

To Wonder

**A Cartography of Information Technology as a Hidden Curriculum and its Effect on
Learning Environments for Art Education**

By

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Declaration

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Abstract

During my artistic studies within the South African educational system, I gradually learnt how to voice the problems that ideologies and methodologies cause when used in the teaching of standardised curriculums. It became apparent that the interests of learners, exterior to the standardised curriculum, held greater educational value in terms of their personal development and challenging the unreasonable circumstances perpetuated by this system. In the particularity of the South African educational discourse exists the remnants of colonial influences and industrial era curriculums that generations of students must still contend with when pursuing their true educational goals and identities. Art students must revalue themselves and reconcile the damaging effect of this legacy in terms of realising what art is for themselves and how it features in their learning and social environments. Accordingly, the outcome of this exploration attempts to discover how the hidden curriculum of information technology may serve as an emancipatory tool.

In the construction of this exploration, a cartographic methodology is used to inform the argument in terms of the political relations and contextual circumstances inherent within the narrative of curriculum discourses. To that effect, in order to disrupt obvious conclusions, a variety of theoretical perspectives and ontological perceptions are used to map the implications of the hidden curriculum. In this relation, with the comprised perspectives of parents, learners, teachers and students, it was discovered that the omnipresence of Information Technologies serves as an enticing creative and social tool in opposition to the failings of standardised curriculums. These existing curriculums have the effect of discouraging and misleading students about how art is to be practised and perceived. Students who are truly motivated to study art face the challenge of overcoming this discouragement by finding their own paths and may achieve this through technological tools. However, these tools are not inert and have the effect of creating new spaces for learning and cultural engagement.

It is simultaneously explored how the effect of globalisation through social media platforms distort the perspectives of people in terms of art perception. In addition to how globalisation through social media continues into commercial art as becoming a highly valued standard as reflected in educational practices. A consequence of this media effect is the economy of fear where technology is seen for its dangers, as opposed to its intellectual and educational benefits. The perceptions of parents and students, however, provided a balanced juxtaposition to this fear by treating technology with reasonable moderation. Other implications arose in terms of what this new perspective could mean for educators, communities, decolonisation, ontology, identity and anthropological spaces.

Opsomming

Gedurende my kunste studies binne die Suid Afrikaanse onderwys stelsel, het ek geleidelik geleer hoe om die probleme aan te spreek wat ideologie en metodiek veroorsaak wanneer dit gebruik word binne in die gestandaardiseerde kurrikulums. Dit het duidelik geword dat die ander belangstellings van leerders, buite die gestandaardiseerde kurrikulums, blyk groter opvoedkundige waarde het in terme van hul persoonlike ontwikkeling en bevraagteken die onredelike stand van sake wat ewig voortleef in die stelsel. Binne die besondere karakter van die Suid Afrikaanse onderwys diskoers bestaan die oorblyfsels van die koloniale invloed en industriële era kurrikulums wat generasies van studente nog steeds mee moet worstel in die strewe om opvoedkundige doelwitte te verwesentlik. Kuns studente moet hulself herevalueer en versoen met hierdie skadelike nalatenskap deur om te verstaan dat kuns 'n persoonlike onderneming is en deur te bepaal hoe om dit te kenmerk binne in hul opleiding en sosiale omgewing. Daarvolgens, die doel van die eksplorasië poog om te bepaal hoe die verborge kurrikulum van inligtingstechnologie mag dien as 'n emansipatoriese instrument.

In die konstruksie van hierdie eksplorasië word 'n kartografiese metodologie aangewend om die argument, in terme van die politieke verhoudinge en kontekstuele omstandighede inherent binne die verhaal van kurrikulum diskoerse, in te lig. Om sodoende voor die hand liggende gevolgtrekkings te ontwig, word 'n verskeidenheid teoretiese perspektiewe en ontologiese persepsies gebruik om die implikasies van die verborge kurrikulum te karteer. In hierdie verband, met die saamgestelde perspektiewe van ouers, leerders, onderwysers en studente, is dit ontdek dat die alomteenwoordigheid van Inligtingstechnologieë dien as 'n aanloklike kreatiewe en sosiale hulpmiddel, in teenstelling met die gebreke van gestandaardiseerde kurrikulums. Die gevolg van bestaande kurrikulums het die effek om studente te ontmoedig en is misleidend oor hoe kuns beoefen en waargeneem moet word. Studente wat werklik gemotiveerd is om kuns te studeer, het die uitdaging om hierdie ontmoediging te oorkom om op hul eie manier deur middel van tegnologiese gereedskap hul kreatiewe doelwitte te bereik. Hierdie instrumente is egter nie passief nie en het die gevolg dat nuwe spasies vir leer en kulturele betrokkenheid geskep word.

Daar word terselfdertyd ondersoek hoe die effek van globalisering deur sosiale media-platforms die perspektiewe van mense in terme van kunspersepsie verdraai. Benewens hoe globalisering deur sosiale media voortgaan in kommersiële kuns as 'n hoogs gewaardeerde standaard soos weerspieël word in opvoedkundige praktyke. 'n Gevolg van hierdie media-effek is die ekonomie van vrees waar tegnologie gesien word vir sy gevare, in teenstelling met sy intellektuele en opvoedkundige voordele. Die persepsies van ouers en studente het egter 'n gebalanseerde teenstelling tot hierdie vrees gelewer, deur om die gebruik van tegnologie met redelike moderasie te behandel. Ander implikasies het ontstaan in terme van wat hierdie nuwe perspektief vir opvoeders, gemeenskappe, dekoloniasie, ontologie, identiteit en antropologiese ruimtes kan beteken.

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Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Opsomming	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Theoretical Mapping	5
What is(n't) Information Technology?	6
Is a Community on a Map?	9
Place, Space, and where they are neither	11
Globalisation and you! Globalisation and who?	13
Identity within Evolving Contexts	16
The Ideology of Schools and Stale Curriculums	19
Critical Thinking	21
Chapter 3: Methodological Mapping	22
Chapter 4: Theory Mapping	28
Outline and the South African context.....	28
Reflections of a Familiar Story	33
The Unspoken Learners	38
A Forewarning to Parents and Technology.....	43
What about the Students?.....	47
Chapter 5: We can (not) Conclude with Implications.....	50
Reference List	54

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Well-meaning philosophers had taught him to look into the logical relations of things, and analyse the processes which shaped his thoughts and fancies. Wonder had gone away, and he had forgotten that all life is only a set of pictures in the brain, among which there is no difference betwixt those born of real things and those born of inward dreamings, and no cause to value one above the other.” (Lovecraft, 1929)

In my experience, this phrase that, “Wonder had gone away” rings ever more true in light of the apparent drawbacks of curriculums in South Africa that stagnate with outmoded methods of education. I mean this through the historicity of education that informs these educational structures and how progress is measured in light of attempted transformation for students, which could extend to broader concerns of globalisation. If we are to teach students merely a form of logical rhetoric that leaves no second-guessing or critical engagement, then we are surely poorer for that as the emergence of critical thought from the sum of our parts is nourished through imagination. Indeed, I am left to consider where wonder has gone when schooling environments must uphold the consumption of predefined content over that of the joys of exploration, discussion and the motivations of the youth. If I am to consider the process of education; it certainly seems transfixed with the reproduction of transferring textbook knowledge and objective syllabus sets which, with regards to encouraging the growth of our capacity to think critically, seem to fall short in application. If ever it was meant to encourage true criticality and discourse to begin with.

Now there may be many reasons for this, chief amongst them, for example, is the schooling environment and the relation between students and educators. It may begin here that the dynamic for engagement falters when the educator becomes the mediator of what is to be thought and said. This is problematic as the ontological state of students has shifted radically through the effect of information media that stands as a considerable juxtaposition against the grain of schooling conduits. However, this is not inconsiderate of tertiary level education where argumentation and philosophical reasoning is still developed, but within a similar grain of learning. What then, becomes the role of the educator in the face of this dynamic and

unregulated avenue of self-enrichment for the student through information media? It is as such, that the very question of what the student has now become in the contemporary age falls into the focus of inquiry. Therefore, I would propose that this exploration would endeavour into discovering what the student has become, where their wonder has shifted, and what ulterior modes of transference are becoming available to sate the desire to wonder and explore. So when this has been evaluated, how are we to understand the value of promoting and nurturing the creative potential of students? Parallel to this exploration is, of course, the role of the educator who must also reconcile with this ontological shift, and perhaps introduces new opportunities for creating engagement or facilitating motivation in students. An additional contextual consideration must also be noted in how the socio-political environment affects the schooling curriculum in terms of decolonisation efforts and how information technology may aid in levelling the playing field in terms of escapism.

Thus far, I have introduced the focus of inquiry concerning the student and teacher relationship. This occurs within the context of how information technology affects the relationship, but there is more to be considered in terms of the spatial dynamic. It should be considered that information technology, in addition to its ontological consequences, creates new virtual and physical places of learning and interaction for student identities. These spaces, in particular, require definition in order to be understood, as it transcends the distinction between physical and mental space. Accordingly, linking the factors of the student, teacher and environment relative to the currently sanctioned educational dynamic may provide valuable insight into where wonder has gone. More specifically, what becomes taught as a parallel education in the form of a hidden curriculum could prove to be more enticing than what is offered in classrooms. The hidden curriculum, in the case, we may come to understand as the ulterior sources of interests that students are affected by in terms of their skills development and artistic pursuits. Additionally, the environment of the classroom versus these alternative modes of education loci forms the context that this exploration will undertake.

The undertaking of this exploration is in part driven by my experience of the South African education system during my upbringing. There is much to be said for its functionality as a means to an end concerning the requirements of educating students as an informed workforce. However, there is much to be desired and critiqued in the present day as I have

reflected over time, such as in terms of post-colonial discourses and the hidden curriculum. Mandatory subject enrolment outside of my interests during my schooling delivered the near-palpable effect of loathing the activity of education, which I may reasonably assume is the state of apathy shared by many students. Consequently, the sense of wonder cannot be fulfilled in such a context where what is taught is inevitably forgotten, leading to a possible waste of educational resources. This is not to demote the heuristic value of undertaking subjects as a challenge towards self-enrichment and contextual awareness of broader concerns. Nonetheless, all subjects being equal relative to the individual student's requirements could be better invested on those with genuine interest.

From my particular perspective as a student of Fine Arts, I would not deny the value of having studied history and biology in school, for example. However, the retrospective analysis of having studied philosophy as a means of understanding logical argumentation and relativity grounded in me the sense that history becomes taught from a singular perspective that is given to be factually true, as opposed to being a subject that allows different perspectives. This ethos of teaching factual syllabuses extended through all my subjects and raised the question as to what end this is to be the purpose of education. I am left to reflect on my own experience, which provides the insight that engaging with the skills learned through art and philosophy provides the means to read the structure and meaning of education. Not every person is prone to delving into a philosophical discussion or probing beyond face value, and as such, the factual syllabus works to his or her end. Nevertheless, for all those inclined to step beyond the immediate perception of knowledge, the education system fails to deliver from the point of encouraging wonder. Within a global society where we need the skills afforded by these insightful students, with consideration to the hangover of colonial discourses in South Africa, it must surely become imperative to understand where and how this wonder is directed or misdirected in the absence of an idyllic education system.

The means by which this exploration is constructed requires a contextual methodology, in the form of a cartography aimed at discovering the perspectives of groups of students that may reflect the changing ontologies within them in terms of their identity and their access to information technologies. Moreover, their utilisation of technology could reveal what ulterior forms of education exist alongside the standard system as a hidden curriculum. As such, this method will not aim to prove a theory but to develop a perspective that may challenge and

transform a phenomenon that we may take for granted. The particular groups vary between the young students of a primary school and that of the students at university level within the context of art classes. This provides comparative ontologies that may display the effects of information technologies on the motivations of students towards self-enrichment. Additionally, the insight of parents into the effects of information technology on the differing levels of cognitive development in learners will create an additional enrichment of the perspective. With these insights in mind of the various age groups, they may act as disrupters of expectations and pre-defined conclusions to determine how information technology functions as a transgressive hidden curriculum. The central theme of inquiry will remain, however, as the overall understanding of what effect is felt in students that are exposed to this phenomenon and what it means for pedagogical practices.

These perspectives of which are representative of a particular focus group and are therefore not transferable to every other context, but should be viewed in light of current research in the complex field of information technology and globalisation for validity. The limitations of this study may be observed by considering the contextual specificity of the research methodology. The juxtaposition of the student bodies from a primary school against that of a university is limited to the area of how artistic endeavours are affected by information technology. This may extend to other academic fields in as far as creative thinking can aid the functionality of a person's learning ability and critical thought. To some degree, this study may evaluate how information technology functions as a new social mechanism, or counter-argumentatively, as an anti-social consequence of rapid development. Moreover, these considerations cannot characterise educational contexts where student bodies do not have ready access to information technology.

The aim of this exploration has been phrased along the grain of finding where wonder has gone, perhaps an idealistic pursuit but ultimately for the purpose of discovering where the student finds motivations in light of the emergence of new technologies. Therefore, the problem of this study may be phrased according to how the current education system may resist the rapid developments of technology and how students are facilitating their education through the emergence by their own agency. This is of particular interest to me who has grown with technology and developed certain skills and interests along its paradigm, such as through how art may be applied digitally and how my exposure to film influenced my video

creation. Accordingly, the structure of this exploration may be given through an initial cartographic framework of pertinent theoretical perspectives from authors who have touched upon the areas of interest for this study, namely that of what the student is becoming, how spaces may be theoretically composed for discussion, and how pedagogical practices may benefit from considering these hidden developments. This will be covered in the second chapter ahead of this introduction. With these considerations in place, the third chapter will contextualise and map the methodology of this study according to how the South African specificity of this exploration may be related to broader concerns, considering that the effect of information technology is reflective of the globalisation trend. The specificity of how this trend affects the primary and tertiary levels of educations will reveal the on-going process of its effect across generations in terms of art as a means of engaging wonder. The reason, of course, for this focus on art is due to my role as a researcher with a background in Fine Art. Accordingly, it will be appropriate to discuss my aims and outcomes as being driven towards expanding this field of inquiry.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Mapping

In the cartographic exploration of how information technology influences the pedagogical practice, I will introduce authors who delve into the key areas of study that pertains to my argument. These areas may be loosely defined according to key terms such as identity, critical thinking, information technology, globalisation, community, decolonisation, place, and ideology and the hidden curriculum. Amongst these key terms will arise theories from certain authors that have formed the main body of theoretical information by which this study is contextualised, with the other terms forming parallel investigations to aid the South African perspective of this exploration. The concept of identity ties in closely with that of citizenship and, relative to globalisation, will become a pertinent field to study when compared to contemporary students. Information technology itself requires a solid definition because, as a concept, its boundaries are shifting as rapidly as the development of its adherent concepts. This is not an impossible task but requires a certain methodology of understanding. For this reason, the concept of community functions along similar patterns of description, as the boundaries of definition are simultaneously shifting due to the effect of globalisation and, as will be revealed, the effect of information technology. This latter term of information technology creates new places of interaction and learning amongst students through emergent

virtual platforms. Lastly, ideology in this exploration will critique the status of the traditional education systems present in South Africa that harbours similar issues of contention abroad in terms of how education determines progress and development. Furthermore, this take on ideology will introduce the understanding of the hidden curriculum, accordingly, these theoretical perspectives will be cross analysed, challenged, and focused according to how we may best understand the function of information technology as a hidden curriculum in light of critical thinking. Without further ado, it becomes clear that this chapter on theoretical perspectives should begin with the foundational concept of information technology.

What is(n't) Information Technology?

If we are to consider information technology as a concept, several assumptions may arise, namely, that technology is merely a tool and a means to an end. As the creators of the tool we are in the position to use it as we see fit, however, what may not always be immediately evident is that we are shaped by technology through its usage. Consequently, as technology develops, our society, thoughts and behaviours shift accordingly. Nicolas Burbules provides a significant perspective on the balance of technology in shaping ourselves in addition to aiding the definitional boundaries of the concept (2000). To expand on the potential of information technologies according to Burbules, we may take for granted that the educational benefits of technology are self-evident, to debate the matter is at this point counter-intuitive to this exploration. As such, what becomes pertinent to discuss is to what end these technologies are used and its retroactive effect.

Firstly, in the conceptual analysis of this title, we should expand on what is meant by information and its underlying premises. As technological devices create a repository of information, ranging from any form of knowledgeable representation as an inexhaustible library, we should not undervalue the enormous resource available to us at any given time. Likewise, this resource may seem formless due to the disparity of its parts, perhaps even raw, but it must be also understood that information may be constructed to fit conclusions. As a result, information technology may reproduce certain biases without the consideration of how it is filtered. Algorithmically speaking, performing a query on an online search engine reveals results according to that given input. Consequently, this engine would not contradict the biases one is already reinforcing by its use. Furthermore, these devices are not only

information sources but also a communication method, which introduces a platform of interaction. In this situation, the communication aspect of information technology becomes a platform for active users to form a community of interests. The implications of this development span beyond the limitations of a traditional sense of space and place, to become that of a cyber-space. Resultantly, to declare that information technology is a ‘medium’ understates the effect of its being an access point by which users interact and initiate a causal effect unlike what may be possible in physical spaces of community investment.

Secondly, the understanding of technology as a tool given towards accomplishing a task is a misnomer. Technology, in this sense, can achieve new purposes unlike what may have been previously considered. As such, we are continually shaped in unexpected directions according to the new possibilities created by information technology. This effect may be understood as a ‘relational’ point of view whereby we are, through reshaping the environment, culturally redefined (Burbules, 2000:6). This redefinition poses the consideration that the line between human and technology becomes blurred to the degree that we are synonymous or co-dependent with technology in its instantiation. This may be observed as an ontological development in terms of how we process information or select interests, in addition to physical changes such as through poor posture and the learnt dance of social interaction. A third position considers the social consequences of technology and the concept of choice. To this end, it becomes progressively essential to develop a virtual literacy where the definition of what enabling factors are available depends on it.

However, as limitless as information technology may seem like a phenomenon for change and education, there are substantial limitations to be argued. Burbules discusses the, “Computer as panacea” (2000:8), whereby our problems with regards to education may seemingly be fixed through this falsely in-exhaustive resource. A caveat to this perspective notes logistical issues such as classroom spaces and the role of human educators who cannot be undervalued or replaced through virtual means. As a paradigm, this fits the sentiment of discovering the universal method of an all-encompassing educative method, which does not take into account the disparities and natural difficulties of learning contexts. Admittedly, this tactic finds traction through marketing schemes aimed at utopian temperaments, a danger of which creates a sense of falling behind for institutions that have not updated to the latest technologies. These marvellous devices, of which, are inevitably discarded when their flaws

become apparent. Counter-argumentatively, the pessimistic view that technology is merely a tool which becomes as effective as the wisdom reflected by the user, is inconsiderate of the dualistic relationship of technology. The perspective of understanding information technology as a neutral phenomenon may synthesize this dialectic viewpoint. Moreover, we may understand that certain effects may result from the particular function of a device, in addition to its drawbacks and benefits.

A further caveat to ameliorating simplified understandings of information technology targets the perspective that the value of the phenomenon can be placed on a scale of success with regards to achieving goals. Of course, attaining goals is just a product when we consider the formation of social, cultural, conceptual, and perceptual redefinitions, the consequences of which are far less linear and contextually bound than a developmental paradigm. Secondly, the valuation and implementation of information technology should not be given to a framework of cost and benefit analysis. The consequences of technology have already proven to be far-reaching and unpredictable due to the human equation. On a similar line of reasoning to the cost and benefits framework is that of the good and bad. As a negative outcome, these perspectives can be more philosophical in the outlook of considering the variety of contextual outcomes. To contemplate that an idea, through the spread of communication technology, may act as a Von Neumann machine¹ that reproduces itself ad infinitum in the form of fake news, which has neither a body to target nor a head to sever, becomes an alarming hypothetical development. Furthermore, the spread of news via communication technologies may perpetuate in concrete stories, which are only amended later. Of the particular need for focus is the effect of communication technologies due to the ever-increasing pace by which they are developed, in addition to the consequences for society. This may be the preeminent example of a technology that the consequences of which are not immediately apparent but practised, regardless.

¹ In science fiction literature, such as Arthur C. Clarke's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), a Von Neumann machine is the concept of a space craft, such as the Monolith, which can infinitely replicate itself in the manner of bacteria. My choice of using this analogy attempts to amalgamate the effect of information technology and the organic factor of humans who become susceptible to the replicative quality of devices in both the economy of their becoming a daily necessity and the consequences of replicating modes of thought.

Is a Community on a Map?

The concept of community has certain definitional requirements and boundaries that should be explored in relation to how it functions in the discourse of information technology. As such, certain questions have arisen through how it may be applied, namely, how we are to consider the function of a community developer in a technological phenomenon that has individual self-determining agency within virtual spaces. Furthermore, are these communities comparable to traditional spaces of interaction, which have tangible boundaries or fences? To this end, traditional communities inherently run the risk of exclusivity due to their physical demarcations. However, if this applies to virtual communities remains to be determined, if it requires demarcation to begin with. Moreover, it may certainly be the case that a sense of community by definition of boundaries may become obsolete in light of globalisation trends. Hence, the factors that have arisen to enable the condition of globalisation may be exempt from a definition of boundary, and therefore requires a revised understanding.

Jnanabrata Bhattacharyya provides a theory for community development, which proposes key factors for redefining and problematising communities in light of the historical process of community erosion due to developmental changes. As a foreword to problematising the definition, he states that community development does not lack in definition, but to the contrary, these definitions are substantially idiosyncratic and vague (2004:7). It is, therefore, that the problem of defining a community is put forward for inspection. One may define a community according to spatial definitions; however, this excludes or conflicts with overlapping geographic boundaries, which is in contradiction to the ethos of a community that orientates itself by working together. Secondly, a community may define itself as a collectivity with a purpose or commonality, such as the previously mentioned geographic aspect, but extends to micro-communities of special interests (2004:9). Nonetheless, this is still subject to the limiting effect of overlapping definitions. Bhattacharyya proposes that a community can be defined irrespective of spatial dynamics, and may serve in the understanding of the functionality of virtual communities. Namely, he argues, that communities require solidarity and the resulting agency as a binding element, which can encompass a large variety of overlapping perspectives and differences. What may be meant by solidarity can be understood by a shared identity and normative that aids in providing distinctiveness to emerging communities as the distinguishing factor. This is, of course, a stable opposition to a distinction based on geographic boundaries, which may be crossed by

the aforementioned distinctiveness of solidarity. The second aspect is given in the form of the agency where we are provided with the freedom to determine our choices in terms of associations and living standards; this is certainly a reflection of education where individuals are empowered to establish communal relationships and the critical consciousness to take action.

Bhattacharyya touches on the nature of paradigm shifts² in the sense of how erosion occurs in communities when the foundational concepts of solidarity and agency begin to shift. This has been observed through the effect of capitalism and industrialisation on communities based on agriculture and trade unions, to name but two. However, there remains a constant that should be noted for its significance with regards to how communities are instigated and should not be seen as a product or construct, but a normality. There is perhaps a no more eloquent explanation for this than is given by Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation*.

“Labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in its turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man; actual money, finally, is merely a token of purchasing power which, as a rule, is not produced at all, but comes into being through the mechanism of banking or state finance. None of them is produced for sale. The commodity description of labor, land, and money is entirely fictitious.” (1944:75).

It is therefore that this fiction, erroneous in its interpretation of labour that reflects the perpetual organisation of humanity, should not be an encompassing determination of community as a means to an end of production but by the measures of solidarity and agency. This perspective aids in the understanding that the individual who navigates new modes of place and space in the advent of virtual environments, finds purpose exclusive of economic activity. To this end, the exploration of new learning environments should take note of

² A paradigm, as instantiated by Thomas Kuhn in scientific philosophy, is when the normal confidence given to a mode of thought is made unsure by an anomaly, which subverts its certainty and thereby gives rise to a new paradigm of thought adapted to this revelation (Bird 2013).

communities that are not geared toward economic concerns that are valued in traditional education avenues.

A final consideration regarding community may be found concerning the use of language in the formation of solidarity. This, as Bhattacharyya suggests, is one of the cornerstones of participation and sharing of collective meanings. Language, as I would expand, is not simply limited to verbal communication, but the cultural symbolism and representations, which a community may be based on. In the example of virtual communities, it may be a significant perspective to consider the techniques by which they communicate. This would reveal the goals, methods, tools and purpose of a community, which becomes reflective of the felt needs and self-help, that participants exhibit. As such, we may now see the link between information technology and emergent virtual communities as educational curriculums geared toward shared communities of interest. Defining these communities irrespective of spatial boundaries and focusing on the tools that reveal the underlying methods of solidarity is a substantial factor in understanding how learning environments are changing. Furthermore, it reveals the erosion of previous educational communities through the potential benefits of virtually aided education methods. However, this must take into consideration the unforeseeable drawbacks and consequences that may arise in the duality of information technology and its user base. With this in mind, we must move onto the definition of space in an emerging platform that transcends the traditional environment of the classroom, student and teacher relationships.

Place, Space, and where they are neither

It must be asked, when we speak of places if its meaning still bears the same connotations as what we may normally think of in three-dimensional terms, for example, when visiting a music concert. In this respect, we can refer to these spatial events in terms of our relation to the environment, the time of the event, and the identity of those who attend. The key term in this event would be sharing the cultural capital of the musician, which is spread amongst the spectators. However, if this capital can be spread exclusively, in terms exempt from something we can refer to through space, history or identity; what are we to call this? Marc

Augé postulated that these spaces could be referred to as non-places³ (1995:77). These non-places, I would argue, have taken on another meaning through the continuous development of information technologies that verge on creating anthropological platforms of virtual interaction. The likes of which I would argue approximate a culture in itself. It is here that I would challenge Augé's premises of the non-place concerning the removal of the human equation in the places in-between anthropological cultures. To harken back to Lovecraft's introduction with regards to valuing our experience through the lenses of imagination or reality, betwixt which there is no cause to hold one above the other. Likewise, in this discussion, the semantic distinction between place and space holds no value for events lacking the intersections of moving bodies. I disagree for the purposes of redefining how virtual spaces/places are populated by the animation of the mind.

To expand on this particular point, I would refer to the function of new sub-cultures existing within virtual environments in relation to art education. To begin with, John Steers reflects on the globalisation of visual culture and determines that art education must equip the student with the tools for investigating and critically analysing the visual world, and less about the transferal of knowledge. Furthermore, he argues that technological tools bring cultures closer together, but may impoverish culture through marginalisation (Delacruz 2009). New virtual environments, I would argue, become sources by which culture becomes transferable in a manner not entirely expected or recognised due to marginalisation. The consequences of which I would refer to the lyrics of Jamiroquai's song 'Travelling Without Moving' (Kay & Stone, 2018). Of course, the natures of songs are subject to interpretation but I consider this to be of particular pertinence. In the lyrics, the verse is carried by the notion of travelling, however, faster than what can be managed. If things are not slowed then we might just get lost and end up last at nowhere. With regards to art education, I believe this serves as a forewarning for the speed of technological development and the risk of falling behind. In this situation, students who are not up to par with visual literacy become those left behind.

³ "non-places. meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places...do not integrate the earlier places: instead these are listed, classified, promoted to the status of 'places of memory' , and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position." (Marc Augé 1995:78). The relation of anthropology in this sense refers to how the function of a space does not incorporate the earlier relations of places. As Augé argues, the consequences of an age of Supermodernity where the anthropological functions of a society are shrunk together through solitary modes of travel, in the example of places that can be referred to through memory, such as working at a desktop computer.

However, I would argue that these new virtual spaces of cultural exchange become centres of literacy development for the future. To that effect, the status of a non-place becomes compromised by the development of virtual identities, history and culture in the place of the mind.

Ordinarily, as I have argued to the contrary, space or place may be defined as something that may be referred to in actuality. So what then forms the content and consequences of a virtual environment of reference? It is here that I would admit that the notion may be a reality that awaits fruition for the time being. Jane McGonigal provides a contemporary perspective with regards to virtual environments and the consequence of how its residents become an unprecedented resource (2010). More specifically, she argues how video games become a tool that trains its users, which may be utilised towards development for real-world challenges. Statistically, by the end of high school, gamers have spent approximately ten thousand hours within games, the equivalent to mastering a skill. The question is what skills are being developed and how it may be used as an educational method. Moreover, I would argue as to the importance of understanding how the virtual spaces within games become a conduit for cultural literacy. My example of this phenomenon would be my first experience of yet another song, Mr Sandman by The Chordettes. I knew of the song beforehand but the first time I ever heard it was travelling within a virtual game environment and listening to its radio selection. I realised that the source of my cultural capital could only be referred to as a non-place through having no tangible space in reality and recollected only within memory. This could be corroborated by others who have travelled the same non-place and thereby becomes an example of a homogenising consumer identity. It is, therefore, that this brings us to the next concept of this exploration; globalisation.

Globalisation and you! Globalisation and who?

As has been mentioned, the presence of virtual reality cultures is attainable through the effect of globalisation and consumer identities. This bears particular importance on the use of popular culture as a discourse for identity and learning. Karen Wood and William Blanton investigate this phenomenon with regards to pedagogical practices and defining popular

culture⁴ (2009). Of particular focus is on how students facilitate literacies of their own outside of sanctioned educational curriculums. The implications of this study aimed to discover what tensions exist for educators in learning contexts that resist the incorporation of these popular texts and how these texts may be used as an insightful method for teaching students about the effect of consumer culture. As this resource may be analysed in terms of traditional reading, writing, and debate; educational strategies, which marginalise the emotional importance of popular culture amongst students, may devalue the practice of engaging with student motivations with regards to critical analysis, art, language, and logical skills. In much the same way as the educational benefits of information technology are unquestionably obvious, the saturation of a globalised consumer culture amongst students has become an important discourse for developing skills. These skills of which may be framed according to, “a social semiotic theory of multimodality” (2009:213) and accounts for the effect of information technology that utilises the various mediums of sound, visual, and 3D virtual spaces for example. Consequently, these multimodal semiotic constructions become the meaning makers for those engaged with virtual literacy and should be taken into account for future pedagogical practices.

For this purpose, we must delve into how popular culture functions as a multifaceted textual resource that bears insight into how students form or resist identities by the skill of ‘reading’ the world as may be decoded by these literary sources. This is not merely limited to the aforementioned example of traversing a virtual environment and experiencing a consumer identity, but additionally the identity constructions of social networking mechanisms. Of particular concern is how the identity of a student becomes formed through popular culture and what this entails in the absence thereof. As such, this cartography will continue with the theoretical perspective of identity after a thorough understanding of the South African context is established, relative to Globalisation.

Perhaps one of the most pertinent, if unorthodox, South Africa examples of the (trans)formation of an identity in light of the effects of globalisation, decolonisation and technology is the event of the Organised Chaos (OC) LAN (Local Area Network) Party. This event, which has since ceased in late 2013, was known as the largest LAN party in Africa for

⁴ “...*popular culture* as a complex system involving interplay among people, texts, and technologies.” (Wood and Blanton 2009:210).

a number of years before being superseded by the rAge Electronics Expo. In these events, participants of all ages gathered under the ethos of playing video games over a single shared network and identity of being a 'gamer' or cultural enthusiast. During these events, the performative identities and the escapism of gaming overwrite the tensions that permeate the living conditions of Post-Apartheid South Africa by erasing issues of race, age and socially instigated prejudices through the avatars that these participants donned. From a subjective point of view, these types of events create a flattened ontology of shifting representations where everyone is essentially equal in juxtaposition to the political discourses of decolonisation. It is curious to note that, in the face of this, that the efforts of decolonisation and social justice have not yet reached tangible transformative measures within schooling environments. From a developmental point of view, it would seem that to engage in the discourses of decolonisation and social justice and apply them to current and previous discourses in the socio-political context would yield tangible results in the deconstruction of colonialism. However, these efforts harbour an unfortunate twist of fate.

The concept of racial formation, as it is given legitimacy and agency within colonial institutions and discourses, serves as an effective method of social analysis as it demonstrates that race cannot be essentialised within given social relations and must also be understood within a historical and cultural continuum. However, in the case of individual and group identity, the situation becomes complicated due to the co-construction of given meanings within oppressive systems (Adams, Bell and Griffin 2007). What this creates, one could argue, is a tense ontological dilemma. More problematically, in the case of social justice praxis, is that these learned terms of oppression, which label groups according to assigned identities, forms the educational framework by which social justice attempts to emancipate these groups from inequality. In the conceptual instantiation of racial formation whether implicitly or explicitly, an individual has through a categorical imperative, been assigned a mark of separation. As such, even in social justice, the conceptual structures of oppression become perpetuated as the sum of an individual's identity, prior to anything else. This type of knowledge is a reflection of the political structures within society that mediate the worth of an individual and creates a pervasive method of social control. Therefore, social justice and decolonial education become an alternative form of social control that utilises the structures of oppression to enforce social change where inequality can be identified. In the historical continuum of this process, it must be understood that social change is preceded by social

trauma that transcends generations in living memory, and is never quick to change. The long-term implications, through social justice and decolonial education, are to emancipate ourselves from the categorical imperative of oppressive identities and allow for equal human rights to everyone, with respect to new norms of learned identities which do not repeat the process of oppression. Maxine Greene gives an eloquent distinction between the notion of humanity and the construction of social categorical imperatives.

“To talk of nations or structures instead of people; to use words like ‘Victory’ and ‘defeat’; to talk about a ‘great war’; to deal uncritically with ‘heroism’ and ‘martial law’: all this is to distort and to falsify, if attention is not drawn to the interpretive process itself.” (Allsup, 2003:165).

It is, therefore, in light of the turmoil of student protests during the 2015 and 2016 Fees Must Fall movement in South Africa, that the consequences of intensive colonial structuralism should be critiqued. This is not to disparage the theoretical clarity and success of decolonial efforts in understanding, but how it becomes uncritically implemented and distributed within the discourses of institutions becomes the point of discontent. In Lynn Quinn and Jo-Anne Vorster’s writings in the Decolonial Turn, they warn against the superficial adoption of the language of decolonisation with regards to pre-existing discourses and frameworks, in addition to the challenges of transformation which is obscured by interpretations from the horizon of immanence (2017). As much as it is challenging to myself to understand how the decolonial language and discourse functions within the avenue of globalisation, it may suffice to say that the discourse becomes a power play of identification. When during events such as the OC, where individuals can express themselves in exclusion of this categorical reproduction, it may become a hopeful avenue for transformation.

Identity within Evolving Contexts

The consumption of popular culture literacy in educational contexts requires certain explorations, such as how this affects the cognitive development of students. As has been suggested, critical skills and virtual literacy has become honed to a large degree. In this venture, it must be of crucial importance that readings into the identities of students are wary of the dangers of superficiality. For example, although a student may negotiate their choice of popular culture sources by the manner of literary categories, which could be read as a

disturbing or enriching interest depending on the category, this does not bear on their own identity and would be a superficial summation (Delacruz 2009:218). What should be noted from this is that the enticing idea of describing a complex person's identity according to their choice of popular culture references would be an easy and ill-considered conclusion. This is in much the same way, I would verbosely argue, as the incongruency of suggesting that Plato's metaphysical theory of a dualism is compatible with Immanuel Kant's categorical moral imperatives. To exclusively practice each as an absolute in itself is absurd, but to garner the lesson of perspectives becomes the value of philosophy. To this effect, it would be absurd to determine the be-all identity of students' subjectivities by their popular culture choices; to the contrary, it would be more reasonable to acknowledge these texts as a material for cognitive enrichment. An extended consequence of this perspective would imply that the idea of a stable student identity is challenged by the notion that identities are in flux, which corresponds more directly with human nature and learning. Truly, the one thing may be relied on is that change is constant and this is nowhere more obvious than in the mercurial nature of humanity.

Regarding the question of identity, in relation to information technology, is the notion of what it now means to be human. Due to the mercurial modalities of redefining identity through a technological medium that is ever changing, and by extension changing ourselves, we have to reconsider what it means to be human. Rosi Braidotti postulates that the concept of the Posthuman may become the next interpretative theory for cultural understanding (2013). To this end, the imperative premise regarding culture and the human relation is that one is not born into a culture; one is made into a culture, and we are socially independent of a culture that requires our reciprocation to perpetuate itself. In this sense, we are immanent within the context of our cultural environment and should form interpretations with this in mind. The Posthuman challenges the binary between what is given and constructed. In the example of humanism, the moral values and foundations of human society seemed to be incontrovertible; however, this was proven false within post-war society when these values became disconnected to the implicit premises of humanity. Correspondingly, previous faith placed in intellectual theories takes on a melancholic perspective in terms of ideologies that appear to have failed or been crushed under the falsity of a belief in certainty. The Posthuman, therefore, functions as a tool to reconsider the basic premises of culture. I would

argue that this is a similar eventuality along the lines of nihilism⁵ when all our cherished beliefs require a spring-cleaning to make way for new culturally adapted meanings. This near nihilism presents certain challenges, namely, how we are to redevelop critical thought and community in the face of ontological uncertainty (2013:6). Indeed, the answers may already be evident through the effect of globalisation. Communities are now no longer defined by physical boundaries and are brought together in a virtual global village through solidarity. With regard to reframing critical thought, it is usually the pursuit of rejecting universalisms in favour of context sensitive solutions in addition to the framework of human decency, such as it could be defined.

Braidotti suggests that human ideals should not aspire to idealism in the form of humanisms or, as I may suggest, the *Übermensch* which follows along similar lines of developmental paradigms. Although this take on identity is outside the scope of this study, it is appropriate to note how these discussions may take on the form of moral philosophies. Braidotti continues, in the posthuman, that there is a need to translate different philosophical cultures in order to mend the paradox of finding new modes of agency versus conservative theoretical sentiments (2006:32). She continues to provide valuable insight concerning this perspective that inherits a tendency within contemporary cultures to entertaining despairing perspectives. A remedy is suggested wherein we undertake the method of reconciling and reconnecting the historical contexts of philosophies that presently function as a roaming refugee of disrupted discourses. The discontinuity explored here takes note of how philosophies, practised with certainty, invariably fail when applied to the new contexts and immediate needs of different cultures over time. The importance of this step becomes apparent when we reconnect with our locality as opposed to entertaining unfeasible macro solutions based on a type of technoutopianism. These utopianisms offer a panacea to the problematic discourses found within contemporary cultures but fail when contextual needs are ignored, consequently fostering an economy of fear. Ultimately, this position takes due consideration of the complexity of local contexts that cannot be ameliorated by the inconsideration of overarching solutions that are promoted by the ontological effect of globalisation on citizens. In other words, the

⁵ In the sense of Nihilism, Friedrich Nietzsche refers to the concept of the 'eternal return' whereby, when we determine that the structure of the world is not contingent on any objectively inherent form of meaning or authority; we may then eventually 'overcome' through intense reflection and return to value, meaning and cultural foundation. The means of doing so, however, remains unclear (Aylesworth 2015).

Posthuman perspective aims to allow individuals to regain their agency as participants of a community.

The Ideology of Schools and Stale Curriculums

If I am to critique the schooling system as it appears within the context of South Africa; some perspective is needed concerning how it functions on an ideological level. This would aim to explain the purpose of the schooling system and the broader concern for students who are subject to its construction as may connect with decolonisation and globalisation. To that end, Michael Apple provides an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon, which still bears its legacy today (1979). In essence, the schooling system, on an ideological level, is responsible for delineating and justifying the appropriate limits of thought and concept. The extent of this responsibility reinforces the validity of cultures and the institutions that support it by consensus. As a result, school environments function as safe enclaves with neutral views towards political argumentation and popular developments. The implications of this mean that schools are often slow with regards to the changing needs of communities and the social body, in addition to maintaining the already established hegemony. Concerning information technology, this becomes disruptive when students take on the agency of change by their own hand outside of the rate of adaptability of schooling institutions. Furthermore, if change does occur, it may yet be outmoded by further developments along the timeline, thus rendering the invested resources in new technologies inert.

This agency on behalf of the students engaging in their own affairs externally of the sanctioned learning environment becomes an example of the hidden curriculum in effect. This does not imply that the schooling environment itself is exempt from being a hidden curriculum, but the scope of this exploration focuses on the external forces that shape the emerging cognitive developments for students with access to information technologies. However, there may be tensions that arise between the two forms, in the example of the relationship between praise and power being directed away from classroom activities. This relationship of which previously functioned to encourage activity may be drawn away by the gratifying allure and promises of information technologies, or 'infotainment'. A pertinent question, however, is to what scale and level of importance does this external curriculum

detract students from their schooling activities, and if this development brings risks or benefits to pedagogical practices.

An understanding is needed, in terms of establishing the importance of context and socio-political discourses, that the government enforced ideological curriculums of South African schools, especially in the Post-Apartheid context, broadly still maintains significant levels of colonial influences and social tensions as a result. As we have covered through Apple's take on ideology, the status quo maintained in the elite schools of South Africa (primary and high school) maintain institutionalised practices such as mandatory dress codes, regular school assembly, lining up, standing to attention, referring to your betters as 'sir', which is reminiscent individuality destroying process of military camps. The hegemony of maintaining an appearance of something other than the purpose of receiving an education becomes indicative of the underlying legitimisation of these practices that go unquestioned. While seemingly benign under the pretence of civility, these practices are collectively harmful to the growing learners in terms of their individual identity formation and value system. (Rhodes)

A possible risk to consider is how the development of hidden curriculums affects the hegemonic status quo of the education system that utilises standardised testing as a method of accountability for investment as opposed to truly measuring student capability. The structure of a school is much the same as that of a simulated business where the teacher takes on the role of the boss and standardised tests become the target of success. This is problematic for several reasons as explained by Antonia Darder (2005:209). Firstly, standardised testing becomes reflective of the developmental paradigm that places the effectiveness of schooling on a simplified graph measured by a score. The implications of this system reveal that students learn to study to achieve a score as opposed to being motivated for authentic learning and comprehension. Consequently, the curriculum standards and teaching methods of educators must uphold a measure of accountability for a system that does not reflect authentic learning. Hence, teaching problems within a school become marginalised by the sweeping reflection of score tables that is uncritical of the true underlying problems. The implications of this perspective on this exploration may be revealed through the measures that students undertake in their external interaction with information technology and the effectiveness thereof in terms of skill development and motivation.

Critical Thinking

In the examination of the effectiveness of the hidden curriculum, it should be juxtaposed against what we may understand as a critical reflection in the context of art, visual and technical literacy, logical perspective, agency, and identity. Consequently, I would invoke the perspective a traditional method of critical reasoning, that of the Socratic Method. As explained by Martha Nussbaum, the ability to criticise one's own perspectives and mantle that of others with a respect for reason is an invaluable tool in discovering the underlying premises and connotations of various discourses in argumentation (2002). As a rule, the engagement of criticality in this exploration will use this perspective as a basis for critique and becomes a safeguard against the repetition of rhetoric. Correspondingly, this perspective serves as the synthesis of all the previous perspectives, which by methodology expands and reviews the meanings and concepts utilised in their construction.

It is reasonable to state that the ability to be critical is closely tied with creative potential. In schooling institutions, its curriculum is provisionally aimed at producing citizens with a capability to examine their role in society. Therefore, in the accumulation of the ability to engage in the Socratic 'examine life,' there is also the ability to considering oneself beyond one's immediate locality and enter a narrative imagination that requires substance beyond the factual (Nussbaum 2002:299). Admittedly, this may cause certain tensions within an ideologically restrictive schooling system when students consider their reality parallel to its construction. As such, this perspective aids this exploration with regards to determining how student interaction with information technology forms a creative outlet beyond the factual discourses of sanctioned curricula. The emergence of this ability, I would argue, is nurtured through exposure to free environments of reasonable argumentation and discussion, which, as a skill, is practised in the creative process of problem-solving and subjective reflection and projection. However, as Laura Johnson and Paul Morris argue, a limitation to the seemingly reflexive development of critical thinking skills may not necessarily encourage moralistic or ideological concern in students (2010:79). Critical thinking, as a general process, is subjectively distanced from moral concerns and actions. It is here that the complexity of identity becomes a factor in the analysis of student cognitive development and contextual factors must become a feature of study with regards to critical pedagogy. As such,

determining that critical thought is exclusive of moral or ideological concerns is an ill-considered summation of the student complex.

The pursuits of critical pedagogy are not unfamiliar, however, through the teachings of Paulo Freire who states that, “in the classroom, all students are ‘oppressed’ until they have become ‘critically conscious’” (Freire 1990). I would argue in this event, the students within an ideological outmoded educational system exists as the subaltern until they develop the cognitive ability to critically analyse their situation and by the feat of imagination discover their agency in exterior interests through the availability of information technology.

Chapter 3: Methodological Mapping

The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither is reducible to the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other. Neither is articulated or articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated. (Barad, 2007: 152)

As a poignant re-articulation of Lovecraft’s sentiment towards the unjust duality between upholding materiality over that of subjectivity, Barad reveals to us the significance of observing our experience of ontologies and epistemologies as mutually constructing. Consequently, the heart of my exploration between the self-constructed subjectivities of students, in relation to new spaces brought into fruition by technologies and the implications for learning environments cannot, by way of methodology, be based upon a qualitative research method. That being said, a more apt approach would be the use of a cartographic approach, as I will explain. The pursuit of this exploration will not achieve a valuable insight through the collection and comparison of data which may reveal not much more than we may already suspect. As such, the insight of participants⁶ and my interpretation thereof as a

⁶ The participants of this exploration ranged from the level of primary to tertiary level educational centers. The former having a total of 114 learners in the environment of the art classroom, in addition

student and critique of the educational system will be of paramount aid in this venture. In this case, the theoretical perspectives discussed thus far, while being an essential framework for determining the foundational concepts used in this exploration, should not merely be treated as theory. It is, therefore, necessary to go beyond theory in a manner that is inclusive of the vagaries of subjectivities and considerate of how this relates to practical matters for pedagogical pursuits. Thus, perspectives that delineate aspects of life into contained boxes will not be of relevance to this exploration except as an example of how this research aims to transgress the qualitative research method.

To harken back to Polanyi's perspective on the fiction of labour, Hillevi Lenz Taguchi focuses exactly on the complexities of life and knowledge as necessitating an understanding that does not seek certainty or answers, in the philosophical sense. To be clear, as Taguchi argues, between the binary relation of materiality and subjectivity exists a middle ground that reveals the event of existence itself as being neither a separation of the two to be pinned down but as a constant fleeting movement between biology, matter and humanity (2010:13). It is here that the cartographic approach becomes a necessary methodological construction for this exploration from an interrelational point of view. This method is explained by Braidotti who we have discussed thus far in terms of Posthumanism. From the desire of our immanent position, cartography becomes the attempt of remaining inclusive and avoiding sectarianism, while simultaneously taking a theoretical and political stand (2013:25). More specifically, it is the effort of carefully mapping our situated ontology in relation to our immanence in power relations. A Cartography becomes a politically informed reading of power relations for the purpose of understanding our central position in relation to others. Therefore, as I become the central inquirer, I simultaneously become the cartographer of the multiplicity of others in relation to my field of interest. More simply put, my argument becomes a mosaic where everyone involved brings the pieces together from their homes. This interrelation method of piecing a map together reminds me of the epistemological theory of John Locke who describes that as we enter life we are but a blank slate, whereby we experience reality through our senses in the form of ideas that progressively gain traction to form concepts that become more complex over time. This knowledge, however, is not inconsiderate of the interpretations

to the insights of their parents. Of the parents, 23 decided to participate in the study with their insights. In the tertiary level, 47 students participated through individual and group discussions during my studies and in given classes.

of opinion, belief and scepticism (Priselac, 2018). Admittedly, while researching for this exploration I have been confronted with ideas and perspectives I had long suspected and ruminated upon on occasion, as though these conclusions are merely the inevitable consequence of the inter-active traction between reality and I. More pertinently to this exploration in relation to learning environments, however, is Taguchi's theory of an intra-active pedagogy. Preliminarily speaking, this perspective accounts for the human being as being subject to the agency of material objects and spaces in our self-construction in addition to the discourses that explain our reality (2010:14).

Furthermore, along with the notion of traction, Taguchi's mode of thinking relies on the concept of an 'ontology of immanence', which is the next step between the intra-active relation of the human and non-human divide by inferring that we are in co-existence with the rest of the world. This forms an archetypal perspective whereby our knowledge and experience is as much dependant on that of others. As Barad puts it in yet another eloquent phrase, "Existence is not an individual affair (2007: ix)" and therefore the emergence of the individual is a gestalt, or in other words, greater than the sum of his or her parts in both mind and body. It should, therefore, be understood that the production of the self is in a constant state of immanence, as our relationship with ourselves, reality and the greater picture results in a complexity that is in constant flux and naturally resistant to boxing in terms of ontological theory. But as I would argue from my own point of view and what I have observed from students; although we are each in a persistent developmental flux through the sense of time, self and materiality; we are each a convergence that may be perceived through milestones in time whereby concepts and experiences fall into place within discourses that bears relevance at that point in time. Even if we emerge into a different understanding later on, it should not be a cause to give into a nihilistic loss of meaning when knowledge and subjectivity are viewed as a temporary state.

Accordingly, the pedagogical practice should be placed within a practical context where theory may be applied and measured. For this reason, the question of validity arises and is another way of questioning whether this perspective is in fact correct. An additional feature of the Cartographic approach should be instantiated here, whereby the aim of reaching a conclusion is ultimately a misnomer. More accurately, would be to say that we may draw conclusions from the given perspectives, not as a finality, but as an enrichment or

transformed perspective from what we have held prior. Therefore, it would be a wasteful venture, however, if the exploration of this perspective were only concerned with being correct and measurable. It may indeed be that case that the risk of being wrong is of greater value than the concern of qualitative correctness and empirical method. In support of this point of view is the notion of post-qualitative inquiry as forwarded in the article in *Teaching, Troubling, Transgressing* (Kuby et al., 2015). This exploration of teachers and doctoral students attempt to transgress⁷ the dominance of qualitative research as a standard methodological procedure in opposition to the inherent subjective challenges posed within pedagogical practices. As such, it questions how overlaps form between delineated discourses such as teaching and learning, consequently eliminating the explicit binary relationship. Philosophically speaking, this perspective forms a re-examination of the concept and meaning of qualitative research in the chronological context of other post-theories such as I have mentioned through Braidotti's Posthuman discussion.

A key phrase in this exploration is "thinking with theory" which is explained by using it as a fluid resource that is unhindered by prescriptive and inaccessible red tape. An appropriate analogy of this method of thinking may be compared with that of Rhizomatic structures which cannot be delineated or conformed according to structure, perimeter or linear reasoning (2015:142). As such, this point of view acknowledges the flux of meanings and unsettles common understandings in favour of new ones. As a process, one may begin at one point and perceive to have found some understanding, only to be thrown into another direction. In the philosophical attempt to understand concepts, we are more often than not further lost in understanding. Nevertheless, this is itself an understanding, that our reality is more complicated and interconnected than may initially be inferred. To this effect, theory becomes not an end in itself, but a means to explore further than what we may have intended or expected. As such, a tension occurs between binaries of, what may be explained through, smooth and striated spaces or territorialised and deterritorialised explorations. At the heart of each lies the sentiment of the known/unknown and the structured/unstructured spaces, which forms the method of inquiry where these spaces are reversed or transversed. Consequently, I

⁷ 1. "involving a violation of accepted or imposed boundaries, especially those of social acceptability. 2. to outrage or violate basic mores and sensibilities. 3. of or relating to fiction, cinematography, or art in which orthodox cultural, moral, and artistic boundaries are challenged by the representation of unconventional behavior and the use of experimental forms." (2015:143)

am reminded of my experience in the education system where I question the loss of wonder in the introduction of this exploration. This distinction of the transversing of known and unknown spaces forms yet another inevitability of traction where I add may complement the loss of wonderment with the loss of wandering. In other words, “Normalised practices cease to wonder/wander, and ask “what more can we learn?” (2015:144)” and as such, if at the conclusion of this exploration I am left without question, then it must surely be a botch on my part as an inquirer into the unknown or transverse of the known.

As an inquirer, and more specifically inquiring within a field concerned with subjectivities, I cannot remain impartial with regards to my own interests and perspectives in the account of writing and interpreting my thoughts in this exploration. As may be gathered thus far, I have through my own peculiarity instigated thoughts and examples (in the form of songs and literature) in relation to the theories covered so far according to my observations and thoughts. As such, and as a further cartographic transgression of qualitative research, it is necessary to consolidate a method of viewing the experience of subjectivity. To this end, Bradley Robinson and Mel Kutner regard Spinoza’s take on affect theory (2018). As a summary thereof, the emotion-experiencing subject is understood in relation to other subject bodies, which forms flows of affect. As such, these experiences are neither fixed nor static, but rather circulatory. This affect theory is essentially phenomenological in nature, as subjects, our experience of reality is positioned in relation to our point of experience, that being the experiencing mind and body. Consequently, in being affected by reality, we extend our concerns and explorations within that circle of affect. A useful analogy may be given in terms of our experiencing the warmth of the sun in two mutually distant locations. The positionality of our body, as an extension of the mind that experiences the heat of the sun, gives the impression that the distance travelled had an effect on the heat gradient of the sun. To this end, the distance travelled was inconsequential to the distance and heat of the sun to the earth, however; the body becomes implicit in the formation of the mind’s concepts of the former (Robinson & Kutner, 2018). How this bears relevance to this exploration may be noted through my subjective approach and discussion of selected concepts becomes a reflection of my circle of experience. This distinction is indicative of my limitation as a single inquirer, and as such it is necessary to employ methods to extend beyond my circle of experience to that of others, thereby leading to unexpected avenues of exploration and overlaps of thought. It is then such, that the participation of learners, parents and students will inform the cartographic perspectives that aids in transforming and escaping an easy-sense.

How this method of exploring will aim to differ from the data collection of qualitative research may be given through the understanding of a diffractive strategy as explained by Lisa Mazzei (2014). The reasoning behind the method of diffractive reading is a move to produce different modes of thought as opposed to reiterating what may already be deduced from the reduction of research narratives produced by themed questioning. Such a qualitative method would not be of value towards this exploration which seeks to discover new modes of thought by thinking with theory. An analogy may be given in terms of a research model that performs as a mirrored reflection of what is already known, perhaps from different angles but essentially the same isolated source. A diffracted method, however, takes into account that the production of new knowledge cannot occur in isolation and requires different perspectives to reveal how one source may be made more intelligible through another. This occurs through the coding of different theoretical concepts into the diffractive reading of data, thereby forming a method of analysis that creates an unpredictable result that emerges beyond the initial coding. Coding as such, takes us back to what is already known by our circle of experiences and in itself does not produce new knowledge, if we do not take it further it merely results in an “easy sense” of understanding (Mazzei 2007:743). Therefore, to move beyond this easy sense requires that the result of coding into data and theory produces a reading that is ambiguous, multiple and subjectively incoherent. An outcome of this is a movement of thought into unexpected avenues, much like the rhizome, or in another phrase, the dispersal of waves hitting an obstruction. As such, this constitutes the applicability of forming new connections between sources as a result of thinking with theory, where theory is not an end in itself. The source and substance for coding, in this exploration, becomes the participation and interviews of students in their own situatedness, so as to become the rocks that disperse waves into unexpected directions.

At the outset of this chapter, I have aimed to explain how subjectivity and inquiry is an essential element in the exploration of pedagogical studies. As an inquirer, it is my prerogative to make use of my own understanding as an interpretation of the concepts and theory I am exploring, in addition to enriching my perspective with that of my participants. This approach feeds into the context of the study and adds an additional layer of depth that would otherwise be lacking if I were to merely interpret and correlate data impartially. Moreover, I have pointed out that the discrepancy between upholding materiality and subjectivity as mutually exclusive in the application of theory is a limiting approach in the

analysis of perspectives. What would be more helpful, is understanding that perspectives are a matter of magnification. This is understood through the intra-active quality of the subject formation, which is concerned with not only emotional knowledge but also how this knowledge is circulated, produced and altered amongst spaces, bodies, and the context of our position in the world. For this reason, it becomes imperative that the collection of perspectives from participants in the theoretical exploration of information technology, learning environments and the hidden curriculum is cognisant of the ambiguities and interrelations between subjects and spaces, and how this may reveal knowledge I may not have anticipated. With this in mind, we may now proceed to the discussion of the mapping of insights that I have collected through my experience of the educational system and interacting with students.

Chapter 4: Theory Mapping

Outline and the South African context

In this exploration, I began by questioning where wonder had gone by the example of Lovecraft's analogy of the problem of upholding reality over imagination (1929). Barad rearticulated a second analogy nearly a century later, bearing the same sentiment, but expanding that without the one there cannot be the other (2007). In other words, the middle ground between reality and imagination exists in terms of how they are mutually defining, in a dialectic sense; nonetheless, even this dialectic sense becomes a simplified misnomer as Barad instantiated. I chose these analogies for the purpose of revealing how the student takes their education into their own hands once they become disillusioned by the dreariness of standard education. This is not an unfamiliar narrative, for it is the quest of stepping into a space of imagination that we enter the means of reaching empathy and contextual understanding of our needs in education and self-definition. This expanded further into a questioning of where the mind wanders in terms of new spaces for learning that have developed through the advances of information technology. Such advances, as we may refer to, varies according to definition by means of how technology is as much a tool, as it is a medium for forming our identities within a globalised platform through the measure of a popular commodity culture. Thus, the skeleton of this exploration begins to take shape when we compare the drive of the students need to learn according to their direction of wonder, and

an emergent space that entails a new horizon of creative tools and identity formation; as may encompass a hidden curriculum.

This, of course, poses many challenges for the current educational system in terms of opposing curriculum standards and combating student apathy. From a pedagogical perspective, the educator must surely take notice and adapt to this new resource to nourish the emergence of the student's critical imagination and creativity. This is not to instantiate that this had not occurred, as I cannot be privy to the perspective of every educator, but as a recipient of the South African educational model, I have garnered various critical perspectives and insights that I have questioned over time and intend to reveal in this exploration. To that effect, an outline of the challenges of the current curriculum must be understood, not simply according to how new and unregulated hidden curriculums challenge or bolster its efficacy, but in addition to how it must necessarily change within the context of an emerging globalised platform, regardless. This may imply several consequences for the educator, namely, to what degree they may utilise the resource of information technology and how the students may respond to it. The student, necessarily, becomes the variable with regards to its efficacy, as they are not all equal in terms of virtual literacy. Nevertheless, it may be fair to say that the commonality of advanced virtual literacy is on the rise. Furthermore, students may endeavour to teach themselves skills in a limited way, but whether this technique can be applied professionally is up for debate. As such, an educator should not fear being replaced by technology but should adapt to utilising the resource and providing the means of virtual literacy for those who require it.

We may speak of information technology as a resource and tool, but furthermore, it should be understood that to enact its use requires some form of space, whether in mind or body. Ordinarily, we may consider the concept of space as occupying a tangible area within reality, but as I have argued, a space may exist as much within the shared boundaries of the mind as it coincides with the actuality of utilising, for example, a social media platform. Although an abstract argument, this is not said without substantiated cause; as much as we occupy reality, we may not dismiss the ontological structures that inform our perspective of reality and how we interpret the inter-dependent systems of mind and body as a theory with tangible results. Our interaction with new virtual spaces informs our movement, discussions and goals in an increasingly implicit manner when we consider that our communication is traded over text, sound and visual through devices. Moreover, the development of anthropological centres of

activity, once centred to cultural venues of interaction in physical locations, has now eroded through the ever presence of the growing ontologically shared space of mind concerned with social media, popular culture and the clamped vice of globalisation. Certainly, this is not without consequence, as may be gathered from the newer generations exposed to this ontological inter-activity, may experience what could be defined as sociopathic tendencies by the uninitiated viewer who is quick to judge as an easy-sense. In this sense, a tense social binary may form between generations that stigmatises the focus of the imaginative mind over that of 'real' concerns.

As I have stated, I am in my context a student of Fine Arts and Philosophy and as such, I may not, in my capacity, sit comfortable and be impartial to the deficiencies of how the creative process is taught and regulated through both a practical and conceptual plane within the educational curriculum. I would point to my predominant concern with the migratory sense of meaning that becomes ingrained when embracing the fluctuating experience of art and philosophy; or in other words, my sensitivity to finding meaning brings the cause to counteract what seems inauthentic⁸ by design. My perspective is less serious, but not inconsiderate, of the university level educational standard for Fine Arts and Philosophy, as by its consequence I am now in the position to use these skills to critique and evaluate the conceptual and practical implementation of curricula in my formative years. If I were to review its implementation, I would point to the ideological structures that most educational standards are subject to as a matter of accountability for developmental measurement. A case example of my process of analysis is my choice of the Socratic Method as the means by which I may deconstruct a concept and mantle different perspectives to serve the purpose of how we may come to enrich or overcome an inauthentic concept. This context and empathetic point of view towards the challenges for a young creative individual in the

⁸ When I speak about authenticity, I mean specifically the premises by which a concept functions and is implemented within a designed system such as in education. By reflection, I can account for moments of frustration when performing an exercise the result and activity of which seems far removed from its purpose. In this sense, I may compare this to Emmanuel Kant's moral ethics in terms of his deontological viewpoint. This proposition denies the result of an action is justified by the outcome, but rather that the action performed should be judged itself as a moral standpoint (Johnson and Cureton, 2018). It is therefore the principal of the will that gives moral credit to our actions, however, without going into the banality of opposing utilitarian arguments; this example serves to underline the students dilemma within a designed education that does not, by the necessity of its required actions, serve to enrich the students growth and interests.

educational system serves for much of the basis for what inspires this exploration. Further context, however, is required on my part to fully instantiate my necessity for exploring this topic of how information technology functions as a hidden curriculum and what this means for learning environments, as I will elaborate on.

As I am focusing, in part, on the conceptual definitions of the theoretical perspectives of this study as a means to demarcate how we are to understand the function of information technology, space and curriculum, I am also extending the influence of the student identity in this relationship through the lens of my own perspectives. In as much as a student may have a degree of virtual literacy, this extends to the formation of their identity by means of the cultural capital that becomes spread by the commodity culture of globalisation within the convergence of virtual spaces. This identity of which exists within the overwhelming accumulation of visual and auditory stimulation exposed to growing individuals on a daily basis and has implications for both their psychological well-being and learning methodologies. As such, the grander perspective to this identity is the ontological effects of technology on the mind of the students and the material consequences this has on their future. Moreover, this may be explained in terms of the phenomenological flows of affect, or in other words, the intra-active relationship between the mind and reality as neither separate nor individual; to harken back to the quest for lost wonder. As such, what should not be taken out of hand in this theoretical discussion is the base benefit of an identity to an individual, which as a concept of belonging and acceptance is paramount to the wellbeing of a student in terms of their confidence and self-esteem. Correspondingly, if in reality this identity is denied by their peers, then it may have unfortunate repercussions to their productivity within learning environments.

A pertinent example of this flow of affect may be noted through the relationship between the definition of information technology and community. As may be problematised, the concept of community lacks definition precisely because it has an excess of arbitrary context bound definitions according to space, economy, land, people, culture, boundaries and their attending sub-definitions. Information technology suffers a similar malady of definition regarding what constitutes its adherent conceptual premises in terms of where to draw the line between individuals, tools, identity and complexity of interpretation. Where they may overlap, as may be argued, is that there is the overarching need for solidarity as a desire to be known and accepted, in addition to the freedom and agency to carry out one's creative and

developmental pursuits within a community and the tools required to do so. Correspondingly, the use of technology as a tool that affects the individual simultaneously functions as the means to bring individuals together into a community of shared interests. From a visual point of view, these communities develop specific semiotic languages that demarcate them from others as becomes the traditional consequence of a community within a globalised world of many languages.

As we now come to the close of this contextual outline, it would serve well to reiterate that this exploration is not concerned with, by the sum of its parts, to find an all-encompassing answer to exactly how technology affects the outcome of education through some quantified measure. Rather, the parts themselves are each a context that provides additional insight into a different perspective which, as a heuristic pursuit, is invaluable. To that end, as a critical outlook, I intend to be as Socrates in the society of old; like a pestering gnat on the rump of an old ox. More precisely, I must decouple the comfortable perspective of technology as merely a tool and the student as merely a means to education's end, whereby the hidden curriculum forms the transgressing factor of this process. To examine the inauthentic and go beyond one's immediate perspective is endemic of the process of narrative imagination and is irrevocably concerned with the staples of ideology and morality. Consequently, it would be a disservice to the creative potential, complexity and individual histories of students to dismiss their unique subjectivities and outlooks as without merit. The type of subjectivity that has arisen through contextual access to emergent communities within an ontological platform may seem translucent to the undiscerning eye. Subsequently, all that I have said leading to this point becomes a forerunner to the argumentation that will proceed; I should begin with an examination of my own story, which will provide the necessary canvas for this cartographies existence. This is not an exercise in vanity, but a representation of a silent story that has not had the means of articulation until I began this exploration. One story, to my dismay, that I believe is shared by many; and it is unwise to dismiss that which is shared by many.

Reflections of a Familiar Story

“What we do know is, if you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original... And by the time they get to be adults, most kids have lost that capacity. They have become frightened of being wrong. And we run our companies like this. We stigmatize mistakes. And we're now running national education systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make. And the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities. Picasso once said this, he said that all children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up. I believe this passionately, that we don't grow into creativity, we grow out of it. Or rather, we get educated out of it.” (Robinson, 2006)

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges of surviving the educational curriculum, as I have experienced, is remaining creative in the face of a system, in both education and culture, which so rigidly defines and demarcates what art and creativity is. It is a curious retrospective for me how this reflects in popular culture and the art world, such as through social media platforms and commercial galleries, which as we may suspect on some level, is the lowest common denominator of public art perception. The glaring terror of this is its function as a Von Neumann machine of ontological reproduction where what constitutes the idea of art is sold to us by means of these platforms. In this sense, art becomes realistic charcoal portraits. Art becomes psychedelic illusions. Art becomes paint splashed in a wild thoughtless frenzy onto a canvas. Alluring, bright, captivating... derivative and superficial. Far removed from the visual was the depth, process, personal emotion and willingness to explore involved behind the outcome. Alternatively, if it were present, it was to highlight the artists' impossible uniqueness or gimmick. What the artistic journey in education became was the visual at the cost of the journey, as happens when one does not have access to a level of understanding in art instructors who themselves must adhere to the curriculum that favours the outcome over the journey. Art became an exercise devoid of playfulness; a skill that required textbook knowledge and painful hours of copying figures from the masters of old in addition to shading cubes. The blank canvas did not represent an opportunity or potential, it

represented the beginning of failure and a terrible fear of falling short of the masters. Art became wrong.

One may imagine the frustration of not having the ability to articulate and convey the dissatisfaction and despondency of a system when it presents itself as so sure and beneficial to its unwitting clientele. It is, therefore, that in as much as this exploration is a pedagogical pursuit, it is additionally an introspective analysis of how a student may retrospectively deconstruct the failings of the system when given voice. The overarching goal of this exploration is to provide insight into the pedagogical practice in terms of the subjectivities of students in relation to changes brought through technology the implications for spaces of learning as a means of giving voice. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, is how the learning environment is subject to the flaws of an archaic curriculum and how this has over time reproduced the flaws as a matter of fact. As a student, I have been subject to an emancipatory experience in terms of how technology features in the construction of my relationship with art, photography, cinematography and digital art creation as creative outlets. In terms of spaces for learning, I found my engagement with technological devices such as film media and video games⁹ considerably more stimulating as an educational source than my engagement with the classroom environment. From a visual point of view, these sources created interconnected associations in various levels of my development in terms of my morality, my sense of observation, logic and the ability to access different perspectives, to name but a few. This opposed the classroom environment of sitting silently and paying attention to uninspiring figures on a blackboard. Returning home to study the textbook felt equally uninspiring, as this felt like pouring sand through a sieve, grain by grain, to catch

⁹ In the study of interactive games as a form of learning, Kurt D. Squire explores the use of play as an effective means of encouraging a greater depth of learning and insight through simulated engagement (Squire, 2008). Squire explains that modern learning systems are based on the obsession of industrial style efficiency, which is not conducive to the action of learning for students who require interactive and social aspects to their learning retention and interest. Games, in this sense, fulfill this need in terms of community network interaction, challenging curves, and, as I would put it, rhizomatic-learning strategies that are active as opposed to the inert classroom environment. The possible matters of contention exists in terms of the academic prejudices held against the term of ‘video games’ and how it may be implemented to supplement current pedagogies without creating an equity gap. As I may expand on the other hand, however, the current culture surrounding the community already exists as a subaltern in relation to the dominant hegemony of the traditional education system and culture. To that end, while the cognitive benefits of interactive learning is gradually being felt, it is not fully recognized.

only the largest morsels. The medium of narrative and symbolism became of insurmountable benefit as time grew onwards in my education as a referential library. History became a story I would weave into a complex visual mind map to be mentally photographed and reproduced on the back of test papers as a means to hold every answer, much as an Egyptian wall recounts its own history. In this sense, the subject of history took on an authentic meaning beyond the simple reproduction of textbook lines and allowed for some degree of interpretation through the understanding of how narratives are constructed.

It is not a happenstance that my exposure to digital media encouraged my fascination through the use of art as a means of personal development and education. In the production or viewing of, say, a film, one must understand the relations of scenes from an empathetic point of view. How does a character or landscape relate to the narrative, and by its symbolism, relate to the historical context? The semiotic construction and communicability of our digital culture has formed over generations and suggests a complex depth of knowledge lies beneath the surface. It became a means of discovery, whereby the viewer, at any point of age, can reciprocate their experiences through the ontological experience of interpreting the scenes, and as such reinforces or informs their experiences outside of the relativity of their own lifetime. What should be taken from this is that a narrative is co-dependent on the viewer who is an extension of its meaning. Slavoj Žižek discusses this function of film in terms of how “Cinema is the art of appearances... tells us something about reality itself... about how reality constitutes¹⁰ itself” (Žižek, 2006). He continues to explain how reality may, according to an old Gnostic myth, be perceived as an unfinished creation that we are ever fighting against to complete our better selves. This ontology of an unfinished reality is in many ways an anathema to the pursuits of pedagogical practices that aims to constitute a more complete reality in the minds of students. For as we are born, we begin to occupy a world harboring a history prior to our individual perception, and it becomes an essential endeavour, in as much as discovering our identity and place in the world, to realise that our existence is co-constituted by what precedes us, as I may correlate to Taguchi’s intra-active perspective (2010).

¹⁰ What may be the most pertinent example of how cinema indicates how our reality is constituted, in terms of our technological identity, is that of the legacy of films regarding the theme of entering a virtual reality and donning a new identity. These examples we may see in films such as *Tron* (1982), *The Matrix* (1999), *Avatar* (2009) and, more recently, *Ready Player One* (2018).

From this ontology, we may arrive at a sense of existing within a developmental curve. However, this may be the allure of a typical narrative construction that we are persuaded during our upbringing from our exposure to such media and culture. It would be apt then to, from this point onwards, dismantle such allure in a manner I find particularly sensible. In a series of Philosophical lectures given by Alan Watts, he defines two areas from a standpoint that seems, once explained, self-evident upon introspection, but which are illusive my the machinations of consciousness that is myopic by nature. Firstly, the matter of our lifespan may be seen as a race to reach milestones; as if though life rides on our backs whilst dangling before us that most divine carrot. When finally we become weary enough, we are given the prized carrot only to find that it has gone rather stale over the years and the whole preceding matter seemed to be a terrible hoax. However, we should understand that to view life as such is to miss the point entirely. As Watts instantiates, life is like a musical number where the point is to dance before the end, instead of arriving for the finale. Secondly, and this may be a well-known dichotomy between the arts and academic circles, is the interchange of two personalities that may be termed as Prickles and Goo. The former would advocate an intellectual rigour of precise statistics and would accuse the latter of being repulsively vague, mystical and miasmic. The latter, of course, would reply that the Prickles are but rattling skeletons who know the words but not the music. So, therefore, it comes to be that these two groups endeavour to constitute reality according to their perspective that manifests itself into various disciplines. Now, of course, this is too insensible and simplistic a point of view to ratifying any study against as one would always oppose the other without end. Therefore, it should be understood, as Watts expands, that Prickly Goo and Goey Prickles is what constitutes our reality. That is to say, that these two perspectives are a matter of magnification. To zoom close and focus reveals a prickly point of view, and to zoom outward reveals a goey point of view. So accordingly, we are always fundamentally playing with both.

An acceptance of this complexity is one that forwards a path towards achieving a greater understanding of contextual factors that are independent of various perspectives, such as can be applied pedagogical practices, which is considerate of the backgrounds of students who are agents in themselves. As Delacruz (2009) mutually concludes in identity, and Mazzei (2014) through methodology, it would be impertinent to reduce our theories to an easy sense that explains students accordingly to a singular perspective, explanation or answer and

thereby denying their complexity. That being said, as an explorer of the particular relation of students regarding technology, pedagogy and curriculum, there are many questions I do not have the answer to and as such it is this unknown that fuels my drive for discovery and the path I intend to follow. This is for the sake of every student who did not have the means to articulate their context. It is therefore that I would use the perspective of my own frustrations during my time in the educational system to phrase the questions that become the avenue where I may find meaning outside of my circle of experience. Namely, in terms of identity, I would endeavour to ascertain how strongly students associate with social media platforms and how this constitutes their self-worth, identity, and confidence. In addition to this, I would expect that exposure to such platforms necessitates some degree of virtual literacy, and by extension, skills that are developed due to the interactive nature of such devices. It may be reasonable to assume that the time spent on these devices may constitute itself into the form of hobbies that are aided by virtual communities of interest. From a pedagogical perspective for educators, this may have certain implications for how virtual literacy impacts on the efficacy of learning models. As a creative student, I would necessarily assume that students with a background in an art would agree that it would assist in their ability to learn and solve problems. Lastly, the implications of virtual literacy may present itself in several ways, such as the levels of equity students may experience in their home and school environment due to their interests and abilities. Furthermore, this may influence their social relationships with their parents who become the mediators of their access to virtual devices and the wealth of cultural capital they may expect to share or exclude with their peers.

As I began this reflection with Robinson's introduction on the trial of remaining an artist within education, I would end with my experience of having been taught art and its inherent fallacy. As I derided the idea of art as being sold to the public, so must I expand that art may become inauthentic when it is created out of a fear of being wrong. While I should state that being within an educational system, some leeway is given for divergent or casual expression; however, fundamentally the student is encouraged within a box of categorical avenues to explore. These avenues become explored as an easy example of what it is to make art and, therefore, the outline is within sight. In fairness, it would not be reasonable to subject every student to the blank canvas terror of infinite possibility, but it does pose the fundamental problem that art is not being taught; art is being shown. In this sense, I would argue that art should not be taught directly by example in any other sense but as a technical exercise; on the

other hand, it should be shown as the potential that exists within every student and the ability to be wrong without consequence, and by extension, original. To grasp this potential is, in a manner of speaking, much like Friere's instantiation of students who are 'oppressed' until they become critically conscious, which in this case is to realise that art is a personal journey and not that of textbook rote learning (1990). Furthermore, art is not what is presented to us on a public level in terms of simply the production of an image but instead the creative process which features in every facet of our critical engagement with reality. I would akin this to my time studying the philosophy of logic where it was stated that although logic is in no particular way essential to any one study; it is essentially applicable to every study. To justify this point of view I will expand on my findings within the educational system and the experiences I have grown through interacting with students of an artistic background and the parent's perspective of student's engagement with technology and art.

The Unspoken Learners

When I speak about students, I refer to the specialising individuals who have in some sense ventured to study a field about which they have become passionate. More specifically, the students I have worked with during my own studies in art and observed through my time in studying education. These students of which have reached their tertiary level of education and by their insight and depth of understanding offer a unique perspective into the effects of having grown with technology and the context of globalisation in their formative years, in addition to how this juxtaposes with their identities and living in South Africa. An additional point of reference is the time that I worked with learners within a primary school, whereby I had the opportunity to observe general tendencies amongst learners who discussed popular culture amongst themselves in addition to how it influences their art making. Moreover, the contextual perspective of learners in the learning environment and my individual experience with information technology during my formative years provided the information to question beyond my own experience with regards to the perspective the parents of learners. It is my predilection to believe, with good reason, that these sources may provide the necessary insight to reveal how the students are affected by their intra-active relationship with communities, globalisation, identity, space and place through information technology. At the very least, this corroboration of perspectives between learners, students and parents allows for a unique insight into the consequences of information technology in terms of its

transformative potential. This is in addition to what is implied for pedagogical practices for educators concerned with ideological paradigms within learning environments and critical thinking.

A fair point of departure, that is to say, to begin at the very beginning, would be to analyse how identity features into the agency of learners and students concerning their individual pursuits, self-expression and confidence. Here on out, it may be additionally apt to contextualise the reasoning behind the pursuit of identity as a feature in student motivations. During my own formative years, I had neither interests in sport or classroom politics, as neither seemed to have any direct relationship to advancing mental acuity or physical development. That is to say, the former seemed in-authentically geared towards sport for sport's sake and the latter was simply not engaging. However, what I did find to be unendingly engaging was my interaction with virtual media, art, literature and how they began to form intertextual relations. As such, in the social circumstances of my environment, I was dubbed as the 'nerdy' bookish type and faced certain exclusionary sentiments, in addition to some admiration for artistic promise as has been shown in my family. From this example, it may be said that this is simply my own circle of experience, however, I believe this may overlap with the generations of students exposed to the same media and creating a desire to emancipate themselves from perceived oppressions and in-authenticity, which I believe manifests itself into identities of mutual interests within communities. From this perspective, I began to notice certain commonalities in both my time of studying education and that of my experience within it, so therefore, my magnification is attuned to this degree of analysis.

Within my attendance of the art classroom environment of a primary school catering to 114 learners, much appeared to be the same as what it was. Learners continued to battle their despondency against the fear of being wrong, "I can't do it!" being the most common defeatist sentiment when presented with a themed task, such as reproducing a famous portrait of Van Gogh. This was to be completed within the timed period of multiple one-hour sessions which we may know is problematic for the artistic process. In amongst these students were those who are more interested in kicking a soccer ball and urging their comrades to join in rather than painting a portrait. And so on, the process of identity formation accrues according to the adversarial relationship formed against a loathsome art activity. What made the

situation worse, as the art teacher by the given name of Janice¹¹ corroborated, is that students are forced to value their work against the gradient of a marking sheet from one to one hundred, which as we may know, makes little sense when compared to the subjective process of art engagement and creation. Furthermore, this gradient is concerned with appearances over that of the process. The process of which is non-so encouraging, as may be suspected. And when a repetition of low gradients are given to a child, they may conclude nothing less than that they, in fact, “cannot do it”. A sixth grader by the given name of Jonathan reflected this unfortunate scenario when I complimented his obvious artistic promise and process; however, he could only engage with his creation in terms of his disappointment at how it became valued against the master artist. This is the typical environment that generations of art students have necessarily faced as the standard matter of fact layout for learning what seemed to be art, in the context of the South African curriculum system. I have been fortunate enough to have the means of drawing in my home environment with exemption from the gradient sheet or boisterous peer pressures, yet, I cannot say, and still cannot say, that every student is so fortunate.

What is to be a possible remedial compromise for such an unfortunate reality? I have observed amongst the younger age groups a curious, but not unexpected, tendency towards a freedom of expression in terms of the representations they enjoy. In particular, several categories revealed themselves in their art creation that became indicative of the effect of identity and globalisation through popular culture. The school held a costume day event where learners could dress according to their whim, so the occasional Ninja Turtle swaggered past, however, and more pertinently, in their drawings were revealed the beginnings of their developing cultural capital in the form of video game landscapes, superhero figures, and by implication, their narrative imagination. Although this form of representation petered out in the older age groups as the lessons became more formal and structured, what remained consistent were the topics of common interests discussed amongst learners, such as that of Minecraft¹². This particular example ranged from the youngest to the oldest class groups as a

¹¹ All references to individuals are pseudonyms

¹² Minecraft may be defined as an open-ended “sandbox” game resembling that of a virtual Lego environment where players interact within the simulated landscape. Such interactions include resource management, basic mathematics, basic programming, architectural planning, visual cognition, aesthetic decision-making, and peer-to-peer project collaboration. Minecraft has gained vast popularity amongst the young and old since its development began in 2009

popular topic and represented itself in terms of drawings featuring characters in architectural landscapes. Although the game held no formal place within the art class, it became present as a space in terms of the shared identity amongst students and the engaging solidarity it harbours. The value of this commonality, I would argue, should not be understated. From an educational point of view, this playful creative outlook forms complex connections amongst students and exposes them to concepts that would otherwise be ineffectively communicated in the format of a classroom. It may be argued, however, that the level of engagement given to a virtual environment is disproportionate to the engagement and needs of reality. Nevertheless, I argue as per the introduction of this exploration against this mindset. To quote an aphorism, which derives appropriately from a video homage to Minecraft, “beauty is in the hard work itself and the, often times false, sense of purpose when doing it. It’s a fleeting sensation that drives us to repeat our actions in order to capture it again.” (Herpich & Wolfhard, 2018). In this context, the narrative imagination simulated within games become preparation for applications in reality and forms a community that develops the confidence amongst learners that is paramount to their learning process. Furthermore, in terms of learning theories, this falls in line with Vygotsky’s Social Constructivist model of education that highlights the importance of the social and cultural background of the student as the path towards cognitive development, in which the role of the teacher becomes that of a capable guide (Aubrey & Riley, 2016:48).

This perspective is not without its problematic issues, however, as the juxtaposition exists between educators and learners in terms of the performance and acceptance of identities, especially within the context of changes brought about by globalisation in the interim between generations. More specifically, as Wood and Blanton have discussed concerning the development of student’s independent skills and cultural capital by the phrase of a “social semiotic theory of multimodality” could create an exclusive lexicon that may be adversarial in the relationship between students and educators (2009). In the primary school example, I observed the prevalence of esoteric discussions regarding the mutual popular culture interests

and has been singled out for its potential for art education. This may be seen through how players collaborate using shared online and social teaching methodologies as a guideline for learning the game that by itself holds no manual. Furthermore, the game has been noted for its encouragement of developing a creative problem solving mindset amongst learners in addition to forming a platform for 3D modeling development and 2D pixel art creation (Overby & Jones, 2015).

amongst students, such as Minecraft, but in addition to action movies topics such as Star Wars. In the presence of such discussion, Janice would frequently request for silence amongst the learners, as it seemed to be tangential to the work at hand. However, as we may now begin to suspect, the on-going presence of such topics of discussion may be beneficial to aid the imagination and learning methods of students by means of a social camaraderie that provides a point of reference in the mind of what learner's experience. This particular scenario conjures a particular method employed by one of my previous art teachers who insisted that every student occupy different seat during art theory lessons, as a means of attaching the lessons to that spatial point of reference. In a discussion with Janice, she offered her perspective on the effect of popular culture on the cognitive development of children. This particular perspective formed an intriguing contrast to the discussion of Delacruz who points out how learner's choice of literature categories should not be used in the summation of their personality or to preside over their individual complexity, as much has been given to presuming its negative effect. With this in mind, Janice viewed the prevalence of popular cultures depiction of violence and damaging influences as vastly greater than a few decades prior. In this, she suspects that the environment that children grow into today is considerably more negative for developing minds. I argued that as a recipient of that culture, I turned out cognitively well put together in the end and more critical of visual meanings. This conversation was prompted, by Janice's dismay from the example of a young boy, by the given name of Kyle, who drew an image of a character in a hockey mask wielding a baseball bat from a television show he had watched, with undertones from the Freddy versus Jason movies. To my statement, she replied that in the context of my environment I had guides to help me interpret the inappropriate subject matter into a perspective that could translate negative depictions outside of its damaging effect into that of a positive one. In this case, my parents helped me to develop my narrative imagination without the illusions of cinema as corresponding to reality. However, I would still maintain that this peters dangerously to oversimplifying the complexity of individuals, as it was regardless my prerogative in terms of how I interpreted these depictions in my own mind. From witnessing the camaraderie and communal spirit amongst the learners who discussed these topics, it became clear to me that there must be an additional influence in terms of their exposure to such media.

A Forewarning to Parents and Technology

As much as we have discussed the potential and tangible benefits of information technology for the cognitive development of learners, there is additionally the psychological affect of device usage on learners in terms of how they may ontologically integrate and perceive visual material. Therefore, it would be pertinent to view the perspective of parents in this regard. While the scope of this study is concerned about the students and the learning environment, it would be inconsiderate to exempt the example of parental and educator concerns due to its heuristic value and implications. To proceed, a themed class was conducted where Janice gave learners a haiku consisting of three lines that they were tasked to illustrate. The challenging aspect of this would be to use their imagination to define and illustrate figures from the text. Many learners experienced frustration at the exercise and asked how to draw certain figures, such as that of a sea lion, as if though there was a certain formula to achieve this (or perhaps merely a cheeky retort). Janice remarked afterwards that the children of two decades prior had much greater imaginative potential regarding the same task. At this time, it appeared to be her speculation on how children's ability to process visual stimuli was affected by their upbringing and environment. Following this lesson, during a tea break, a discussion between Janice and a visiting language therapist, Frida, occurred around the topic of children's imagination and technology. Frida commented on how children's access to addictive touchscreen devices left little room for the imagination to flourish, and furthermore, damaged their skills of inference and deduction. On reflection, I would argue that although there is a sensible logic to this generalisation, as an aphorism it does not take into account the holistic complexity of the modern day environment children are growing into. The inundation of information, stimuli and the out-dated curriculum structure a child is expected to perform within their formative years, in addition to the stress of expectations, may arguably be of greater detriment to their imagination and creativity from the standpoint of complete exhaustion. It would be needless to say that children need as much time to play and have the freedom to engage in their own activities as they necessarily need to spend on education. During my observations of the learners at the primary school, it became clear that their lack of imagination may be causatively equal to the out-dated ideology of the curriculum that causes student apathy. However, this matter is open to subjective interpretations from multiple perspectives but becomes a pertinent example of contemporary debates and assumed fears amongst parents brought on through technology.

As a generation of parents must necessarily come to grips with the changes of technology in the home environment, it should at some point become evident that they must take certain precautions in terms of how technology may become a fear of the unknown, but also for its evident potential for education. Depending on the parent's particular prior experience with technology in their own upbringing, this may manifest in various scenarios. As I referenced in relation to Braidotti's post-humanist perspective, is the indicative tendency of contemporary societies to entertain a culture of despair, in which we may notice through the inundation of fear mongering within popular media outlets that inform the general Geist of reactionary measures (2013). A foreboding example of this is made evident through an article published by TIME in 2016, which had the following to say regarding children and technology.

“While we... are thrilled the AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) has created stronger guardrails and suggestions to help parents navigate this challenging terrain, this is only the beginning. Our children are overstimulated, over-scheduled and under pressure to perform academically and beyond school. This diminishes their ability to build creative thinking skills essential to self-discovery. Inventiveness occurs when kids have time for curiosity and exploration. With children spending up to eight hours a day on media devices and additional hours engaging in scheduled activities, opportunities for growth are stifled.” (Bernstein, 2016)

The fundamental ethos of this article belies giving a balanced perspective on the effect of technology on the development of children, arguably for the purpose of reproducing a common sentiment in news media. It goes as far as to say that children are indeed overstimulated on every level and require the appropriate measures and freedom to engage their imagination. Exposure to technology, however, does not avail the situation and is not considered a healthy outlet within their free time. That is to say, technology is not conducive to developing imagination, forming connections or adhering to traditional 'real world' values. From this point of view, technology is targeted to blame children's lack of engagement and imagination, whereas a more culpable source for this is exactly what is mentioned before it is

derailed, “over-scheduled... under pressure to perform academically and beyond school.”, which as we may now reasonably suspect, school is not as conducive to creative development than what is thought. To this end, articles bearing this common sentiment become unwittingly disingenuous about the depth of the problem within the curricula of learning environments both at home and at school.

A telling example of this particular phenomenon took place with the focus group of young children and their parents in relation to the context of social commentator’s anxieties and parental fears regarding technology¹³, which provided contradictory and insightful results. In this study, Lydia Plowman, Joanna McPake and Christine Stephen outline the debate according to common fears perpetuated within media outlets that are often polarised to the point of ignoring evidence, and fuelled by suggested guidelines given by the AAP as a mutually bolstering recursive loop (2010). The exploration further points to the ambivalence regarding older age groups using technology, which has indicated that they experience benefits in the form of social and intellectual developments in the form of digital literacies, creativity and participatory cultures (Plowman et al., 2010:65). However, this does not have the same persuasiveness in popular media where parents are more informed of the dangers, as opposed to the benefits of technology. The unexpected contradiction lies in the common sentiment expressed by the perspective of parents regarding their children and technology. Firstly, parents remarked positively on the digital literacy of their children due to the benefits it will have on their future education. Secondly, all children in this case study physically engaged themselves in activities outside of technology. Thirdly, the behaviours of children are shaped according to the predispositions and family practices of parents, which included a moderation of time spent on technology, as with all other activities. With these points in mind, the exploration acknowledged that parents did have concerns about children’s use of technology, but did not view the phenomenon itself as risky when a balanced amount of time is regulated to other activities. The presence of technology itself did not appear to undermine the relationships of families, but rather, the approach families practised through their cultural values in relation to technology as either a binding or toxic activity became the deciding factor.

¹³ In this case defined as, “television, games consoles and computers.” (Plowman et al., 2010:63).

While the fears of parents are rationalised, it does not vastly differ from the rationalised fears of any activity that a child participates in, which is to say, as an excess that points to underlying problems. This study does take on the perspective of families that have, by the method of their particular ethno-theories, developed a balanced means of incorporating technology into their children's development. However, there exists a scenario where the relationship may become unhealthy in the event that a child becomes withdrawn into an excess of technological use and requires a remedial parental approach. From the point of view of the a parents attitude to their child's level of technology usage, I would strongly propose that for parents to ignore the underlying issues of a child's development and point to their coping mechanisms as the cause of their problems, albeit social or emotional development, would become an unwittingly disingenuous and damaging approach. From a symptomatic point of view, behind every addiction lies trauma. To reiterate, this would be a move to go beyond the dangers of an 'easy sense' as stipulated by Mazzei and takes into account the complexity of individuals (2014). The blame does not fall solely on that of the parent, however, as this area of research is itself an unexplored terrain with which they do not have a point of reference in terms of how the technological landscape appears today. Oppositionally speaking, a healthier approach would be to engage one's child, discuss their relationship with technology, and take some interest in their activities from a caring point of view. This approach would foster a positive relationship instead of an adversarial one where the child's interests become invalidated or shameful. To return to Kyle's drawing of the man in the hockey mask, the distress and shame he would feel to express himself become completely unnecessary. The vulnerability of this latter situation may strongly undermine the confidence and agency of learners later in life. From an alternatively extreme perspective, however, is a story recounted to me by one of my colleagues in my educational studies who worked as an Au pair in her free time. The children she looked after spent an inordinate amount of time playing and learning through technological devices as opposed to other activities, with their parent's blessings. When questioned as to this parental approach, the parents pointed out that the skills their children are learning now will be of immense future benefit to them in our technologically driven culture. While this story is a second-hand account, it does become indicative of the other extreme of technological use the children of today are facing.

What about the Students?

If we consider the relationship of the parent or teacher to their child or learner, respectively; or of my perspective towards that of the child, the child could not articulate their thoughts or feelings on the matter without the necessary reflection that I am concerned with in this exploration. To that end, it would be more direct to approach visual art students who have come to the point of tertiary education with the means of reflecting and articulating their perspectives, much as I have attempted to achieve through writing my reflections. Of course, this would be an apt approach as these students are the end line of their upbringing through technology and its potential educational or harmful effects. Therefore, during my observations of 47 of these students while conducting lessons and surveys on topics such as Globalisation, Citizenship and information technology, for the purpose of my studies; several perspectives came forward that became indicative of the omnipresence of technologies effect of their identity, in addition to their social, artistic, and intellectual development.

From my discussions and interactions with these students, we discussed the effect of globalisation in terms of how it affects their everyday lives and creative endeavours. In terms of virtual identities, these students felt a degree of ambivalence regarding the perception of their identities within social media platforms. When asked how strongly they felt connected to their virtual identities, the consensus was partially at best. While they did feel connected and in some way represented by their virtual identities, it was agreed that it does not accurately reflect who they are in person. Consequently, many agreed that from a social point of view, engaging and representing their identities outside of virtual communities gave a greater sense of belonging and acceptance. In expressing their identity outside of virtual communities or popular culture discussions, many felt to be more authentic in how they expressed themselves, however, they simultaneously felt diminutive, diluted and voiceless in relation to the cold and unrealistic representations of social media. When given the choice of placing themselves inside, outside, or in-between how they felt constituted by technology in their identity, the majority felt to be in-between this relation. A common sentiment expressed by this group was the emotionally depressive effect of the ambiguity of social media relationships and long periods of time given to interacting with computers, and as such felt that practising moderation in this relation was key. What was not in dispute amongst this group was the tangible benefits of social media as a means of communication, which has the

potential of education in the form of general awareness of events, how they are interpreted in the broader context, and the accessibility of information for practical endeavours. A case in point example of broader concerns occurred during a conversation with a student by the given name of Marcy, who discussed our group meetings as a ‘decolonial’ and freeing process. This was in the sense that there was no established hierarchy or intimidating factor amongst everyone and any topic or statement was given a fair voice for everyone.

From another perspective, the group discussed the effect of globalisation and the changing dynamics for how we educate ourselves through information technologies. From a critical point of view, technology was acknowledged for how it may enhance the knowledge economy but carried the danger of algorithmic interests. This was to mean the political nature of how information is filtered through search engines by users according to a hierarchy of bias, where information sources are selected to corroborate their own perspectives without dispute. On another note, the function of communities of interest has proven invaluable to their creative and practical education in terms of online video tutorials or visual guides such as what may be found on YouTube and Instagram, for example. However, this group broadly did not find themselves confident enough to educate themselves a professional skill without the aid of instructors. However, the guides given by information technology did provide a method by which they could develop and enhance their interests through their own capacities, such as by example of photography, sewing, cooking, music, digital programs, printmaking, and popular culture knowledge. In addition to this were the skills developed by proxy through exposure to technology that was named according to effective time management, self-branding, inter-personal relationship management and information and inspiration sourcing. A point of interest that occurred during these conversations was meeting a fellow member of a large global online community of interest that I participate in, that being the hobby of creating and implementing virtual assets into the game environment of Skyrim, otherwise known as ‘modding’. The skills of which involve texturing, modelling and coding these items into the game through learning from a community-driven library of esoteric guides. This formed a curious juxtaposition of the digital artistic direction and skills garnered from online sources into a specialised skill base, which as we may suspect can be a path for the younger generation involved within a similar community through Minecraft. This becomes a telling example of Jane McGonigal’s prediction that all the time spent in these environments will develop a skillset yet to be seen (2010).

The perspective of these art students is in many ways parallel to what has been observed and played out in children and the parenting methodologies we have discussed thus far. This may be seen in how students have become self-regulating and aware of the dangers of technology overuse. Moreover, they have attained a critical perspective on the nature of information distribution and selection as an intellectual pursuit that aides in their creative endeavours, in addition to how they navigate virtual communities of interest versus their more tangible relationships. On a pertinent note, what is absent amongst both students and parents is the polarised viewpoint of how exceedingly dangerous technology has become for children, in terms of how it is portrayed on media outlets through the ‘loss of childhood, freedom and creativity’ sentiment. Therefore, it is from this point of magnification, that we may argue the perspectives of these students and parents are not that of what is represented in the economy of fear that is propagated within popular media outlets, as it depends from what perspective it is viewed in. It is heartening to note that, from the post-humanist perspective as discussed by Braidotti (2013), on an individual level they broadly do not entertain a culture of despairing perspectives, but rather take on the standpoint of relativity and rationality. To be more specific, the relationship between child, teacher and parent has adapted technology into daily life in a manner, not unlike any other development that poses challenges. That is to say, that the change is neither a crisis or epidemic, but rather fuel for adaptation and opportunity for the natural activity of humanity, as opposed to an economic perspective that highlights a singular perspective.

The perspectives that have been recounted to me by these students have served to corroborate a suspicion that I have long held in terms of my own experiences with information technology. In the journey of my educational pursuits, I have been considerably influenced by the production of art through technological devices such as through digital photography, video editing, 3D modelling, digital painting, and information sourcing. During this time, I have touched upon these sources to varying degrees in terms of pursuing them fully before settling on my studies in Fine Arts. In applying for studying 3D creation, prior to settling on Fine Arts, I had the opportunity to question the heads of various schools of design in this field in terms of how students approach the discipline. From these encounters, I have taken note of several fundamental points from these educators. Firstly, students are, through their exposure to media, guided through their interests to these academies and immediately want to jump into subjects such as character modelling but lack the necessary skills. From this point of

view, it makes sense that esoteric hobbies such as modding Skyrim or Minecraft have come into existence. As such, in these academies, students begin with the basics of the field, which by their own agency have not had prior opportunity to enhance, due to being more advanced than what may be found through online sources. Therefore, it is that the need for these educators is not challenged and is necessarily required for learning professional techniques. What was further lacking in these students was the ability to think about what they were doing. This is to mean that while, technically speaking, they are proficient; their application of the techniques in terms of conceptual depth became lacking.

This brings us to the second point. During my time of studying Fine Arts, I have learnt about the finer details about the production of an image and the conceptual approaches one may employ in this regard. Retrospectively, if I had gone into the previous pursuits without this background, I undoubtedly would find my digital image production much poorer as a result. On the other hand, my hobbies in these fields are not professional per se but harbour a sense of depth and personal touch beyond what I have a been witness to be produced by these academies. In additional discussion with the Visual Arts groups, I asked if they had similar stories, in terms of if their pursuits are a result of the skills they have learnt and if those skills were not developed due to lack of facilitators. Their answers have retained a level of depth and contextual consideration I would have suspected. Firstly, it was responded that their own interests mediate their creative field of choice, where technology becomes an outlet for their creative desires, as opposed to becoming the mediator of what they must necessarily study. However, they expressed similar frustrations at the level of professionalism they can individually achieve through technological pursuits. The second point was given with regards to how technology creates the sense of becoming a “jack of all trades and master of none.”, which was agreed to not necessarily be a negative aspect, as this provided many opportunities to enhance one's creative endeavours.

Chapter 5: We can (not) Conclude with Implications

During this cartography, it has become clear that the links between information technology, curricula and learning environments are one of extreme polarisation in terms of what perspectives we may tune into by magnification, each of which yielding a different result. In some way, this had become a defence of the imagination over that of upholding matters of

supposedly real consequence in preference. In this sense, the topic is certainly a matter of philosophical debate with room for scepticism. This is meant by way of how the changes brought by information technologies, both through educational and hegemonic veins, are not yet fully informed by way of how it affects the identities of learners, students, parents and educators who must adapt to this paradigm shift. Of course, a further limit of this exploration is the particular context of South Africa educational institutes as viewed through the lens of my intellectual journey in terms of interpretations and experiences, with supplementations from the aforementioned groups. Therefore, as I stated from the outset, this exploration did not intend to prove some generalisation of truth, but to explore the in-depth aspects of a story shared between every party who has embarked on the same journey and been met with similar frustrations in terms of creative endeavours and authentic learning. To this end, I found it to be my prerogative to structure and design this exploration in terms of how these aspects may become a reflection of my journey as corroborated by the perspectives and theories of the participants who have, by their individuals transgress these frustrations, aided this perspective. This being delineated to that of the interests of learners in their formative years, the perspectives of various educators and parents, who have witnessed these changing paradigms, and the students who have become subject to these changes. These perspectives of which fundamentally return to the matter of the hidden curriculum which I have determined functions within, without and in-between the complexities of individual identities in classrooms and at home.

What we may be certain of is that students, parents, and teachers have adapted to using technology by enhancing their endeavours and teaching environments. Additionally, the concerns of the students in this relation reflect a perspective that is rationalised and well-founded in terms of how their identities and social lives have been impacted by technology and the uncertainty of informational sources. From the parent's perspective, who function as the uncertain guide for the student's journey of being reared through technology; they similarly express concerns that are well founded in terms of any other concern parents may have. This is to mean, that any excess becomes unhealthy. This is in opposition to the perspective that dominates the scene within popular media sources as vilifying the aspects of technology as the destructor of childhood, over that of its creative and intellectual benefits. This is in parallel to the perspectives of students who have become accustomed to the biases of information sources that follow the tides of algorithms and popular sentiments, and as such

have formed a balanced perspective on the uses and effects of technologies. Certain dangers are present that should not be discounted, however, as extremes may exist for every scenario where remedial action is required for education on the part of parents and teachers alike. In as far as these conclusions may be generalised, I would infer that it is reasonable to say that these perspectives are those shared by many who are at the mercy of out-dated educational systems that is still common in the developed and developing world, to which the frustrations of the creative journey are a result of this.

Additionally, the topic of information technology within a technological culture is one of considerable debate and variable perspectives. As such, this exploration aimed to provide, through context, sensitivity and philosophical debates one that may aid those experiencing these frustrations. From a conceptual standpoint, the topics of space, place, identity, globalisation, ideology and curriculums have been discussed in relation to information technology along the parameters of conceptual deconstruction and the hidden curriculum. Space and place no longer hold the traditional perspective of a being placed within a tangible environment and has evolved along a similar parameter as that of community. This is to say that the interrelations and intra-relations of individuals from an ontological perspective have gained prominence because of the levelling of identity through globalisation. The hidden curriculum, in this regard, functions as the transgressive force against the unjust discourses that persists in the form of institutionalised colonial influences that becomes the heart of many a student's frustrations in terms of exercising creativity and social reparation.

There are certain limitations to be expected from this cartography. As I have discussed this from a standpoint of perspectives and interpretations, there will undoubtedly be those who stand in opposition, such as through my discussions on the presence of new virtual spaces within communities of interests and to what degree this truly affects the educational process by constituting as a hidden curriculum. What is more, this cartography does not attempt to dismantle the inter-generational effect of colonialism by any degree other than highlighting its problematic influences for young aspirational artists. It does not instantiate that every student is equal on the basis of creative purpose and motivation. However, the participants of this exploration have followed the creative journey and become critical of how art is taught and mistreated within the South African standard curriculum. The instigation of this exploration became necessitated by my experiences of this criticality and noticing how it was

reproduced within the broader problems of an out-dated curriculum system in South Africa. Of course, this is a matter of perspective and magnification. The implications of this particular magnification weigh upon how much emphasis may be placed on the effect of technology as an emancipatory device, both in and without schooling environments. The variables of technology, colonialism, globalisation and the active bodies navigating these new anthropological spaces of which are in a constant shift due to the development of an evolving ontology through intra-active devices. As such, it would be impertinent to conclude with definite implications that these influences are set in stone. On the other hand, we may say that this exploration may serve as a contextually sensitive outlook which is essential to the oversimplification of these discourses. It is, therefore, on behalf of every student who has had to face this familiar story, that I wish to view the time spent and enjoyed through my creative practices and social encounters through technology as one of upliftment and solidarity, as opposed to an orchestration of terrible loss. In other words, I wish to say that I could enjoy the wonder of a dream as much as I enjoy my waking moments.

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