Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujcp20

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Version of record first published: 02 Jan 2012

To cite this article: Chelsey Hauge (2010): Pasolini's Public Pedagogy in a YouTube World, Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 7:2, 19-21

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15505170.2010.10471329

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that engages teachers' intellect in creative and powerful ways? In what ways might collaborative, dialogic communities of practice reignite teacher agency?

To download a complete file of participant responses, visit http://www.curriculumandpedagogy.org/JCP7-2.html

Pasolini's Public Pedagogy in a YouTube World

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Search for Pasolini's Salò on YouTube, and the list that appears includes hundreds of videos. Many are clips taken directly from the film, while others are trailers made by users who created montages of selected scenes. There are also video journals of people talking about their reactions to Salò from all kinds of perspectives. The top-grossing video of those on the list, with over 300,000 viewings, is a montage of scenes that give little indication of the violence and horror that define the film.

It is doubtful that Pasolini imagined Salò in a YouTube world, although the fragments of Salò that are pulsing through the Internet might not surprise him. A central concern of Pasolini’s was the social role of intellectuals and artists: “Pasolini insists that far from changing society, writers and filmmakers can do little more—and even this ‘little’ is problematic—that offer creative resistance to [the] triumph of technological neocapitalism” (Green, 1990, in Pinar, 2009, p. 119). More than 30 years later, Pasolini’s “creative resistance to [the] triumph of technological neocapitalism” manifests itself through the appearance of clips from Salò on YouTube. Can an old film by a master artist about the horrors of fascism be repurposed decades later in a corporate-owned participatory space like YouTube, thereby offering a form of resistance for an entirely different community? Can there be “creative resistance to [the] triumph of technological neocapitalism” on an Internet site whose growth stems directly out of technological neocapitalism? Does Salò's fragmented existence on YouTube, where a digital public watches and comments on its clips, constitute cos-
mopolitan engagement with a piece of art that is temporally, historically, and culturally situated?

For Pasolini, "cinema was but the most public and spectacular expression of his commitment to 'permanent intervention,' a commitment constantly renewed and re-expressed as each new film opposed still another configuration of political and social codes and conventions" (Pinar, 2009, p. 141). This public pedagogical attempt to intervene with social codes and conventions bears the markings of what Geertz Lovink (García & Lovink, 1997) calls tactical media—especially once it is posted in a free-use space like YouTube. Tactical media is the exploitation of do-it-yourself, inexpensive media tools by communities or groups whose beliefs are not mainstream. Tactical media is hybrid and provisional, and it disrupts dichotomies like amateur versus professional and alternative versus mainstream. YouTube allows users to post videos up to 12 minutes long, and it is within this space that a number of users have posted, downloaded, repurposed, and remixed fragments of Pasolini's masterpiece Salò.

On YouTube, the lines defining amateur and professional, artist and viewer are increasingly blurry. While Pasolini's concern about the social role of the intellectual and the artist is still relevant, on YouTube we see nonprofessional users repurposing clips from his film to have conversations not only about fascism, but also about violence in film and the role of the film in society. While much of the conversation is fairly superficial, there are contributions that seriously engage a range of topics relevant to Salò. The fragments from Salò thus become a pedagogical intervention that creates conversation about both the specific film and its historical significance, and about the role of film and art in general. The conversations are transient and brief. That this space exists at all for these transient, brief conversations may disrupt "technological neocapitalism" by signaling the use of space provided by corporate Google to engage in conversation about artistic purpose and the disruption of dominant social and political codes and conventions. However, is this disruption one that diverts technological neocapitalism, or is it a product of technological neocapitalism? The clips of Salò, the remixes, and the comments are made possible through the continued (capitalist) economic success of Google, just as the showing of Pasolini's film was dependent upon the technological facilitation of whatever the leading tape/camera/screen producer was at the time. These contradictions are not unique to this medium (digital video) or space (YouTube).

Engaging with these materials might be considered cosmopolitan, and it indeed reaches across temporal and spatial communities facilitated by YouTube. It is important to note that they are repurposed within this new temporal space and used/understood differently than Pasolini initially
intentioned, perhaps with a wider net of implication. In the original Salò, the “very construction of the film gives rise to a terrifying web of complicity with the libertines, a web that forces us to see ourselves—and Pasolini—as among their number” (Greene, 1994, in Pinar, 2009, p. 135). This web of complicity crystallizes when the clips are posted on YouTube and become part of a network where social roles are increasingly blurred. Placing these fragments into these online social networks and remixing them implicates posters, viewers, and their networks in the horrifying story they tell—or is it horrifying at all anymore? Many of the remixes that use fragments from Salò leave out the most horrifying moments. Removing these integral scenes strips the film of its intense critique of fascism and social and political codes and conventions, so that technological neocapitalism subsumes the initial critical meaning. The film fragments, then, are folded into dominant discourse and no longer represent critique of social and political codes and conventions, historical or otherwise. And yet, it is this very “mainstream commerciality” that has “produced the possibility of participation in an online video culture for a much broader range of participants than before” (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 76).

The pedagogical implications of our immersion in a technological sensorium of which YouTube is a part are contradictory. YouTube provides space for tactical engagement with social and political conventions. When this engagement stretches across temporal and spatial boundaries, it might well constitute cosmopolitan engagement with the world. At the same time, its allowance for remixing films like Salò without mandating engagement with historical moments, major films, and filmmakers and their ties to contemporary society constitutes technological neocapitalism in the face of possibility for cosmopolitan engagement. The public pedagogy manifested by social networking spaces like YouTube has the potential to play a role in fostering educational engagement with major historical events, people, periods, and art, including film, that link these moments to contemporary society, even as this cosmopolitan possibility is easily subsumed by technological neocapitalism.

References