Multimedia Pedagogy and Multicultural Education for the New Millennium

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Abstract

New technologies provide tools to reconstruct education as we undergo dramatic technological revolution and enter a new millennium. In particular, multimedia technologies, like CD-ROMs and Internet websites produce new resources and material for expanding education. In examining the Shoah Project -- which documents the experiences of survivors of the Holocaust --, we demonstrate how this project provides important tools for historical and religious education, as well as making the reality of the Holocaust vivid and compelling in the contemporary moment. It is in this context that we discuss how multimedia can provide an important supplement to multicultural education, bringing the experiences of marginal and oppressed groups to the mainstream. Yet we also argue that effective multimedia education also requires historical contextualization, the skills of media literacy, and engaging pedagogical presentation in the classroom to make such new technologies effective as a supplement to traditional classroom and print-based education. Hence, we show how educational technologies, such as those produced by the Shoah Foundation and the UCLA Film and Television Archives, can thus help reconstruct education for the next century.
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New technologies are dramatically altering every aspect of life from work to education. While television has been regularly denounced by educators for the "dumbing down" of youth, new multimedia technologies are providing innovative and exciting teaching tools. During the first week of February 1998, we had an opportunity to view two sets of cutting-edge multimedia production at the Shoah Institute just outside of Hollywood and at the UCLA film and television archives in Los Angeles. In this article, we explore the potentials of new multimedia technology for developing multicultural education and the ways that new technologies can enhance the educational process.

Teachers of twentieth century history and religious education confront the problem of how to teach the Holocaust, one of the most disturbing events of our era. Simply citing statistics and retelling the story of the concentration camps and murder of over six million Jews and other ethnic nationalities and minorities cannot adequately grasp or instill the enormity of this event. To supplement existing accounts of the Holocaust and to dramatize its effects, we believe that new multimedia technology can provide tools to recreate the experience and to provide a better sense of its horror, inhumanity, and magnitude. The multimedia dimension enables students to experience the sounds, sights, and images of history as well as to learn basic facts. Testimonies of ordinary citizens help demonstrate the human and personal dimension of history and to dramatize the effects of historical events on ordinary people. The interactive dimension of new

multimedia technology can potentially involve students more integrally into historical research and enhance moral understanding, thus providing powerful pedagogical tools to teach tolerance and promote a multicultural and an anti-racist curricula. Hence, we see the virtue of multimedia technology in providing new tools of both historical documentation and pedagogy that can help reconstruct education for the next century.

Teaching the Unthinkable: The Shoah Project

The Shoah Visual History Foundation is tucked away within the dream factories of the production studios in the Hollywood Hills, not far, in fact, from the infamous "Hollywood" sign. The Shoah Foundation utilizes the most advanced multimedia digital technology to document the impact of the Holocaust. Founded by Steven Spielberg, the Shoah project combines technological inventiveness with audio-video historical documentation to capture the experiences of the survivors of one of the most horrific historical experiences of the century. The result is a highly impressive set of multimedia materials that show how new media can provide significant new teaching tools for the Information Age.

Shoah, the Hebrew word for "destruction" or "annihilation," has become a metaphor for one of the most heinous programs of genocide in twentieth century history. And although there have been a number of films and television productions that attempted to tell or depict some of the stories of more than sixteen to eighteen million victims and survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, until this project there had been a serious lacunae of audiovisual material that attempted to capture the actual testimonies of those who had managed to survive. However, rather than simply documenting the rapidly disappearing agents of the stories and memories of survivors still living in stock footage and traditional linear, static, talking-head video or film style, this project uses advanced new digital technology. The project utilizes top quality video documentary footage archived and distributed by computerized, fiber optic interactive multimedia, produced by the collaboration of some of the most creative minds in the fields of technology, education, and media production. For in taking advantage of the capabilities of new computerized multimedia technology, layers of additional material accompanies the testimonies in a diversity of forms, including maps, archival historical footage, related music and/or sound affects. These technological devices provide the interactive capacity to experience multiple dimensions of the historical ordeals being described, as well as to gain better contextual understanding.

The Shoah project thus combines video documentary footage, historical texts and commentary, and interactive computerized research archives to provide educational material concerning the Holocaust. It is in this sense that the educational potential of this project is highly significant, demonstrating how new technologies can supplement traditional teaching materials. Indeed, the video testimony of survivors in conjunction with interactive multimedia material both humanizes the Holocaust and enables in-depth involvement in research that makes the facts and horrors of the Holocaust all the more striking and real.

It is therefore ironic that this nonprofit and imaginative prototype of a new form of

politicized, contextual, humanistic multimedia pedagogy is due, in large part, to the inspiration, commitment, and initial financial support of Steven Spielberg, one of the most successful members of the Hollywood community. Indeed, Hollywood is frequently demonized for its role in the production of the kinds of commercial media "junk" that is often blamed and criticized for underlying many of the problems plaguing and affecting contemporary youth. Yet it was during Spielberg's filming of Schindler's List (1993), his movie about the relationships between Holocaust survivors and a Catholic, German war profiteer who was responsible for the salvation of many of his Polish, Jewish employees, that he decided to initiate the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. Rather than just depicting representative victims and survivors -- through actors -- Spielberg was provoked, largely through his personal encounters with survivors throughout production of his acclaimed and award-winning film, to pursue and practically apply this new video and multimedia technology into developing new types of educational and historical tools. The result is perhaps the most significant historical archive of an oppressed people ever produced and a dramatic demonstration of the pedagogical potential of new multimedia technology.

Incorporating the expertise of numerous scholars, historians and specialists drawn from a diversity of technological, artistic and educational fronts, the project was initially directed by Michael Berenbaum, a respected Holocaust scholar. Berenbaum was the director of the Research Institute of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., before he accepted the position of president and CEO of the foundation; he has been succeeded by Douglas Greenberg.[1] The project has, since 1994, archived over 51,000 eyewitness accounts in 32 languages from 57 countries. Freelance videographers and interviewers undergo training sessions organized by the Foundation and base their interviews primarily on a specially designed questionnaire. Within this context, individuals who experienced life in the camps are asked to address three areas of their lives, involving pre and post-war experiences, as well as the substantive portion involving their firsthand wartime ordeal in concentration camps and/or other World War Two experiences.

The unedited videotapes are duplicated once they arrive at the Shoah Institute headquarters. Copies are made not only for the participants, but also for storage on both the east and west coasts of the United States for long-term safety and posterity. Ultimately, one copy will be housed in California and the other. which will eventually be permanently preserved in a safe storage area in Israel, at the Holocaust Museum in Washington. D.C.. In addition, there is a digitalized version for interactive computer accessibility, as well as a copy which is coded for documentation purposes. The taped interviews are also periodically checked by resource people at the Institute, for "quality control," and/or to provide assistance and support to individual interviewers. Indeed, the "cataloguing," or "customized cataloguing interface" as it is called, is one of the most impressive aspects of the project in both technical and pedagogical terms. Through a complex computer documentation system, comprised of an ever-growing number of key categories or terms, each testimony is personally analyzed and documented by professionals. This process provides not only a computer record of the participants' words, but the grouping of each testimony into three to four minute vignettes. In addition, multiple aspects of the survivors'

experiences are organized and indexed under a diversity of key areas or topics that can be called up for future use and/or projects.

Each interview takes about eight hours to index, using digital technology. The final version of the text includes multimedia and interactive documentary footage, maps, and iconic aural and oral materials earlier mentioned, as well as the option to access other associated interviews, sites, and arenas of learning. Indeed, eventually there will be linkages between the Shoah institutional holdings through networks to a variety of museums, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations within a global context. The Foundation is also involved in the production of documentaries, books and educational CD-ROMs, to further distribute its groundbreaking archival material. Cumulatively, these products provide valuable educational material and documentation of human nobility, spirit, and courage of survival and transcendence in the face of the German Nazi system of brutal dehumanizing atrocities, with its almost unimaginable abuses.

The experiences of Holocaust survivors have thus generated documents of human fortitude and heroism in the face of a monstrous social system. Hence, these testimonial archives are not only a chronicle of individual experience and perseverance, but also an innovative pedagogical approach to understanding, studying and better contextualizing the horrors of the Holocaust in terms of both particular instances of oppression and the more general features of German fascism. Moreover, the tapes contest and put in question the pernicious stereotype of Jews as sheep being led to the slaughter -- a myth that has been perpetuated for far too long and has done significant damage and disservice to the Jewish people. Such stereotypes of passivity, by covering over resistance and struggle, also do injustice to many other victims of the myriad forms of abuse and torture that remain prevalent in the contemporary world.

Consequently, one of the most moving and ennobling portions of each video is a segment at the end of each tape that allows the interviewee to introduce their families, and/or show pictures and news clippings, read from letters or journals, and include any material he or she feel is relevant. Often, this material is the most accurate and credible way of commemorating the existence and quality of families, friends, and/or loved ones of the millions victimized. Indeed, the project is not confined to video documentation and data bases, but is accessible to the production of other forms, such as documentary films which incorporate its material and expand on its techniques. The Academy-award winning documentary The Last Days (1998), for example, effectively mobilized Shoah Foundation material to produce a poignant film about the experiences of the Holocaust, as did five forthcoming foreign documentaries.

We cannot attempt to begin to describe "the undescribable" in this text. It would obviously be inappropriate and difficult to aspire to recount the kinds of experiences captured in these records in a fashion that adequately summon the plethora of emotions they evoke, as well as the wide expanse of human frailties, talents, courage, love, altruism, fortitude and horrors they display. Yet we should stress the historical documentary value of the archival material and its pedagogical significance, as well as the potential of empowerment realized by these testimonies in both form and content. The project provides strength for both those who may have -- until

exposure to the graphic ordeals of other survivors' experiences -- felt alone, isolated and/or marginalized by their personal victimization. It also helps those of us inspired by their courage to survive and carry on in the face of horrific suffering and evil.

Moreover, such a multimedia and interactive archive's strongest applications may reside in their potential for a salutary recontextualization of contemporary history and the place of the Holocaust, combined with cultivation of a pedagogical framework of a politics of hope that individuals and groups can overcome horrible deprivation and oppression. For subordinated and disenfranchised students who will have access to these gripping documents, the experiences should be poignant and instructive, thus transcending the often abstract and ineffectual modes of teaching which frequently fail to capture the personal and human dimension of history, especially of suffering and struggle. The multimedia presentation of the Holocaust also overcomes the tendency in some educational circles to divide and hermetically seal one subject or dimension from another. Such abstracted and decontextualized education often neutralizes the kinds of associations between disparate dimensions, areas, and skills of learning. By contrast, combining multimedia sights, sounds, and print material provides a more multidimensional contextualization to events like the Holocaust and the combination of historical documentation and personal testimony enhances and the possibility of both historical and moral education.

New Educational Technology: Challenges and Potential

Hence, we believe that a mechanistic and all-too-common reductive abstraction of teaching from human experience and multidisciplinary perspectives can be overcome in part through the use of new multimedia as teaching devices. Narrow print-based history pedagogy often misrepresents and reduces the eloquent dialectic of real history into the kinds of dry and banal versions of historical actuality which so often masquerades as "the real thing" within far too many of our schools and universities. Multimedia education, however, can help access to lived experience, as well as dramatize and concretize basic historical facts and knowledge.

Many current criticisms of the role of computer and multimedia technology in the school stem from an inability to grasp the nature and importance of computer literacy and to understand how new technologies can help revitalize education. This failure to embrace new technologies as a teaching device has been preceded by an uneven and never adequate use of film and television material in the classroom. So-called "media" material was often used as a supplement, or as an excuse for the teacher to take a break from the arduous activity of interacting creatively with students -- and is still used in this way. Yet rarely has media literacy been taught, and imaginative use of media materials in the classroom remains all-to-seldom –- although creative use of computer and new multimedia material highlights how older media like photographic images, video documentary, and film can also immensely enhance instruction. Within K-12 classrooms, as well as higher echelons of learning, and even in Education schools where teachers are taught how to teach, media, computer, and technological literacies are rarely discussed. However, it is to be hoped that this situation may soon change under the pressures of the computerization of education now underway (see Luke 1997; Kellner 1998 and 2000; and Burbules and Callister

2000).

It appears as if a form of elitist blindness has emanated from far too many of the leading educational theorists and so-called experts regarding the significance and importance of recognizing the enormous role of media in the everyday lives of both teacher and student. There is also a pervasive failure to employ these common and shared materials and media in a manner that intensifies and enhances the experience of education through teaching about the semiotic codes and ideological frames that organize and structure so much of media culture. Further, there is a general failure in developing critical skills and analytic abilities that empower both teacher and student, providing them with the skills to analytically criticize and interpret media culture. Moreover, critical media literacy in the computer era is necessary for understanding and navigating within ever more complex technological/ideological forms that require computer and multimedia literacy so as to enable students to utilize computers, CD-ROMs, the World Wide Web, and the Internet.[2]

In general, media and computer literacy will enable students to more actively seek information and knowledge, but also provides the skills to actually produce and develop their own cultural artifacts within both an educational setting and within a much wider pedagogical, philosophical, and practical context. It is indeed inspiring to see web sites and other artifacts that students have already produced with computer and multimedia technologies, often collaboratively. In view of the increased role of computers in business, higher education, and everyday life, such skills will be necessary for full and creative participation in the societies of the rapidly approaching future.

It is therefore unfortunate that many influential educators and pedagogues have underemphasized and discredited the significance of media and computer literacies and productions, in lieu of outdated arguments which privilege the written word over other forms of cultural expression.[3] It may be that this is the bias of the university professor, immersed in the publish or perish domain of the university, and is translated into hostility toward alternative multimedia pedagogies. The prejudice against computers and interactive multimedia may reflect technological incompetencies and phobia on the part of teachers who themselves have not mastered these technologies and cultural forms.

There are, however, limitations to the use of media and computer technology for education and we believe that print literacy and the fundamentals of education are more necessary than ever in a new high-tech information society (Kellner 2000). In a world of information overload, it is increasingly important to teach the skills of critical reading and analysis, and clear and concise writing. Moreover, a good classroom teacher can provide context, appropriate application of course material to the situation of the students, and a forum for discussion and live interaction that computers cannot provide. Hence, far from suggesting the obsolescence of the classroom and traditional models of good teaching in the high-tech era, we are arguing that sound pedagogy and constructive dialogue in the classroom is as important as ever. But we also believe that it is the responsibility of educators to make use of the most advanced technologies for

educational purposes -- in addition to teaching the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Obviously, teaching tools cannot fully replace teachers. We believe that the relationship between print media and multimedia technology, as well as between classroom teaching and computerized teaching tools, is not a choice of either/or, but is one of both/and. In this conception, multimedia is used to supplement print material and computers are deployed to supplement classroom teaching exercises.

We owe it to our students to provide the skills and tools to understand the vast changes of the economy, society, and culture currently going and to help orient them toward opportunities, challenges, and problems. This involves educating students to become citizens in a rapidly mutating democracy, as well as to prepare them for new labor markets, forms of information and entertainment, and a new technologically-mediated cultural and social field. Yet rather than deploying new multimedia technologies, traditional educators persist in blaming media and technology for declining test scores and an alleged dumbing-down of youth -- not unlike blaming the victim. These educators often propose or defend problematic tools like "V-Chips" in televisions to censor so-called sexually explicit or violent programming (which is all too often misidentified and/or misdefined by the so-called experts) rather than teaching students to critically analyze and dissect representations of violence or other objectionable media material. Likewise, it is now fashionable to defend programs that will block home or school computers from objectionable content as the solution to allegedly debased and dangerous forms of computer culture.

It seems more productive, however, to teach students how to access and appreciate worthwhile educational media and cultural material rather than to censor and condemn -- although learning skills of critique is certainly an essential part of media pedagogy and education in general. Often censoring material makes it even more appealing and seductive, so we recommend critical engagement with media materials rather than simple prohibition. Moreover, the incorporation of media literacy programs within the public and university systems hardly requires anything more than a television set, VCR monitor, pretaped programs, and a teacher and/or professor who is trained, committed, and knowledgeable in basic critical media literacy theory and practices. Indeed, as Carmen Luke argues:

> TV is today's mass social educator with powerful influence on social life, people's worldviews, consumer behavior and the shaping of public sentiment. The network of commodity and visual symbolic sign systems within which we live is already so dense and pervasive that we fail to make much note of it.... Television takes up more of children's time than any other activity except sleeping, and school aged children watch on average between 18-30 hours a week.... By age 18, the average viewer has watched some 14,000 hours of TV, and yet during that same time has spent only 12,000 hours in classrooms in front of teachers and texts. These figures do not include time spent reading comic books and magazines, playing video games, or playing with media spin-off toys (Luke 1996, 1).[4]

Luke goes on to emphasize the every-day life situations of the typical contemporary student by perceptively claiming that: "In my estimation, the everyday televisual and popular cultural texts that students encounter are at least as, if not more, significant sources of learning than the print texts educators deem as culturally relevant literacy texts" (1; emphasis ours). Luke's appraisal of the state of contemporary student consciousness regarding the dominance and significance of media is a common-sense and shared assumption. Yet such recognition of the saliency of media culture in the life of today's students is at odds with the manner in which the educational establishment and the majority of workers within it actually address education and the issue of media and computers within every-day teaching practice.[5]

For example, even with the widespread availability of inexpensive video equipment within both the schools and universities, teachers rarely teach students how to critically analyze media materials in their classrooms or promote media literacy, let alone cultivate media literacy skills in order to teach students how to use the equipment to produce their own contemporary media forms. We have found that the production of alternative or parodic forms of commercial media, in the mode of anti-commercials or anti-rock videos, for instance, could break through the barriers and extend the critical educational process in many exciting pedagogical directions (see Hammer 1995: 226ff.). Yet this inexpensive and accessible option is rarely employed by university and/or K-12 classroom teachers. Unfortunately, it seems far more common for teachers to supplement oral and written teachings with a one-dimensional employment of a film, video, or media form as a supplementary and far less valued corollary text.

Moreover, if actual practical applications of media production are taught and incorporated within the university or educational setting, they are often addressed with condescension and allocated to the role of a far less socially credible school employee, usually technical support staff. Such employees are often not interested in or qualified to teach the necessary semiotic skills and analytical concepts of media literacy which must accompany all practical applications of any media form. Furthermore, the main authority figure, the classroom teacher or professor, often diminishes the importance of this kind of work and/or literacy by the very lack of demonstrated skill and/or interest in learning this form of practical literacy. The teacher thus abdicates to "techies" the pedagogical responsibilities in these arenas.

Hence arises the illogical but common practice of blaming the victim, or student in this case, and the technology itself in a fashion that distracts and obscures its potential pedagogical significance. Focusing on the alleged pedagogical harm from media and computer culture diminishes the positive potential of media and technology in society and education, as well as the necessity to become literate in reading and using media and cyberculture. The computer, as well as the TV set, has now often become a common object of disdain and disrespect within the educational context. Like the television and Hollywood films that have been blamed by so many educators for educational and human failings among contemporary students, the computer is now also being demonized. Common complaints, used to characterizing negative the computer revolution and its associated forums, like the Internet and Web, appear to blame the new technologies, and the student who uses them for playing games like blackjack, or computerized

video games. Others complain that students spend too much time on e-mail, in chatrooms, or in web-surfing. Many educators and critics thus denounce out-of-hand new computer technologies rather than embarking on serious studies of how such tools can be used to enhance education. In a similar vein, criticisms are also proliferating concerning student propensities toward employing the computer, Internet, and the World Wide Web to plagiarize and cheat on term paper assignments, rather than seriously investigating the ways that computers and multimedia could be productively used to advance research and education. Such criticism obscures the real kinds of epistemological and behavioral shifts that an expanding computer and media culture are producing and the need to develop literacies and pedagogies to make use of these technologies for educational purposes.

The criticisms often call attention to the challenge and ubiquity of the new technologies and dramatize the need for those who educate and develop educational curricula to become literate in these domains. Such emergent pedagogical forums deserve the respect with which the written, published word is afforded within the academic and educational realm (often, we might add, uncritically). All too often, a news story or artifact of media culture depicts youth as taking advantage of the computers in an immoral fashion to access pornography, to cheat, or to play trivial games. It is as if we are being revisited by 50s morality and cruising the Web and the discovery of particular web sites (as well as other controversial activities like chat rooms or participation in other forms of virtual interaction like MOO's and MUDs) is generally considered as corrupting, like early involvement in rock and roll.

Moreover, some educators and so-called experts have adopted a defeatist and counterproductive attitude toward these new technologies and their incorporation into both the classroom and everyday lives, and hence shirk their responsibilities as practical and critical pedagogues to make use of the most advanced technologies for educational purposes. All-too-many educators and critics employ the (admittedly compelling) argument that the new technologies are far more accessible to the privileged and are therefore reinforcing class hierarchies which will eventually enable those children of the predominantly white middle and upper classes to become far more computer literate. Critics often use this argument to imply that computers will generate an even more rigid future of class-based divisions in employment opportunities and social position to denounce computers, rather than devising strategies to make sure that disadvantaged and subordinate groups have access to computer education and technologies.

Merely dismissing computers and new technologies manifests a refusal to confront the need to restructure education and to cultivate multimedia and computer literacies among all social groups. In fact, the admittedly growing disparity between the haves and have-nots must become part of a media and computer literacy educational epistemology and politics. This cause needs the active participation of educators in political coalitions that seek to make these new technologies more accessible to the underprivileged student populations. Such coalitions require networking teachers and educational professionals with grass-roots organizations, official and unofficial lobby groups, and research and grant organizations. It also requires teachers to become public intellectuals to strive to make schooling responsive to the need to cultivate democratic

citizens (see Giroux 2000), as well as relevant to the challenges of a new economy and culture. Overcoming the "digital divide" thus requires participation in social and educational change to benefit those subordinate groups along the axes of class, gender, and race who have traditionally not received the benefits of ruling social groups.

What is needed therefore is a philosophical and pedagogical shift toward positively deploying new technologies for educational purposes and democratic social transformation. This reconstructive process should seek to empower and enlighten both teachers and students and to assist them in recognizing the difference between good and bad, mediocre and beneficial, media and multimedia texts. Teachers and students should learn to evaluate new cultural forms in the same manner in which one judges and evaluates print media material. This approach, however, necessitates a commitment to teaching media, computer, and multimedia literacies and the active incorporation of the best of these programs within the pedagogical forum (Kellner 1998 and 2000).

It is within this context, then, that the Shoah project could prove an innovative and useful teaching resource. For any liberatory and effective educational form that assists in progressive and revelatory education must be pedagogically efficacious in both form and content. Thus, projects like the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation can provide models of how multimedia material can enhance education, if, of course, the material is utilized appropriately.

Such multimedia technology has a great potential for multicultural education. To non-Jews, Jews are an Other, they exist in an area of strangeness outside of familiar experience, just as Blacks are alien to non-Blacks who have not had personal experience and interaction with them. Multimedia technology makes accessible representations of those perceived as an Other. Such images can personalize individuals in groups often perceived as different or other; it makes it possible to see, hear, and experience the views, practices, and culture of groups outside of one's ordinary life and interaction. In particular, multimedia can dramatize oppression, making intolerance and bigotry vivid and striking, showing the evil effects of racism and prejudice.

The new multimedia can thus help document racism and teach tolerance by providing concrete and vivid images and examples of prejudicial behavior and racial and other forms of oppression. The documentation of concrete instances of racism and prejudice help personalize and vivify the consequences of oppression and enable students and citizens to emphasize with the victims through humanizing phenomena that are often abstract and objectified. Hence, well-produced multimedia productions can help teach tolerance and moral behavior, as well as history, religion, philosophy, and any particular subject matter.

We are therefore encouraged that the Shoah Foundation has chosen to illuminate a variety of forms of fascist oppression in addition to the slaughter of millions of Jews in the Holocaust. The next phase of their work involves documenting other groups and individuals oppressed by German fascism, including many people who have sometimes been forgotten in the wake of

literature and research dedicated to the vitriolic hatred of the Nazis toward the Jewish people. The significance and consequent complexities implicated in expansion of the Shoah parameters are powerfully expressed by Bohdan Wytwycky in his critical documentary text, The Other Holocaust: Many Circles of Hell (1982), which provides an excellent textual supplement to the Shoah material.

To grasp the full range of German atrocities involves understanding the Nazi policies which extended beyond Jews and encompassed an additional 9 to 10 million people who shared the same or similar fates (Wytwycky, 17). Indeed, Wytwycky draws on Dante to attempt to make clearer the Nazi genocidal pathology.

In his classic medieval trilogy, The Divine Comedy, Dante managed to portray nine different "circles" of damnation. The Nazi hell, too, consisted of different circles into which victims were consigned and in which they suffered a variety of cruel fates. The Nazi hell differed from Dante's, of course, because its victims were innocents whose only "crime" was to belong to peoples whom Nazi and racism had decreed to be unworthy of sharing in the Thousand Year Reich (17).

Hence, rather than restricting their multi-dimensional educational and interactive archival project to audio-video documentation of those Jewish veterans of the Holocaust who managed to survive and then stayed alive long enough to be chronicled by the archives, the Shoah foundation has been expanding its mandate. As mentioned, it will actively collect the testimonies of other pariahs of the Nazi genocide. These groups include gypsies, Slavs, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Communists, and individuals in any way deemed physically or mentally challenged or different, as well as any individual or group who resisted the official doctrines of the so-called germanic "master race." Moreover, the Shoah Institute is also attempting to chronicle those particularly courageous and usually unsung heroes and heroines people who refused to collaborate and chose to put their lives on the line by assisting those identified as the enemies of the Third Reich to escape or hide from their executioners and by resisting a hegemonic force which was so powerful. Indeed, the power of fascism was due in large part to the vast legions of supporters and collaborators who were encouraged and rewarded for practices of cooperation and collusion which cost the lives of brothers, sisters, friends, and loved ones. Hence, celebrating the lives and sacrifices of those who resisted fascism is an important lesson for the future and a necessary aspect of properly understanding the past.

The magnitude of the Shoah project, which makes use of the most advanced technologies for educational purposes, is thus beneficial to showing how new technologies can advance and revitalize education for today's student. Creative use of new technologies, of course, depends on those who implement them and how they are deployed. Effective use is nurtured by the convictions and sustained efforts that must accompany projects embodying imaginative teaching designs and programs to further multicultural education and teaching of events, otherwise hard to grasp, such as the Holocaust.

A democratic and multicultural reconstruction of education thus requires the commitment

and critical intelligence -- as well as hard work! -- of teachers, in conjunction with the students who so desperately need these kinds of resources to truly learn about the world, and hence themselves and their place in it. Teachers will find that such respond positively to multimedia materials which can be of great assistance in promoting student interest as well as transforming key historical experiences and knowledge. A transformative media pedagogy thus helps broaden the curriculum and brings voices, experiences, and material into the educational process that is often downplayed or ignored in traditional educational texts and materials.

Historical Education and Multimedia: UCLA's Executive Order 9066

The Shoah project, to be sure, had tremendous economic resources behind it, but, as Steve Ricci, the director of the Film and TV Archives at UCLA, and his other colleagues have demonstrated, it is not necessary to have access to a budget of over 45 million dollars to produce a highly effective interactive educational pedagogical supplement. While the Shoah Foundation has a large budget and multiple sources of funding, the unlimited use of state-of-the art technological equipment, and the contributions of at least 240 paid staff members and over 3,600 volunteers, Ricci and his colleagues co-produced with the Japanese American National Museum a CD-ROM which is highly sophisticated, arresting and absorbing in both form and content. And like the Shoah project, Executive Order 9066: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II bursts disciplinary boundaries and traditional compartmentalized learning arenas to produce a transdisciplinary, multi-leveled portrayal and historical presentation of one of the cruelest, most blatantly racist programs in U.S. history.[6]

The UCLA-produced CD-ROM documents an often obscured episode of World War II history. Emphasizing particularly the situation of Japanese Americans in the United States, this riveting multimedia, interactive project documents, at many levels, how 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated by the United States government in numerous so-called internment or concentration camps through-out the United States, primarily in the West, Midwest and Texas. Allowing users to navigate from photographs, diaries, and home videos of life in the camps to newsreels, essays, and media texts, the CD-ROM provides a contextual framework to understand the events and humanizes the experience of its victims and survivors. It also contains information often omitted from accounts of the war, such as the collusion of thirteen Latin American countries with U.S. agents in the displacement and internment in the United States of over 2,000 people of Japanese ancestry from these countries, on the highly dubious charges that they posed security risks.

Like the Shoah project, the UCLA CD-ROM also stresses the necessity of revisiting and re-examining painful and repugnant instances of massive scale, legitimized programs of persecution and inhumanity to others. Indeed, the incarceration of Japanese Americans was rationalized and justified solely on the basis of an assortment of bigoted myths and practices, and the CD-ROM helps ensure that we do not forget and repeat, reproduce, falsify or gloss over these atrocities of the recent past. One learns, for example, that much of the land or property owned by these Japanese –Americans was legally stolen or "repossessed" by government

agencies during this shameful episode of U.S. history which many Americans would prefer remain buried and forgotten.[7]

Employing a multiplicity of innovative technological devices, archival and documentary footage, maps, photographs, oral histories, Executive Order 9066 presents and interrogates the arrests and conditions of incarceration of over 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, of whom over two-thirds were American citizens. Drawing on both UCLA-owned archival material and the resources of the Japanese American National Museum, rare archival footage and photos, interview material, personal accounts, chronologies, maps, and historical essays all provide a vivid historical reconstruction of the event. In making accessible this shameful episode, the project develops a diversity of imaginative, ingenious and original multimedia formats which display testimonies from survivors and visionary, artistic mixes of computer graphics, digitizations and stunning examples of virtual reality to make concrete the Japanese American experience of internment. Moreover, the CD-ROM incorporates familiar Japanese-American actors and celebrities as narrators, and includes many of their own testimonies. This content further humanizes the shameful episode, as well as demonstrating the courage of those who are too often portrayed as victims.

The UCLA-produced CD-ROM thus clearly demonstrates, in a variety of iconic, aural, and oral forms and forums, that propensities toward intolerance and persecution lies within ourselves and within the frameworks of the systems of government and ways of life that are defined and embraced as democratic, liberal, and egalitarian. The production reveals that crimes against humanity are not restricted to peoples and nations that are commonly identified as evil, totalitarian, fascistic, undemocratic, or Other, and hence interrogates and teaches about some very discomfiting truths and realities in our own democracies.

Rather than relying on the usual "bells and whistles" that often typify educational CD-ROMs (which often embody simplified, computer game-like brain candy techniques), Executive Order 9066 permits students to learn at their own speeds and levels of expertise. It also facilitates both individualized and class-based teacher-student multimedia tutorials, studies, and assignments. The CD-ROM thus exemplifies the practical applications of the theoretical and educational calls for multimedia based projects that actually enhance and transform public pedagogies. Consequently, this is exactly the kind of multimedia project essential for contemporary teaching, which may help remedy the situation evoked by current studies that appear to demonstrate waning basic student skills and literacies, as well as serious lack of historical and political knowledge and awareness.

New transdisciplinary multimedia projects include multiple educational arenas within an underlying common, critical, and political theme. Such projects make it possible to teach not only the basics of mathematics, reading, and study skills, geography, history, and some dimensions of science, but also disciplines such as political science, economics, and sociology, without the often tedious and dull segregations and divisions that generally mediate these subjects. Instead of decontextualizing historical events and divorcing them from reality, the multimedia and CD-ROM

projects that we have discussed provide exceptional contextualized understanding of the many dimensions of political oppression, as well as teaching tolerance and the importance of resisting racist and oppressive political behavior. Thus, by bringing to the fore the human dimensions of persecution, multimedia technology can also serve as an instrument of moral and political education.

The Shoah Foundation is currently offering tours to interested parties and will eventually make their material accessible at the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance, via books and CD-ROM, and a website. Call the Shoah Foundation at 800-661-2092 for information.

For information on ordering Executive Order 9066: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II write Steve Ricci, Film and TV Archives, 302 E. Melnitz, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095 or call 310 826-5388.

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Notes

[1] The current director, Douglas Greenberg, …. We might note that the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. is one of the most advanced and impressive museums in the world in terms of their use of multimedia technology. Museum displays deploy a variety of exhibits, multimedia, and interactive media to experience and teach about the Holocaust.

[2] For detailed discussion of media literacy and the major literature and debates concerning it, see Luke 1997 and Kellner 1998.

[3] For a brilliant study of the misfit below student experience, subjectivities, and culture and the institution of schooling, as well as strong arguments for introducing multiple literacies in the schools and not privileging print literacy, see Luke and Luke (forthcoming).

[4] Current statistics indicate that children [get recent lat article

[5] Luke's comments on the importance of using televisual and other cultural texts in the article cited is even more appropriate in an era marked by an explosion of computer and new multimedia technologies. In this situation, students are cultivating new identities and subjectivities in their interaction with new information and multimedia technologies (see Luke and Luke forthcoming).

[6] Other allied countries colluded with the United States in perpetuating this government-authorized bigotry against Japanese citizens and residents of the U.S., Canada and South America. For information on ordering Executive Order 9066: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II, write Film and TV Archives, UCLA, 302 E. Melnitz, Los Angeles, CA 90095; call at 310-206-5388; or check their website at www.cinema.ucla.edu/publications.html.

[7] The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 apologized formally and allocated $40 million dollars in reparations -- half to fund educational programs, and the other half to compensate about 81,000 Japanese Americans directly. This legislation, however, hardly addresses the grievances, suffering, loss, and long-term consequences of this injustice.