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A multidisciplinary normative evaluation of media as an educational institution

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The University of Toledo

A Thesis

entitled

A Multidisciplinary Normative Evaluation of Media as an Educational Institution

by

Jamie Eric Teeple

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Education Degree in Educational Theory and Social Foundations of Education

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An Abstract of

A Multidisciplinary Normative Evaluation of Media as an Educational Institution

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In this thesis, I seek to determine whether or not media in the form of
advertisements can be considered not simply a morally "neutral" societal triviality, but
more so a potentially deleterious, "unjust" pedagogical phenomenon. I initiate this
reinterpretation of media as an educational force by first attempting to justify via the
work of Joe Kincheloe, Patrick Slattery, and Shirley Steinberg (2000) an interpretation of
media as an "educational institution". I then utilize Martha Nussbaum's (2011)
interpretation of the Capabilities Approach to frame advertisements that utilize implicit
persuasion to delimit consumers' ability for free product selection as manifestations of
media as an "unjust" educational institution. I then draw upon the work of Flavio Vega
(Martin, 1992), Martin Heidegger (1962), Emmanuel Levinas (1997), and Slavoj Žižek
(2008) to depict two specific advertisements as discriminatory, and thus vehicles of
media as a discriminatory educational institution. I then return to Martha Nussbaum
(2011) and the Capabilities Approach to argue that discriminatory media forms can also
be considered "unjust" because they undermine the Central Capability of "affiliation". I
subsequently use this dual interpretation of media as an unjust and discriminatory
educational institution to warrant a call for educational responses. I then include in what I

deem to be effective educational responses to media as an unjust and discriminatory

educational institution not only Douglas Kellner's and Jeff Share's (2005) elaboration of

critical media literacy, but also Richard Rorty's (Hayden, 2001; Voparil, 2006)

conception of sentimental education and David Takacs' (2002) interpretation of an assets

model of multiculturalism. I finally critique Claudia Ruitenberg's (2010) affect-based

pedagogical model of inductive political education as being complicit in cultivating

antagonistic intersubjective relationships and lend support instead for Rorty's (Hayden,

2001; Voparil, 2006) and Takacs' (2002) pedagogical models.

For my wonderful family.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One

Media, Education, and Questions of Social Justice

In *Contextualizing Teaching*, Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg (2000) frame educational spaces as existing both within and outside of the spaces one might initially think of as being "pedagogical", such as primary and secondary schools; they denote this inclusive and holistic conception of educational spaces as "… 'cultural pedagogy,' or the idea that education takes place in a variety of social sites including but hardly limited to the school" (Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000, p. 380). It is also important to note that the idea that educational spaces exist both within and outside of the school can be traced to the Ancient Greek conception of the "*paideia*", which

> … included education in the arts, philosophy and rhetoric, history, science, and mathematics; training in sports and warfare; enculturation or learning of the city's religious, social, political, and professional customs and training to participate in them, and the development of one's moral character through the virtues (Crittenden & Levine, 2013, pp. 4-5).

I believe that the idea of the *paideia* and, for the specific purposes of this thesis, the conception of "cultural pedagogy" can be used to account for all spaces within which children learn and, crucially, to then hold to account any spaces which may not serve children's best interests: Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg (2000) specify that, "Pedagogical sites are those places where someone organizes and deploys power, and they include libraries, television, the movies, newspapers and magazines, toys, advertisements, video games, books, sports, and so forth" (p. 380). Apropos the organization and deployment of "power" within these "pedagogical sites", of particular concern to these authors is the influence of corporate motives on the structure of existent "curricular" media forms, or "the cultural curriculum" (p. 380).

Juxtaposing the "commonplace" conception of "the school" with corporate-dominated pedagogical sites, the authors argue that "Patterns of consumption shaped by corporate advertising turn commercial institutions into the teachers of the new millennium" (p. 381). These "teachers" have, however, a vested interest in profiting from their attentive pupils: The authors state, "The organizations that create this cultural curriculum are not educational agencies; rather, they are commercial concerns that operate primarily for individual gain and only secondarily, if at all, for the social good" (p. 381). Moreover, these corporate pedagogues, via the vehicles of media, have access to children's "private lives", and with such privileged entrée use, "Marketing strategies for children from birth to three years old …" which "… hope to establish a consumer attitude from the earliest stages of life" (p. 381).

This existence of a corporate-sponsored "establishment of a consumer attitude" within the youngest children is a phenomenon that poses two questions for those concerned with issues of social justice: First, to what extent do advertisements affect children's ability to exercise rational thought? And second, if advertisements do affect children's capacity for rational thought, to what extent, and according to what or whose conception of social justice, can advertisements' effects on children be considered "just" or "unjust"? In this chapter, I will first introduce and discuss Martha Nussbaum's (2011) "Capabilities Approach" to social justice issues and subsequently focus on her argument for the provision of rationality as an axiomatic component for the satisfaction of social justice (Nussbaum, 2011). I will then review current literature on the topic of advertisements' psychological effects on children to determine the extent to which advertisements may influence children. I will then conclude by determining that,

according to Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach and in light of current literature on

advertisements' psychological effects on children, advertisements can indeed be

considered "unjust" and, thus, vehicles of media as an unjust educational institution.

Martha Nussbaum's "Capabilities Approach"

In *Creating Capabilities: A Human Development Approach*, Martha Nussbaum

(2011) presents and develops her interpretation of the theory, or domain of theories, she

explains has been considered "… the *Human Development Approach* and sometimes the

Capability or *Capabilities Approach*" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 17). Preferring the moniker

"Capabilities Approach" over "Human Development Approach", Nussbaum explains that

the latter accounts for the capabilities and "… provides a fine basis for a theory of justice

and entitlement for both nonhuman animals and humans" (p. 18). Nussbaum cursorily

defines the Capabilities Approach thusly:

> The Capabilities Approach can be provisionally defined as an approach to
> comparative quality-of-life assessment and to theorizing about basic social justice.
> It holds that the key question to ask, when comparing societies and assessing them
> for their basic decency or justice, is, 'What is each person able to do and to be?'
> In other words, the approach takes *each person as an end*, asking not just about
> the total or average well-being but about the opportunities available to each
> person. It is *focused on choice or freedom*, holding that the crucial good societies
> should be promoting for their people is a set of opportunities, or substantial
> freedoms, which people then may or may not exercise in action: the choice is
> theirs. It thus commits itself to respect for people's powers of self-definition. (p.
> 18)

Importantly, Nussbaum adds that the Capabilities Approach to questions of social justice

is also "… *concerned with entrenched social injustice and inequality*, especially

capability failures that are the result of discrimination or marginalization" (p. 19).

More specifically, Nussbaum explains that her variant of the Capabilities

Approach, which is, incidentally, "… a theory of fundamental political entitlements …",

is comprised of separate but related forms of capabilities, including "*combined capabilities*", "*internal capabilities*", "*basic capabilities*" and "*Central Capabilities*", (pp. 19, 21, & 23). Nussbaum first clarifies that capabilities generally are "… answers to the question, 'What is this person able to do and to be'", and claims that her colleague, Amartya Sen, offers the term "… 'substantial freedoms,' a set of (usually interrelated) opportunities to choose and to act", which closely parallels her conception of capabilities (p. 20). Nussbaum adds further, however, that capabilities can also be defined in part as "… the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment" (p. 20). This combinatory dimension of capabilities, therefore, compels Nussbaum to proffer "combined capabilities" as a subset of capabilities in general, and a term which more closely parallels Sen's term, "substantial freedoms" (pp. 20 & 21).

Nussbaum first differentiates between "combined capabilities" and "internal capabilities" by denoting the latter as, "… states of the person (not fixed, but fluid and dynamic) …" which include "… personality traits, intellectual and emotional capacities, states of bodily fitness and health, internalized learning, [and] skills of perception and movement …" (p. 21). But she subsequently clarifies combined capabilities as constituting "… internal capabilities plus the social/political/economic conditions in which functioning can actually be chosen" (p. 22). Combined capabilities, in other words, crucially entail the provision of social, political, and economic circumstances to the individual which allow her the choice to pursue desired social, political, and economic projects. This definitional dichotomy allows Nussbaum to highlight the fact that societies may provide their citizens opportunities for internal capabilities, but *not* provide their

4

citizens with these social, political, and economic avenues for concomitant projects, and thus deny them combined capabilities. She states, for example, that "It is … possible for a person to live in a political and social environment in which she could realize an internal capability (for example, criticizing the government) but lack the developed ability to think critically or speak publicly" (p. 22). Nussbaum (Hayden, 2001) expounds on this possibility when she states that, "Citizens of repressive non-democratic regimes have the internal but not the combined capability to exercise thought and speech in accordance with their conscience" (Hayden, 2001, p. 227). She adds,

> The aim of public policy is the production of *combined capabilities*. This idea means promoting the states of the person by providing the necessary education and care, as well as preparing the environment so that it is favorable for the exercise of practical reason and the other functions. (p. 227)

Moreover, a society in which combined capabilities are realizable but internal capabilities cannot exist for Nussbaum (2011) because internal capabilities are intrinsic to combined capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011).

"Basic capabilities" differ from combined and, thus, internal capabilities in that, as Nussbaum states, "Basic capabilities are the innate faculties of the person that make later development and training possible" (p. 24). Nussbaum draws anecdotally on philosopher Adam Smith's comment, "… that deprivation of education made people 'mutilated and deformed in a[n] … essential part of the character of human nature" (p. 23). According to Robeyns (2011), basic capabilities also entail, qua Nussbaum, "… the capability of speech and language, which is present in a newborn but needs to be fostered" (Robeyns, 2011, p. 11). Nussbaum (2011) argues that in order to satisfy exceptional students' basic capabilities, for example, "… special interventions are justified" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 24). Robeyns (2011) writes that Sen, however, considers

basic capabilities to "… refer to the freedom to do some basic things considered

necessary for survival and to avoid or escape poverty or other serious deprivations"

(Robeyns, 2011, p. 11). She adds that, "… while the notion of capabilities refers to a very

broad range of opportunities, basic capabilities refer to the real opportunity to avoid

poverty or to meet or exceed a threshold of well-being" (p. 11). Snauwaert (2011) writes

that "… human dignity includes a consideration of the characteristics of a good human

life, and central to a good life is the actualization of basic human capabilities that shaped

and constitute the structure of our humanity and a good human life" (Snauwaert, 2011, p.

321".

 Additionally and importantly, Nussbaum explains that capabilities have as their

"end points" what she calls "functionings", or the actual activities the choice for which

capabilities fundamentally provide. Nussbaum explains,

> In a sense, capabilities are important because of the way in which they may lead
> to functionings … the notion of functioning gives the notion of capability its end-
> point. But capabilities have value in and of themselves, as spheres of freedom and
> choice. To promote capabilities is to promote areas of freedom, and this is not the
> same as making people function in a certain way. (p. 25)

Nussbaum fleshes out the dichotomy between "capabilities" and "functionings" with an

intriguing anecdote from Sen: "… a person who is starving and a person who is fasting

have the same type of functioning where nutrition is concerned, but they do not have the

same capability, because the person who fasts is able not to fast, and the starving person

has no choice" (p. 25).

 Subsequently amalgamating her conception of combined, internal, and basic

capabilities, Nussbaum offers a list of Central Capabilities, or capabilities which

represent "… areas of freedom so central that their removal makes a life not worthy of

human dignity" (p. 32). Crucially, Nussbaum's list of Central Capabilities, which is a purposefully contestable proposal, should be measured against the very definition of what it means to be a "dignified human". "The central capabilities," Nussbaum (Hayden, 2001) writes, "are not just instrumental to further pursuits: They are held to have value in themselves, in making a life fully human" (Hayden, 2001, p. 223). Ultimately, she explains, different cases will present potential freedoms which may seem from different positions to be more or less central to the maintenance of human dignity: She rhetorically asks, "What about the right to plural marriages?" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 32). Nussbaum (Hayden, 2001) argues, however, that the Central Capabilities "… have a special claim to be supported for political purposes in societies that otherwise contain a great diversity of views about the good…." (Hayden, 2001, p. 223). Regardless of the moral gray areas inherent to the selection of what could or should be considered freedoms inexorable from the satisfaction of human dignity, therefore, Nussbaum presents a list which provides "… an ample threshold level of ten Central Capabilities …" (p. 32). These Central Capabilities include: (1) "*Life*"; (2) "*Bodily health*"; (3) "*Bodily integrity*"; (4) "*Senses, imagination, and thought*"; (5) "*Emotions*"; (6) "*Practical reason*"; (7) "*Affiliation*"; (8) "*Other species*"; (9) "*Play*"; and (10) "*Control over one's environment*" (pp. 33-34). For the purposes of Chapter One, however, I will look closely at only two of these ten Central Capabilities: (4) "*Senses, imagination, and thought*" and (6) "*Practical Reason*" (pp. 33-34). In Chapter Two, I will deem it necessary to look more closely at the Central Capability of (7) "*Affiliation*" (p. 34).

"Senses, imagination, and thought" as a "Central Capability". This Central Capability, as Nussbaum states, entails,

Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason–and to do these things in a 'truly human' way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literacy, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain. (p. 33)

"Senses, imagination, and thought" as a Central Capability, therefore, essentially entails both the capacity for cognitive freedom and the free access to social spaces within which cognitive freedom can be expressed. Hence, this capability entails an assemblage of combined, internal, and basic capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011).

"Practical reason" as a "Central Capability". This Central Capability, as Nussbaum states, entails, "Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)" (p. 34). "Practical reason" as a Central Capability is also cognitively based, and would thus represent an internal capability. It would also, however, represent a combined capability in its prescription of a social space within which all individuals have the freedom to pursue the observance of the religion of their choice (Nussbaum, 2011). Moreover, practical reason brings to light the fact that the Central Capabilities are "*architectonic*", meaning that they "… support one another in many ways" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 39). For Nussbaum (2011), practical reason and affiliation, the latter of which I will discuss in Chapter Two, are especially architectonic: She states, "… they organize and pervade the others" (p. 39). Moreover, she explains that when the other Central Capabilities "… are present in a form commensurate with human dignity, they are woven into them" (p. 39). Nussbaum provides a striking example: If, for

example, the citizens of a society are physically well taken care of, are "well-nourished", but are at the same time denied the ability "… to exercise practical reason and planning with regard to their health and nutrition, the situation is not fully commensurate with human dignity: they are being taken care of the way we take care of infants" (p. 39). Nussbaum flatly attributes to practical reason nothing less than "… the centrality of choice in the whole notion of capability as freedom" (p. 39). She adds, "What is meant by saying that the capability of practical reason organizes all the others is more obvious: the opportunity to plan one's own life is an opportunity to choose and order the functionings corresponding to the various other capabilities" (p. 39).

How May these "Central Capabilities" relate to advertisements? In the subsequent section of this chapter, I will attempt to determine via contemporary research on the psychological effects of advertisements on children the extent to which advertisements influence children's capacity for rational thought. If there is evidence to suggest that advertisements do, in fact, affect children's capacity for rational thought, then I would be compelled to determine whether or not advertisements violate either one or both of Nussbaum's Central Capabilities which account primarily for humans' capacity for cognitive freedom, and thus whether or not advertisements can be considered either "just" or "unjust" qua Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach to social justice (Nussbaum, 2011).

Advertisements' Effects on Children

The Nairn and Fine-Ambler debate. In 2008, Agnes Nairn of the EM-Lyon Business School and Cordelia Fine of the University of Melbourne (2008) published an essay entitled, "Who's Messing with My Mind? The Implications of Dual-Process

Models for the Ethics of Advertising to Children", within which they argue, synopsized for now, that advertisements do, in fact, influence children, and that they do so, moreover, in an implicit, affectively based way (Nairn & Fine, 2008, p. 447). In the same year, Tim Ambler (2008), a "… Senior Fellow at London Business School", responded to Nairn and Fine's essay with an essay of his own, provocatively entitled, "Who's Messing with Whose Mind? Debating the Nairn and Fine Argument", within which he points out and responds to what he deems to be several inconsistencies in their argument (Ambler, 2008, pp. 885 & 895). Finally, in 2009, Sonia Livingstone, "… Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics …", published an essay entitled, "Debating Children's Susceptibility to Persuasion – Where Does Fairness Come In? A Commentary on the Nairn and Fine versus Ambler Debate", within which she both assesses the merits and shortcomings of both Nairn and Fine's and Ambler's essays and offers a position of her own (Livingstone, 2009, pp. 170 & 174). Subsequently, therefore, I will review each author's essay in order to produce an adequate evidential foundation for ultimately offering an informed position regarding the extent to which advertisements affect children and the ethical status of this influence if it exists.

Nairn and Fine. Nairn and Fine (2008) initially point to the problem that advertisements may still influence children regardless of whether or not they possess "cognitive defenses" toward persuasive media content:

> They state, "… a very recent experiment, for the first time specifically comparing children's cognitive defenses against an adult benchmark, reported that while children did indeed begin to show an understanding of selling intent from age 8, at 12 they had still not acquired an understanding of persuasive intent on a par with adult levels (Rozendaal *et al.* 2008). (Nairn & Fine, 2008, pp. 449-450)

They argue, however, that even older children who possess the ability to recognize

advertisements' selling intent were not immune to this influence, calling into question the

effectiveness of cognitive defenses again advertisements and the ways in which

advertisements influence children. Nairn and Fine note that,

> … Brucks *et al*. (1988) reported that even having the ability to be skeptical does
> not necessarily mean that such abilities will be engaged – a finding upheld by
> Moses and Baldwin (2005), who note that 'merely having the concepts in some
> latent form does little if anything to prevent children from being led astray by
> advertising. (p. 450)

They state, moreover, that, "Studies that have compared under-12 age groups generally

find little or no effect of age persuasion knowledge on children's preferences for

advertised products (Christenson 1982; Kunkel 1988; Mallinckdrodt & Mizerski 2007)"

(p. 450). Thus, regardless of whether or not children may "know" that advertisements

intend to sell them products, they do not employ this "explicit" understanding of

persuasive intent in modifying their ultimate "implicit" preferences towards products (pp.

449 & 457).

Nairn and Fine do not ascribe this susceptibility in children to possible "faulty

cognitive defenses" against advertisements' persuasive intent; rather, they turn their

attention to advertisements themselves and what, if anything, is intrinsic to them that

allows them to still influence children regardless of children's explicit awareness of their

persuasive intent. The authors argue that, "… changes in the intent behind and execution

of contemporary children's advertising formats mean that such marketing techniques

make use of evaluative conditioning rather than explicitly persuasive information" (p.

454). Put in another way, "… there is no propositional information that the child can

critically assess and evaluate in light of knowledge of the selling or persuasive intent of the message …" (p. 454).

Nairn and Fine explain that this is owing to the fact that "contemporary advertising" has evolved from "… 30-second TV spots, which were mainly factual or propositional in content …" in the 1970s and 1980s, into "ambient" media forms which consist of "… viral marketing … (Marsden 2006)" on the internet, "… sponsored 'advergames' on children's websites (Dahl *et al*. 2006)", "… movie tie-ins and brand mentions in pop songs (Kaikati & Kaikati 2004)", and other forms of what the authors dub "[c]overt and stealth marketing … (Kaikati & Kaikati 2004; Sprott 2008)" which are "… practices where the true relationship with the company that produces or sponsors the marketing message is not entirely clear (Martin & Smith 2008)" (p. 453). These "ambient" forms of advertising, Nairn and Fine believe, "… involve an evaluative conditioning format in which the product or brand is linked with rewarding stimuli" (p. 453). Hence, the authors believe that, "These new ambient, and often interactive, formats clearly constitute a move away from information-based advertising, which presents facts about a product", and moves toward "… an evaluative conditioning format …" which is *affective* in nature – which peaks children's emotions and "*attitudes*" (pp. 453 & 455).

Nairn and Fine draw, therefore, on the "dual process model" of cognitive functioning which assesses attitudes and, furthermore, divides attitudes into two subtypes: "'explicit attitudes'" and "'implicit attitudes'", the former which can be defined as "… self-reported, deliberative evaluations …", and the latter "… which are based on 'automatic affective reactions resulting from the particular associations that are activated automatically when one encounters a relevant stimulus' (Gawronski & Bodenhausen

12

2006, p. 693)" (pp. 454-455). The authors state, consequently, that "… research has shown how advertising messages can influence implicit attitudes toward products", and add that, "Importantly, this can occur in the absence of any change in explicit attitudes, thus making it unlikely that implicit attitude change is merely a consequence of a changed explicit attitude" (p. 457). Nairn and Fine subsequently mention four interesting studies that clarify the relationship between consumers' implicit and explicit attitudes towards products.

The first study by "Czyzewska and Ginsburg (2007)" found that public service advertisements against marijuana use increased negative implicit attitudes towards its use but did not affect explicit attitudes towards its use (p. 457). The second study by "Dal Cin *et al*. (2007)" entailed that young men, after seeing a film clip of actor Bruce Willis smoking, did not experience either a positive or a negative change in explicit attitudes toward smoking, but for those who identified with the actor, did experience an increase in positive implicit attitudes towards smoking and how the activity related to the self (p. 457). They add that "… for smokers, [the film clip] increased intention to smoke …" (p. 457). The third study by "Gibson (2008)" involved the association of "… positive or negative images and words …" with "… Coke and Pepsi logos …" and resulted in participants experiencing "… implicit attitude change … who initially had no strong preference for either brand" (p. 457). The authors add that, "Their explicit attitudes towards the two drinks, however, remained unaffected" (p. 457). The fourth and final study by "Forehand and Perkins (2005)" involved participants identifying celebrities' voiceovers in advertisements and resulted in this identification protecting participants against explicit "brand attitude change" but failing to protect them from implicit "brand

attitude change" (p. 457). Crucially, Nairn and Fine note that "… implicit attitude change in response to advertising may affect explicit consumer attitudes, too", a contention they support with reference to a study by "Berridge & Winkielman 2003" that found that participants rated a drink higher, "… drank more of it and were willing to pay more for it …" after being exposed to happy faces (p. 457).

Qua "Bargh (2002)", Nairn and Fine warn that, "Although this study involved subliminal stimuli … what is important is not that stimuli are consciously imperceptible but that the consumer does not realise that they are being influenced, or think themselves immune to that influence (p. 457). Because, therefore, "… the pairing of products with positive stimuli can effect implicit attitude change, in the absence of explicit attitude change", and "Implicit consumer attitudes, in turn, can direct consumer choices even when they conflict with the individuals explicit consumer attitude in low-control situations", Nairn and Fine conclude "… that contemporary marketing techniques that link products with positive stimuli can elicit a preference for or choice of that product by non-conscious, non-rational means, and may even undermine consciously held attitudes" (p. 458).

Ambler. Ambler (2008) responds critically to Nairn and Fine's (2008) essay by highlighting and responding to seven of their arguments he considers to be "contentious" (Ambler, 2008, p. 890-892). First, Ambler criticizes Nairn and Fine's argument that, "*Advertisers have recently changes from using explicit forms of persuasion to manipulating minds through implicit persuasion* (pp. 452–454)" (p. 890). He argues that Nairn and Fine essentially neurotically frame advertisers as evil scientists bent on "manipulating" the minds of viewers when, in fact, "The reality is that advertisers have

used association, emotion, and other non-cognitive appeals since the dawn of advertising" (p. 890). Although he argues that advertisements should be labeled if they could otherwise be confused for examples of "editorial" media, he states that the manipulative advertiser to whom Nairn and Fine seem to appeal "… is a long way from the experience of any current advertising executive …" (p. 890).

Second, Ambler attacks Nairn and Fine's position that, "*When implicit advertising does more than reinforce behaviour (i.e. it seeks to change attitudes) people switch from implicit to explicit ad evaluation* (p. 456)" (p. 890). He reasons, however, that advertisements could not effect "… implicit attitudes implicitly …" because they would have to elicit "… explicit processing …" to do so (p. 890). For Ambler, this means that "'implicit persuasion'" must then necessarily involve explicit evaluative processes when individuals view advertisements, an unlikely possibility owing to the vast number of advertisements individuals view and would thus have to explicitly evaluate (p. 891). Ultimately, Ambler is attempting to cast doubt on Nairn and Fine's interpretation and use of the dual process model of cognitive function by muddying the exclusivity Nairn and Fine attribute to implicit and explicit attitudes (pp. 890-891; Nairn & Fine, 2008).

Third, Ambler rebuts Nairn and Fine's contention that, "*Ad processes, or the lack of them, that are not age related can still be used to challenge advertising practice if it is unfair or unethical for all age groups* (p. 461)" (p. 891). He uses a semantic argument by claiming that Nairn and Fine, by defining "… 'the ability to resist implicit persuasion', p. 460 …" as "'fairness'", engage in a tautological argument when arguing that "… all implicit forms of persuasion are 'unfair' …" (p. 891). This, for Ambler, obfuscates the meaning of the word "fairness" and thus renders problematic their criticism that implicit

persuasion is "unfair" to viewers. Ambler adds, "It is not clear how the world could operate if all forms of implicit persuasion were eliminated in case some people did not have the ability to resist" (p. 891). Essentially, therefore, Ambler claims that it would be impossible to eliminate all forms of advertising that implicitly persuaded, in my words, "some of the people, some of the time" (Ambler, 2008).

Fourth, Ambler criticizes the position that "*Recent neuroscience and psychology research supports the Nairn and Fine version of the dual process model* (p. 455)" (p. 891). Ambler bluntly points out that Nairn and Fine reference only "… six neuroscience references, which are mostly about the development of the human brain and neither support, nor deny, their claims for this model …" (p. 891). He concludes brusquely on this point that, "… Nairn and Fine seem to be stretching neuroscientific support beyond its current limits" (p. 891).

Fifth, Ambler refutes Nairn and Fine's implication that "*The dual process model is the only, or only main, explanation of how advertising works* (p. 455)" (p. 891). On this point, Ambler reasons that Nairn and Fine are single-minded about the explanatory robustness of the dual process model of attitudinal change, argues that they are neglectful of explicating the nuances and interrelationships that exist between this dual process model and others which fall under this category, and states that, "It is obvious that no one model explains how all ads work if only because different circumstances require different means of persuasion and/or habit reinforcement" (pp. 891-892).

Sixth, Ambler takes issue with Nairn and Fine's statement that, "'*Much of advertising to children does not work like this at all* [i.e. openly], *but instead operates darkly, beyond the light of consciousness'* (p. 463)" (p. 892). He does not agree with

Nairn and Fine's dichotomization of the unconscious and unconscious activities being "dark" or "reprehensible" and consciousness and conscious activities being "light" (p. 892). Rather, he argues that, "Advertising is a form of communication and, like other forms of communication, it uses words, pictures and sounds, some of which register consciously and some do not", and posits that well-dressed partygoers are like advertisers, "… simply seeking to make a good impression and there is nothing manipulative about that" (p. 892).

Seventh, and finally, Ambler criticizes Nairn and Fine on the topic of "*Brand versus category choices*", entailing that, in his estimation, Nairn and Fine focus too narrowly on children's product brand choices rather than product category choices: He states, "In the wide sweep of childhood welfare we are concerned with broad category, not brand, choices. It matters little in this context whether the child, or her parent, chooses Coke or Pepsi" (p. 892).

Ambler concedes in his conclusion, however, that Nairn and Fine do "… make some valid points …", despite "… all the contentious areas and confusion" (p. 893). Moreover, Ambler effectually agrees with Nairn and Fine's point "… that the advertising industry itself reconsider advertising to children in the light of their paper" (p. 893). Owing to the contentiousness of this debate, therefore, it is essential that I now review third party, Sonia Livingstone's (2009) assessment of these authors' arguments.

Livingstone. Livingstone initially clarifies an important facet of the topic of advertising to children by elucidating three separate arguments which attempt to account for advertisements' effects on children: "… the literacy argument …", "… the influence argument …", and "… the fairness argument …", the first claiming that "… until

somewhere between 8 and 12 years of age, children cannot grasp the persuasive intent of advertising …", the second claiming that "… since they lack adequate cognitive defenses (or advertising literacy), children (unlike adolescents and adults) are particularly susceptible to advertising …", and the third claiming that "… since they are both unduly vulnerable and unable to defend themselves, it is unfair to advertise to young children (see Kunkel & Wilcox 2001), although, many suggest insofar as their advertising literacy can be increased, advertising to children need not be restricted" (Livingstone, 2009, p. 170). She suggests that it is due to these three strains of thought that we have the Nairn and Fine-Ambler debate in the first place and states that, "While [Nairn and Fine and Ambler] agree that more, and even more self-regulation, is needed, they do not agree about the processes by which advertising persuades or the relevance of the fairness argument across the age range" (Livingstone, 2009, pp. 170-171).

Livingstone subsequently offers three general and theoretically cautious claims in the attempt to moderate the exchange between Nairn and Fine and Ambler. The first two claims deal directly with advertisements' effects on children. The third deals with media literacy and its effectiveness, and for now, I will suspend commentary on this claim until later in the chapter. Thus, first, Livingstone notes that, "… while the evidence for children's recognition of advertising is reasonable sound as regards television advertising, little is known about children's recognition of or skepticism towards the present media environment" (p. 171). Included within this "present media environment" is, qua "… Chester & Montgomery 2007; Fielder *et al*. 2007; Moore & Rideout 2007; [and] Calvert 2008 …", "… viral marketing, user engagement strategies, brand advocacy, emotion marketing, behavioural targeting, social networking applications, spin-off

merchandizing, cross-media promotions, product placement, sponsorship, advergames, and more …" (p. 171).

Second, she states that "… there is little evidence that young children are more affected by advertising than adolescents (or, indeed, adults), even though the latter are more media-literate (e.g. Lewis & Hill 1998; Moore & Lutz 2000 – as reviewed in Nairn and Fine 2008a, and Livingstone and Helsper 2006)" (p. 171). A crucial conclusion of this premise is, therefore, that "… the recognition of persuasive intent does not appear to confer immunity from persuasive effects, irrespective of age" (p. 171). This claim leads Livingstone to posit, then, that if the "… social or mediated … environment" within which advertising exists is inherently "difficult to understand" or read, it can render both adults and children "illiterate" (p. 173). She states, "Since the commercial messages embedded in the new media environment are found by many to be 'hard to read', adults and children alike can be rendered vulnerable", "vulnerability", Livingstone claims, being "… shaped by not one but two factors – it depends not only on the individual's cognitive/social resources but also on the (social or mediated) environment" (pp. 172- 173). Owing to the fact that in the new media environment both adults and children are vulnerable to advertisements' influence, therefore, she profoundly makes the claim, and states that she "… hazard some support …" for the claim, that "… all implicit advertising is unfair" (p. 173).

Livingstone is careful to caution the reader, however, that her support for the claim that all implicit advertising is unfair to viewers is a contention which departs from the realm of empirical statements on advertisements' effects on children and enters the realm of *political* statements on the issue. She notes, however, that naïve is the

participant in this discussion who sees this debate as being "purely intellectual" (p. 173).

Hence, Livingstone offers that what has been brought to bear on this debate is a conflict

between two of the three axiomatic strains of argument underlying the issue of

advertisements' effects on children: She states, "… the influence argument should not be

seen as a necessary consequence of the literacy argument since people, including

children, can be influenced irrespective of their literacy, albeit perhaps by a different

process" (p. 173).

She suggests, therefore, that *the fairness argument* fractures along the lines of the

influence argument and the literacy argument: "The first suggests it is unfair to persuade

children if they cannot tell they are being persuaded. The second suggests it is unfair to

persuade people if such persuasion is against their own interest (i.e. if the effect of the

persuasion is harmful)" (p. 173). Livingstone feels that Nairn and Ambler support the

former argument, whereas Ambler "… hints at support" for it in "… his call for research

and self-regulation of the new media environment …" (p. 173). She also feels, however,

that, apropos the latter argument, Nairn and Fine believe that although "… persuasion

will not occur against the individual's interests …" if individuals possess "… sufficient

resources (cognitive, social) …", when these resources are absent or insufficient, "…

problems occur …" (p. 173). She senses that Ambler, on the other hand, holds that "…

advertising is generally in people's interest (as he says, it pays for good media content)"

(p. 173).

Can Advertisements Be "Unjust"?

In light of Martha Nussbaum's (2011) comment that, "We can certainly agree that

capability-destruction in children is a particularly grave matter and as such should be off-

limits", I would like to restate the two research questions I posed at the outset of this chapter: First, to what extent do advertisements affect children's ability to exercise rational thought? And second, if advertisements do affect children's capacity for rational thought, to what extent, and according to what or whose conception of social justice, can advertisements' effects on children be considered "just" or "unjust" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 27)?

In response to the first of these two research questions, I contend that Nairn and Fine's (2008) research and Sonia Livingstone's (2009) elegantly level-headed analysis of the Nairn and Fine-Ambler debate make the convincing case that advertisements not only affect children, but also implicitly persuade both children and adults, regardless of the quality and quantity of media literacy viewers possess, and thus cripple their ability to exercise rational thought proper, and when applied to consumer behavior, rational product preference and ultimate selection. Even Ambler (2008) does not deny that implicit persuasion exists – although he does not necessarily believe that such persuasion is as deleterious as Nairn and Fine suggest. Moreover, Livingstone (2009) reveals that although there exist three strands of argumentation underpinning the issue of advertisements' effects on children, "the literacy argument", "the influence argument", and "the fairness argument", each of which possesses its own agenda and framing of the issue, the latter two seem to concordantly call into question the ethical status of advertisements' implicit persuasion of both adults and children (Livingstone, 2009, pp. 170 & 173) (Ambler, 2008; Livingstone, 2009, Nairn & Fine, 2008).

I agree with Livingstone, and perhaps also "hazard" the position, that "… all implicit advertising is unfair" to all viewers, regardless of age. Implicit advertising is

unfair because, as Livingstone explains, it affects viewers *regardless* of whether or not they possess media literacy skills, and this fact evidences itself in the nonexistence of differentiated effects in younger children and adolescents – adolescents possessing at least some degree of media literacy. In short, media literacy does not protect older children from advertisements' effects. And yet, calling this influence "unfair" does not go far enough in admonishing a phenomenon, a "pedagogical site", as Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg (2000) posit, that, as evidence shows, implicitly persuades adults and, perhaps to a greater extent, children on a daily basis (Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000, p. 380; Livingstone, 2009; Nairn & Fine, 2008).

In response to the second of these two research questions, therefore, and in light of the evidence that advertisements implicitly persuade children and, therefore, impinge children's capacity for rational thought proper, it is logical to argue that advertisements *can* be considered *both* unfair *and* unjust if we also assess them according to Martha Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach. Referring back to my assessment of her interpretation of the Capabilities Approach, she characterized "internal capabilities" as constituting in part "… states of the person (not fixed, but fluid and dynamic) …" which include "… intellectual and emotional capacities, … internalized learning, [and] skills of perception and movement …" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 21). By way of implicit and affect-based persuasion, it stands to reason that advertisements *hijack* children's capacities for novel intellectual and honest emotional interpretations of the products to which they are exposed. Moreover, advertisements *dictate* how and what children learn about products, therein denying them authentic opportunities for consciously determining whether or not a particular product or brand is worthy of purchase and use. Furthermore, implicit and

affectively based persuasion injects children with *designer perceptions* of the products for sale, thereby robbing children of the ability to see how products *actually* look, *actually perform*, *actually* taste, ad infinitum. As Nussbaum (Hayden, 2001) has argued, "If people are well-nourished but not empowered to exercise practical reason and planning with regard to their health and nutrition, the situation is not fully commensurate with human dignity: they are being taken care of the way we take care of infants" (Hayden, 2001, p. 39) (Livingstone, 2009; Nairn & Fine, 2008; Nussbaum, 2011).

Also apropos Nussbaum's (2011) statement that, "It is … possible for a person to live in a political and social environment in which she could realize an internal capability (for example, criticizing the government) but lack the developed ability to think critically or speak publicly", it is reasonable to argue in a parallel way that children exist in a social reality that does not in and of itself restrict them from making choices in regards to what products they prefer; rather, due to implicit persuasion, they *lack the a priori ability for this free expression* (p. 22). Hence, with respect to "functionings", it appears that advertisements prevent children from *exercising* the capability of rational product choice in real world situations, such as purchasing a food product in a convenience store. Apropos Sen's (Nussbaum, 2011) anecdote involving the starving versus the fasting individual, a child affected by implicit persuasion may shop alongside a child who have *not* been affected by implicit persuasion, and both children may select the same item, but it is only the latter child who has chosen, *functioned*, freely in accordance with access to its internal capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 25). Advertisements quash, therefore, these internal capabilities for children (Livingstone, 2009; Nairn & Fine, 2008; Nussbaum, 2011).

Furthermore, and perhaps most gravely, advertisements, via implicit persuasion, specifically violate *both* Nussbaum's (2011) Central Capabilities of "Senses, imagination, and thought", and "Practical reason" (pp. 33-34). In regards to the latter Central Capability, advertisements restrict children from the capability "… to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life …" if we can consider part of the process of planning one's life to entail one's ability to rationally and consciously choose products one wants and needs. In regards to the former Central Capability, advertisements, once again framed as a "pedagogical site", constitute an educative force which *attacks* one's imagination and senses by attempting to *control* and *manufacture* one's thoughts and feelings (Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000, p. 380). Implicitly persuasive advertisements, therefore, are the exact *opposite* of an educational phenomenon that is "adequate" – they are the very *bane* of critical media literacy projects. Moreover, in destroying individuals' Central Capability of practical reason, advertisements eliminate a unifying, "*architectonic*" capability, without which the remaining Central Capabilities cannot function in a manner that is, in Nussbaum's (Hayden, 2001) words, "… commensurate with human dignity" (Hayden, 2001, p. 39). Snauwaert (2011) reasons qua Nussbaum that, "'A life that lacks [practical reason] as its guiding element… is a life less than human. Thus it has no chance of being good human functioning' (Nussbaum 1998 182–3)" (Snauwaert, 2011, p. 321). For these reasons, therefore, advertisements elicit internal capability and Central Capability failure and "-destruction" in the destruction of "senses, imagination, and thought" and "practical reason", and thus according to this conception of social justice can definitely be considered "unjust" (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 27, 33, & 34) (Livingstone, 2009; Nairn & Fine, 2008; Nussbaum, 2011).

Chapter Two

Media, Discrimination, and Educational Responses

Advertisements, "the Other", and Empathy

In Chapter One, I argued qua Martha Nussbaum (2011) and her interpretation of the Capabilities Approach that some advertisements can be considered "unjust" if they utilize implicit persuasion to control consumers' – and more specifically, children consumers' – ability to freely make decisions about products, and thus essentially their very capabilities for "Senses, imagination, and thought" and "Practical reason" (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33 & 34). In short, therefore, I criticized some advertisements as being unjust because of *what they intend to do* to the consumer. And yet, can we also criticize some advertisements because of *what they say* to the consumer? More specifically, do there exist advertisements that promote stereotypical or discriminatory images of people, places, or things? If so, what do these advertisements say, how do they convey these messages, and how can and should we as critical media consumers interpret and critique such advertisements (Nussbaum, 2011). In this chapter, I will utilize Renée Martin's (1992) interpretation of scholar Flavio Vega's "Wholistic Model for the Study of Social Policy on Race, Sex, and Class Diversity in Education", the work of philosophers Martin Heidegger (1962), Emmanuel Levinas (1997) (Moran & Mooney, 2002), and Slavoj Žižek (2008), and also Martha Nussbaum's (2011) Central Capability of "affiliation" to frame media as an educational institution as "unjust" not only in light of some advertisements' use of implicit persuasion, but also in light of some advertisements' use of ethnocentric and classist stereotypes to sell their products. I will then assert that Richard Rorty's (Hayden, 2001; Voparil, 2006) conception of

"sentimental education" and David Takacs' (2002) "assets model of multiculturalism",

when used in conjunction with Douglas Kellner's and Jeff Share's (2005) interpretation

of critical media literacy, can be a potent pedagogical response to media as an unjust

educational institution. I will subsequently critique Claudia Ruitenberg's (2010)

conception of inductive political education as being a pedagogy that is antithetical to

fostering respectful intersubjective relationships and favor instead Richard Rorty's and

David Takacs' educational models. I will then conclude this chapter and my thesis by

reflecting on the progress of this work and imagining future research initiatives.

The Vega Model as a fundamental heuristic. In "A Model for Studying the

Effects of Social Policy on Education: Gauging the Impact of Race, Sex, and Class

Diversity", Renée Martin (1992) offers a heuristic with which scholars can clarify and

explore the interrelated nature of "cultural bias", "personal prejudice", and "institutional

discrimination" (Martin, 1992, p. 54). Martin attributes "A Wholistic Model for the Study

of Social Policy on Race, Sex, and Class Diversity in Education" to researcher Flavio

Vega, "… who was instrumental in the creation of human relations/multicultural

education programs in colleges of teacher education in the 1970s and 1980s in

Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois where the model continues to be used" (p. 53).

She also notes that the model "… provides students with a conceptual framework for the

study of human discriminatory practices" (p. 54).

More specifically, she describes the model, which is structured as a Venn diagram

comprised of three circles, thusly:

> In the model, cultural bias refers to the norms, standards, and values in the society
> that are maintained and reinforced by the dominant culture. Vega notes that the
> dominant culture disseminates and perpetuates values and standards through its
> societal institutions. As individuals mature in the society, they are reinforced for

their internalization and reiteration of the standards of the dominant culture. The individual develops prejudices or attitudes that are reflected by the dominant culture which become an ingrained behavioral component. These attitudes are perpetuated in the media, in one's peer culture, and in all social institutions. With the attainment of status in those institutions the individual invokes the attitudes gleaned from the culture for which she or he has been reinforced and enacts policies, practices, or laws (formal and informal) reflective of the dominant cultural values thereby engaging in the process of institutional discrimination. (Martin, 1992)

Media as a discriminatory institution. In the following sections, I will seek to determine whether or not "media-as-as-a-social-institution" in part operates as a "discriminatory" social institution via advertisements by depicting those who fall outside of a society's dominant culture as "other". I will also attempt to gauge whether or not such depictions are empathetic to the agency or subjectivity of those depicted. In order to accomplish these two objectives, however, I must first present and explore philosophical accounts of "the other", "empathy", and objectification and then rely on these accounts to inform an exercise of critical media analysis which will involve the assessment of an advertisement for potential discriminatory meanings. I will then use my forthcoming analysis to justify a call for educational responses which utilize critical media analyses to restore subjectivity to those depicted as "other" in advertisements and in all media forms.

Philosophical accounts of "the Other", empathy, and objectification. In the subsequent three sections, I will review Martin Heidegger's (1962), Emmanuel Levinas' (1997), and Slavoj Žižek's (2008) thoughts on intersubjectivity. I will then rely heavily on these philosophers' positions to critically assess two advertisements that potentially express latent, discriminatory messages.

Heidegger. In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger (1962) examines identity and intersubjectivity within a much larger project which takes as ontologically and

phenomenologically axiomatic the meaning of the question of "Being": Heidegger states,

"*Basically, all ontology, no matter how rich and firmly complicated a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains blind and perverted from its ownmost aim, if it has not first adequately clarified the meaning of Being, and conceived this clarification as its fundamental task*" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 31). Part and parcel of Heidegger's task of clarifying the meaning of Being requires the application of phenomenological analysis to the terms and concepts we use for the navigation of everyday existence. For Heidegger, for example, what we commonly call "the person", "the individual", or "the subject" is instead phenomenologically the being for whom Being "… is an *issue* …", "This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being …", or "… '*Dasein*'", which, when hyphenated as "'Da-sein'", literally means "'Being-there'" (pp. 27 & 32).

Heidegger subsequently attributes to Dasein, therefore, characteristics which are initially foreign to common discussions of "identity" or "existence", such as terms which specify certain "kinds" of existing, including hyphenated concepts such as "being-in-the-world" (pp. 69 & 78). This is due to the fact that Heidegger's novel analysis calls the very commonness of the way we encounter ourselves, others, and the world itself into question and subjects this normality to phenomenological reinterpretation. Heidegger states that, "At the outset of our analysis it is particularly important that Dasein should not be Interpreted with the differentiated character … of some definite way of existing, but that it should be uncovered … in the undifferentiated character which it has proximally and for the most part" (p. 69). This "undifferentiated character" for Heidegger, a "… kind of Being …" out of which, and back into which again "… is all

existing, such as it is", is "… '*averageness*' …", or at times subsequently referred to as "average everydayness", which is an ontologically "inauthentic" kind of Being (p. 69). This "undifferentiated character" of Dasein also, therefore, hints at the possibility that Dasein may have an "authentic" kind of Being toward the experience of which it may be able to strive (pp. 69 & 349). This dichotomy of Dasein's "inauthentic" versus "authentic" Being becomes crucial to Heidegger's examination of Dasein's relationship with other Dasein, or "Others" (p. 153).

First, however, it is important to note that Heidegger conceives of Dasein as always existing, and always having existed, within a world; conversely, in existing, Dasein is never "without" a world: Heidegger states, "Dasein is never 'proximally' an entity which is, so to speak, free from Being-in, but which sometimes has the inclination to take up a 'relationship' towards the world. Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only *because* Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is at it is" (p. 84). Moreover, Heidegger explains that there are two additional kinds of Being which are inexorable from and components of Dasein's Being-in-the-world: Dasein's "*Being-with*" and "*Dasein-with*" other Dasein, or "Others" (p. 149). In these kinds of Being, Dasein operates in "… the mode of everyday Being-one's-Self" (p. 149). Being-with is not the same kind of Being as Dasein-with for Dasein's everyday Being-one's-Self, however, because Being-with operates as an "existential" capacity for Dasein to be with Others, "… even when factically no Other is present-at-hand or perceived": Heidegger explains that, "… Being-with is an existential constituent of Being-in-the-world. Dasein-with has proved to be a kind of Being which entities encountered within-the-world have as their own" (pp. 156 & 163).

It is qua Dasein-with, therefore, that Dasein actually encounters Others in the world, and in this encounter, Others "… are not encountered as person-Things present-at-hand", "present-at-hand" connoting the relationship Dasein has to mere things in the world (p. 156). Heidegger continues to state that,

> … we meet [Others] 'at work', that is, primarily in their Being-in-the-world. Even if we see the Other 'just standing around', he in never apprehended as a human-Thing present-at-hand, but his 'standing-around' is an existential mode of Being … The Other is encountered in his Dasein-with in the world. (p. 156)

Heidegger explains, moreover, that in Being-with Others, Others "matter" to Dasein in a way different than "equipment", such as common tools, matter to Dasein: Apropos the former relationship, Dasein expresses "*solicitude*" towards Others, whereas apropos the latter relationship, Dasein expresses "concern" towards equipment in the world, a phenomenon which is "ready-to-hand" to Dasein and not "present-at-hand", as are mere things (pp. 156, 157, & 158). What is crucial about this differentiation between solicitude towards Others and concern towards equipment, however, is Heidegger's contention that Dasein, as everyday Being-one's-Self in "average Being-with-one-another", expresses a "deficient" mode of solicitude towards Others, which functions as *concern* toward Others, *as if they were equipment*: Heidegger states,

> Being for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, not 'mattering' to one another—these are possible ways of solicitude. And it is precisely these last-named deficient and Indifferent modes that characterize everyday, average Being-with-one-another. These modes of Being show again the characteristics of inconspicuousness and obviousness which belong just as much to the everyday Dasein-with of Others within-the-world as to the ready-to-hand of the equipment with which one is daily concerned. (p. 158)

Dasein as everyday Being-one's-Self in average Being-with-one-another, therefore, encounters Others inauthentically and as it would mere tools (pp. 149 & 158). In this mode, "[t]his 'inconsiderate' Being-with …", Others exist for Dasein as "'numerals'", as

a "… number of 'subjects' …", as "… those who proximally and for the most part '*are there*' in everyday Being-with-one-another" (pp. 163 & 164). In "'inconsiderate' Being-with", moreover, Dasein does not "count" on Others nor may want "… to 'have anything to do' with them" (p. 163). "In utilizing means of transport and in making use of information services such as the newspaper," Heidegger states, "every Other is like the next" (p. 164). Heidegger also notes that, "The 'who' is not this one, not that one, not oneself ... , not some people … , and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, *the* "*they*" [*das Man*]" (p. 164).

Heidegger collapses Dasein's mode of Being as Being-one's-Self in average Being-with-one-another as Dasein's "*they-self*" (pp. 149, 158, & 167). This move is important because Dasein's very mode of being *is affected* by Dasein's outward interpretation of Others as "das Man" (p. 164). In other words, Dasein does not stand as an "*authentic Self*" to Others when it expresses concern for Others as das Man; rather, Heidegger states that, "As they-self, the particular Dasein has been *dispersed* into the 'they', and must first find itself" (p. 167). Because Dasein as they-self is "dispersed into the 'they'", Heidegger states that, "This Being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Dasein completely into the kind of Being of 'the Others', in such a way, indeed, that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more" (p. 164). And because Dasein as they-self has a "kind of Being of 'the Others'", a kind of Being which also envelops Dasein surreptitiously and wholly, Heidegger states that "the real dictatorship of the 'they' …" emerges: He states, "We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* … take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise

31

we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking" (p. 164).

Consequently and colloquially, this inauthentic relationship between Dasein and Others makes impossible an authentic interaction between two people, not simply because an authentic individual deems everyone else to be inauthentic, but also because the individual *herself* experiences Others as inauthentic through an *inauthentic Self*. Her very Self sabotages the way in which she is capable of interpreting Others from the outset. Heidegger imagines the possibility of an "authentic" encounter between two Dasein as consisting of two Dasein first sharing an understanding of Being, which would then allow one Dasein to see or project "… one's own Being-towards-oneself" into the Other (p. 162). "The Other," Heidegger adds, "would be a duplicate of the Self" (p. 164). Interestingly, this is Heidegger's anecdotal account of the process of empathy, which, as he states, "… is … supposed … to provide the first ontological bridge from one's own subject, which is given proximally as alone, to the other subject, which is proximally quite closed off" (p. 162). But once more, the very Self which Dasein as they-self would be projecting into the Other is inauthentic, and would merely reflect that Self which belongs to das Man; hence, empathy fails to moderate and define this exchange (Heidegger, 1962).

On the issue of the existence of empathy in the intersubjective encounter between two Dasein, however, Heidegger makes a fascinating series of comments which hint at the possibility for the existence of empathy in intersubjectivity: He states,

> Of course it is indisputable that a lively mutual acquaintanceship on the basis of Being-with, often depends upon how far one's own Dasein has understood itself at the time; but this means that it depends only upon how far one's essential Being with Others has made itself transparent and has not disguised itself. And that is

possible only if Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, already is with Others. 'Empathy does not first constitute Being-with; only on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible: it gets its motivation from the unsociability of the dominant modes of Being-with. (p. 162)

There are two major premises in this passage that concern my current project: The first, which is also considerably nebulous, is that for an authentic encounter between two Dasein to occur, Dasein must "understand" themselves. The second is that empathy is catalyzed by "the dominant modes of Being-with", the dominant modes being constituted by Dasein's everyday and inauthentic Being-one's-Self, or they-self, in average Being-with-one-another, which deems Other as das Man (pp. 149, 158, 164, & 167). In other words, Dasein *can* encounter Others authentically given particular "understanding", and empathy *does* emerge from and *is* catalyzed by inauthentic social relationships (Heidegger, 1962).

Apropos the former premise, Heidegger explains that,

Dasein, as a they-self, gets 'lived' by the common-sense ambiguity of that publicness in which nobody resolves upon anything but which has always made its decision. 'Resoluteness' signifies letting oneself be summoned out of one's lostness in the 'they'. The irresoluteness of the 'they' remains dominant notwithstanding, but it cannot impugn resolute existence. (p. 345)

In this sense, therefore, "resoluteness" is a "… distinctive and authentic disclosedness, which is attested in Dasein itself by its conscience" (p. 343). Resoluteness is catalyzed, in turn, by Dasein's "… wanting to have a conscience …" which originates from a "call" within Dasein which both penetrates "… loud idle talk which goes with the common sense of the 'they'", and, therefore, draws it nearer to understanding itself as an "uncanny", "guilty" being, ready for the experience of the anxiety which accompanies having a conscience (pp. 342-343). Hence, Heidegger specifically denotes resoluteness as "… *this reticent self-projection upon one's ownmost Being-guilty, in which one is ready*

33

for anxiety …" (p. 343). Because Dasein via resoluteness emerges from the hold of the they to become instead a Self which listens to its conscience, and which is therefore an authentic Self, "Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others" (p. 344).

Apropos the latter premise, that empathy *does* emerge from and *is* catalyzed by inauthentic social relationships, Heidegger explains that, "Dasein's resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to the Others who are with it 'be' in their ownmost potentiality-for-Being, and to co-disclose this potentiality in the solicitude which leaps forth and liberates" (p. 344). "When Dasein is resolute," Heidegger adds, "it can become the 'conscience' of Others. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another—not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the 'they' and in what 'they' want to undertake (pp. 344-345). If two Dasein enjoy resoluteness, therefore, which entails desiring to have a conscience, subjecting oneself to an uncanny and guilt- and anxiety-inducing self-critical state, and escaping the grasp of das Man, then they can be aware of each other's conscience and, therefore, be aware of each other's statuses as authentically behaving, authentically thinking beings – thereby allowing for the instatement of empathy in the intersubjective encounter (Heidegger, 1962).

Levinas. In *The Primacy of the Other*, Emmanuel Levinas (Moran & Mooney, 2002) proffers an important and novel facet of intersubjectivity that echoes Heidegger's attestation that Others cannot be taken as mere things, or as Heidegger (1962) states, "… as person-Things present-at-hand" (Heidegger, 1962 p. 156). Levinas writes, "Inasmuch

as access to beings concerns vision, it dominates those beings, exerts a power over them. A thing is *given*, offers itself to me. In gaining access to it I maintain myself within the same" (Moran & Mooney, 2002, p. 515). The face of another person, or the face of the Other, does not "lend" itself to us in the same way as do things – the subject does not "dominate" the Other's face upon witnessing it: Rather, Levinas states, "The face is present in its refusal to be contained. In this sense it cannot be comprehended, that is, encompassed. It is neither seen nor touched – for in visual or tactile sensation the identity of the I envelopes the alterity of the object, which becomes precisely a content" (p. 515). The alterity, or the "otherness", of the face, therefore, is not that which the observer can "envelop" and convert into mere "content", and thus is not the same as the otherness of a thing (p. 515). Contrarily, for Levinas, the alterity of the face *affects* the observer in an importantly ontological way: He says, "The Other remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign; his face in which his epiphany is produced and which appeals to me breaks with the world that can be common to us, whose virtualities are inscribed in our *nature* and developed by our existence" (p. 515).

Levinas' framing of the Other's face as a "site" at which the observing subject encounters an alterity which cannot be "enveloped" or "encompassed" as can mere things is an axiomatic premise which underpins his powerful interpretation of and position on murder (p. 515). He argues that to kill the Other is not akin to destroying a lifeless object; in "killing" there exists the possibility for the *total* destruction of a being: "To kill is not to dominate but to annihilate," Levinas states, and continues, "The alterity that is expressed in the face provides the unique 'matter' possible for total negation. I can wish to kill only an existent absolutely independent … The Other is the sole being I can wish

35

to kill" (p. 518). Power is also a crucial component of Levinas' conception of the intersubjective encounter, and "Murder," he explains, "exercises a power over what escapes power": The face "… exceeds my powers infinitely" (p. 518). He notes that murder does still exercise a power toward the Other due to the fact that, in part, the Other's "… face expresses itself in the sensible", but the face still "… paralyzes the very power of power", or the power of murder (p. 518).

Levinas echoes this latter sentiment when he subsequently explains that the Other, in virtue of its transcendence over the physical pieces of which it is comprised and the infinity with which this transcendence exists, opposes the observer – presents a "struggle" for the observer: "This infinity, stronger than murder, already resists us in the face, in his face, is the primordial *expression*, is the first word: 'you shall not commit murder.'" (p. 518). Out of this encounter between the observer and the infinitely transcendent Other, therefore, emerges *ethics*: Levinas explains, "The infinite paralyses power by its infinite resistance to murder, which, firm and insurmountable, gleams in the face of the Other, in the total nudity of his defenseless eyes, in the nudity of the absolute openness of the Transcendent" (pp. 518-519). This "nudity" of and within the Other reveals to the observer what is "… absolutely *other* …", and what is "resistant" to the observer's infinite "… temptation to murder …" – this resistant is "… the ethical resistance" (p. 519). Levinas explains that Other's face, the "epiphany" of the Other's face, present's the observer with the potentiality that the temptation to murder is not only "… a temptation to total destruction, but also … the purely ethical impossibility of this temptation and attempt" (p. 519).

In *Otherwise than Being: Or Beyond Essence*, Levinas (1997) also employs the term "the neighbor" when discussing the Other and argues that the observer has an inherent "obligation" to the neighbor: "The community with him begins my obligation to him," Levinas explains, and continues to state that, "The neighbor is a brother. A fraternity that cannot be abrogated, an unimpeachable assignation …" (Levinas, 1997, p. 87). This is due to the fact that, according to this text's translator, Alphonso Lingis, the neighbor for Levinas is always obsessively close to the observer – the neighbor is closer to the observer, or subject, than are "entities" (p. xxv). The alterity which defines the intersubjectivity of the subject and the neighbor is, moreover, defined by a paradox: Though the neighbor is infinitely removed from the subject, as Levinas (Moran & Mooney, 2002) states, "… this 'knowledge' of another self lacks any direct mode of access to this life, lacks the means to pierce the secret of his inner life and his personal identity, the *forever-indirect* knowledge of the unknowable", the neighbor is also, according to Lingis, so close to the subject that, "The other, my neighbor … concerns, afflicts me with a closeness … closer than the closeness of entities", a "… closeness without distance … Levinas calls proximity" (Levinas, 1997, p. xxv; Moran & Mooney, 2002, p. 534).

Žižek. In *Violence*, Žižek (2008) proffers a conception of the Other-as-Neighbor which parallels and expounds upon Alphonso Lingis' (Levinas, 1997) comment that the proximity of the Neighbor to the observer "… concerns, afflicts me with a closeness … closer than the closeness of entities" (Levinas, 1997, p. xxv). Žižek conceives of the Neighbor as "… primarily a thing, a traumatic intruder, someone whose different way of life (or rather, way of *joissance* materialized in its social practices and rituals) disturbs us,

throws the balance of our way of life off the rails" (Žižek, 2008, p. 59). Žižek crucially adds that the subject's ultimate position towards the Neighbor is one of repulsion, that "… when [the Neighbor] comes too close, this can also give rise to an aggressive reaction aimed at getting rid of the disturbing intruder" (p. 59).

The Other-as-Neighbor in Žižek's account differs from the Other in Heidegger's (1962) account in an important way: In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explains that Dasein's they-self, when it operates inauthentically in the mode of everyday Being-one's-Self in average Being-with-Others, is absorbed in the "publicness" of das Man: Once again, Heidegger states, "We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* … take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 149, 158, 164 & 345). Notice the striking parallel in Žižek's (2008) description of the essence of the "middle-class subject":

> My notions—of good and evil, of pleasant and unpleasant, of funny and serious, of ugly and beautiful—are essentially *middle-class* notions; my taste in books and food and clothes, my sense of honour, my table manners, my turns of phrase, my accent, and even the characteristic movements of my body, are all matters of habit. (Žižek, 2008, p. 166)

With Heidegger, Dasein as they-self may be "apathetic" toward the Other as an Other of das Man. With Žižek, however, we see a novel position: The middle-class subject may be *disgusted* or *repulsed* by the Other-as-Neighbor because the Neighbor in his account is both *foreign* to my average understandings of the world and *threatening* in virtue of its latent subjectivity – Levinas remarks once again that, "The Other remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign …", and as "…something absolutely *other* …", (Moran & Mooney, 2002, pp. 515 & 519; Žižek, 2008).

Žižek (2008) proceeds a step further, however, and characterizes the Neighbor as not that being toward whom we must show "unconditional respect", a position he attributes to Levinas, but that thing which *smells*:

> Perhaps the key difference between lower-class and middle-class concerns lies in the way they relate to smell. For the middle class, the lower classes smell, their members do not wash regularly enough–and this brings us to one of the possible definitions of what Neighbour means today: a Neighbour is one who by definition *smells*. This is why today deodorants and soaps are crucial–they make neighbours at least minimally tolerable …. (Žižek, 2008, pp. 55, 166, & 167)

Interestingly, Žižek seems to invoke Heidegger's conception of Other as an Other of das Man when he states that, "… the Other is just fine, but only insofar as this Other is not really other …" (p. 41). This sentiment characterizes what Žižek calls, "[t]oday's liberal tolerance toward others …", which he thinks is grounded in only "… the respect of otherness and openness towards it …", but also "… an obsessive fear of harassment" (p. 41). Žižek continues,

> My duty to be tolerant towards the Other effectively means that I should not get too close to him, intrude on his space. In other words, I should respect his *intolerance* of my over-proximity. What increasingly emerges as the central human right in late-capitalist society is *the right not to be harassed*, which is a right to remain at a safe distance from others. (p. 41)

In this sense, then, Žižek implies that the Other-as-Neighbor is that figure which we must not only *avoid*, but also *avoid becoming* for the Other (Žižek, 2008).

 Empathy's absence: Žižek on torture. In his discussion of "post-political bio-politics", Žižek introduces an intriguing claim: Essentially, that the vulnerable Other for which we have an extreme respect on one hand, and the Other which is reduced "… to 'bare life,' to *Homo sacer* …", and thus excluded from all rights "… like prisoners at Guantanamo or Holocaust victims …", on the other, "… spring from a single root …" and are "… two aspects of one and the same underlying attitude …" (p. 42). Žižek argues

39

that "… respect for the vulnerable Other [is] brought to an extreme through an attitude of narcissistic subjectivity which experiences the self as vulnerable, constantly exposed to a multitude of potential 'harassments.'" (p. 42). And yet, because of this hyper-sensitivity to potential harassments from the Other, from the Neighbor, the very Other for which the subject has "unconditional respect", apropos Žižek's citation of Levinas, becomes that thing which must be *annihilated* (p. 55).

Yet, Levinas (Moran & Mooney, 2002) adeptly accounts for the fact that killing the Other, the Neighbor, an infinite, "Transcendent" phenomenon, is an "ethical impossibility" (Moran & Mooney, 2002, p. 519). Žižek (2008) explains, however, that "the Neighbor" *as such* is *never* tortured – instead, the Neighbor must *first* be stripped, deprived of its subjectivity; it must *first* be rendered *Homo sacer*: He states, "The tortured subject is no longer a Neighbour, but an object whose pain is neutralised, reduced to a property that has to be dealt with in a rational utilitarian calculus (so much pain is tolerable if it prevents a much greater amount of pain)" (Žižek, 2008, p. 45). Crucially, Žižek adds, "What disappears here is the abyss of the infinity that pertains to a subject" (p. 45). What happens here, therefore, is that *this* Other in the Heideggerian (1962) sense *is* rendered and "… apprehended as a human-Thing present-at-hand …" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 156). As an aside, perhaps it is no wonder, then, that when we see images of detainees at Guantanamo, we rarely see their faces, the sites at which, for Levinas, we could experience these Others' subjectivity (Independent Media Centre Ireland, 2013; Moran & Mooney, 2002).

Critical media analysis #1: "Febreze" and the ethnocentric other. In the following analysis, I will present a 2012 "Febreze" television advertisement, a brand

owned by the company Proctor & Gamble, which features the Azerbaijani Olympic Wrestling Team and its scented air deodorizer (Newman, 2012). It is my intent to determine whether or not the way in which the advertisement depicts the Azerbaijani Wrestling Team can be considered "discriminatory", both according to the Vega Model and in light of the previous philosophical analyses of "otherness" (Martin, 1992).

      Content. Febreze's advertisement begins with a screen which displays the text, "In preparation for The London 2012 Olympic Games, Febreze took on the toughest odor challenge" (YouTube, 2012). The next screen shot reads, "The Azerbaijani Wrestling Team" (YouTube, 2012). A third screen shot reads, "This is their story" (YouTube, 2012). The advertisement proceeds to show the four male members of the Azerbaijani wrestling team, dressed in team athletic wear, in Azerbaijan. A likely Western, English-speaking male narrator narrates "their story" against a background of what may be traditional Azerbaijani music. The four men are never named individually and are exclusively shown together as teammates. At 24 seconds into the 2 minute and 5 second-long advertisement, the narrator states, almost glibly, "Febreze gets rid of odors" (YouTube, 2012). The team is then shown in a photo shoot posing with bottles of Febreze. At 38 seconds, the narrator states, "Febreze brought the team to London to continue their training for the games. And over the course of several days, they worked up a massive stink" (YouTube, 2012). The men are shown to be in a gym using various forms of equipment. At one point, a service worker in the gym expresses disgust as she deals with their towels. At 53 seconds, the narrator says, "Febreze used that stink and conducted a series of experiments", and the advertisement shows Febreze representatives,

exclusively white individuals, spraying their soiled belongings with the deodorizer (YouTube, 2012).

The advertisement then shows the men to be in a different room, still exercising, but now dispersed amongst blindfolded and seated bystanders, or "participants" in the experiments, which are mostly white and completely Western men and women. The room seems dark, dingy, and fetid. As the men are shown to be working out around the participants, one shot showing one of the men stretching in a prostrate position near one participant's face, Febreze representatives and the men themselves suspend the men's recently sprayed contents in front of the participants' faces. Two participants in particular rave about how "fresh" the room smells and others liken the room's scent to pleasurable sources such as flowers – until they are asked to remove their blindfolds. When they see the Azerbaijani Wrestling Team before them they express their incredulity with laughter (YouTube, 2012). The advertisement concludes with the narrator stating, "People confirmed: Febreze defeats the roughest odors, and the Azerbaijani team continued on their journey for gold at the Olympics", and the team walking out of the facility (YouTube, 2012).

Analysis. *New York Times* Advertising correspondent Andrew Adam Newman, quotes "Per Pedersen, global executive creative director at Grey New York …" as stating about this advertisement, "'We don't expect you to cheer for the Azerbaijani team – it's not that kind of sponsorship' … 'These guys are brought in because they represent a sport that has the biggest odor challenge of the Olympics.'" (Newman, 2012, p. 2). Newman also states that, partially using a quote from another commentator, that, "The choice of an obscure Azerbaijani team as opposed to well-known American athletes 'is

42

counterintuitive in many ways …' … 'It's a bit more humorous, a bit more endearing'"

(p. 2). I contend, however, that this advertisement's content deserves an analysis that

dispenses with such light-hearted commentary and praise.

Per Pedersen got it right, at least, when he stated that we are not supposed to be

rooting for the Azerbaijani Wrestling Team in this advertisement (Newman, 2012). By

representing the men throughout the advertisement as "a team", "an Azerbaijani team",

and not "as individuals", Febreze renders these men exclusively representative of "the

collective" from which they have come – they "stand" for and *are* Azerbaijan, a country

with a population which is, incidentally, 93.4% Muslim (Central Intelligence Agency,

2013). Because these individuals are not encountered as individuals but are instead

encountered as nameless members of a collective, in Heideggerian terminology they

could be said to represent the Others of das Man, with whom the other participants in the

advertisement never meaningfully interact. Moreover, when looking at the advertisement

as a means for corporate profit-making, we could say that Febreze actually uses the men

as "tools" or "ready-to-hand equipment" for the single purpose of demonstrating the

effectiveness of a product (Heidegger, 1962).

In a Žižekian (2008) reading, however, *smell* is also a critical component in this

advertisement, and coupling the Heideggerian interpretation of this team representing the

Others of das Man with Žižek's exegesis on smell as an integral characteristic of the

traumatic, intrusive Neighbor, it could be said that the four men of the Azerbaijani

Wrestling Team *also* represent the Neighbor, and more specifically, the *Muslim*

Neighbor, which poses a direct threat to Western selfhood. Interestingly, for most of the

advertisement the men are shown to be firmly held "at a distance" from everyone else

43

involved in the advertisement – only near the end do the men shake hands with some of the participants. The moment at which the participants remove their blindfolds, however, could be said to be the moment within which the men become *actualized* as Neighbors – they become placed in a position wherein they *must* be interpreted as instantly intrusive, foreign, and repulsive to the mostly white and completely Western participants (Žižek, 2008).

There is no evidence to suggest that Febreze reduces the Azerbaijani men to "mere things" in the advertisement – apropos Levinas, for instance, we can still see their faces and observe their expressions throughout the advertisement, and thus, they retain some level of subjectivity. But the extent to which Febreze reduces the members of the team to a foreign, stinking, othered "set" of corporate tools implies that this advertisement is, in fact, discriminatory and, more specifically, "ethnocentric": It represents an institutional media form which, according to the Vega Model, engages in practices "… which perpetuate the original cultural values, norms, and standards of the dominant culture", a dominant, Western culture which also happens to be, qua Žižek (2008), *middle-class* and *resistant to* and *appalled by* intrusive Others, and in this case, the Azerbaijani citizen – the Muslim Neighbor (Žižek, 2008). It is possible, therefore, that this advertisement plays, and those similar to it play, an important part in nurturing a culture which deems possible the torture of human beings who lack the dominant culture's requisites for belonging.

Critical media analysis #2: "Mucinex" and the classist other. In the following analysis, I will present a 2004 "Mucinex" television advertisement, a brand owned by the company Reckitt Benckiser, which features a personified "mucus man" and his invasion

of a human man's lungs. It is my intent to determine whether or not the way in which the advertisement depicts its "mucus man" can be considered "discriminatory", both according to the Vega Model and in light of the previous philosophical analyses of "otherness" (Martin, 1992).

    Content. The 30-second Mucinex advertisement begins by showing a white man in his sleepwear walking down the hallway of his tidy, modern, two-story home during the daytime. The camera angle is askew and the background oboe music is melancholy, however, connoting that something is wrong with our character: As he coughs, beats his chest with his fist, and contorts his face in discomfort, we infer that he is suffering from chest congestion and possibly the common cold. As he walks directly up to the camera, the advertisement's point of view changes from being outside of the character to being inside of him: Fantastically, the vantage point passes through the man's shirt and skin, between the ribs of his ribcage, and directly into his right lung. Simultaneously, the advertisement's narrator explains, "When you're congested, mucus can settle into your chest" (YouTube, 2010).

    The advertisement's background music changes from melancholy to playful, and we see that a man, made of mucus, has just "moved in", or for the sake of the pun, "settled" into the first character's chest, which is depicted as an apartment "for rent". As the mucus man haphazardly tosses his belongings around his new "room", he exclaims, "I love 'movin' in' day" (YouTube, 2010). The mucus man has a discernible accent, and at first blush it sounds as if he might be from New York, and possibly Brooklyn (Howcast, 2013). He is also physically diminutive yet rotund – "squatty" could be *le mot juste*. He wears a sleeveless tee-shirt, from under which his belly protrudes, and plaid

slacks, which are held up by a pair of suspenders, and dons a small, brown hat. We also

notice that his room in sparsely decorated and merely contains a dirty, tattered recliner; a

broken, yet mended, television; a suitcase; a side table, upon which sits what looks like a

soft drink; an area rug; one lamp; a coatrack; a houseplant; a picture which reads, "Home

sweet home"; and another picture which shows what appears to be his "mucus wife" and

"mucus child". After "unpacking", the mucus man jumps into the air and lands heavily

into his filthy chair, rubs his posterior into the chair to get comfortable, and gasps with

pleasure as he settles in. A sound which connotes flatulence accompanies his actions

(YouTube, 2010).

The advertisement's point of view immediate shifts to being outside of and in

front of our first character, who has just sat down in his recliner in another area of his

home. By contrast, the human man's recliner is cozy-looking and clean. An appealing

fish tank sits beneath a genuine-looking painting to the left of the scene, another

authentic-looking painting hangs to the right of the scene, a houseplant sits in a basket

upon a stand, French doors appear in this part of the house as they did in the beginning of

the advertisement, and to the man's left, we see a modern lamp and side table, upon the

latter of which sits a box of tissues, a glass of water, and a package of what appears to be

medicine. Suddenly, the man coughs, again to the soundtrack of a melancholy oboe, and

instantly the scene changes back to the mucus man and his hypodermal dwelling

(YouTube, 2010).

For the first time in the commercial, the mucus man seems to be aware of his

"host": The human man's cough rattles the mucus man's apartment, and the mucus man

wryly exclaims, "Nice try, but I'm not goin' nowhere!" (YouTube, 2010). He rebelliously

tosses his cap onto the coatrack, settles back into his recliner, and grabs the television

remote to begin watching a program. At this point, the advertisement has crystalized the

metaphor that the human host is a "landlord", and the mucus man an undesirable

"tenant". The advertisement's narrator chimes in, "That's when you need Mucinex", and

the scene changes to a close-up of the human man's hand, next to which is a package of

Mucinex, and into which he places with his other hand a small, blue tablet of the

medicine (YouTube, 2010). The narrator continues, "Mucinex is specially made to break

up the mucus that causes congestion" (YouTube, 2010). As the narrator states, "… mucus

that causes congestion," the scene cuts back to the mucus man, whose apartment has

started to quake more considerably. As his belongings shake, he looks directly into the

camera and, with an eyebrow raised in concerned surprise, exclaims, "Uh oh!"

(YouTube, 2010).

   The advertisement's point of view shifts back to the human man, and we see him

standing in a fresh collared shirt with his fist to his mouth. He coughs twice, much more

vigorously than before, and the scene cuts back to the mucus man. At this point, the two

coughs have been enough to completely upend the mucus man's home, sending both his

belongings and him careening toward the esophageal hole in the center of his ceiling. As

he is flying through the air amidst his possessions, the mucus man exclaims, "There goes

the neighborhoooood!" and gets permanently ejected from the premises (YouTube, 2010).

The advertisement then shows the human man leaving his own house, yet happily and

confidently. The advertisement's music is upbeat and hopeful. "Ah!" the man gasps, his

lungs now clear (YouTube, 2010). As he glances from the right to the left at his own

neighborhood, he states, "That's better!" (YouTube, 2010). He then strolls down his front

yard's walking path to the sidewalk, and we notice just how quaint his home and well landscaped his yard are. The narrator continues, "And one Mucinex pill lasts up to 12 hours!"

The advertisement then shifts to its final scene, which shows the evicted mucus man, suitcase ready, standing next to a large package of Mucinex. He states, "Hey! Got any room at your place?" while turning to walk away (YouTube, 2010). Each step he takes is accompanied by a revolting "squishing" noise. The narrator has the advertisement's last line and, as the mucus man walks away, states, "Mucinex in. Mucus out" (YouTube, 2010).

Analysis. Owing to the fanciful and "comical" context of this advertisement, it is easy to dismiss its messages as being nothing more than benign – charmingly *creative*. It is easy, actually, to dismiss the advertisement as containing within it no "latent messages" at all. After all, the advertisement is cartoonish, silly, and slapstick! How could something so ridiculous be "discriminatory" toward a group of people and deleterious to intersubjectivity itself? According to Theresa Howard (2008) of *USA Today*, even Mucinex's "vice president for marketing", M'lou Arnett, stated that, "'The ads were done in such a light-hearted manner that struck a chord in a humorous way,'", and that, "'He's a disgusting, loveable icon, but at the end of the day, we're pretty happy where we ended up.'", "he" in his statement referring to whom Mucinex calls, "Mr. Mucus", or to whom I have thus far referred and will continue to refer as "the mucus man" (Howard, 2008, pp. 1 & 2). Let us start from the top, therefore, and break down the advertisement's content measuredly so as to expose any subtextual biases that may writhe beneath the banter.

At the outset of the advertisement, it explicitly defines the race, gender, and age of the human character and the social class within which this character can be situated. Our human character is white, male, and middle-aged or slightly younger. Based on the appearance of his home and the quality of his possessions, he could reasonably be placed in the middle- to upper-middle-class. The advertisement introduces into this privileged tableau, however, a figurative splinter in the man's proverbial side: He's unwell. We find out immediately that he is suffering from chest congestion and possibly the common cold, all to the tune of a melancholy oboe. And thus, met with the banal fact that their main character was to be ill with chest congestion, the advertisement's creators opted for a "creative" depiction of human mucus, a substance which is *in essence* wholly undesirable, foul, "external", and "dangerous" to one's wellbeing (YouTube, 2010).

The creators of this advertisement did not *characterize* a "glob of mucus" as, perhaps, a *monster*, or some ferocious animal or parasite, however, both options worthy of consideration – worthy, indeed, of the off-putting adjectives mentioned. Rather, they decided that integral to this creative reimagining of mucus, the object of disgust *par excellence*, was its *personification* into what to all reasonable speculation is an *impoverished, obese, male, Italian American immigrant from Brooklyn*. And though this "mucus man" thus accordingly possesses identifying characteristics which hint at personhood – such as the possession of a humanistic body, language, and culture – he by definition lacks full humanness because he, apart from being a cartoon, of course, is wholly made of mucus. This decidedly lower-class, immigrant character walks the line, therefore, between being a human being and being an object of disgust. The fact that he is literally constitutive of effluvium poisons all of his secondary, humanistic features: His

characteristics are inexorably tied to his inherent disgustingness, his inherent undesirability. *Repulsive also* are his traits of being *poor, overweight, "foreign", an immigrant*, and belonging *to the lower-class* (YouTube, 2010).

The advertisement constructs a fascinating and troubling dichotomy: The mucus man is not simply disgusting *on his own*; rather, he is disgusting *apropos* the human character – the affluent, white male. The mucus man, therefore, is his warped, funhouse mirror-image. And yet, reflections are still external to the mirrored. The advertisement has gone one step further to place the mucus man *into* the human man. The mucus man is not only the human man's inherently disgusting anti-doppelgänger, but he is also his *intrusive* and *dangerous* trespasser. Note the similarity between this description and Žižek's (2008) description of the Neighbor: He denotes it as "… primarily a thing, a traumatic intruder, someone whose different way of life (or rather, way of *joissance* materialized in its social practices and rituals) disturbs us, throws the balance of our way of life off the rails" (Žižek, 2008, p. 59). What is the lower-class, immigrant mucus man in this advertisement if not a "thing" which is a "traumatic intruder" which "disturbs" its human host's wellness, throws his life's "balance" "off the rails"? Moreover, the mucus man *smells*, is portrayed as "flatulent" and generally unkempt. Again, we turn to Žižek's (2008) statement that, "For the middle class, the lower classes smell, their members do not wash regularly enough-and this brings us to one of the possible definitions of what Neighbour means today: a Neighbour is one who by definition *smells*" (Žižek, 2008, p. 166). Furthermore, again citing translator Alphonso Lingis' assessment of Emmanuel Levinas' (1997) exploration of "alterity", Lingis states, "The other, my neighbor … concerns, afflicts me with a closeness … closer than the closeness of entities …"

(Levinas, 1997, p. xxv). What also, then, is the lower-class, immigrant mucus man if not the "other", the traumatic "neighbor", who is so close to its human counterpart that it is *within* him – "afflicting" him internally, as no "outside" entity can? Žižek (2008) also presciently adds that one meets the Neighbor's "over-proximity" with resistance: He states, "… when [the Neighbor] comes too close, this can also give rise to an aggressive reaction aimed at getting rid of the disturbing intruder" (pp. 41 & 59). Is not the lower-class, immigrant mucus man's ultimate fate nothing short of "aggressive" *eviction* from his subcutaneous domicile (YouTube, 2010)?

This advertisement even *literally* personifies the mucus man as the human man's "neighbor", or more specifically, his "tenant". The mucus man's status as being the human man's tenant, and not simply his (next-door) neighbor, is notable because it locates the mucus man *inside of* the human man's space – his *private* space, his *self*. The mucus man is, once again, so *close* to the human man as his Neighbor that the former must, at all cost, expel the freeloading, foreign intruder from *his* "property", his body. A stark power differential thus exists between the affluent, white subject and the impoverished, immigrant subject. And yet, is the immigrant "subject" portrayed in this caricature a "subject" at all?

In being depicted as quasi-human, the lower-class, immigrant mucus man from the onset lacks subjectivity and thus possesses its lack: *objectivity*. This objectivity proves so completely subjugating that it ultimately renders him a disposable object, and in Žižekian (2008) terms, *Homo sacer*, or "'bare life'", an entity that exists at the whim of the opposing subject's power (Žižek, 2008, p. 42). Thus, in the mucus man we are not contending with "an Other" in the Heideggerian (1962) sense – a passive Other of das

Man (Heidegger, 1962). Rather, *this* "Other" is threatening and "too close" to a subject's

self, and thus proves to be the human character's invasive Neighbor. And yet, by

definition, the Neighbor *still* has latent subjectivity and the terrifying potential for

objectifying its opposing subject. I contend, therefore, that the lower-class, immigrant

mucus man represents *a Neighbor in transition to* Homo sacer, wherein a more powerful

subject strips the Neighbor of its latent, threatening subjectivity and renders it an object

to be annihilated: Again, Žižek (2008) explains that, "The tortured subject is no longer a

Neighbour, but an object whose pain is neutralized, reduced to a property that has to be

dealt with in a rational utilitarian calculus … What disappears here is the abyss of the

infinity that pertains to a subject" (Žižek, 2008, p. 45). Moreover, in subsequent Mucinex

commercials, we notice that the mucus man has a family consisting of a mucus boy and a

mucus wife. Interestingly, and this is intimated in the analyzed advertisement's insertion

of the mucus man's "family photograph", *all of the members of this family share the*

same face, the face, for Levinas (1997), being the very site of subjectivity. Though the

mucus man "has" a face, he actually "lacks" a face – he lacks *any semblance* of a

subjectifying identity. The lower-class, immigrant mucus man, therefore, "should" be

unsympathetically evicted from his home because he is *a priori* a Neighbor – repulsive,

reeking, interloping, and dangerous. He "can" be and *is* uncaringly evicted from his

home, however, because is outright "not human *enough*", a cartoon, a faceless discharge

(Levinas, 1997; YouTube, 2011; YouTube, 2010; YouTube, 2009; Žižek, 2008).

Returning to the fact that the mucus man is depicted as an immigrant, notice how

the advertisement's narrator uses the word "settles" to describe the way in which the

mucus man has made his way into his host: The narrator states, "When you're congested,

mucus can settle into your chest" (YouTube, 2010). The intolerance of the "settling immigrant" is a theme which reaches a zenith in the mucus man himself ironically quipping, "There goes the neighborhoooood!" as he exits the human character's lung (YouTube, 2010). The allusion to a collapsing neighborhood can only "work" if the mucus man is indeed intended to be, from the point of view of the affluent, white male, an unwanted immigrant. This metaphor culminates when the human character stands on his front porch, now free of the mucus man, scans his neighborhood, and with birds joyously chirping in the background, exclaims, "Ah! That's better!" (YouTube, 2010). The human character is, therefore, not only happily (and contextually) free of chest congestion, but also happily (and subtextually) free of lower-class, immigrant intruders in his *sterile* upper-class neighborhood. Recall the dichotomy of the affluent, white male carelessly strolling down his yard's walking path and the subsequent depiction of the lower-class, immigrant mucus man desperately seeking shelter, disheveled suitcase in hand. All is "normal" once again in this advertisement's universe when the mass of mucus, the mucus man, the tenant-immigrant, the *Neighbor*, and ultimately *Homo sacer* has been completely expelled from the affluent, white male's chest, property, neighborhood, and *self* (YouTube, 2010; Žižek, 2008).

We must return to Žižek (2008) once more and assert that the advertisement's subtextual engine is the middle-class' "… obsessive fear of harassment" of the intrusive Other, the Neighbor, which is the darker side of the coin of what he calls "Today's liberal tolerance towards others …" and which exists at the heart of what he calls "Post-political bio-politics …" (Žižek, 2008, pp. 41 & 42). In an impressively subtle, seemingly and even intentionally "light-hearted" way, Mucinex's advertisement depicts *real* class

struggle, the victor of which is the middle- to upper-middle-class, championed by the affluent, white male subject, and the vanquished of which is the lower-class, caricaturized by the squalid, anonymous, loud, thoughtless, fetid, repulsive, dispensable, g-dropping, Italian American immigrant (Howard, 2008, p. 2; YouTube, 2010; Žižek, 2008).

Concluding remarks on both advertisements. It is not, nor has it been, my intention to accuse either the companies of the aforementioned products or the marketing personnel involved in the creation of the products' advertisements of *purposefully* or *maliciously* sanctioning or producing discriminatory media messages. I *have* been condemnatory of both parties, however, for not having been *aware* of their tacit acceptance and promulgation of discriminatory media forms. In this case, blame is futile without intent, and finger-pointing distracts one from cognizing the more oblique source of the discriminatory messages contained within these advertisements: *us* – our dominant, Western, middle-class culture. Qua Vega (Martin, 1992), we can see that emergent in these advertisements are nothing short of the dominant culture's biases against Muslims, the lower-class, and immigrants. These biases, subsequently distilled into the personal prejudices of those with decision-making power within media companies, ultimately become *discriminatory* messages and "practices" through the institutionally-sanctioned vehicle of the advertisement. What concerns the critical media theorist, however, is the way in which these messages *then reify the cultural biases from which they have come*, which in turn subsequently *cultivate individuals' prejudices through socialization*. According to the Vega Model, "Institutional Discrimination" entails, "The policies, practices, and standard operating procedures that reflect the public's beliefs, opinions, and attitudes which perpetuate the original cultural values, norms, and standards of the

dominant culture" (Martin, 1992, p. 54). Thus, when viewed as an educational institution, media, through discriminatory advertisements such as the two I have analyzed, both injects novel biases into and strengthens the cultural biases which were already undergirding the dominant culture. From and within this ideologically poisonous culture, then, individuals either learn or relearn novel or familiar prejudices. Media as a discriminatory educational institution thus influences individuals, in part via cultural biases, through socialization (Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000; Martin, 1992).

Returning to Nussbaum's "Capabilities Approach". Perhaps now we can also draw on Martha Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach to not only evaluate media as being "unjust" in light of some advertisements' use of implicit persuasion to influence, and thus control, consumers' purchasing behavior, but also evaluate media as being "unjust" in light of some advertisements' use of discriminatory messages and consequent complicity in reifying cultural biases and personal prejudices. And yet, qua the Capabilities Approach, what capability might advertisements compromise in their use of discriminatory messages and consequent conception and reification of cultural biases and personal prejudices (Martin, 1992; Nussbaum, 2011)?

Affiliation as a "Central Capability". Once again, Nussbaum defines "internal capabilities" as being "… fluid and dynamic …" "… states of the person" which include, "… personality traits, intellectual and emotional capacities, states of bodily fitness and health, internalized learning, [and] skills of perception and movement …" and which are part and parcel of "combined capabilities", which are "… internal capabilities plus the social/political/economic conditions in which functioning can actually be chosen"

(Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 21-22). Among her list of "Central Capabilities", moreover, is the

combined capability for *affiliation* (pp. 33-34). Nussbaum defines affiliation as:

> *(A*) Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for
> other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to
> imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting
> institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protect
> the freedom of assembly and political speech.) *(B)* Having the social bases of self-
> respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose
> worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on
> the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.
> (p. 34)

The advertisements I have analyzed, paradigmatic of discriminatory media forms,

achieve *nothing* if not the dehumanization of Muslim, lower-class citizens, and

immigrants. They play a systemically crucial role in (re-)constructing the dominant

culture's "Other" and, qua Žižek (2008), *Neighbor*. Thus, in reifying dominant cultural

biases and personal prejudices against historically oppressed groups, media in the form of

discriminatory advertisements is an educational institution which *undercuts* humans'

capabilities to "… live with and toward others and show concern for other human beings

… [and] be able to imagine the situation of another …" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34).

Moreover, if anything, media in this form acts as an institution which is the *antithesis* of

"… institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation …" (p. 34).

Furthermore, by caricaturizing Muslims and lower-class immigrants as Neighbors,

discriminatory advertisements sabotage human beings' capability for "Having the social

bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation" and extinguish the capability for each human

being "… to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others" (p.

34). Hence, discriminatory advertisements *directly* violate the "… provision[s] of

nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion,

[and] national origin" (p.34). If implicitly persuasive advertisements contribute to the failure of the Central Capabilities of "Senses, Imagination, and Thought" and "Practical Reason" and can be considered "unjust" as a result, *discriminatory advertisements*, which could also be evaluated as "tacitly ideologically influential" according to the Vega Model (Martin, 1992), contribute to the failure of the Central Capability of "Affiliation" and thus can be considered "unjust" as a result (pp. 33-34). Nussbaum (2011), moreover, argues that like the Central Capability of "practical reason", "affiliation" is also an "*architectonic*" capability in that "… it pervades the other capabilities in the sense that when they are made available in a way that respects human dignity, affiliation is a part of them–the person is respected as a social being" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 39). Snauwaert (2011) writes that, "A human life is a life necessarily shaped by practical reason and sociability, for a human being is 'a dignified free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than being passively shaped" (Snauwaert, 2011, p. 321). He also states that, "What is distinctive about human beings is that we are capable of freely conceiving, planning, executing, and evaluating our choices. We are not passive products of our environment; we are capable of free choice and action" (Snauwaert, 2011, p. 321).

On the contrary, if some advertisements intentionally strip us of the capabilities for forming our own opinions about the choices in our lives and furthermore dictate the ways in which we interpret the "value" of select groups of people, media in the forms of implicitly persuasive and discriminatory advertisements quash what Snauwaert says is distinctive about human beings: Under the economic and ideological influence of media, we no longer maintain our status as beings who "… are capable of freely conceiving,

planning, executing, and evaluating our own choices" (p. 321). Inversely, under the influence of implicitly influential and discriminatory media forms, we *become* the "… passive products of our environment …" and are *no longer* "… capable of free choice and action" (Snauwaert, 2011, p. 321). Perhaps the individual's possession of "… free choice and action" also entails the individual's possession of the ability to see others in non-judgmental ways. Discriminatory advertisements tacitly undermine this ability, however, by reifying cultural biases, personal prejudices, and institutionally discriminatory messages, and thus also quash the "*architectonic*" capability of affiliation, thereby preventing the dignified concert of the remaining Central Capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 39). Based on Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach, therefore, the two advertisements I have analyzed, in light of their discriminatory messages and consequent erosion of the Central Capability of affiliation, are not only merely "discriminatory" but also "unjust" (p. 34) (Martin, 1992; Nussbaum, 2011; Žižek, 2008).

      A call for educational responses. Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg (2000) argue that, "In the interest of both our children and the larger society, we must exercise our personal and collective power to challenge and neutralize the many ways corporate power (gained as purchased access to the media) oppresses and dominates us" (Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000, p. 381). One of the ways in which educators and scholars can challenge and neutralize oppressive corporate influence in the media, they argue, is by creating "… an awareness of the ways cultural pedagogy operates so we can scold when appropriate and rewrite contaminated texts whenever possible" (p. 381). Heretofore I have attempted to rise to these authors' challenge by both rewriting two advertisements' narratives in a critical way, taking into account philosophical accounts of

"the other" and empathy, and in the process drawing attention to the ways in which discriminatory messages are interwoven in their subtextual narratives. Next, I will analyze in more depth the validity and merit of what I have both alluded to and deployed as "critical media analysis" and attempt to determine whether or not this form of analysis is theoretically robust enough to independently challenge both implicitly influential and discriminatory media forms.

Educational Challenges to Media's Influence

In Chapter One, I argued that according to Martha Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach there is sufficient evidence to deem some advertisements "unjust" in light of their use of implicit persuasion to limit children's ability to make free consumer choices, a practice that, qua the Capabilities Approach, results in "capability failure" in children. In Chapter Two I have critiqued media, in the form of advertisements, in a different way and for a different purpose: I have attempted to argue that advertisements can be not only perpetrators of unjust and implicit consumer persuasion, but also vehicles of a discriminatory educational institution that tacitly displays and promulgates both novel and familiar ethnic and classist stereotypes which, in turn, both catalyze new and contribute to established cultural biases and personal prejudices and affect individuals' subconscious ideological positions. Ultimately, moreover, I have contended that this latter criticism warrants invoking Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach once again to evaluate media in the form of some discriminatory advertisements as "unjust" for compromising the individual's capability – indeed, *combined* and *Central* Capability – for *affiliation* (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34). Given these criticisms, therefore, in what ways can and should educators prepare children for

encountering the unjust and discriminatory educational institution of media advertising (Nussbaum, 2011)?

Returning to the Nairn and Fine-Ambler debate. The Nairn and Fine-Ambler debate effectually underscored the fact that advertisements communicate not only explicit content but also *implicit content*. And the debate further addressed the fact that advertisements not only *communicate* implicit content, but also *rely upon* this unique content to implicitly *influence* the consumer – and to the educational theorist's particular concern, the child consumer. In the following sections, I will argue that critical media literacy will have to be able to critique and reframe not only advertisements' explicit messages, but also advertisements' implicit messages, the latter of which I contend pose the more serious threat to both the individual's freedom of choice and the individual's ideological independence.

Considering critical media literacy. Kellner and Share (2005) offer an overview of several models and concepts of critical media literacy. I would like to begin this discussion of their work, however, by citing a cautionary statement they make toward the beginning of their essay: They claim that,

> … despite the ubiquity of media culture in contemporary society and everyday life and the recognition that the media themselves are a form of pedagogy and despite criticisms of the distorted values, ideals, and representations of the world in popular culture, media education in kindergarten to Year 12 (K–12) schooling in the USA has never been established and developed. (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 371)

The authors delineate between four major kinds of "media pedagogy" models pertinent to educational theorists today (p. 372). First, they explain, is the "… traditionalist 'protectionist' approach," which "would attempt to 'inoculate' young people against the effects of media addiction and manipulation by cultivating a taste for book literacy, high

culture, and the values of truth and beauty, and by denigrating all forms of media and computer culture (see Postman, 1985, 1992)" (p. 372). Second is "A 'media literacy' movement …" which "… attempts to teach students to read, analyse, and decode media texts in a fashion parallel to the advancement of print literacy" (p. 372). Third is "Media arts education …" which "… teaches students to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of media and to use various media technologies as instruments of self-expression and creation" (p. 372). And fourth is "Critical media literacy," which

> … builds on these approaches, analysing media culture as products of social production and struggle and teaching students to be critical of media representations and discourses, but also stressing the importance of learning to use the media as modes of self-expression and social activism. (p. 372)

For the authors, critical media literacy is the preferred pedagogical response to their assertion that,

> There is expanding recognition that media representations help construct our images and understanding of the world and that education must meet the dual challenges of teaching media literacy in a multicultural society and sensitising students and the public to the inequities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, and class inequalities and discrimination. (p. 370)

Qua author Len Masterman and The Center for Media Literacy (CML), Kellner and Share outline five "core concepts" indispensable to critical media literacy (p. 374). The first core concept, which the authors assert "… is the foundation of media literacy …", is the "*Principle of Non-transparency: All media messages are 'constructed'*", which entails the use of semiotics in interrogating the latent messages contained within media forms. This concept, "… challenges the power of the media to present messages as non-problematic and transparent" (p. 374). The authors state, "Media do not present reality like transparent windows or simple reflections of the world because media messages are created, shaped, and positioned through a construction process" (p. 374). "This

construction," they add, "involves many decisions about what to include or exclude and how to represent reality" (p. 374). The authors conclude that, "Demystifying media images through critical inquiry is an important starting point for media literacy" (p. 374).

The second core concept of critical media literacy, apropos author Len Masterman and the CML, is "*Codes and Conventions: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules*" (p. 374). This core concept also involves the use of semiotics in interrogating media messages but more closely examines the use of signs in media, or "… denotation and signifier (the more literal reference to content) and connotation and signified (the more associative, subjective significations of a message based on ideological and cultural codes) (Hall, 1980)" (p. 374). This emphasis on dichotomizing and illuminating denotation and connotation and signifier and signified in media forms, or in my analyses to what I have referred as *context* and *subtext*, allows the critical media consumer to separate what they perceive in media content and how they feel about this content: The authors state, "With younger students the terms are simplified into separating what they see or hear from what they think or feel" (p. 374). They posit that,

> … discussion of the representation of class, gender, and race in media such as television or film requires analysis of codes and stereotypes through which subordinate groups like workers, women, and people of colour are represented, in contrast to representations of bosses and the rich, men, and white people. Analysis of different modes of representation of women and people of colour makes clear the constructedness of gender and race representations and that dominant negative representations further subordination and make it look natural. (p. 375)

Here we could also elaborate via the Vega Model (Martin, 1992) that this "furthering" of subordination is, in other words, the media's discriminatory messages reifying both the

cultural biases and, in turn, personal prejudices attributable to the dominant culture

(Martin, 1992).

The third core concept of critical media literacy is "*Audience decoding: Different people experience the same media message differently*" (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 375). In this core concept, "Empowering the audience through critical thinking inquiry is essential for students to challenge the power of media to create preferred meanings" (p. 375). Kellner and Share add, "Audience theory views the moment of reception as a contested terrain of cultural struggle where critical thinking skills offer potential for the audience to negotiate different readings and openly struggle with dominant discourses" (p. 375). Within the contested moment of struggle, moreover, different members of the audience will interpret media meanings in different ways, depending on members' "… gender, race, class, or sexuality …" (p. 376). The authors state that, "… one's grasp of a media text is enriched by interpreting from the standpoint of different audience perspectives," and

> This process of grasping different audience readings and interpretations enhances democracy as multicultural education for a pluralistic democracy depends on a citizenry that embraces multiple perspectives as a natural consequence of varying experiences, histories, and cultures constructed within structures of dominance and subordination. (p. 376)

This core concept is also in line with the authors' belief that "… teaching critical media literacy should be a participatory, collaborative project", in that,

> Watching television shows or films together could promote productive discussions between teachers and students (or parents and children), with an emphasis on eliciting student views, producing a variety of interpretations of media texts, and teaching basic principles of hermeneutics and criticism. (p. 373)

The fourth core concept of critical media literacy is "*Content and Message: Media have embedded values and points of view*" (p. 376). It is my belief that it is this core concept of

63

critical media literacy for which critical media literacy *proper* is generally understood. Kellner and Share explain that this "… core concept focuses on the actual content of media messages in order to question ideology, bias, and the connotations explicit and implicit in the representation" (p. 376). They continue to state that both, "Cultural studies, feminist theory, and critical pedagogy offer arsenals of research for this line of inquiry to question media representations of race, class, gender, and so on", and "Beyond simply locating the bias in media, this concept helps students recognize the subjective nature of all communication" (p. 376). Lending credence to the underlying thrust of this thesis, the authors conclude that, "Content is often highly symbolic and thus requires a wide range of theoretical approaches to grasp the multidimensional social, political, moral, and sometimes philosophical meanings of a cultural text" (p. 376).

Finally, the fifth core concept of critical media literacy is "*Motivation: Media are organized to gain profit and/or power*" (p. 376). This concept entails promoting students' understanding of the corporate sources of media forms, especially since the number of these sources is small, indicating a privileged monopolization of power underlying media construction and output: Kellner and Share state that "The fifth concept encourages students to consider the question of why the message was sent and where it came from", and that "Too often students believe the role of media is simply to entertain or inform, with little knowledge of the economic structure that supports it" (pp. 376-377). In "… knowing what sort of corporation produces a media artifact or what sort of system of production dominates given media," Kellner and Share explain, students will be better able "… to critically interpret biases and distortions in media texts" (p. 377).

On the topic of critical media literacy as a whole, therefore, the authors state that

> … critical media literacy can promote multicultural literacy, conceived as understanding and engaging the heterogeneity of culture and subcultures that constitute an increasingly global and multicultural world (Courts, 1998; Weil, 1998). Critical media literacy not only teaches students to learn from media, to resist media manipulation, and to use media in constructive ways, but is also concerned with developing skills that will help create good citizens and that will make individuals more motivated and competent participants in social life. (p. 372)

In retrospect, I have perhaps utilized Kellner's and Share's first, second, and fourth core concepts in my own analyses of Febreze's and Mucinex's advertisements to effectually "competently participate" in social life by attempting to draw attention to the ways in which advertisements can both unjustly disseminate and strengthen discriminatory messages (Kellner & Share, 2005).

And yet, given my support and possible utilization of these core concepts, concepts which are also inherently logical and necessary for students' interactions with all types of media forms, do these concepts actually teach students "… to resist media manipulation" as the authors claim (p. 372)? In other words, can critical media literacy as Kellner and Share have comprehensively outlined it, and perhaps as I have utilized it, successfully "teach" students to resist media manipulation (Kellner & Share, 2005)?

Contending with "implicit" influence. Returning yet again to Nairn and Fine (2008), the authors state that, "… if persuasion knowledge is not associated with increased resistance to advertising, then it is not clear what benefit persuasion knowledge training could be expected to bring in terms of helping children to resist the influence of advertising" (Nairn & Fine, 2008, p. 452). Moreover, they comment on modern advertisements' use of "… formats that deliver subtle affective associations rather than a rational or factual message", supported, they explain, by "A recent content analysis of children's television food advertising in Australia [which] found fantasy, fun and humour

were the most common promotional appeals made to children (pp. 453-454). In *both* Febreze's and Mucinex's advertisements, we find the use of *all three* of these themes. In such affectively charged and "attitudinally" influential media forms, therefore, "… there is no propositional information that the child can critically assess and evaluate in light of knowledge of the selling or persuasive intent of the message" (p. 454). Implicitly persuasive advertisements' effects on children, therefore, have led the authors to argue "… that contemporary marketing techniques that link products with positive stimuli can elicit a preference for or choice of that product by non-conscious, non-rational means, and may even undermine consciously held attitudes", that "… applications of new findings from neuroscience and psychology show that advertising techniques that use evaluative conditioning formats manipulate consumer behaviour via implicit attitude change", and that

> … for these formats, the appropriate test of fairness is the ability to resist implicit persuasion. Without this, the child is like the target of subliminal advertising: preferences are mediated by non-conscious, non-rational means that are impossible to resist. (p. 460)

In a statement that is especially troubling for educators, the authors conclude that, "… we have outlined data to suggest that not only will pre-adolescent children fail to possess sufficient cognitive control capacities to resist implicit persuasion, but that even adolescents may have difficulty, relative to adults" (p. 460).

Here we have the dilemma of the viewer, and pertinently, the adolescent viewer, possessing conscious defense mechanisms against advertising content and intent and both the *resistance* of implicitly persuasive content to these defenses and the *power* of implicitly persuasive content to affect the viewer's attitudes *regardless* of consciously held and possibly contrary attitudes. Nairn and Fine would argue, therefore, that, in light

of the non-conscious influence of implicitly persuasive content, Kellner's and Share's (2005) position that critical media literacy can "teach" students to "resist media manipulation" is flawed, if not completely unfounded (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 372) (Nairn & Fine, 2008).

Moreover, Rozendaal, Lapierre, Reijmersdal, and Buijzen (2011) claim similarly that "… the affect-based nature of contemporary advertising, combined with children's immature cognitive skills (which inhibit a *stop and think response*), makes it very difficult for children to engage in an elaborate persuasion process" (Rozendaal, Lapierre, Reijmersdal, & Buijzen, 2011, p. 338). The authors also state, as another blow to the cogency of the "cognitive defense" view of media literacy, that, "… due to immature executive functioning and emotional regulation skills combined with the nature of persuasion in child-directed advertising, children have major difficulty in using their knowledge as a defense against its effects", adding that, "… even though children possess all the necessary advertising knowledge (i.e., conceptual advertising literacy) they are not yet able to access and apply this knowledge when exposed to advertising (i.e., advertising literacy performance)" (p. 346). Furthermore, they claim that

> … methods of reducing children's susceptibility to advertising, including advertising education programs aimed at increasing children's knowledge of advertising (i.e., conceptual advertising literacy) … do not necessarily enable them to defend themselves against advertising. (p. 348)

The authors do, however, leave the critical media literacy advocate with some sense of a silver lining for their efforts when they report that "… it has been argued that conceptual advertising literacy can be successful in reducing children's susceptibility to advertising when they are triggered to utilize this literacy" (p. 346). And yet, they claim that this argument is based upon experiments that have occurred in controlled laboratory

environments, and that "The laboratory circumstances are likely to encourage cognitive, rational processing of the advertising message (e.g., produce critical thoughts) whereas ordinary television viewing more often produces heuristic or affective processing" (p. 347). Among their suggestions for future research, the authors posit that, "… general critical attitudes toward advertising, such as disliking and skepticism, may potentially play a crucial role in shaping how children respond to persuasive messages (Buijzen, 2007; Rossiter & Robinson, 1974; Rozendaal et al., 2010b)" and, thus, that "Future research should further examine if and how children's attitudinal advertising literacy can be successful in altering children's responses to persuasive messages" (p. 347).

Kellner's and Share's (2005) core concepts for critical media literacy may not provide the viewer, then, with the ability to *utilize* cognitive defense mechanisms against implicitly persuasive advertising. Core Concept 1, however, does promote within the viewer the desire and capacity to trace the origins of advertisements, and in turn, their messages, to their commercial roots, and perhaps this concept, therefore, at least allows the viewer to be aware that their albeit inevitable influence derives from potentially discriminatory, and assuredly profit-driven, corporate sources. Moreover, Core Concept 2 approaches the neutralization of affectively-based media messages in promoting the critical self-assessment of the feelings we emote when engaged with media (Kellner & Share, 2005, 374, 376, & 377). Hence, I propose that a combination of Core Concept 1 and Core Concept 2 may represent a potential avenue for reversing implicit advertising influence on consumers' product choices (Kellner & Share, 2005).

I am still concerned, however, that, apropos Nairn's and Fine's (2008) contention "… that contemporary marketing techniques that link products with positive stimuli can

elicit a preference for or choice of that product by non-conscious, non-rational means, and may even undermine consciously held attitudes", an alternative to their position is also true: that advertisements' practices of pairing not a product but a *type of person* with *negative stimuli* can elicit a "non-conscious, non-rational" affective, *prejudicial* attitude toward that type of person, an attitude which "… may even undermine consciously held attitudes" (Nairn & Fine, 2008, p. 458). Kellner and Share (2005) surely outline critical media literacy strategies that promote the interrogation of societal biases in media forms. And yet, what strategies do they offer for *changing* viewers' prejudicial attitudes which, like consumer purchasing attitudes, may be *non-consciously acquired* from *implicitly influential* discriminatory media messages, as found in some advertisements?

Again, I feel that Core Concept 2 of critical media literacy comes closest to providing the viewer with a mechanism for critically assessing the feelings she experiences when engaged with a media form. These Core Concepts of critical media literacy strike me, however, as entailing *reactionary* strategies to discriminatory messages in media that may or may not effectively neutralize individuals' prejudicial attitudes which result from both socialization and potentially implicit ideological persuasion. I am not, however, *against* "conscious" analyses of both implicit and explicit discriminatory media content. On the contrary, I believe that these aspects of critical media literacy illuminate the ways in which media producers construct discriminatory messages and, then, hopefully contribute to changes in the media industry that will effactually eliminate these discriminatory practices. It is my humble hope that my *own* analyses in this chapter circuitously lead to further scrutiny Febreze's, Mucinex's, and

other companies' discriminatory advertisements and their consequent removal from the media landscape.

There is no mention in the five Core Concepts of critical media literacy, however, of fostering the viewer's *empathetic attitudes* towards the groups which experience discrimination in media messages, become vilified within cultural biases, and precipitate as the "others" of personal prejudices. If sentimentality is a well from which activism, including critical media activism, springs, why would the Core Concepts of critical media literacy omit the notion of the cultivation of sentimentality in the viewer, the analyst, and even in the institution of media itself (Martin, 1992; Nairn & Fine, 2008)?

I contend that Kellner's and Share's (2005) five Core Concepts of critical media literacy should incorporate a quasi-"traditionalist", quasi-"'protectionist' approach" to "media pedagogy", which in a very real sense entails the "inoculation", or perhaps more accurately, "defense", of "… young people against the effects of media … manipulation by cultivating …" a deep, abiding sense of empathy for those whom our society has deemed "Others" and "Neighbors", in the Žižekian (2008) sense. As Kellner and Share (2005) note, the traditionalist paradigm "… would attempt to 'inoculate' young people against the effects of *media addition* and manipulation by cultivating a taste for book literacy, high culture, and the values of truth and beauty, and by denigrating all forms of media and computer culture (see Postman, 1985, 1992)" (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 372, my emphasis added). A quasi-traditionalist media pedagogy paradigm that cultivated empathy, indeed sympathy, as a "Core Concept" and "defense" again media "manipulation" that entailed ideologically prejudicial "brainwashing" would not also disparage "media and computer culture" (p. 372). Rather, it would respect all forms of

communication and serve as the ethical ground and emotional catalyst for *charged*, *meaningful*, and *hastened* critical media analysis as outlined by Kellner and Share. I contend that Richard Rorty's (Hayden, 2001; Voparil, 2006) conception of "sentimental education" and David Takac's (2002) conception of an assets model of multiculturalism together provide a model for such an empathetic media pedagogy paradigm (Takacs, 2002, p. 175) (Kellner & Share, 2005).

  Rorty and "sentimental education". On the topic of the moral underpinnings of human rights, Richard Rorty (Hayden, 2002) cites philosopher Annette Baier as arguing that "… 'trust' rather than 'obligation' …" should serve "… as the fundamental moral notion", a "… substitution [that] would mean thinking of the spread of the human rights culture not as a matter of our becoming more aware of the requirements of the moral law, but rather as what Baier calls 'a progress of sentiments.'" (Hayden, 2002, p. 254). Rorty adds that, "This progress consists in an increasing ability to see the similarities between ourselves and people very unlike us as outweighing the differences. It is the result of what I been calling 'sentimental education.'" (p. 254).

  A foundational question for the sentimental educator, in Rorty's view, is not " 'Why should I be moral?'", a question he says belongs to the "rational egoist", but is instead, "'Why should I care about a stranger, a person who is no kin to me, a person whose habits I find disgusting?'" (p. 254). For Rorty, the rational egoist would respond, "'Because kinship and custom are morally irrelevant, irrelevant to the obligations imposed by the recognition of membership in the same species.'" (p. 254). The sentimental educator, on the other hand, would respond, "'Because this is what it is like to be in her situation—to be far from home, among strangers,' or 'Because she might

become your daughter-in-law,' or 'Because her mother would grieve for her.'" (pp. 254-

255). Rorty asserts that,

> Such stories, repeated and varied over the centuries, have induced us, the rich,
> safe, powerful, people, to tolerate, and even to cherish, powerless people—people
> whose appearance or habits or beliefs at first seemed an insult to our own moral
> identity, our sense of the limits of permissible human variation. (p. 255)

Christopher Voparil (2006) elaborates upon Rorty's conception of sentimental education

by categorizing it into two main tenets: On the first tenet, Voparil states,

> The unifying thread of 'achieving our country,' 'justice as a larger loyalty,' and
> Rorty's recent work on human rights is the notion that an inclusionary moral
> community is the cornerstone of an effective democratic practice. Without the
> emotional involvement entailed by the creation of a self-conscious moral
> community, largely through sympathetic identification with the suffering of
> others, attempts to remedy the injustices of the world will prove feeble and hollow
> … A kind of community of fellow feeling or 'reciprocal trust' is needed for
> individuals to be likely to provide assistance to others. The moment one ceases to
> think of the other in the first person plural, the likelihood of acting on their behalf
> decreases dramatically. (Voparil, 2006, p. 91)

Concomitantly fundamental to Rorty's sentimental education is also, according to

Voparil, "… the view that imaginative literature, in particular social realist novels, but

narratives and stories in general, are the primary vehicles of moral progress and the quest

for social justice" (p. 91). Furthermore, Voparil states of Rorty that he, "… describes this

kind of education as that which 'gets people of different kinds sufficiently well

acquainted with one another that they are less tempted to think of those different from

themselves as only quasi-human.'", and that "The goal here is greater inclusion: 'to

expand the reference of the terms 'our kind of people' and 'people like us''" (p. 92).

Rorty's conception of sentimental education, therefore, flies in the face of the messages

contained within the discriminatory advertisements I have analyzed: These

advertisements subtly *divorce* Muslims, the lower-class, and immigrants from the middle-

class' conception of what it means to be a human. Sentimental education, through

endowing the other, the *Neighbor*, with *recognizable subjectivity* and *an endearing*

narrative returns to it *a humanness* lacking in discriminatory advertisements (Žižek,

2008).

   Takacs and "an assets model of multiculturalism". David Takacs (2002)

effectively complements Rorty's empathetic conception of "others" by approaching

"difference" in the classroom with "an assets model of multiculturalism" based on the

concept of "positionality": Takacs states,

> We allow each student to assert individualized knowledge that contributes to a collective understanding. Rather than 'tolerating' difference, we move to respect difference, as difference helps us understand our own worldview — and thus the world itself — better. From respect, we move to celebration, as we come to cherish how diverse perspectives enable us to experience the world more richly and come to know ourselves more deeply. To understand our own place in the world *requires* us to listen to and understand those around us. (Takacs, 2002, p. 170 & 175)

Takacs clarifies the term "positionality" when he writes,

> To work toward a just world — a world where all have equal access to opportunity — means, as a start, opening up heart and mind to the perspectives of others. We must be able to hear each other and to respect and learn from what we hear. We must understand how we are positioned in relation to others — as dominant/subordinate, marginal/center, empowered/powerless. In the *Feminist Classroom*, Maher and Tetreault (2001: 164) describe 'the idea of *positionality*, in which people are defined not in terms of fixed identities, but by their location within shifting networks of relationships, which can be analyzed and changed.' (p. 169)

Takacs adds,

> For those who teach for social justice, the 'and changed' part is crucial: understanding positionality means understanding where you stand with respect to power, an essential skill for social change agents. From this understanding, we have a standpoint from which to challenge power and change ourselves. (p. 169)

Takacs thus contributes to a sentimental conception of education a structure by which subjects can not only tolerate each other but also value and *learn from* the differences they possess, differences which lend to each and every subject new and empowering ways to see the world. Takacs remarks further that,

> By encouraging an assets model of multiculturalism through an appreciation of positionality and epistemology, we encourage a nuanced, scholarly, personal exploration of the racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and other 'isms' that roil society and can roil our classrooms if we delve into these topics insensitively. When we explore these issues in the context of academic subject matter, we tie our explorations to students' lived experiences, in a less judgmental and charged way. Everyone's perspective is valued; 'bias' is seen as a resource that can help each of us understand our positions in society, can help us gain some perspective on the assumptions we may blindly hold about each other. (p. 175)

Interestingly, Takacs' "assets model of multiculturalism" is in line with Kellner's and Share's (2005) third Core Concept of critical media literacy, "*Audience Decoding: Different people experience the same media message differently*", in that, as the authors state, "The ability for students to see how diverse people can interpret the same message differently is important for multicultural education, since understanding differences means more than merely tolerating one another" (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 375).

What Rorty's (Hayden, 2001) conception of sentimental education and Takacs' (2002) assets model of multicultural education bring to critical media literacy, however, is the quintessential focus on treating others with genuine respect and empathy, a focus which, if taken seriously, injects into Kellner's and Share's (2005) five Core Concepts of critical media literacy *a sense of immediacy* for subjecting to critical analysis deleteriously discriminatory media forms, and for the purposes of this work, advertisements which subtly yet viciously caricaturize Muslims, the lower-class, and immigrants as the Neighbor (Žižek, 2008).

A response to Ruitenberg. Returning once more to Žižek's (2008) insights into intersubjectivity, he states,

> Today's liberal tolerance towards others, the respect of otherness and openness towards it, it counterpointed by an obsessive fear of harassment. In short, the Other is just fine, but only insofar as his presence is not intrusive, insofar as this Other is not really other … My duty to be tolerant towards the Other effectively means that I should not get too close to him, intrude on his space. In other words, I should respect his *intolerance* of my over-proximity. What increasingly emerges as the central human right in late-capitalist society is *the right not to be harassed*, which is a right to remain at a safe distance from others. (Žižek, 2008, p. 41)

We could say qua Heidegger (1962), therefore, that in maintaining a "safe ideological distance" from others via "respectful tolerance", the subject ensures that its "they-self" remains outside of the range of attack or even dissolution by the identity-threatening Neighbor. Žižek cites Peter Sloterdijk, however, as claiming that "'More communication means more at first above all more conflict'", and states himself that, "This is why he is right to claim that the attitude of 'understanding-each-other' has to be supplemented by the attitude of 'getting-out-of-each-other's-way,' by maintaining an appropriate distance, by implementing a new 'code of discretion'" (Žižek, 2008, p. 59) (Heidegger, 1962; Žižek, 2008).

Claudia Ruitenberg (2010) would not only agree with Sloterdijk's sentiment that more conflict will result from more communication, but also go so far as to argue that only via conflict, and not "getting-out-of-each-other's-way", can individuals truly formulate and exercise their civic identities: She states,

> I propose that disagreement ought to be fostered as a democratic capacity, not neutralized or suppressed. In fact, I would consider it a failure of democratic political education if young people learn to avoid conflict or regard it as a breakdown of democracy, as I agree with Mouffe that 'a well-functioning

democracy calls for a vibrant clash of democratic political positions.' (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 49)

Ruitenberg is compelled to support this position because she originally frames the subject's political affiliation as being an affective attachment to an identity-granting social collectivity: She explains,

> Lacanian psychoanalysis does not attribute a particular substance or essence to human subjectivity, but rather considers lack 'the defining mark of subjectivity.' The subject, confronted with its intrinsic lack, constantly seeks 'traits of identification' outside of itself with which it can identify and, thus, construct its identity. (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 46)

Moreover, with respect to the subject's political identity being "affective", Ruitenberg continues, "The identification with a collectivity is not a decision based on purely rational considerations; people need to feel moved, inspired, affectively compelled by political identity" (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 47). Citing Žižek (1993), she explains, "'The element which holds together a given community cannot be reduced to the point of signification: the bond linking together its members always implies a shared relationship toward a Thing, toward Enjoyment incarnated.'", or what in psychoanalytical literature is called "*jouissance*", "… the term Lacan uses to refer to the powerful, bodily enjoyment that drives human desire" (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 47) And yet, though Ruitenberg accounts for one's need and desire for identification with a political collectivity, what does she say about one's interpretation of *another's* political identity? (Ruitenberg, 2010; Žižek, 2008).

> Ruitenberg reasons that

> … ignoring this affective dimension [of political identification] means that the emergence of ethnic, nationalist and xenophobic groups is misunderstood, for one's identification with a group that shares a particular kind of enjoyment—or, at least, the fantasy of that enjoyment—is, at the same time, the rejection of another

group that shares another kind of enjoyment or its fantasy. (Ruitenberg, 2010, pp. 47 and 48)

Ruitenberg adeptly states earlier that

Human relations are inherently antagonistic as their collective identifications require the definition of a 'we' that, by definition, presupposes a 'they' in the sense that one cannot define with whom or what one identifies without defining with whom or what one does *not* identify. (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 46)

But in these passages, Ruitenberg neglects a critical account of the way in which the subject not only "rejects" another group as a result of its affective political identification, but also *reviles* the group as a threatening Neighbor. Ruitenberg cites Žižek as stating, "'What are fantasies about the Other's special, excessive enjoyment—about the black's superior potency and appetite, about the Jew's or Japanese's special relationship toward money and work—if not precisely so many ways, for us, to organize our own enjoyment?'" (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 48). But she leaves Žižek commenting only on the way in which the subject interprets its *own jouissance apropos* the Other's *jouissance* and not the way in which the subject truly regards the Other's *jouissance*: On this side of the duality, and as I have cited earlier in Chapter Two, Žižek (2008) states that

Since a Neighbour is, as Freud suspected long ago, primarily a thing, a traumatic intruder, someone whose different way of life (or rather, way of *jouissance* materialized in its social practices and rituals) disturbs us, throws the balance of our way of life off the rails, when it comes too close, this can also give rise to an aggressive reaction aimed at getting rid of this disturbing intruder. (Žižek, 2008, p. 59)

I have already posited, and elaborated apropos Mucinex's advertisement, that one way in which the subject "gets rid" of this disturbing intruder, or Neighbor, is via objectification and ultimate torture. In light of this process, Peter Sloterdijk's injunction that subjects "remain at an ideological distance" from the Other when attempting to understand it

makes sense. Ruitenberg (2010), on the other hand, follows Chantal Mouffe's position

that "'a well-functioning democracy calls for a vibrant clash of political positions.'", and

states that "Students should gain an understanding of the institutions and discourses of

the social order in which they live, but they should also be encouraged to *imagine* other,

more desirable forms of collective life" (Ruitenberg, 2010, pp. 49 and 51). Here, it seems

that Ruitenberg glosses over and trivializes the student's *understanding* of the

complexities of the social order, a reality within which the Other resides, in favor of

encouraging the subject's misinformed affective identification with a political

collectivity. Ruitenberg does comment, however, that "An inductive political education,

then, would begin not with political theories or the abstract request to 'imagine a

desirable society' but with discussions of concrete perceptions of injustice", but I fear

that within Ruitenberg's paradigm, these discussions would promote the student's

understanding of issues of injustice *via* vantages gained from ultimate political

identification and *not* via an empathetic understanding of the ways in which "the

contextual Other" would interpret issues of injustice, an understanding of the Other both

Rorty (Hayden, 2001; Voparil, 2006) and Takacs (2002) promote (p. 52).

Heidegger (1962) would potentially claim that Ruitenberg's (2010) "inductive

political education" effectively moves Dasein further and further away from an authentic

relationship with its Self in "Being-one's-Self" and closer to strengthened and

factionalized conceptions of inauthentic das Man (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 52). Žižek (2008)

would potentially respond that Ruitenberg (2010) is unknowingly setting the stage for the

existence of subjects who are becoming the *encroaching Neighbors* of *the Other*. If not

meted first by an *empathetic* understanding of the nature of the Other, therefore, I

contend that Ruitenberg's desire and call for a "'vibrant clash of democratic political positions'" could potentially contribute to political strife, fragmentation, and even cultural warfare (Heidegger, 1962; Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 49; Žižek, 2008).

An Assessment of the Project

I started this thesis by drawing upon the work Joe Kincheloe, Patrick Slattery, and Shirley Steinberg (2000) to justify the interpretation of "the media" as "an educational institution". I subsequently attempted to frame some media forms, specifically in the form of advertisements, as being symptoms of an "unjust" educational institution qua Martha Nussbaum's (2011) Capabilities Approach *first* for utilizing implicit persuasion to delimit consumers' freedom of product selection. I then attempted to draw upon the work of Flavio Vega (Martin, 1992), Martin Heidegger (1962), Emmanuel Levinas (1997), and Slavoj Žižek (2008) to frame two specific advertisements as examples of *discriminatory* media forms, and thus vehicles of the discriminatory educational institution of the media. I then returned to Martha Nussbaum (2011) to argue that discriminatory media forms are *also* "unjust" according to the Capabilities Approach. I used this interpretation of the media as an unjust and discriminatory educational institution to pose a call for ameliorative educational responses, and I included within these responses not only critical media literacy, but also Richard Rorty's (Hayden 2001; Voparil, 2006) conception of sentimental education and David Takacs' (2002) interpretation of an assets model of multiculturalism. I concluded the body of my thesis by critiquing Claudia Ruitenberg's (2010) affect-based model of inductive political education for its complicity in fostering vitriolic social relationships.

Future research. In future research, I would like to flesh out of what a sentimental/assets model of multiculturalism, quasi-traditionalist media pedagogy's curriculum would consist and marry this curriculum with exercises in critical media literacy. Amongst these exercises, moreover, I would like to include further analyses of both Febreze and Mucinex advertisements, as well as others advertisements that may contain latent discriminatory messages. Finally, I would like to inquire into the ways in which discriminatory media forms implicitly persuade viewers and the existence of other methods of defense I could incorporate into my developing conception of comprehensive media literacy.

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