Fixed Identities and Fluid Lives: Representation, Regulation and Possibilities of Resistance in AIDS Education

by

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Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, but because a certain attachment to my existence is to be assumed, a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me, precisely because they constitute me socially... As a further paradox, then, it is only by occupying -- being occupied by-- that injurious term that I become enabled to resist and oppose that term, and the power that constitutes me is recast as the power I oppose. 
(Judith Butler, 1995, 245)
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Abstract.

This project is an attempt to critically engage with pedagogical strategies which demand or envision a sense of stability, singularity and stasis in their subjects, and, more specifically, to come to some understanding of the way in which the pedagogical subject or learner is represented and regulated through AIDS education as it has unfolded in North America. The discussion is located around an analysis of the photographic images and texts employed in publicly distributed poster campaigns developed through AIDS education initiatives. Public educational initiatives around AIDS, regardless of the context of their initial production, have participated in a public discourse which has informed the constitution of subjects and identities, both in relation to AIDS and in relation to each other within the larger social. The production of AIDS posters which employ photographic images, and our reading practices and identifications in relation to them, are informed by both the historical emergence of photography as a medium and visual discourse which produces and locates bodies through representation, as well as other contemporary discourses which aim to construct what is known as AIDS. Processes of identification as well as those epidemiological, Judeo-Christian, and biomedical discourses having particular currency in the AIDS crisis are examined as constituting the conditions for the construction, normalization and regulation of subjects and bodies through AIDS education discourse. At the same time, it is precisely within these same processes of identification and disciplinary subject-formation that possibilities for resistance and clues as to the way in which AIDS education might play a crucial role in such a project of resistance are located.
Chapter One. The Production of AIDS and Strategies of Prevention.

The AIDS epidemic--with its genuine potential for global devastation--is simultaneously an epidemic of a transmissible lethal disease and an epidemic of meanings or signification (Treichler, 1988, 32).

The last fifteen years has seen the emergence of HIV/AIDS in bodies and imaginations. Although AIDS is now understood to be a syndrome which crosses borders of identity and nationality -- it is a pandemic -- the proliferation of North American discourse around AIDS points to a society not only contending with an epidemic of disease but also an epidemic of signification, where signification describes the way in which language organizes rather than labels experience or the world (Treichler, 1988, 32). It is through the production of knowledge that discourse provides a way for us to contend with what we do not know, what we cannot comprehend. Insofar as AIDS and its effects have been virtually unthinkable, various discourses have sought to establish what it is, where it resides, how it comes to be. The establishment of boundaries, of limitations, of truths is the function of discursive strategies which seek to protect societal gains and structures, or prevent the disintegration of a system of social organization which is seen to be threatened by outside forces or marginal practices. The appearance of a life-threatening syndrome of epidemic proportions can only be understood and “controlled” if it can be intelligibly constituted and represented in discourse. Thus, all we know of AIDS, or any other social phenomenon, is our own discursive renderings of it, those representations in language which make it a knowable object. Given the monumental trauma and danger associated with AIDS and its epidemic status, the proliferation of representations and discourse has been of similar proportions.
Foucault writes of the way in which the modern era has brought a measure of relief from the profound threat of death for western societies, that death has ceased "to torment life so directly" (Foucault, 1990, 142). For modern, western societies in which, for the most part, people live without the a sense of the immediate threat of death, an epidemic such as AIDS, which has been so closely linked to that same threat, carries a great imperative to discursively allay fears and deny death's threat to life. Foucault argues that it is precisely the discursive strategies which take hold of life, through individual bodies and populations, which function to avert "the immanent risks of death." (Ibid.) Thus, the degree to which AIDS has been perceived as the unknown, the unexpected, the uncontrollable functions as a measure of the degree to which it must be constituted discursively and regulated in terms of individual bodies, social categories, and the population as a whole.

Linda Singer describes this as a "logic of epidemic:"

An epidemic is a phenomenon that in its very representation calls for, indeed, seems to demand some form of managerial response, some mobilized effort of control. To the extent that epidemics come to function as a ground for the mobilization of social resources, they operate as more than metaphors of the social. They also function as political logics, forms of social rationality (1993, 27).

The AIDS epidemic has provided the logic or rationale for social institutions to engage in the production of discursive knowledge and the fortification of relations of power which aim to control what is known as AIDS and the ways in which it becomes articulated in the population. Foucault argues that "there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association" (1980, 93). One of the central ways in which power
operates in the deployment of knowledge is through the production of its own target. This is not to say that AIDS as a disease does not exist, but that "the very nature of AIDS is constructed through language" (Treichler, 1988, 31). The dialexis of power/knowledge demands that it proliferate what it seeks to contain and produce what it wishes to regulate. According to Foucault, it is through this operation that "power advanced, multiplied its relays and its effects, while its target expanded, subdivided and branched out, penetrating further into reality at the same pace" (1990, 42).

Discourse functions as a productive operation of power to constitute socio-cultural phenomena, such as AIDS, and also to discipline individual bodies and constitute subjects and identities. This thesis is an exploration of the particular ways in which the discourses employed in AIDS poster campaigns have constructed subjects and identities in relation to AIDS. The specific context of this project is made up of poster campaigns produced in both the United States and Canada, all of which share some common characteristics and discursive strategies. Early campaigns produced by government agencies in both countries are remarkably similar and many community organizations have not only utilized similar strategies but identical posters. Many poster campaigns and images are imported from the U.S. into Canada as under-funded community organizations borrow campaigns from larger and well-established foundations. Regardless of their initial sites of production, these AIDS posters overwhelmingly share discursive strategies which both rely on and fortify assumptions regarding the stability and singularity of social identity categories. AIDS education discourse constitutes both AIDS and the pedagogical subject or learner as identifiable, locatable, and fixed, and thus
contributes to a process of regulation rather than a practice of pedagogy which takes into account the multiple, mutable, and contradictory nature of lives and subjectivities.

The existence of a syndrome characterized by immunological deficiency was first recognized in North America at the beginning of the 1980s. In October of 1981, 244 people in the United States are known to have died as a result of a syndrome that was variously referred to in medical journals as gay-related immunodeficiency (GRID) and would be more popularly referred to as “the gay plague.” One year later, 1123 people have died as a result of the syndrome and the US Centre for Disease Control announces a surveillance definition and name for the syndrome: acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). The CDC also publishes a list which identifies the primary social groups at risk for acquiring AIDS; what has become known as the “4-H list” identifies homosexuals, Haitians, hemophiliacs, and heroin addicts as the social groups most at risk of infection. With the release of this information by the CDC, and increasing coverage by the gay press, the popular media also discovers AIDS and begins to construct what will be understood as ‘the deviant’ or ‘person with AIDS’ in North America. Five years later, in 1987, 25644 people have died, and the virus identified as the principle causative agent of AIDS has been named the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Educational initiatives are well underway in the gay community, whose first voluntary AIDS service organizations were formed as early as 1982, and the 1988 US Surgeon General’s report claims there is no need to provide nation-wide AIDS prevention education and risk reduction information. This report supports the CDC’s epidemiological conclusions and

1 All historical and statistical data cited in Grover, 1994 and Crimp, 1993.
implies that there is no apparent risk to those who have not been identified as social groups already infected or at risk.

Throughout the 1980s, both epidemiological and popular media discourses around AIDS dealt extensively with the differentiation of bodies and social locations. Western societies have witnessed the proliferation of modern discourses which take up disease as a metaphor for all that is seen as socially dangerous and undesirable, where the body becomes a metaphor for the social body and the virus for those seen to be infected by it. Metaphors of invasion or infection rely on cultural assumptions that societies, like bodies, are naturally “healthy” and that health is determined not by quality of life so much as freedom from the undesirable or the “other.” In the context of the AIDS epidemic, these metaphors have been resurrected and fortified, much as they were during the plagues of the middle ages. (see Watney, 1988) Discourse in politics and the media has reproduced and reiterated the boundaries between what is referred to as the “general public” and the infected “other.” “As a term, [general public] bespeaks neither sex nor revolution. Its very amorphousness guarantees widespread identification...The asexuality, the vagueness of the term stands in opposition to the descriptive terms applied to most [persons with AIDS]--homosexuals, gays, junkies, IV drug users” (Grover, 1988, 23).

In the discourses employed by the media, public health officials, and politicians, what is understood as “infected” has taken on very complex meanings. Being the “infected” or “infectious” has had less to do with a sero-positive status than with a logic which advocates guilt by association, or guilt by identification. The stigmatization experienced by people with AIDS as a result of HIV’s association with drug use, “foreigners,” homosexuality and sexually transmitted disease has even been powerful
enough to incite violence against those who are more commonly viewed as societal innocents, such as children. This “hysteria crescendoed in the much publicized case of the Ray family in Arcadia, Florida. On August 24, 1987, the three [sero-positive] hemophiliac sons, ages eight, nine, and ten...were readmitted by court order to the local elementary school. The community quickly organized a boycott of the school, and the family’s home was burned down on August 28” (Gilman, 1988, 105). Thus, the discursive and socio-political responses to and around AIDS have reflected not only a fear of the virus but perhaps more accurately the construction and fear of the “other.” Because of this, people with AIDS were, and in many ways still are seen, not as those who test sero-positive, but as those who exist outside of, or in association with those outside of, the “general public.”

In contrast, while describing the case of Kimberly Bergalis -- a young woman positioned in the straight, white, middle-class communities of middle-America who contracted HIV from a medical professional she was receiving treatment from -- the media continually employed terms like “innocent victim” implying that, as a member of the “general public,” Bergalis could be seen in contrast to those who, through association, are not innocent victims and thus deserve both viral infection and marginalization. AIDS activists described Bergalis as the first member of the general public to die from AIDS. (see Caruth & Keenan, 1991) In these discourses, the “person with AIDS” is essentially a product of community affiliation, a representation of those outside the “general public.” In fact, the construction of the “general public” is a direct consequence of the invention and exclusion of the “person with AIDS” in the media and in politics. Judith Butler argues that the “exclusionary matrix by which subjects are
formed...requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet 'subjects,' but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject” (1993, 3). Those who form the constitutive outside to the “general public” are discursively produced as the stereotypes of certain socially unacceptable identity categories. In this way, the person with AIDS has been produced as a particular kind of subject, one that is marginalized and subjected to a one-dimensional, identity-driven, and heavily stigmatized social location.

Early on in the AIDS epidemic, and throughout the last decade, there was a continual slippage between what was known about individual practices and modes of transmission and social categories of identity. “Risky behaviour and risky people became synonymous, collapsing the process of infection into the fear of contact with people who are ‘different’ according to recycled stereotypes of otherness” (Patton, 1994, 9). In an attempt to reassure the “general public,” excuse political irresponsibility and mismanagement, and reinforce discourses of regulation and control in the social arena, medical discoveries regarding modes of transmission were quickly grafted onto stereotypes regarding identity and sexual practice. Gay men and prostitutes were labeled responsible for transmission through penetrative sex, and transmission through IV drug use and the global nature of the virus quickly acquired a racialized discourse, stigmatizing immigrant and African-American communities in particular. This conflation of infection and identity constructed notions of the “general public” by clarifying which identities it excluded and essentialized identity categories themselves. This proliferation of discourses sought to contain and delimit social bodies and AIDS itself.
As early as 1982, groups within the gay community had been formed to deal with the urgent need for clear educational initiatives which would provide gay men with a means of protecting themselves from a disease which was ravaging their communities. In this sense, there was a dire need for educational discourse which would establish the boundaries of safe sexual behaviour and preserve some semblance of freedom and political solidarity in a community which felt largely abandoned by more mainstream institutions. As a result, community based educational initiatives entered the foray of the multiple discourses being produced around AIDS. Whereas mainstream discourses had established boundaries between social groups largely to reassure a “general public” of the containability of AIDS and their relative innocence and safety, early educational discourses within the gay community sought to employ notions of containment to build solidarity and maintain hard-won notions of sexual freedom and political self-esteem which the devastation of AIDS threatened to destroy. Thus, both “mainstream” and “subcultural” discourses were engaged in the establishment of boundaries and categories of identity, although for somewhat different and yet complementary purposes.

While government reports insisted that there was no need for population-based risk-reduction programs, discourses in the mainstream media embarked on population-wide campaigns intended to reassure the “general public” of their safety from contagion. “Because epidemiologists perceived that AIDS signaled an extreme emergency and that homosexuals and drug injectors were geographically isolated and extremely deviant...prevention campaigns were locked into risk-based, rather than population-based, programming” (Patton, 1996, 24). The fact that the first educational initiatives around AIDS came out of the gay community, as a response to the overwhelming needs
of its particular members, in some ways unintentionally reinforced notions that population-based programs were unnecessary. The sheer absence of prevention programs addressing the “general public,” in contrast with the rapidly growing amount of material addressing gay men in particular, contributed to popular beliefs that AIDS was not a threat to anyone not belonging to certain social groups. Under-funded and over-worked groups within the gay community began implementing imperative prevention programs which, as risk-based strategies, attempted “to alert particular types of people to their special risk” and inadvertently reinforced mainstream discourses which viewed risk as “virtually absolute: one either is or is not at risk” (13-4). Ironically, AIDS education within the gay community primarily encouraged the universal adoption of safer-sex practices regardless of either partners’ probable exposure to HIV.

Cindy Patton addresses the division between mainstream discourses and those produced in early educational efforts of gay communities by differentiating between a notion of “national pedagogy,” which refers to “the mechanisms and logics that frame the evolving concept of citizen,” and a more common notion of education, which she defines as “practices that make relatively sharp distinctions between those who know and teach and those who do not know and learn” (1996, 7). She argues that the more localized educational efforts produced within the gay community of the 1980s can be seen in opposition to the discursive mechanisms which constituted a national pedagogy. Clearly, community-based educational efforts did not initially have ties to nor owed allegiance to mainstream institutions such as the media and government funding bodies. Groups within the gay community which took on the work of educating primarily gay men, did so without any government support, and held very little, if any, institutional
power. However, to the degree that these community efforts have manifested themselves in publicly distributed, and eventually widely available, materials, they have engaged in the important work of proliferating and complicating public discourse. In this way, public educational initiatives around AIDS, regardless of the context of their initial production, have participated in a public discourse which has informed the constitution of subjects and identities. Patton herself acknowledges that “the concept of a national pedagogy suggests that power-knowledge is not *statically held* in a state of both brute and sublime apparatuses, but is a *procedure* for bringing bodies into positions of duty and obligation that are constitutive of identity” (9). The “public” nature of these educational strategies, especially in their use of posters and pamphlets, and the absence of what Patton calls “formal moments of teaching,” locates them in the discursive realm of “national pedagogy.”

The public nature of educational posters and pamphlets developed around AIDS and their subsequent involvement and impact in national discourses make them a particularly unique object of study in terms of the signification of identities and the proliferating discourses around AIDS. While government endorsed AIDS education strategies have had obvious institutional links to the political realm, community-based AIDS pedagogy also has a history which is inherently political. AIDS activists in the gay community were the first groups to identify and address the need for education campaigns around safer sex and drug use. Thus, the methods employed by these educational strategies, namely posters and pamphlets, have historical ties to the methods used by political activists for decades and particularly in the AIDS crisis. Over the last decade, many publications and exhibitions have celebrated the thought-provoking work
created by public artists and political activists in response to and in unison with the proliferation of discourse around AIDS. (see Crimp & Rolston, 1990; Gott, 1994) "More than any other issue in recent memory, the AIDS crisis has provided the tragic impetus for public art....a host of groups...have taken their individual AIDS causes and particular AIDS stances to the streets" (Gott, 1994, 187). For many early AIDS activists, who were predominantly based in the gay community or had ties there, producing educational materials in the form of posters and pamphlets was the natural evolution of political work that was already being done.

Activists had learned that posters provided a means to reach large groups of people in a way which was both cost-effective and accessible. The initial lack of government support in terms of both funding and distribution meant that community groups had to develop strategies which were not only affordable, but could be made easily visible and accessible to a large audience. Simple, yet eye-catching, posters could be pasted anywhere, and stickers, flyers, pamphlets and postcards could be handed out to passersby, or left in bars, bathhouses, and other meeting places where they would be picked up. “Too well designed and beautifully produced to be dismissed simply as graffiti, they nevertheless operate in similar spheres, as ACT UP members throw down thousands of flyers into New York streets, cover newspaper vending machines and traffic lights with activist stickers, paste their posters onto construction-site boardings, and slip placards into the subway and bus systems” (Gott, 1994, 194). When it came to developing educational initiatives which would address the prevention of HIV transmission, these politically active communities realized that the public strategies already being used to increase political awareness would be equally effective. In many
ways, these political media reflect the influence, and success, of marketing and advertising strategies which are pervasive in the western capitalist economy. Posters have provided an informal, often thought-provoking and "sexy" way to sell both political and educational ideas. Using striking images and slogans which were short, memorable and immediately readable, these public materials provided the already proven means of turning safer sex information into a commodity.

Posters and pamphlets became a medium for the proliferation of subversive and confrontational messages, as well as providing an avenue for the development of pedagogical strategies which, in many ways, can be seen as equally non-confrontational. Using posters and other public materials to educate in some ways frees the learner to make choices about what and how much information he or she will engage. The authority or expert, in the form of a person or teacher is removed from immediate view, and this allows the learner or viewer to "gaze" at the information in front of them without the pressure to perform or interact. The disadvantage of this is that many people do not seek out information about AIDS which they need. On the other hand, many people who would not have been exposed to similar information otherwise have been able to access information 'undetected'. People who believe their risk of HIV contraction to be low or non-existent or, more importantly, whom government and community agencies have believed to be low-risk, and who thus do not receive vital information by other means, can be alerted to the risk of HIV transmission through public materials which are posted in sites visited by a wide variety of people. Clearly, public educational materials have been and are effective in reaching large number of
people from a diverse range of social locations in a way which is both visually and socially accessible.

In an increasingly scopophilac culture, in which all of us are inundated by unsolicited advertising and other media, the use of visual images, and particularly photographic images, has become central to the production of an educational discourse which will capture the viewer's attention and hold it. These pedagogical strategies clearly reproduce strategies employed by other sectors within a capitalist economy which recognize the increasing familiarity of North Americans with multimedia discourse. Chapter Two explores the ways in which the discourse which has proliferated around visual media, and specifically photography as a medium, informs the uses and meanings of photographic representations as a pedagogical tool. The use of visual representations on AIDS posters and other similar educational campaigns reflects an increasingly competitive economy for viewer attention and the seemingly successful logic of advertising which relies on consumer identification with images and products. Of particular importance to this project is how these visual representations have contributed to the identification and construction of the subject as learner in the pedagogical relation and in relation to AIDS. Chapter Three examines these questions, specifically by looking at the representations used on AIDS posters in the context of epidemiological discourse and its social categorization of the subject.

Educational poster campaigns produced in the context of AIDS have specifically and almost exclusively employed photographic images of the body, or photographic portraits. In order to explore the pedagogical function and discursive effects of these photographic representations, Chapter Four examines theories of identification and the
visual representation and construction of embodied ideals. Judeo-Christian rhetoric and biomedical discourse, both having particular currency in the AIDS crisis, are discussed in terms of the ways they have each informed the body's representation and intelligibility in AIDS education discourse. The discursive effects of the photographic representations used on AIDS posters are in many ways compatible with the effects produced by the discourses which make those representations intelligible. However, through a discussion of resistance in the context of AIDS pedagogical strategy, Chapter Five forms the conclusion to this project in an attempt to recognize that “we must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1990, 101).
Chapter Two. The Photograph: Medium and Message.

*Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up (Foucault, 1995, 202).*

*The photograph can in some sense elude history...and represent a 'flat' anthropological fact, at once new and definitively unsurpassable, humanity encountering for the first time in its history messages without a code (Barthes, 1988, 45).*

In order to explore how the visual representations on AIDS posters have been both discursively informed and effective in constituting bodies, subjects, desire and what is known as AIDS, it is imperative to look at the ways in which the medium of photography has itself been constituted, informed, and effective. Photographic images are a widely prevalent component of educational texts around AIDS. The most common strategy in designing AIDS posters has been to use both photographic and linguistic texts in order to produce both particular messages and an overall pedagogical discourse. Why have photographic images been used so consistently in educational campaigns around AIDS? How do photographic images function differently than linguistic messages and other visual media? The way in which the medium of photography has been constituted is implicated in how we take up and make meaning from photographic images; our assumptions regarding the medium and its relation to the world influence and inform our reading of the particular content of an image. The meanings attached to the medium of photography itself have been informed by both the specific historical and cultural moment of its origin, as well as the functions it has performed in various cultural discourses and truth regimes.
Although the earliest photograph known was produced in Europe in 1823, it took until the mid to late 1800s before photography was technologically advanced enough to be used on a more regular basis and by a wider variety of people and institutions. Europe in the late 19th century was a society dominated by a belief in the inevitable progress of white, western civilization. Both technological and scientific advances were seen to be paving the way for a future which included a complete mastery of the global economy, non-European societies, and 'nature' itself. The industrial revolution and the discoveries made by people like Darwin had demonstrated the practical and political value of knowledges which labeled themselves 'science' to white bourgeois Europeans who stood to gain economic and symbolic power at home and abroad. It was in this milieu that photography, along with many other new and innovative technologies, was developed. Like many of the established and newly developed scientific disciplines, such as physiology, psychology, criminology, and eugenics, photography was immediately recognized as another method for cataloguing and describing the world as it 'truly' was.

The two dominant epistemological ideologies which particularly informed the way the medium of photography was constituted and understood were scientific empiricism and artistic realism. Scientific empiricism stressed the existence of a 'real' or 'true' world which could be both described and understood through careful, rigorous, and objective methodology. Artistic realism similarly asserted the primacy of a 'real' or 'true' world which could be represented and described through skill and precision. In realism, "the image was conceived of as a relay...between a human subject and reality" (Burgin, 1982a, 10). Both of these paradigms make very similar ontological and
epistemological assumptions. Firstly, they both assume that there is one ‘true’ reality which can indeed be found and described; in other words, ‘reality’ or the world is singular and knowable. Secondly, both empiricism and realism argue that, given a proper and rigorous methodology, it is possible for humans to overcome subjective and contextual concerns in order to describe and explain reality in objective and ‘true’ terms. Thus, truth is linked to objectivity. In 19th century Europe, scientific empiricism had become a powerful truth regime which advocated the knowability and mastery of nature and the world through ‘neutral’ observation and ‘objective’ methodology.

It was in this context that the medium of photography first became significant as a method of representation and communication. “The unprecedented capacity of photography for resemblance seemed most appropriately to determine its specific work and to distinguish it from painting” (Burgin, 1982a, 11). Using an instrument which, seemingly without any human intervention, simply records the scene in front of it by exposing a chemically treated surface to light, photography epitomizes the notion of an empirical and objective eye. Where there would always be slight variations among realist painters’ renditions of a scene, it was believed that the medium of photography would record and represent the same scene in exactly the same way regardless of who actually released the shutter; “the scene is there, captured mechanically, not humanly (the mechanical is here a guarantee of objectivity)” (Barthes, 1988, 44). In this way, photography was constituted and became intelligible through the particularly influential discourses which comprised the epistemological and ontological ideology of empiricism. The medium of photography was thus understood in terms of what was seen as its uniquely objective nature. This understanding of photography as a medium informed the
particular reading practices that developed around photographic texts. Photographs were read, not as works of art or even representations, but as *records* and *documents* of the world as it ‘truly’ was.

As a result of the meanings and reading practices that developed around photographs, the medium of photography began to be recognized as a unique social tool and used in very particular ways by both institutions and individual artists. As records and documents of the ‘real’ world, photographs became functional in scientific terms as a way to inventory and catalogue the world visually. Photography’s use in this manner was not restricted to those in the scientific disciplines; many of Europe’s early ‘art photographers’ also saw their projects as equally scientific, by ascribing the same notions of neutrality and objective documentary to the medium. The work of August Sander, a German photographer at the turn of the century, gives a clear illustration of the way in which photography’s constitution as an artistic and communication medium was bound up in the dominant scientific ideologies of the time. In 1911, Sander began a photographic catalogue of the German people which he published under the title *Antlitz der Zeit* (*The Face of Our Time*). His ‘“archetype pictures’ (as he called them) imply a pseudo-scientific neutrality similar to that claimed by the covertly partisan typological sciences that sprang up in the nineteenth century like phrenology, criminology, psychiatry, and eugenics” (Sontag, 1973, 59). Sander believed that photography would reveal the individual faces he photographed as social masks, and that developing this inventory and cataloguing it would “shed light on the social order by atomizing it, into an indefinite number of social types” (Ibid.). These aims are very similar to the aims of an empirical science which advocates an understanding of the world through its reduction
into parts which can be objectively known and described. The medium of photography had been saturated with empirical meanings and constructed in such a way that even its use by artists was shaped by the epistemological and ontological assumptions dominant in 19th century European science and culture. The photograph carried the implied meaning of specimen or evidence, and as such became a very particular tool of truth and power.

In addition to its constitution as a medium with particular value and meaning, photography was fast becoming a widely accessible technology, and technological developments in terms of production and reproduction meant that photography became a much more efficient and effective tool of power. Walter Benjamin writes that, with the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature...the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental (1969, 225).

Thus, photography became a tool employed by important institutions of social control, particularly those whose mandate was primarily based on notions of identification and surveillance. European bureaucracies began to use photographic portraits as a central way to identify and keep track of citizens whose numbers and mobility were rapidly increasing. The photograph became a requirement on state sanctioned pieces of identification and located bodies in particular sites of origin. “Photography...began, historically, as an art of the Person: of identity, of civil status, of what we might call, in all senses of the term, the body’s formality” (Barthes, 1981, 79). In Foucauldian terms, photographs participate as a tool in the productive functions of power; with its
development in the late 19th century, photography became a readily accessible technique of power in the production of bodies, subjects, and identities.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the disciplinary function of the 'gaze.' He writes that, “power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up” (1995, 202). Photography was a technology which could be used efficiently as a means of disciplinary surveillance; it allowed the 'visibility' of a large number of citizens to the authorities responsible for monitoring their existence and movements. At the same time, the use of photographs establishes a very particular relation of power, where the citizen “is seen, but he [sic] does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication” (200). The photograph poses a relation of power in which the 'gaze' is that of the viewer/authority, and the subject becomes an identifiable and categorizable object; the power of this identification and categorization remains with the 'gaze.' In this way, photography becomes a form of what Foucault calls panopticism where “the Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen” (201-2). Like the Panopticon, photography functions as an optical system and particular technology of power in which “the crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities. From the point of view of the guardian, it is replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised” (201). The relations of power that developed around photography’s use as a medium can be
understood in two ways: first, the reading of a photograph poses a relation of power where the subject of the photograph becomes an object and is made visible as such to the viewing subject, whose gaze can identify and categorize the subject depicted in the photographic text. Second, photography emerged historically as an instrument of disciplinary power which, “in order to be exercised,...had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible” (214). Photography provided a means of visibility, surveillance, and objectification, which could circulate throughout society, through institutions as diverse as the police, the family, and the media, and which could function “like a faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception” (Ibid.).

The use of photography as a method for identifying, cataloguing, and surveying the population stemmed from the perceived need on the part of the state to both describe and inscribe a stable social order, as well as to quell the fears of bourgeois Europeans regarding the proper location of bodies in terms of class, ethnicity, and nationality. The industrial revolution and increasing colonization both called for a need to locate individuals in relation to one another and in relation to power. Not only were people crossing national borders at an increasing rate, but they were also crossing social borders in new and perhaps, unexpected ways. The opening of factories in the urban centres of Europe and migration of thousands of people away from economically depressed rural communities had destabilized traditional dualisms and boundaries --urban/rural, townsfolk/peasants, worldly/ignorant-- which had previously constituted a sense of social order. Similarly, and perhaps more importantly, Europe’s colonization of Asia,
Africa, and the Americas provided a context for, indeed seemed to require, the production of knowledges around bodies, locations, and boundaries and photography became an important component in these discourses. Photographs were used to furnish evidence of existence; they established “not a consciousness of the being-there of the thing (which any copy could provoke) but an awareness of its having-been-there” (Barthes, 1988, 44). At the same time, the ‘existence’ photographs were seen to provide evidence for what was being constituted in very particular ways according to ideologies and truth regimes. Photography was used to support efforts at social and individual constitution and control which “function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding (mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal); and that of coercive assignment, of differential distribution (who he is; where he must be; how he is to be characterized; how he is to be recognized; how a constant surveillance is to be exercised over him in an individual way; etc.)” (Foucault, 1995, 199).

The way in which images function as meaningful texts is both limited and made possible by the way the medium of the imagic message has been constituted as an effective tool and by other discourses which function alongside and in relation to these visual texts. “There can be no evidence, photographic or otherwise, of an event until the event itself has been named and characterized” (Sontag, 1973, 18). At the same time, photographic evidence enters into a productive relation with other discourses in so far as it also constitutes and formalizes particular versions of reality. This is the case with early photographic portraiture, much of which can be understood as producing and verifying specific discourses around identity and the proper location of bodies. In relation to colonialism, photographs functioned to locate the subject of colonization as other in
relation to those identified with colonizing nations. Organizations like the National Geographic Society, which privileged the photographic medium in the production of knowledge, "emerged in the midst of this context, and positioned itself as a key actor in the presentation of 'backward' peoples for Western perusal" (Collins & Lutz, 1992, 163). Photography was used as a form of cultural collection and, as in the case of the indigenous peoples of North America, was a form of evidence gathering which often preceded or coincided with the colonial eradication of cultures. Insofar as photographs and the "systems of classification or explanation that were chosen provided an illusion of adequate representation" (Ibid., 167), they also provided the discursive means and justificatory evidence for Western racism and colonial genocide. Photographs were used to furnish 'evidence' that 'the other' did in fact exist, and to point to differences which constructed 'the other' as exotic, inferior, and collectable.

Both the selection and reading of photographic images are practices informed by and invested in discourses which constitute intelligibility; "to take a picture is to have an interest in things as they are, in the status quo remaining unchanged...to be in complicity with whatever makes a subject interesting, worth photographing" (Sontag, 1973, 12). In this way, photographs were used to solidify the intelligibility of colonial subjects, and were themselves made possible, through and in relation to Western colonialist and evolutionary discourses. Certain images were made, reproduced, and exhibited because they were intelligible to turn-of-the-century European photographers and publishers. At the same time, the production, distribution, and exhibition of certain photographs constituted their representations as more 'authentic' or more accurate than others, both because the medium itself was believed to be objective and because the meaning ascribed
to imagic texts was being shaped by discursive strategies which made their content intelligible. The perceived accuracy and objectivity of photographs enabled singular and subjective images to function as exhaustive representations of a given culture or class. As a result, photographic portraits played a very particular role, not only in colonialist discourses, but also in the production of knowledge around class stratification and control of the population within Western societies. As people became more mobile in terms of both national borders and social borders, photographs which identified the individual's social class and location became useful by confirming one's place in the social order and providing the evidence required to 'put one in one's place.' "Whether directly or not, most portraits registered the bonding of people to their community, if only because innumerable clues were given to show their place within its hierarchies. So, these images were about social power, of which they themselves provided an instrument" (Kozloff, 1976, 135).

Photographic portraits often explicitly reflected the status quo in terms of social hierarchies through intricate clues which located their subjects bodies in particular sites and postures.

Professionals and the rich tend to be photographed indoors, without props. They speak for themselves. Laborers and derelicts are usually photographed in a setting (often outdoors) which locates them, which speaks for them -- as if they could not be assumed to have the kinds of separate identities normally achieved in the middle and upper classes (Sontag, 1973, 60-61).

The use of photography and, specifically, portraiture by public health officials and scientists to furnish evidence of social inequality and deviance functioned to construct and constitute the marginalized subject. In the case of H.H. Goddard, one of the most
prolific advocates of early eugenics, the construction of the “deficient” social subject through photographic representation was entirely intentional. Goddard believed that a subject’s mental deficiency could be visually identified and employed photographic portraits as evidence of the links between degrees of mental deficiency, economic well-being, and physical bearing. In his volume on the Kallikaks, a family which “functioned as a primal myth of the eugenics movement for several decades” (Gould, 1981, 168), Goddard includes three photographs depicting members of what he identified as the “feeble-minded kakos line.” They are depicted as

  living in poverty in their rural shacks. All have a depraved look about them. Their mouths are sinister in appearance; their eyes are darkened slits....It is now clear that all the photos of noninstitutionalized kakos were phonied by inserting heavy dark lines to give eyes and mouths their diabolical appearance (Ibid., 171).

Photography has also been used in public health initiatives since before 1900 both as a way to identify and classify social types as well as increase the “general public’s” awareness regarding poverty, inadequate housing and sanitary conditions. Although the aim of public health initiatives in employing photography has not been as explicit as that of Goddard and the eugenicists, it has still functioned to create representations which identify and constitute marginalized social classes as deviant and ‘other.’ These representations, much like those produced by the eugenics movement, employ photographic clues which constitute and elaborate discursive links between poverty, ignorance, criminality, contamination and socio-moral decay. The intelligibility of photographic clues, such as “dirtiness,” impoverished surroundings and the darkening of features, is culturally and historically contingent; both the making and reading of photographic images is thus dictated and shaped by the cultural context of photographer
and viewer. Whether the subject of a photograph is familiar or exoticized, photographers record what they are able to see and what is interesting to them, or what they believe will be interesting to others, and what makes a subject interesting to both the photographer and viewer is its contextual and discursive intelligibility. Thus, images become meaningful in so far as meaning is produced through culturally contingent viewing or reading practices.

Thus, the photographer, consciously or not, shapes the image he or she will produce through what Roland Barthes calls “connotation procedures.” (see Barthes, 1988, 21-25) The photographer chooses not only the subject of the photograph, but also the angle or perspective, the lighting, the location, perhaps the pose, and certainly the moment at which he or she will release the shutter. All of these variables inform what becomes the final image and how meaning will be made of it. The power of the photographer as the ‘creator’ or ‘constructor’ of the image problematizes and complicates the power of the viewer to constitute or make meaningful the subject of a photograph; the viewer’s reading is both limited and made possible by the actual content of the image. The photographer can to some extent control what we see. At the same time, the medium of “the photograph allows the photographer to conceal elusively the preparation to which he [sic] subjects the scene to be recorded” (Barthes, 1988, 21). What is understood as photography’s objective nature serves to disguise the inherently subjective process that photography is. The photographer’s intentions, or for that matter the intentions of those who use photograph’s to communicate specific meanings, may, however, be interrupted by the possibility for ‘misrecognition’ implicit in all human communication. “An element of chance enters into the dialogue between photographer
and model -- chance, initially in what is recorded, and secondly, in how it may be interpreted. The identity of a figure may not, therefore, emerge quite as intended" (Kozloff, 1981, 131). Still, the power of the viewer to interpret an image, to make meaning from it, is impacted by the power of the photographer to produce it, as well as the relations of power/knowledge which make up the viewer’s cultural and historical location. “It is precisely in its apparent ingenuousness that the ideological power of photography is rooted -- our conviction that we are free to choose what we make of a photograph hides the complicity to which we are recruited in the very act of looking” (Burgin, 1982, 148).

Barthes describes the way in which our cultural knowledge intervenes in, or enables our reading of images when he differentiates between ‘denotation’ and ‘connotation’. The denoted or ‘non-coded iconic’ message in an image can be described as the literal message. When we recognize that a spherical shape, with a line emerging from the top, which is various shades of red is an apple, we are reading the denoted message. The connoted or ‘coded iconic’ message is described by Barthes as the cultural or symbolic message in an image. In recognizing the colour and sheen of the apple as connotations of ripeness, freshness, and good taste we are reading the connoted message. “Of the two iconic messages, [the cultural] is in some sort imprinted on [the perceptual]: the literal message appears as the support of the ‘symbolic’ message” (Barthes, 1988, 37). At the same time, “it is certain that the distinction between the two iconic messages is not made spontaneously in an ordinary reading: the viewer of the image receives at one and the same time the perceptual message and the cultural message” (36). Thus, both the way in which photography has been constituted as an
objective medium and the way in which our reading processes are simultaneously perceptual and interpretive serve to obscure the cultural and subjective meaning made of the image. Far from simply ‘recognizing the real’, we constitute images as culturally and contextually intelligible in the moment we see them. “If...there is no perception without immediate categorization, then the photograph is verbalized in the very moment it is perceived; better, it is only perceived verbalized....From this point of view, the image...in actual fact has no denoted state, is immersed for its very social existence in at least an initial layer of connotation, that of the categories of language” (28-29).

The degree to which we understand our interactions with images to be characterized by recognition or perception versus subjective reading informs our understanding of images themselves as ‘natural’ versus ‘cultural’. Given the constitution of photography as a medium which empirically records and presents the world as it ‘naturally’ is, it is not surprising that photographs are used to present evidence or ‘real’ proof in the modern day media. Photographs are not understood as texts, only as the accompanying proof to a text. “The characteristics of the photographic apparatus position the subject in such a way that the object photographed serves to conceal the textuality of the photograph itself -- substituting passive receptivity for active (critical) reading” (Burgin, 1982, 146). Photographs, however, are indeed texts, and the fact that both the textuality of the photograph and the contextuality of reading practices are obscured serves to naturalize the image as ‘the real’ and our reading of it as simple ‘recognition’. The connotation of the image, its cultural or symbolic meaning, is “experienced only as the natural resonance of the fundamental denotation constituted by the photographic analogy and we are thus confronted with a typical process of
naturalization of the cultural" (Barthes, 1988, 26). In contrast, when we are presented with an image which we cannot immediately recognize, in which we do not recognize a perceptual or literal message, we become aware of our own attempt to retrieve either a literal or symbolic message; in fact, without a literal message, we often fall back on searching for a ‘hidden’ symbolic one. Likewise, in an image which is perceptually clear, in which the objects are recognizable, the denotation “naturalizes the symbolic message, it innocents the semantic artifice of connotation”; there “remains in the photograph, insofar as the literal message is sufficient, a kind of natural being-there of objects: nature seems spontaneously to produce the scene represented” (45).

The reading of connoted messages is linked to what could be called both personal and cultural ‘lexicons.’ That is, the intelligibility of messages or signs in an image is tied to the viewer’s lexicon; to read an image is not to understand the moment of existence that is represented, but to make meaning of that representation through a culturally and subjectively formed lexicon of visual signs. Barthes argues that “thanks to its code of connotation the reading of the photograph is thus always historical; it depends on the reader’s ‘knowledge’ just as though it were a matter of a real language [langue], intelligible only if one has learned the signs” (Barthes, 1988, 28). The contingency of meaning made from images thus implies both a cultural complicity between photographer and viewer as well as the possibility for ‘miscommunication’ or ‘misrecognition’. The possibility for ‘misrecognition’ stems from the fact that cultural knowledge is both shared and subjective. Although the photographer and viewer, or a multiplicity of viewers, may share a cultural knowledge or ideology, each of us also develops bodies of
cultural knowledge which highlight the variety of subjective experience both within and among us.

It is as though the image presented itself to the reading of several different people who can perfectly coexist in a single individual: the one lexia mobilizes different lexicons....This is the case for different readings of an the image: each sign corresponds to a body of 'attitudes' -- tourism, housekeeping, knowledge of art -- certain of which may be obviously lacking in this or that individual. There is a plurality and co-existence of lexicons in one and the same person, the number and identity of these lexicons forming in some sort a person's idiolect (46-47).

At the same time, the subjective is both constituted and mediated by the social or cultural. The intelligibility of signs and our ability to make meaning from them is constituted by a complex apparatus of power/knowledge, within which we inherit a series of culturally and historically located discourses that make up the truth regimes and ideologies through which we read and are constituted by representations. In this way, our relation to images is a discursively informed co-constitution, through which both subjects and signs are constructed and made intelligible. “A fact of primary social importance is that the photograph is a place of work, a structured and structuring space within which the reader deploys, and is deployed by, what codes she or he is familiar with in order to make sense” (Burgin, 1982b, 153).

AIDS posters have played a very particular pedagogical role throughout the epidemic. Used both to educate ‘target’ communities about the risk associated with particular practices and to raise public awareness regarding the social existence and implications of HIV and AIDS, these posters provide a very unique context for the use of photographic images. The photographic medium has been used in the majority of
poster campaigns and has functioned as a central feature of pedagogical strategies and
discourses around AIDS. Within the pedagogical relation between poster and viewer, the
imagic text and the linguistic text have together constituted a sort of 'discursive teacher.'
The photograph has been used, along with written text, to teach us, to convey
knowledge to the viewer about our bodies, our locations, and our relation to AIDS.
Photographs have historically been understood in many of the same ways as the
'teacher'; as an information relay, an objective informer, an expert or authority on the
'real' world. The belief that knowledge is something which can be contained in an image
or person, and then conveyed objectively and directly to the viewer or learner, fails to
take into account the way in which knowledge is produced and truth constituted
precisely through such relations. Both the subject/learner and the image are constituted
or come into existence as a product of their relation.

The photographic text and the AIDS poster are constituted by being in the world;
that is, they are constituted through their relation, not only to the viewing subject, but to
other symbolic systems, discourses and texts. "Photographs are texts inscribed in terms
of what we might call 'photographic discourse', but this discourse, like any other,
engages discourses beyond itself, the 'photographic text', like any other, is the site of a
complex 'intertextuality,' an overlapping series of previous texts 'taken for granted' at a
particular cultural and historical conjuncture" (Burgin, 1982b, 144). Therefore, the
intelligibility of a photographic image, or any textual representation, is contingent upon
its relation to other discourses and texts as well as its relation to the viewing subject and
its location in the world. Edward Said describes this as the 'worldliness' of texts, where
"worldliness, circumstantiality, the text's status as an event having sensuous particularity
as well as historical contingency, are...incorporated in the text, an infrangible part of its capacity for conveying and producing meaning" (1982, 39). The production of AIDS posters, as multimedia texts, has been informed by multiple discourses around AIDS, epidemic, bodies, disease, risk and safety. AIDS posters have been produced in response to and are made intelligible in relation to various discourses, and have in turn reinforced, reproduced, and reshaped the discursive landscape. Thus, the reading of these texts is similarly caught up in a plurality of discourses and representations, or what Foucault would call “the tactical polyvalence of discourse” (1990, 100). It is through discourse, within discourse, that texts are produced and that we enter as viewers/readers into a particular relation with a text and are able to make meaning from it.

One of the most pervasive discourses around AIDS to inform the textual representation and pedagogical strategy of the AIDS poster has been epidemiology. Epidemiology is the name given to the epistemological framework or scientific discipline used by medico-bureaucratic institutions, such as the United States Centre for Disease Control (CDC), whose job it is to deal explicitly with knowledge production and dispersion in relation to health and disease. “Epidemiology is a science of categories: concerned to trace the origin and dispersion of unexpected medical phenomena, epidemiologists try to find descriptive categories by drawing on whatever ideas about existing social groupings seem useful in bringing a disease phenomenon under control” (Patton, 1994, 52). The language of epidemiology is one of strategy and control, as well as management and administration, which presupposes and seeks to constitute or produce predictable forms of knowing. The epidemiologist must decide where in the population a disease resides and, if the disease itself cannot be obliterated, establish strategies of social control in an attempt to locate and regulate the infected. The work of identifying and containing HIV, and perhaps any other disease, is complicated by the nature of the virus itself, which will move between bodies regardless of the epidemiologist’s social categories and assumptions about social practice. At the same time, the work of epidemiology demands that the location of the disease be constituted in the form of social categories of identity.

It is through what Foucault would call the ‘specification of individuals’ as the location of HIV/AIDS that “the machinery of power that focused on this whole alien
strain did not aim to suppress it, but rather to give it an analytical, visible and permanent reality: it was implanted in bodies” (Foucault, 1990, 44). This epidemiological specification of individuals has led to the construction of ‘risk groups’ which are seen in opposition to an uninfected ‘general public’ and the solidification of identity categories as representative of certain sexual practices and ‘risk behaviours’. “The original list [of risk groups], developed [by epidemiologists] during 1981 and 1982, has structured evidence collecting in the intervening years and contributed to a view that the major risk factor in acquiring AIDS is being a particular kind of person rather than doing particular things” (Treichler, 1988, 44). As an epistemological system, epidemiology operates using a logic of categorical subjects. That is, epidemiology produces a knowledge of the population as a collection of individuals which can be segmented and categorized. Social groups are determined according to what are believed to be or constituted as predictable and stable behavioural and social attributes. Thus, epidemiology employs an epistemological framework which assumes identity and behaviour to be predictive of one another. In relation to the AIDS epidemic, epidemiology has constituted a truth regime which produces the individual as a stable, identifiable subject who can be accurately categorized along lines of behavioural risk, and thus effectively targeted. The degree to which the knowledge produced in epidemiology has been taken up as the ‘truth’ clearly indicates the perceived lack of need to provide practical information regarding the transmission of HIV to anyone not affiliated or identified with ‘high-risk’ social groups.

Particularly in this respect, epidemiological discourses and ‘truths’ have continued to inform the content and strategy of educational campaigns around AIDS. Instead of attempting to decrease the risk of AIDS by providing information to the entire
population, early safe-sex education campaigns specifically targeted only those communities believed to be at highest risk by epidemiologists. These “risk-focused strategies attempt to alert particular types of people to their special risk. Here, risk is viewed as virtually absolute: one either is or is not at risk. In addition, the proposed [behavioural] change is viewed as unfairly restrictive or burdensome or not useful enough to impose on those not clearly at risk” (Patton, 1994, 13-14). The discourse of epidemiology appears to simplify safe-sex education initiatives in that it not only “encourages divisions that make the population ultimately easier to regulate (gay ghettos, red light districts)...[but] also easier to target as consumers (market segmenting)” (Singer, 1993, 60). Educational risk-focused strategies have had some success in promoting safer practices regarding the transmission of HIV among certain specifically identified “consumers” of AIDS information.

“The problem faced by the consumer of education became less ‘how do I avoid HIV?’ than ‘which campaign is made for me?’...AIDS education thereby became complicit in the ensuing systems of policing by portraying one group of people as needing to protect themselves from HIV and another as needing to protect themselves from the deviants subject to HIV” (16).

Epidemiological discourses fortified assumptions regarding the descriptive value of social identity categories and failed to recognize the way in which each individual occupies multiple social locations which often make the establishment of category boundaries arbitrary and misleading.

The targeting of particular social groups through consumer-based and risk-focused educational strategies has produced a range of educational messages and representations whose differences speak to the perceived differences among social
groups and behaviours in relation to AIDS. Throughout the last decade, poster campaigns have reflected various and shifting messages as a result of the ‘mainstream’ discourses of the “national pedagogy” and the specific community context of their production. The first poster campaigns to address educational needs around safer sex practice were produced by groups in the gay community in the early 1980s. At that time, discourse in the North American media had constructed AIDS as a formidable, but locatable and containable phenomenon. The infamous “4-H list” developed by the CDC in 1981 located AIDS and the risk of contracting AIDS in the following four social groups, which were perceived at the time to be geographically isolated and containable: homosexuals, heroin addicts, Haitians, and hemophiliacs. The first two groups -- homosexuals and heroin addicts -- were seen to be the primary location of contagion in North America and government inaction with regards to educational strategies seemed to imply that they were also expendable segments of the population, whose behavioural predictability and social isolation posed no threat to the ‘general public’. Voluntary AIDS service organizations and educational strategies were first developed within the gay community in response to both perceived governmental negligence and the homophobia which preceded and continued to proliferate in the context of AIDS, which was seriously and largely affecting gay men. Unlike other social groups, whose identities and behaviours would be constructed in relation to AIDS through educational campaigns developed later through government funding, gay men’s representation of themselves in AIDS educational media was in many ways a response to their construction in the popular media and their history of political conflict with the state.
Foucault describes the way in which the homosexual is constituted as a subject who is essentially defined in terms of sexual practice: the "category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized...less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility...The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (1990, 43). Discourses around AIDS reinforced this sexualized constitution of the homosexual subject by describing AIDS, which was predominantly visible in the gay community, as a sexually transmitted disease. Even though the CDC had as early as 1982 identified the appearance of the syndrome among groups not categorized as homosexual, “sexual orientation persisted as the defining characteristic of the person with AIDS” and AIDS itself continued to be characterized “not as a viral disease, such as Hepatitis B, but as a sexually transmitted disease” (Gilman, 1993, 90). The constitution of AIDS as a sexually transmitted disease reflects the influence of both epidemiological discourses, which initially perceived sexual orientation as the determining feature of the person at-risk for contracting AIDS, and homophobic discourses, which perceive sexual orientation as the defining feature of the subject who engages in homosexual activity. The messages used on posters which specifically target heterosexual couples betray the construction of heterosexual relations in contrast to the constitution of homosexual relations as purely sexual. Posters like the one in Figure 1, which are aimed at heterosexual couples, consistently use the word “love” to refer to heterosexual relations, whereas this word is hardly if ever used in messages directed at the gay community. The homosexual was produced in epidemiology as the location of AIDS, regardless of gender, race, occupation, class, history of drug-use, and any other potentially relevant social factors. This obscured the
emergence of AIDS in other communities by portraying the homosexual community as one dimensional and containable. It also justified government inaction by clearly defining "the boundaries of pollution, limiting the risk to the homosexual...and thus [confining] heterosexuals' fears about their own vulnerability" (105).

Educational texts and representations produced within the gay community reflect and reproduce the construction of AIDS as a sexually transmitted disease and the construction of homosexual men as primarily sexual beings in relation to AIDS. The message employed by poster campaigns coming out of the gay community, and directed primarily at gay men, was and continues to be one which advocates the universal adoption of safer sex practices, regardless of potential exposure to HIV, rather than abstinence. This message, like the one pictured in Figure 2, was initially seen as the best way of preserving both the life of the community's members and the sexual freedom that the post-Stonewall gay community had fought so hard for. In 1986, the LaRouche Initiative, which advocated the quarantining of people with AIDS, was proposed to California voters. Surrounded by a public which seemed wrought with panic and hostility, educators and activists in the gay community saw the universal adoption of safer sex practices as a safer alternative to politically risky and often unreliable accuracy of HIV anti-body testing and mandatory declaration of an individual's sero-status. Over that last decade, both the detailed and sexually explicit nature of educational materials developed in the gay community has changed. The presence of government funding has meant that materials produced are more often censored for both their images and written text. There have been well documented cases of materials being produced and
distributed, and then banned or removed from public spaces by sponsoring government funding bodies. (see Gott, 1994) At the same time, the nature of poster campaigns have also changed as the communities these campaigns target have changed. After fifteen years of AIDS education and the imperative to access information, gay men are now one of the most highly educated communities in terms of safer sex practices. As a result, poster campaigns in these communities have shifted away from a focus on detailed information regarding practices and instead, like the one depicted in Figure 3, employ arresting imagery and simple, often explicit, slogans. A poster produced in 1993 by the AIDS Action Council/ACT of Australia is a perfect example of this: it employs "the stark black and white imagery of two men kissing, drawn from classic gay [pornographic] comic-strip iconography," with the message "fuck safe, shoot clean" drawn in bold letters. "It relies on its target audience knowing the accepted canon of safe versus unsafe
sexual acts, and understanding the 'shoot clean' reference to the sterilising of shared syringes before IV drug use" (Gott, 1994, 203).

In contrast to the messages produced by these community groups, the relatively few educational messages produced in the 1980s by government agencies aimed to ease the "general public's" panic and advocated the avoidance of risk through careful partner selection.

In a section called "What about Dating?" the 1980s most widely distributed campaign to the general public contained this advice: "You are going to have to be careful about the person you become sexually involved with, making your own decision based on your own best judgement. This can be difficult. Has this person had any sexually transmitted diseases? How many people have they been to bed with? Have they experimented with drugs?" (Patton, 1996, 28-29)

These campaigns, which advocate careful choices in partner selection rather then new and safer sexual practices, contrast sharply with campaigns developed in the gay community which advised that sex should be engaged in under the assumption that anyone and everyone could potentially be HIV positive. Other early poster campaigns produced by the federal governments in both Canada and the United States sought to
quell public panic by dispelling commonly held incorrect assumptions about HIV transmission; these are generally referred to as “myth” posters. (See Figures 4 & 5) The series of “myth” posters produced by the Canadian Ministry of Health use bright, bold phrases on a black background which read: “Can you get AIDS from a toilet seat?” “Can you get AIDS from sharing food?,” and “Can you get AIDS from kissing?” Instead of educating the general public about where they could contract the virus which causes AIDS, these posters reflect the assumption that no one in the “general public” engages in high risk activity and therefore, they need only be reassured about the safety of their day-to-day, and very “normal” lives. These posters conclude with a subtext which dispels the “myth” at the root of the question and then proceeds to remind the viewer/reader that they can, however, become infected through contact with an “AIDS carrier.” “The term [AIDS carrier], as used in media discussions of AIDS, is accompanied by a faint
suggestion of covertness, as if a ‘carrier’ had indeed recovered or become immune to that now-invariable accompaniment of the carrier: ‘the AIDS virus,’” which they willfully continue to spread (Grover, 1988, 22). This text confirms what is implied by the campaign as a whole: the “general public” is not infected or at-risk, and their best strategy of defense is to avoid those who are deviant. The black and white photographs on these “myth posters” show, respectively: a young, pre-adolescent girl coming out of a bathroom stall (not shown here); two young girls, of primary school age sharing a soda (Fig. 4); and, a young heterosexual couple sitting on a bench (Fig. 5). The language used on these posters indicates they are not intended for school age children, so why the images of children? Perhaps if the images used were of adults, the posters would not strike at the heart of the “general public’s” panic to the same degree. Again, the use of images which implicate the “general public’s” concern about AIDS in the realm of the hysterical or irrational reinforces the belief that there is no real need for concern about any real risk.

The use of images of children, or images that evoke notions of parental responsibility and concern, is not only isolated to mainstream strategies initiated by government agencies. Many of the initial posters developed by both community organizations and government agencies to specifically target women relied on notions of women’s maternal responsibility to make their point. Educational strategies aimed at women developed later in the 1980s with some of the earliest publications dealing with women and AIDS appearing between 1988 and 1990. (see Patton, 1994) By this point, most community agencies dealing with AIDS were receiving some sort of government support in the way of funding and had witnessed the development of “women's
caucuses” or positions within their organizations to deal specifically with concerns around women and AIDS. The fact that many of the earliest widely distributed poster campaigns targeting women were government funded meant that, in general, they were slightly tamer than other initiatives had been coming out of AIDS organizations based in the gay community. These initial poster series, like the one in Figure 6, used messages like: “Women get AIDS too,” and “All women are affected by AIDS. We are sisters,

Figure 6. “Women around the world are affected by AIDS.” (Kris Klassen, Working Design Group 1990; photo by Robin Barnett) Permission to reproduce granted by AIDS Vancouver.

mothers, friends, lovers,” etc. Most of these posters used images which were group portraits of a number of women of identifiably diverse cultures and ages standing together. These images were clearly being used to provide proof that, indeed women of all nationalities, ethnicities, ages, and sexualities are affected by AIDS. What these posters do not provide is any explicit sense of how they are affected. The subtext, however, is clear: women are affected as sisters, mothers, friends, lovers, caregivers, and, though not primarily, as people with AIDS. This subtext is amplified by other campaigns appearing at about the same time (see Figures 7 & 8) which use images of pregnant women or women with babies, and which state that “women get AIDS” and
warn of the possibility of HIV transmission in childbirth. Here it seems that even if a woman is at risk of contracting HIV or already HIV positive, her concern should be primarily that of a mother.

Only recently have campaigns been developed which address women at risk through factors such as IV drug use, sex trade work, same-sex relationships and abuse or rape. Campaigns developed in the intervening years have primarily targeted heterosexual women or women who primarily and voluntarily sleep with men. As statistics began to indicate that heterosexual couples were indeed at risk for HIV contraction, these campaigns, like those in the gay community, began advocating the universal adoption of safer sex practices, but with a new twist. A poster produced and distributed in Alberta (see Figure 9), which uses the image of a young, attractive, blond-haired woman holding a condom, reads: “If you don’t abstain, use a condom.” This poster, like many others of
its kind, is aimed at young, white, middle-class, heterosexual-actively active women and, in its reference to abstinence, once again implies a boundary between a moral “general public” which will or should consider abstinence and a deviant category of “others” who do not or will not. Not surprisingly, there have been few, if any similar campaigns targeting young, heterosexual men. AIDS posters which do address these men almost always use images of a man and woman together, implying the equal responsibility of both partners in abstaining or using safer sex practices. In contrast, the posters which target heterosexual women, almost always depict a woman alone, who thus carries the responsibility herself. Women’s responsibility in relation to safer sex is in many ways just another manifestation of the positioning of women as responsible for birth control and sexual reproduction as a whole. The explicit message in many of these campaigns is that
the woman is indeed responsible for her male partner's behaviour; for example, the
poster in Figure 10 reads, "If you're dressed to kill, make sure he's dressed not to."

As in many other areas, poster campaigns which address women have changed
and current campaigns produced in both Vancouver and Toronto reflect a focus on
specific sites of risk, such as abusive relationships and rape, IV drug use, and sex with
both men and women in a variety of contexts. What is interesting, is why women were
targeted so specifically by early government funded community-based campaigns, and
how women were constructed in relation to AIDS in such a way that certain notions of
'woman' were constituted as intelligible while others remained invisible. Women had
statistically been identified as at-risk primarily through sexual contact with men.
Educational discourse around AIDS relies on "longstanding cultural constructions of
women which take a minimal (but, obviously, highly problematic) notion of the 'sexed'
body --the (female) reproductive body-- and add connotative meanings associated with
sexual appropriateness --heterosexual and monogamous" (Patton, 1994, 1). Thus, these
campaigns speak almost solely to those women in the domestic sphere of the nuclear
family, while neglecting many other sites of risk for women of all kinds. The woman in
Figure 7 (see above), whose hand has been placed in such a way that the viewer cannot
miss the wedding ring on her finger, is a photographic archetype of this construction of
the good or appropriate female body. "AIDS discourse extended to the world this
prudish, racist, and class-linked US construction of 'woman' which had for two centuries
served to protect sex-role-conforming women of the white middle class, while heaping
abuse on all other women" (Ibid.). At the same time, campaigns which targeted these
women were not complemented by similar campaigns aimed at white, middle-class men,
who were presumably husbands and fathers in the same households. Why were campaigns not developed to the same degree for the men having sex with these women? One reason, which seems particularly to be reflected in the 'maternal' images so often used in these campaigns, is that women are already understood to be primarily responsible for moral and social concerns within the home. The roles of mother and wife, which have functioned as the constitutive basis for representations of the white, middle-class woman in North America, were used to describe and prescribe the responsibility of these women in relation to AIDS. Women were identified in relation to AIDS as responsible for the safety of their children and partners, and the sanctity of the nuclear family. These prescriptions are bolstered by the previously constituted responsibility of heterosexual women for birth control and reproduction in both consensual and non-consensual sexual relations.

Although this particular representation and construction of women in relation to AIDS functioned as a disavowal of heterosexual men's responsibility to their partners and families in the epidemic, it also served to construct homosexual women, women-of-colour, and any women who existed outside the economy of the nuclear family as irresponsible, deviant, and 'other'. "The greater visibility of 'women' cannot quickly or easily change the underlying assumptions which simultaneously made woman both a radiant figure of sexual purity and a magnet for blame during the pandemic's first decade" (Patton, 1994, 2). Women who are not represented in terms of white, heterosexual, motherhood quickly lose any redeeming qualities of "sexual purity" and are relegated solely to a marginalized sphere of blame. Thus, the female sex-trade workers are constructed in relation to AIDS as the potential site of contamination of the 'general
public', lesbians are constructed in terms of their relationship to already deviant and infected homosexual communities, and women-of-colour are largely invisible, occupying that abject and marginalized space which forms the constitutive outside to North American whiteness. In addition, the early research and public education around AIDS failed to take into account that none of these social locations are mutually exclusive. Sex-trade workers and IV drug users were epidemiologically categorized only as such regardless of sexual orientation or racial identity. Thus, women-of-colour and lesbians became, by default, sites of uncategorized and invisible existence, while prostitutes were demonized as a threat to the health of 'the nation' and, it seems, in no need of information which might prevent their own contraction of HIV.²

Racism, sexism and homophobia have had similar repercussions in terms of the construction of various ethnic communities and people of colour in relation to AIDS. White North American fears around the communicability and transmission of infection were grafted onto racist discourses which have constructed the mobility of bodies across national borders as having to do with racial and cultural contamination. In the early phases of the epidemic, western countries, “including the United States, [reconsidered] conditions for admitting tourists and immigrants and other measures designed to limit the mobility and contact of people with AIDS” (Singer, 1993, 29). The origin of HIV and AIDS has always been assumed to be located somewhere other than the North American continent, and most commonly estimated to be either Haiti, the Caribbean, or Africa. Clearly, the association of AIDS with the ‘other’ has meant a reproduction and

² The lack of educational materials produced to target these groups of women is reflected in the AIDS Committee of Toronto poster archives where, in a collection of approximately 500+ posters, I could find
refortification of racist and colonialist discourses which constitute non-western nations as untamed, savage, and dangerous. These discourses have similarly contributed to a constitution of certain ethnic communities within North America as a site of contamination or risk to the white "general public," and have obscured an understanding of both the incidence and transmission of HIV within these communities. "Initially portrayed as primarily affecting gay white men, since 1986 AIDS has been increasingly recognized as having a disproportionate impact on US blacks and 'Hispanics'" (Alonso & Koreck, 1989, 103-104). According to U.S. statistics, compiled in October of 1987, blacks were 3.0 times and 'Hispanics' were 2.6 times more likely to contract AIDS than whites...Minority women and children have been at a higher risk than their white counterparts. Black and 'Hispanic' women were 13.3 and 11.1 times, respectively, more likely to contract AIDS than white women (Ibid.).

Despite these statistics, very few attempts were made by public education campaigns to address and educate these communities regarding safe practices and the avoidance of HIV transmission. As was mentioned above, women-of-colour were particularly invisible in any campaigns aimed at addressing women.

Largely based on racist assumptions and the statistical interpretation which occurs within those discourses, most campaigns, like the one in Figure 11, that sought to educate these communities primarily attributed their rates of HIV infection to a higher incidence of IV drug use.

The statistics commonly used to 'prove' that needle/syringe sharing is the preeminent mode of HIV transmission and the cause of higher AIDS incidence rates in these groups are skewed: these frequently cited figures represent the percentage of drug-related cumulative AIDS cases that are black and 'Hispanic', not the percentage of cumulative black and

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only two aimed specifically at lesbians, another two aimed at women-of-colour (one of which is reproduced in Figure 13; see Chapter 4), and none aimed at female sex-trade workers.
'Hispanic' AIDS cases that are drug-related (Alonso & Koreck, 1989, 105).

Thus, the construction of certain ethnic communities and people of colour as the deviant 'other' contributed to their invisibility in terms of public education initiatives as well as an interpretation of data which failed to reflect a diversity of modes of HIV transmission similar to that of other communities and the 'general public.' The constitution of identity categories as stable and mutually exclusive of one another has contributed to a slippage between identity and behaviour, where an individual's social identity is seen to accurately describe the type of behaviours he or she will engage in. Such stereotyping has "blocked the investigation of the role of sexual practices in HIV transmission among minorities. For in the Anglo imagination, the sexuality of the ethnic 'other' was torrid but always 'heterosexual'" (116). Epidemiological discourses which racialize sexual identity and sexualize racial identity also contribute to the perception that sexual activity is the primary mode of HIV transmission among homosexual men. Within epidemiological discourse around AIDS, identity categories are constructed as stable and mutually exclusive, where the homosexual is always white and people belonging to ethnic
communities are constituted solely in terms of their racial identities, regardless of their sexual orientations and practices. Through epidemiological discourse, statistics are interpreted and identity categories constructed in a way which allows for the gendered, raced, class-linked, and sexualized representation in AIDS education of a stable pedagogical subject.
Chapter Four. Identification and Representations of the Ideal.

It is in the context of identifying, targeting, or portraying specific social groups in response to their apparent high-risk of HIV infection that the use of images on AIDS posters becomes particularly relevant. The perceived ability of an AIDS poster to address a particular social group, as well as the ability of the target learner to recognize that address, relies not only on the assumption that all individual subjects recognize a certain segmenting of the population as 'real' or 'true', but also on notions of identification. Given the specific truths produced in epidemiology and taken up by educational strategies around AIDS, the AIDS poster must engage in a relation with the viewer where the poster succeeds in addressing the intended audience and where the intended audience recognizes that address through identification. Identification can be understood both as that which happens to us and as that which we make happen. As a social relation, identification is co-constitutive of both self and other, subject and discourse, viewer and text. According to Freud, who has been especially influential in theorizing identifications as that which the subject makes, identification is a preliminary stage of object-choice (Freud, 1968, 258). Like sexual object-choice, identification is understood in terms of desire as "the wish to be the other" rather than the "wish to have the other" (Fuss, 1995, 11). The identification of the ego with a love-object, which may be either a loved person or an abstraction, such as an identity category or identity ideal, alters the ego in such a way that the ego comes to an understanding, despite its critical activity, that it is the object. Beginning with a Freudian analysis, Diana Fuss argues that, through this process, "identification inhabits, organizes, instantiates identity." Thus, "every identity is actually
an identification come to light" (Fuss, 1995, 2). It is important to stress that, although identification can be understood as process in which the subject is engaged, it is not a conscious process which follows the constitution of the subject. As a relation, identification is constitutive of the subject. Judith Butler stresses this when she argues that identification is not “an imitative activity by which a conscious being models itself after another; on the contrary, identification is the assimilating passion by which an ego first emerges” (Butler, 1993, 13). On one hand, then, identification can be understood as a process which the ego or subject engages in, and through which the subject/ego is constituted and establishes a social identity. On the other hand, “identification is, from the beginning, a question of relation, of self to other, subject to object, inside to outside” (Fuss, 1995, 3).

It is in considering identification as a relation that we must also consider identification as that which ‘happens to us.’ Like Foucault, Butler, and others, Stuart Hall uses

‘identity’ to refer to the meeting point, the point of suture, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be ‘spoken’ (Hall, 1996, 5-6).

Thus, even as the subject emerges through a process of identification with an ideal object, discourses and representations constitute subjects through the identification of what is normal or ideal, what is intelligible as an object of identification. As well as arguing that the subject engages in practices of self-production, Foucault states that the identification and ‘specification of individuals’ through operations of power and
discursive practices simultaneously constitute the subject in particular ways and within relations of power. Similarly, Stuart Hall argues that the ‘question of identification’ as understood in the ‘discursive approach’ stresses “the process of subjectification to discursive practices” (Hall, 1996, 2). Discursive practices function to create the ideals, norms and objects with which we identify as they simultaneously identify us in relation to them. Philip Corrigan points out that “increasingly in the twentieth century such Identifications are, or are accompanied by, image repertoires;...whether verbal or visual they have powerful embodying rhetorics” (Corrigan, 1988, 214). It is through these processes and repertoires that the use of images on AIDS posters becomes a central feature of the overall discursive effects produced by educational campaigns around AIDS. The effectiveness of the AIDS poster in identifying the viewer and being identified with is furthered by visual strategies and discourses which function as representations of social identity. “Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation...They arise from the narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity” (Hall, 1996, 4).

It is not simply the use of visual texts on posters which illustrates the way in which AIDS education has aimed to identify specific social groups or portray a textual object with which they would identify themselves. It is the specific and overwhelming use of portraiture, that is images of bodies, which so clearly suggests this discursive strategy and its effects. Images of bodies have been used on AIDS posters to represent specific identity categories and to establish identities through the relations of identification. Much like the early documentation of ‘social types’ by photographers like August Sander and
others at the turn of the century, AIDS posters provide us with a photographic inventory of identities in relation to AIDS. Through epidemiological discourse, AIDS has been produced and understood as locatable not only in bodies, but in social relation to specific bodies and behaviours. Epidemiology constitutes social groups as relatively stable and identifiable networks of bodies which engage in predictable behaviours and practices. The visual representations utilized by AIDS posters employ a strategy of identification and indeed produce an embodying and embodied rhetoric; they comprise a discourse which represents and identifies the ‘ideal’ types, or rather ‘proto-types’, for the various social groups which these campaigns seek to target. More generally, these visual texts participate in the discursive production of what Corrigan would call ‘Social Forms’ of identity.

Corrigan describes the establishment of ‘Social Forms’ through three simultaneous and overlapping processes: Systematization, Standardization, and Normalization. Systematization “entails the establishment...of a particular and specific Social Form for a general kind of social activity which renders other forms as...simply, in such a powerful word, Bad,” and Standardization establishes “visible, working, evidential instances” which “function as models” within the general tendency of the Social Form (Corrigan, 1988, 206 & 209). “The cumulative effect of all the Standardization with all the Systematization, which comprehensively registers the dominant version of ‘The Social’, is Normalization” (216). Corrigan’s discussion of ‘Social Forms’ is an attempt to illustrate the ways in which all description necessarily carries the weight of prescription; insofar as representations function as descriptions of ‘The Social’, they also prescribe what becomes constituted as socially intelligible. “Social forms, then, are the expected
set of (connected) ways in which actions have to be done to be properly accomplished, intimately connected with some (socially and historically and gendered and racialized and sexualized) specific sense of ‘The Good’” (202). Foucault also describes the process of normalization as a fundamental operation of power through which some discourses come to function as ‘true’ and other discourses and subjects become subjugated and disqualified. He argues that “we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (Foucault, 1980, 93). It is according to “regimes of truth” that normalization occurs at the level of individual bodies and subjects; “it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals” (98). In this way, photographic representations on AIDS posters contribute to the specification and constitution of particular bodies as the ‘normal’ or ideal types for given social groups. Through the imagic identification of the individual and the individual’s identification with the image, AIDS posters contribute to the normalization of identities and subjects through the specification of a visual object which embodies and functions as the discursive ‘truth’ about a particular social identity.

Thus, the establishment of social forms or ‘true types’ through a process of normalization functions to constitute both what is and what is good. At the same time, a constitution of the ‘normal’ requires a simultaneous constitution of the ‘abnormal’ or pathological. Much in the same way that notions of the ‘general public’ were constituted through the construction of ‘the person with AIDS’ as other to that category, “the whole sets of Social Forms operate always with clear indications of the Other, they value negatively: this (kind of person) is what you do NOT wish to be” (Corrigan, 1988, 215).
While Corrigan describes the process of normalization as primarily that which establishes what is good, proper, and licit, Foucault and Butler argue that the constitution of the ‘other’, the pathological, the abject is a central feature of normalization as an operation of power. According to Foucault, the specification of individuals as a normalizing operation of power can be understood as a collection of strategic unities which form specific mechanisms of knowledge and power. These strategies constitute certain subjects and bodies as intelligible by assigning roles of normalization or pathologization. (see Foucault, 1990, 103-105) That normality and pathology can only be understood in relation to one another can be illustrated in how epidemiology, as an epistemological framework, seeks to establish boundaries between safety and risk by constituting some behaviours and subjects as pathological in relation to AIDS in order to preserve the safety of the larger ‘general public.’ AIDS education strategies are then targeted to address what have been determined as these ‘high-risk’ categories and continue to specify what is believed to be ‘bad’ or pathological in opposition to what is ‘good’ and normal behaviour.

Normalization becomes a discursive effect of both epidemiology and representation in AIDS education through the constitution of certain social identities as intelligible and ‘real’, and through the establishment of certain social forms which prescribe the dominant and the ‘good’ in relation to the pathological and the ‘bad’. That epidemiology and AIDS education strategies located the transmission of HIV in certain behaviours and the risk of infection in certain social groups, first constituted these behaviours and identities as pathological in relation to an innocent and safe ‘general public’, and also occurred as a result of these behaviours and identities being already
understood as pathological or perverse in relation to dominant social forms of sexuality and embodiment. For example, epidemiology has historically located the risk of disease and contagion in the prostitute’s body or within the social group identified as sex trade workers, regardless of these subjects’ other identifications. As individuals who engage in sexual relations as a profession, it makes sense, according to an empirical framework like epistemology, that prostitutes engage more frequently in sex than the average citizen and thus run a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. What is interesting, however, is that in relation to the existence of HIV/AIDS, which was initially identified as a sexually transmitted disease because of its location in homosexual communities, prostitutes were not identified as a community that needed education about high-risk practices in order to protect themselves. Instead they were identified as pathological and a source of risk to the ‘normal’ general public. “Prostitutes emerged as the hysterical symbol of epidemiological crossover from a perceived nether world of sexual deviance into mainstream society” (Patton, 1994, 53). ‘Johns’ or men who frequently use the services of sex trade workers are rarely, if ever, identified by or represented in AIDS education campaigns and other media as ‘at risk’ for either contracting HIV or transmitting the virus to their other partners. The identification of prostitutes as a site of HIV and their representation as such is linked to their constitution as pathological and deviant in relation to a normalization of monogamous, heterosexual relations and the nuclear family through strategies of power and knowledge, which Foucault has described as the “hysterization of women’s bodies,” the “socialization of procreative sex” and the “psychiatrization of perverse pleasure” (Foucault, 1990, 104-105).
Similarly, although statistical data have always confirmed that rates of HIV transmission are far lower and almost non-existent in same-sex relations between women as compared to heterosexual relations, ‘lesbians’ were in many ways identified with the transmission of AIDS and the risk of infection much more clearly than ‘heterosexuals’. AIDS education campaigns which sought to instruct the learner on the risks of cunnilingus were almost solely aimed at women who identified as ‘lesbians’, and dental dams began to be seen as an imperative to lesbian sex long before heterosexual women and men even knew what they were. Clearly, the education of lesbians regarding HIV/AIDS has a great deal to do with their relationships with gay men who, by the mid-1980s, were already ‘over-educated’ regarding safer sex practices. At the same time, the media’s identification of ‘homosexuals’ as a social group whose community affiliation placed them at risk of infection and located them as a source of societal contagion, pathologized the homosexual subject, regardless of his or her individual sexual practices.

Strategies of power which produce categories of subjectivity are essential to the constitution of a domain for the will to knowledge; AIDS emerges as a domain for the will to knowledge precisely through its constitution and location in bodies and categories of existence. Thus, power functions, through procedures of normalization, to establish the ‘homosexual’ as a stable subject or ‘species’, which regardless of actual sexual and individual practices, becomes the category of existence, the identification for the sexual deviant, the ‘pervert’, the pathological. Homosexuality’s constitution as a pathological and ‘high-risk’ identity fortifies the identification of heterosexual sex as ‘safe’, ‘normal’, and ‘good’, regardless of the fact that both homosexual and heterosexual practices are functionally the same.
While the discourses and representations which comprise AIDS education posters identify subjects and learners in a way which categorizes social identities through normalization, they also must be identified with in order to work. "The notion that an effective suturing of the subject to a subject-position requires, not only that the subject is 'hailed', but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an articulation" (Hall, 1996, 6). As outlined earlier, identification is a two-fold process whereby the subject is identified in discourse and emerges through those identifications. The visual representations on AIDS posters which seek to 'hail' the learner and position them in the pedagogical relation that is AIDS education, must also be recognized and identified with insofar as the subject is to be constituted as such and to emerge as socially recognizable. "The materialization of norms requires those identificatory processes by which norms are assumed or appropriated, and these identifications precede and enable the formation of the subject, but are not, strictly speaking, performed by a subject" (Butler, 1993, 15). Therefore, at the same time that identifications and representations participate in the simultaneous constitution of both the normal and pathological, they also constitute 'ideal' types or forms within those categories which inspire identification within the subject. Corrigan argues that it is through social relations which constitute a 'Figure in Dominance' that we both experience identification with what is normal and good, what has been normalized as the dominant type, while at the same time we are located through this identification in opposition to this same figure. "The 'invitations' to identify are themselves intensively contradictory the further you are placed from the relevant and specific Figure in Dominance...in trying to be like (which also means trying to love) the Figure in
Dominance you have to know your place, your voice, your appropriate behaviour” (Corrigan, 1988, 220-221).

The photographic images used on AIDS posters suggest the complexity of the imperative to identify, or what Corrigan calls the “general crises of the dialexis of Identification/Identity” (1988, 220). Even as the visual representations used reflect epidemiological discourse’s categorization of certain subjects and identities as pathological, ‘high-risk’, and contagious, other discourses are employed and reflected in the visual rhetoric which entice the viewer to identify themselves as the pedagogical subject or learner. Just as pathologization is always and already in some form a normalization, the images used on AIDS posters represent ‘ideal’ types or embodied models of each identity category they seek to target. The homosexual bodies depicted below in Figure 12 and Figures 2 & 3 (see Chapter Three) represent an ‘at-risk’ identity and embodied ideal; individuals that have been constituted as ‘sick’ and pathological in relation to AIDS are represented as ‘healthy’ and ideal in body type. Similarly, a recent

Figure 12. “Safer Sex. Keep it up!” (art direction by Don Eunson, layout by Stephen de Francesca, photo by Peter Urban.) © Gay Men’s Health Crisis, 1991.
advertising campaign produced by three of Canada's largest pharmaceutical companies which aims to educate people with HIV/AIDS about a range of new health care options, has been using photographic images which “portray nothing but healthy-looking white people, happily walking dogs or working in offices” (Rau, 1997b). Thus, the subject is able to both identify with what is dominant -- the Figure in Dominance -- while still making identifications which locate them in particular sites of pathology and normalcy in relation to other subjects and AIDS. That the images on AIDS posters overwhelmingly produced by operations of power and knowledge which establish what is intelligible, what is ‘true’, and what is ideal.

There are some notable exceptions to this ‘rule of representation’, especially in terms of representations of ‘whiteness.’ These exceptions tend to be posters and images which aim to specifically address social groups which have been identified primarily along lines of race and ethnicity. Figure 13 is one poster in a series co-produced by the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention and the AIDS Committee of Toronto which attempts to specifically address and educate the black community around issues of HIV and AIDS. Each poster in this series shares the predominant use of portraits which represent young, healthy women and men of colour. However, when posters aim to represent heterosexual or homosexual women and men more generally, the images used reflect the cultural assumptions of white supremacy, which pervade most North American media, where the norm for representation of the subject is whiteness. A complete exploration and discussion of the discursive effects of racism and colonialism
for the production and reproduction of photographic representations of the body in the context of AIDS is an imperative cultural and critical project, the scope of which is far too large to be contained in this paper. The combination of epidemiological and racist discourses have from the beginning of the epidemic constituted people of colour, and particularly African-Americans and -Canadians, as 'AIDS carriers' who, like a virus might enter the body, enter and threaten to contaminate the social body.

Photography's use in the context of AIDS reflects the effect of colonialism in first defining the use of the photographic medium as a method of mapping, colonizing and categorizing bodies. Photographic portraiture, in both contexts, has provided a discursive means of locating and identifying bodies which are perceived as threatening to the status quo or dominant social order. Discourse around AIDS points to the links between photography's history as a means for representing the colonized 'other' and the
employment of photography in AIDS education initiatives which functions to identify the contaminated 'other'. Metaphors of invasion and contamination have been used side by side to speak of both viral infection and immigration, and epidemiological discourse has suggested throughout the epidemic that both Haitians of African descent and black Africans were responsible for the appearance of HIV globally and its spread to the North American continent. Notions of risk and safety, innocence and guilt, purity and contamination have all carried powerful racial overtones. People of colour are pathologized both in terms of their relation to AIDS and in terms of their relation to the 'Figure in Dominance' of whiteness. Thus, the only representations of people of colour are on posters which specifically seek to address communities identified first and foremost as ‘raced’, or on posters which already address social groups considered to be pathological in relation to AIDS (i.e. homosexual men) (see Figure 2). The images used to represent and identify non-drug-using, heterosexual men and women (i.e. the ‘general public’), are almost always portraits of young, healthy, and white bodies.

Whiteness, health, cleanliness, and youth constitute the predominant North American cultural ideals of the body and AIDS educational campaigns, which specifically seek to target those social groups identified as most at risk for HIV infection and transmission, consistently use images which reflect these ideals through the embodied representation of those social groups as uninfected, uncontaminated and un-dis/eased. The epidemiological assumption is that educational efforts should identify and contain the virus which already exists within certain specified communities; homosexuals, prostitutes, people of colour and other social groups have been identified as the location of disease and yet the visual representations of these groups used on AIDS posters in no
way suggests their assumed embodiment of contamination. In many ways, this representation of the identity of AIDS or ‘person with AIDS’ has succeeded in dispelling many assumptions that people living with HIV look any differently from those people who are uninfected; that is, these images have succeeded in dispelling the myth that infection can be identified as a bodily mark. Thus, we are taught not to make decisions about the practice of safer sex based on whether our potential sexual partner ‘looks sick’. At the same time, the effect of these representations is to normalize the healthy body as the natural body, to conflate purity, health and freedom from disease with what is natural, normal, and good. Similarly, many people with AIDS have also argued that these representations obscure the lived experience of disease, the embodiment of disease, and render those who are visibly marked by infection as invisible.

Discourses produced around the body and dis/ease in the context of AIDS reflect the strong cultural and historical influence of Judeo-Christian philosophies on North American society. A column in the Globe & Mail, dated March 6, 1997, is an alarming reminder of the way in which North American conceptions of the “nation” and the “general public” have been constituted through such eurocentric traditions. The column describes the passage of a bill by the US House of Representatives which favours displaying the Ten Commandments in all government offices and court houses by saying “the issue was about the US national heritage founded on Judeo-Christian principles.” The cultural dominance of Christian philosophy and rhetoric in North America has been reiterated in the specific context of AIDS where it has been used time and time again in popular media and other political discourses which seek to make sense of or construct a phenomenon which has seemed beyond human comprehension and control. That AIDS is
“God's judgment of a society that does not live by His rules” (Jerry Falwell, cited in Crimp, 1993, 8) is by now a well known refrain. The influence of Judeo-Christian philosophies on popular thinking around the body, dis/ease, purity and contamination has extended into political, as well as personal, realms. Walter Rico Burrell writes about his experience of living with AIDS this way: “I'm forced to wear my own scarlet letter in the form of these abominable purple blotches; a blazing visual condemnation for all the world to see so they can pass judgment on me and become part of my perpetual penance” (1991, 125). Given the currency of Christian rhetoric in the context of AIDS, how is Judeo-Christian philosophy implicated in the discursive strategies and visual representations employed by AIDS posters?

Relying predominantly on the book of Genesis, Judeo-Christian philosophy argues that humans were made in the image of god, and thus our original or “natural” state is one of both purity and divinity. Purity is defined as the absence of taint, the absence of harshness, pollution, contamination. Purity is thus defined by what it does not include or contain. To be pure is to be untouched by what is seen to be undesirable, and thus the notion of purity is determined by cultural ideals which dictate what objects or interventions form its constitutive outside. The conflation of purity and divinity, aptly illustrated by the popular cliché that “cleanliness is next to godliness,” produces the equally pervasive assumption that contamination denotes immorality, referred to in Christian rhetoric as the fall from grace. The earliest example of contamination in Judeo-Christian writings is Eve's ingestion of the apple. This original contamination, born of free will and human weakness, brings dis/ease not only to Eve, whose punitive destiny is to suffer mortal pain in childbirth, but to all of humanity who must suffer the pains of, the
dis/ease of, material and mortal existence. Eve’s original sin was an immoral choice and her punishment is the embodied result of contamination. The AIDS pandemic has provided a context for the resurrection or reproduction of these supposedly premodern discourses around purity, contamination, signification, and the body. The conflation of contamination and immorality that has infused popular discourse around AIDS reflects Descartes’ early arguments that “free will,” in the context of limited capabilities, is the only source of error in god’s glorious creation, humanity. We are pure beings until we make bad or immoral choices, until we sin, and our punishment as prescribed in Genesis is both mortal embodiment and shame. Thus, all contamination reflects the guilt of the subject who embodies dis/ease. Burrell makes this point horrifically clear with his allusion to wearing a “scarlet letter” in the form of purple lesions.

According to Christian rhetoric, then, purity is the natural, original, or essential state of the human body. Purity implies a state of innocence and freedom from worldly and immoral contaminants. Thus, if the body is constituted and made intelligible as that which is pure and essentially healthy, then the contaminated body, the infected body, functions as its constitutive outside, that which remains abject, invisible, unintelligible. Insofar as AIDS posters represent what is culturally intelligible, the visual images used on these posters reproduce what has been constituted as visually intelligible. Photographic images of healthy, clean, robust bodies are used on AIDS posters because they represent the body in a way which is intelligible to us, in a way with which we have learned to identify. It is trying to be like the ‘Figure in Dominance’ that we recognize these embodied ideals and make identifications with them. The idealization of the body or embodiment is, of course, not limited to discussion around infection and disease.
Foucault has argued that modern societies have witnessed the proliferation of strategies of power which invest in bodies through disciplinary practices; “discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (Foucault, 1995, 138). “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved”; thus, a docile body is a productive body, “a useful body and an intelligible body” (136). Insofar as “discipline is a political anatomy of detail,” (139) it not only functions to bring forth “a specific repertoire of gestures postures and movements,” but it also “aims to produce a body of a certain size and general configuration” (Bartky, 1988, 64). Thus, Sandra Lee Bartky argues that the identification with and achievement of what is considered the ideal body type for femininity is a product of power’s disciplinary investment in bodies. However, as Foucault has stated, the subjection of the body to discipline, the investment of the body by power, functions to constitute the ideal body, the docile body as intelligible. Other interventions, such as disease and infection, serve to disrupt the body’s intelligibility and relegate it to a space of invisibility, abjection and unintelligibility where it functions as the ‘other’, the un-embodied.

Similar to this constitution of the natural body as uncontaminated, or that which exists apart from or in opposition to infection, many of the discourses around ‘sex’ as an activity in the era of AIDS constitute it as naturally or essentially without worldly intervention. Linda Singer describes how, in the context of AIDS and, more generally, epidemic, pleasure and sexual practice become evaluated within “the more highly charged and hysterically invested currency of life and death, health and disease” (Singer, 1993, 63). That Christian discourses have always made this linkage between sexual behaviour, immorality, ‘sin’, and mortal consequences, explains to some degree their
resurgence as well as their political currency in epidemic conditions. Through Christian rhetoric ‘natural’ sex is constituted as a particular socio-cultural practice in relation to socio-moral concerns and the institution and ‘Social Form’ of the nuclear family.

The anxiety that becomes mobilized around the connection of sex to death in AIDS entails an increased fetishization of life as such. Hence, the anxiety produced through the epidemic is displaced and condensed in the regulation of sexual reproduction and the promotion of the family as the supposedly exclusive site of safe sex (Singer, 1993, 29).

Through various North American discourses which are culturally informed by a Christian rhetoric, sex has been constituted as ‘natural’ only to the degree that it located within the heterosexual nuclear family, which has been remarkedet “as a prophylactic social device” (Singer, 1993, 68). The critical response to this constitution of sexuality as that which ‘naturally’ occurs only in specific social relations and sites also, however, naturalizes and constitutes sex as a stable object or domain. Thus, in various activist communities which have responded to Christianity and capitalism as disciplinary mechanisms, “the private pursuit of pleasure,” or the pursuit and maintenance of a domain of liberated sexuality, have been “represented as a form of resistance to oppression, and an assertion of the powers of the life of the body over the economy of death” (Ibid., 65). The sexually explicit and sexually erotic nature of photographic representations used on AIDS posters which target gay men clearly indicate the ‘gay community’s’ insistence on a sexuality free from the constraints of state and moral regulation. Although those discourses which constitute ‘natural’ sex as that which occurs within the sanctity and supposed safety of the family are clearly problematic, equally problematic are

those forms of resistance to [these] very [ideas] on the grounds of, or in the name of, an undisciplined, liberated sexuality. Whether that resistance operates through a romantic stylization, or through the aesthetics offered
by a more self-conscious politics of ecstasy, both depend on mobilizing
the power attached to the idea of a sexuality, and a form of empowering
pleasure accompanying it, that not only are separable from the disciplinary
mechanisms, but can function as grounds for opposing them, as though
that oppositional sexuality was not itself a product a disciplinary
production (Ibid., 81).

Thus, both Judeo-Christian rhetoric and other discourses around safer sex share a
similar discursive effect through which sex is constituted as “a kind of natural given
which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries
gradually to uncover” (Foucault, 1990, 105); sex is “constituted as a problem of truth”
(56). At the same time, any outside intervention into the realm of ‘sex’, whether
understood as the necessity of safer-sex practices or moral and state regulation, is seen
as a contamination of some ‘pure’ and essential sexual domain. In the texts, both
linguistic and visual, and discourses produced by AIDS education strategies, safer-sex
has in many ways operated as the constitutive outside to ‘natural’ sex. Sex is established
as an object or domain outside of discourse which can be protected and secured through
the use of safer-sex practices, but which, in its essential and natural state, does not
include them. In particular, the posters and images aimed at educating heterosexual
couples illustrate this notion of a ‘natural’, uncontaminated sexuality which must be
preserved. Photographic images, like the one in Figure 14, show young, healthy, white
heterosexual couples engaged in what looks like loving and pleasurable sexual activity,
but which shows no signs of safer-sex accessories or practice. One of the effects of
images like this is that the sexual space depicted becomes discursively identified and
normalized as a natural and ideal expression of sexuality which thus requires strategies of
safer-sex to preserve it. In contrast, many of the images used (see Figure 12) to target men in the gay community, whose sexuality has already been pathologized, include visual content which identifies the use of safer-sex practices in the erotic moment. These images are more effective in terms of blurring the lines between a domain of 'natural' sex, uninterrupted by worldly intervention, and the 'other' that is safer-sex; they include the possibility of sex as something constituted through discourse and culture. That the sanctity of a 'natural' and ideally latex-free sexuality is not preserved to the same degree by these images reflects the degree to which homosexuality has also functioned as the constitutive outside to a 'natural' sex, understood by socio-sexual discourses informed by Christianity as essentially heterosexual. The discursive imperative to maintain some 'natural' domain of sex as good, normal, and ideal is not as great for those communities whose sexual practices have always been constituted as 'unnatural' in opposition to those of the 'general public'. At the same time, discourses within those same communities which valourize both 'sex before AIDS' and sexuality as a site of freedom
from oppression fail to recognize that sex does not exist beyond the discourses which constitute it, but is, as Foucault writes, “the name that can be given to a historical construct” (1990, 105).

The discursive effects of images and discourses which normalize and idealize notions of the body and sex as stable and essential entities or objects is an obscuring of both the diversity and complexity of embodiment as well as the discursively and culturally contingent nature of all constructs. Representations emerge through and within procedures of normalization which obscure the process of the object’s constitution; “all Social Forms abstract from any historical experiences (including their own formation, being constantly propounded, even in their bewildering novelty, as Naturally Good) denying particularity, specificity, and localness” (Corrigan, 1988, 208). In addition, the production of representations which reflect singular and stable notions of embodiment and practice further obscure the multiple and unstable realities of bodies and sexual behaviours. If bodies and sexual practices are discursively located in some “natural” or original state of purity, then how do we come to terms with the infected body or sexual intervention? In a society with dis/ease, “according to which heresy and sin are held to be scored in the features of their voluntary subjects by punitive and admonitory manifestations of the disease,” contamination becomes the defining feature of those who have fallen from grace, and whose impure bodies will be disavowed, obscured, made invisible, constituted as unintelligible (Watney, 1993, 73). Mortality or mortal embodiment is seen as the divinely prescribed consequence of sin and this shameful judgment becomes the justification for a silencing of embodied and diseased experience.

The constitution of certain sexual practices as sinful and thus punishable, and safer-sex
practices as an indication of risk and guilt, obscures the possibility for a discursive proliferation and reproduction of sexuality. Where so much significance is placed on the markings and meanings of infection, our focus is shifted away from the embodiment of dis/ease and onto the signifier, the contaminant, “the virus.”

Much of what has been termed “AIDS Literature” reflects this tension between embodiment and contaminant. The obscuring of living bodies and embodied experience through the signification of dis/ease produces a sort of animation or personification of “the AIDS virus.” It is described as an outside force which shrouds the body, stands between bodies, invades bodies; it forms the constitutive outside to the “natural” body in the same way that contamination functions as the constitutive outside to purity. In his novel, To the friend who did not save my life, Herve Guibert writes: “Jules and I now found it really difficult to fuck each other; of course we no longer risked anything but reciprocal contamination, but the virus loomed up between us like a repellent specter” (Guibert, 1990, 140). In this case, lovers who once found each other’s bodies knowable and desirable, who found the expression of sexual intimacy not only intelligible but “easy” have found that expression obscured by, what Guibert calls here, the “specter” of the virus. Their bodies have become shrouded by the virus and thus unknowable or unintelligible to each other. David Feinburg reiterates the way in which the contaminant overwhelms or obscures embodied experience when he writes: “Once I awoke from a wet dream, swimming in a sea of infected sperm; I leapt out of bed to wipe it all up quickly (how does one stem the tide, the flow?)...All I could think of was infection and disease. All I could think of was the virus that was coursing through my blood” (Feinburg, 1991, 81). The reification of “the virus,” the signifier of contamination, and
subsequent obscuring of embodied experience is also a discursive effect of biomedical discourse. Like the categorical epistemology of epidemiology, and the normalization of certain modes of existence, the identification and naming of AIDS and its virus, HIV, was the way in which biomedical discourse sought to constitute AIDS as both an intelligible object and experience. “The existence of a name plays a crucial role in providing a coherent and unified signifier -- a shorthand way of signifying what may be a complex, inchoate, or little understood concept” (Treichler, 1988, 55).

Foucault has argued that one of the central operations of power in the deployment of knowledge is the production, through “lines of penetration,” of a domain for the will knowledge. (see Foucault, 1990, 42) In its search for “the virus,” biomedical discourse has constituted AIDS and the body in ways which function to erase the complexity of embodied practice and experience, and normalize notions of the ‘ideal’ body; the body without embodiment. Treichler notes that modern immunology moved into the realm of high science with its employment of a language of warfare: “we see here the evolution of a conception of the ‘AIDS virus’ as a top-flight secret agent -- a James Bond of secret agents, armed with ‘a range of strategies’ and licensed to kill” (Treichler, 1988, 59). AIDS becomes a “spy’s spy,” a “terrorist’s terrorist,” a worthy opponent for epidemiology and the medical establishment: “the scientific effort to identify the AIDS virus [is described] as a ‘medico-biological Interpol’ on the trail of an international ‘criminal’ charged with ‘breaking and entering,’” and AIDS itself is described as “an ‘epidemiologist’s dream’” (60). AIDS is constructed in bio-medical discourse as masculine, efficient, strong, and almost heroic in its military capacity. AIDS as the culturally ideal virus does not really hurt any body, but wages a surreal war at the
level of T-cells, B-cells, phagocytes, and killer cells. In its personification and prioritization of ‘the virus’, biomedical discourse relies on those early and yet prevalent Christian philosophies which regard the contraction of infection as a fall from grace and which, thus, justify a disavowal of the embodiment, the life with dis/ease. The construction of AIDS through biomedical discourse allows for a signification of disease which obscures the embodiment of infection, pain, and suffering, and obscures the messiness of diverse individual experience which might complicate the categorical logic of epidemiology itself.

The discursive effects produced by Christian morality and biomedical science reiterate and are reiterated by the logic of epidemiological work in that they dis-embodi and, thus, de-humanize and de-individualize the experience and transmission of the virus and disease. Likewise, these discourses are implicated in the lack of embodied diversity in representations used on AIDS posters and the use of educational strategies and methods which fail to recognize the unstable nature of sexual practices. In an epidemic such as AIDS, it is easy to argue that the embodied experience of dis/ease and death is simply intolerable. We are shamed by what we see as both physical and moral failure, or we cannot tolerate, cannot even think through such a devastating embodiment of disease. Perhaps it is a survival instinct to repeatedly cite the ideal, to disavow the complexity of life and death through a repetition of the ideal. Or perhaps, as Freud argues, it is precisely this inclination to consistency, this desire not to know and hence not to be changed that reflects a desire for death. (see Freud, 1968b) In the AIDS epidemic, in a world where dis/ease exists in and with all of us, we must ask at what cost we refuse to acknowledge the embodiment of experience. AIDS activists have long argued that by
focusing predominantly on “the virus” and a discovery of its cure, the medical establishment and popular media have neglected to pursue research and discussions which might improve the quality of life for all of us and especially those of us who are HIV positive and “persons with AIDS.” Once constituted as the infected, the contaminated, cultures and individuals have instead experienced the brutality of marginalization and invisibility, their bodies and embodied experience obscured by discourses in which such means are seen as justified by the success of educational and scientific initiatives, and in extreme cases as retribution for moral impurity. If we are to live, all of us infected and affected by AIDS and dis/ease, the possibility and quality of that living depends on a clarity of discussion which has little to do with purity and all to do with contamination. We must begin to infect or inflect our own discourse in a way that critically engages categorical epistemologies and challenges discursive foundations and binaries -- pure/contaminated, good/bad, divine/mortal -- which obscure what Sue Golding calls “the nitty gritty of our multiple criss-crossing lives -- our fluid, mad, exiled, mutated, villainous, impossible, uncontrollable” lives (Golding, 1995, 173).
Identity can never be fully totalized by the symbolic, for what it fails to order will emerge within the imaginary as a disorder, a site where identity is contested (Judith Butler, 1995, 239).

Over the last decade, AIDS education campaigns have proliferated at an astounding rate as the number of AIDS organizations has increased to deal with the incidence of HIV transmission in a wider range of communities and more diverse range of social settings. More recent campaigns have tried to encourage the employment of 'safer' practices by producing messages which eroticize safer sex instead of vilifying practices which are 'unsafe' and condemning those who engage in them. At the same time, although pedagogical messages have shifted and diversified, the overall pedagogical strategies and representations employed by community organizations and government agencies continue to reflect and reiterate a logic which understands the learner, or pedagogical subject in categorical and stable terms. Indeed, the establishment of organizations in various communities has occurred in response to the notion that certain practices and behaviours correspond to particular social groups which, thus, need to be targeted in specific and limited ways. Statistically and culturally it is true that the constitution of social locations and social groups can be understood in terms of some behavioural and cognitive consistency between individuals. However, the notion that social groups and identities are static and that the individual occupies only one social location at a time has limited the pedagogical possibility of AIDS education initiatives and, through AIDS education, has primarily served to regulate and discipline subjects in relation to each other and the larger social. That the pedagogical subject of AIDS
education has been constituted discursively as stable, identifiable and predictable reflects
the power of the social imperative for stratification, consistency and coherence, rather
than an acknowledgment of the power inherent in social relations and the often
ambivalent, multiply-located subject. It would not be useful to condemn the past work of
AIDS educators and educational campaigns around AIDS: “Rejecting everything that has
not yet worked means ignoring the context of past projects and potentially discarding
strategies...that might work differently now” (Patton, 1996, 140). It is, however, useful
to look at the discursive and theoretical foundations of AIDS education in a critical and
self-reflexive manner in order to imagine what AIDS education could become.

Most of the discourses responsible for constructing what is known as AIDS and
what has been AIDS education in North America reflect certain historically-grounded
assumptions about the existence of a subject who can be found, described, defined and
categorized. Epidemiology uses social identity categories to do just that. In this instance,
the subject is seen as essential, a priori, and singularly unified, functioning as a ground of
knowledge and a precondition for sociality. These assumptions about the subject and the
validity of static identity categories in describing the truth of the subject form the basis
for representational and educational strategies in the AIDS epidemic. How might AIDS
educational strategies be reconceptualized through a critique of the subject? If the
subject is not singular, unified and categorizable, but multiple, contradictory and fluid,
how might education around AIDS begin to resist discourses that view the subject as
fixed and unproblematic? In trying to rethink the subject of AIDS education,
poststructuralist theory offers some useful critiques of traditional notions of identity, and
argues for a reconceptualization of the subject as definitively problematic. As such,
poststructuralism opens up new possibilities in reconsidering educational strategies around individual practice and health.

Foucault’s work calls us to rethink the subject in the same way that he invites us to rethink history, as operating “on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times” rather than as a searching for origins (Diamond & Quinby, 1988, xiii). He argues that the subject, like any other cultural production, is a production of power, brought into being by discursive strategies and representational practices. Power and knowledge operate through discourse to constitute and specify the pathological subject which then functions as an easily identifiable and categorical source of infection, regardless of individual practice or behaviour. Like Foucault, Judith Butler argues for an understanding of the subject as constructed, both in terms of its various “identities” and as a concept. “Paradoxically, the discursive condition of social recognition precedes and conditions the formation of the subject: recognition is not conferred on a subject, but forms that subject” (Butler, 1993, 225-226). Quite in opposition to a belief in the a priori existence of a unitary and definitive subject, Butler suggests that what we believe to be an essential subject is really a constructed and identified category of existence which, through its constitution, constitutive effects, and recognition, allows us to interact in the social domain and enables certain regulatory strategies of power. The alternative to constituting the subject as singular and categorizable is not the negation or dismissal of that same subject, but the opening up of possibilities for practice, identification, and resistance; it is to “release the term into a future of multiple significations...and to give it play as a site where unanticipated meanings might come to bear” (Butler, 1992, 16).
If we adopt a perspective on the subject which contests foundations and finalities, must we dismiss categories of identity altogether? That we understand the world and our place in it through identifications and in categorical terms is not necessarily what is troubling. Categories of identity are only problematic in so far as they remain uncontested and closed to future transformation, and to the degree that they, thus, become complicit in regimes of truth which function as a means of regulation. Diana Fuss writes that “identification is a process that...prevents identity from ever approximating the status of an ontological given, even as it makes the illusion of identity immediate, secure, and totalizable” (Fuss, 1995, 2). Epidemiology and education in the context of AIDS have both engaged in a knowledge production that negates the multiplicity of practices and identifications of the subject and reifies identity as its absolute descriptive truth; in fact, Simon Watney writes that the stable and categorical “notion of a ‘homosexual body’ only exposes the more or less desperate ambition to confine mobile desires in the semblance of a stable object, calibrated by its sexual aim, regarded as a ‘wrong choice’” (Watney, 1988, 79). To imagine how AIDS education might become a discourse which resists foundations and accounts for the instability of the subject, it is imperative to explore where possibilities of resistance exist within disciplinary mechanisms and processes of subject-formation.

Stuart Hall writes that identities “emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are a sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity” (Hall, 1996, 4). Given that identifications, as outlined in Chapter Four, are always that which happens to us and also that which we make, singular identity categories can never account for the multiple
identifications which constitute individuals. It is more accurate to describe the social individual through the simultaneous use of multiple categories of identity, but it is also useful to recognize how identity categories, no matter how numerous, will never fully account for an individual's identifications. “Identification is, then,...an overdetermination not a subsumption. There is always 'too much' or 'too little' -- an overdetermination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality” (Hall, 1996, 3). Philip Corrigan frames this another way, in terms of the tension between identity performance and regulation, when he writes:

being regulated is not to be entirely ‘positioned’ in discourse, totally identified by visual forms. To repeat, once again, role performance is not (necessarily) role compliance, no more is role compliance an index of role commitment (i.e. totalizing belief)...People have cognitive, affective, and, above all, somatic senses, perspectives, longings, hopes, desires which cannot be fitted into the ways they are coercively encouraged to behave (Corrigan, 1988, 219).

What is being expressed by these authors is an understanding that, although we are constituted as social beings through discourse and its regulatory effects, the processes of identification and social performance are complicated and can hardly be accounted for or understood by resorting to the use of strictly defined categories of identity. That all social relations depend on a degree of mutual recognition and intelligibility, for which a process of identification is required, inevitably positions the possibility for resistance firmly within the production of regulatory discourses. The quality of unpredictability inherent to the process of identification and “the capacity of identifications to reverse and disguise themselves, to multiply and contravene one another, to disappear and reappear years later renders identity profoundly unstable and perpetually open to radical change” (Fuss, 1995, 2).
Although questions of identity “are never freely chosen, but we choose within determinations, within limits of variation, once again from dictionaries and repertoires” (Corrigan, 1988, 218), the process of identification itself is not predictable and does not follow any singular logic. Freud describes identification as a psychic process which results from the ego’s wish to be the other or object. (see Chapter Four) At the same time, in Civilization and Its Discontents (1961), Freud also describes how the emergence of the individual as a social being, or the establishment of sociality and societies, demands the disavowal or sublimation of certain instincts and identifications. Thus, the subject emerges as a socially intelligible being at the expense of the psyche. Judith Butler writes that “the psyche, a notion which includes the unconscious, is very different from the subject: the psyche is precisely that which exceeds the imprisoning effects of the discursive demand to inhabit a coherent identity, to become a coherent subject” (Butler, 1995, 231). This abject domain of un-performed and sublimated identifications which is multiple and contradictory forms the “psychic remainder which signifies the limits of normalization” (233) and thus a site of resistance within subject-formation. Butler further argues that we might similarly conceptualize the body in Foucault’s work, where the possibility for resistance to or in disciplinary subject-formation is located precisely in the sublimation of the body through that same disciplinary constitution of the subject. The object that is sublimated does not disappear but continues to exist in another state.

An appearance of a subject which not only effectively takes the place of the body, but acts as the very soul which frames and forms that body in captivity....might be understood as the sublimation of the body itself, a production which is the consequence of displacement and substitution...This bodily remainder, I would suggest, survives for such a subject in the mode of already, if not always, having been destroyed, a kind of constitutive loss (236).
Thus the identificatory and disciplinary processes by which the subject is constituted simultaneously establish sites of resistance to that same constitution.

Possibilities for resistance are also located in the repetitive and citational nature of identification, performativity and subject-formation. “The Foucauldian subject is never fully constituted in subjection; it is repeatedly constituted in subjection; and it is in the possibility of a repetition that repeats against its origin that subjection might be understood to draw its inadvertently enabling power” (Butler, 1995, 237). The performance of identifications in the form of social identity is always a citational process insofar as we identify with objects or ideals which have been constituted to some degree as intelligible. The processes of identification and performative citation are co-constitutive of both the subject and object; “the ideal that is mirrored depends on that very mirroring to be sustained as an ideal” (Butler, 1993, 14). However, although “the ‘I’ who would oppose its construction is always in some sense drawing from that construction to articulate its opposition” (122), it is in the act of repetition, through which the subject is constituted, that the subject may come to redefine the terms of its own constitution. The existence of an “unharnessed and unsocialized” psychic remainder which functions as the domain of unpredictability in terms of identification poses the possibility of resistance to stable identity categories by instigating the desire to cite and perform in ‘inappropriate’ or taboo ways. Similarly, possibilities of resistance are located in the repetitive and citational nature of social performance where “there might be produced the refusal of the law in the form of the parodic inhabiting of conformity that
subtly calls into question the legitimacy of the command, a repetition of the law into hyperbole, a rearticulation of the law against the one who delivers it" (Ibid.).

Given that the subject cannot be described in stable terms, and that possibilities for resistance are constituted even in the process of disciplinary subject-formation, how do we produce educational initiatives around AIDS in a way that resists foundationalist notions of identity and accounts for the multiple identifications and practices of the subject? The production of knowledge and discourse through educational strategies around AIDS often reflects an attempt to establish uncontested meanings around the subject, disease, infection and identity. The use of identity categories as descriptive truths can be seen as both an effect and function of population control and regulation by social institutions. The AIDS crisis has provided plenty of evidence which suggests that identity categories and singular notions of the subject do not adequately account for the complexity and unpredictability of individual identifications and practice. The spread of HIV into communities and categories defined as “safe” by epidemiologists and educators clearly indicates that the production of the population as divided along lines of identity and risk has been more successful in terms of socio-cultural regulation than disease prevention. According to Foucault, the nature of power is productive, in that power produces or incites discourse, knowledge, and subjects, both in the establishment of regimes of truth and in opposition or resistance to those same regimes. (see Foucault, 1980 & 1990) Thus, the discourse and knowledge produced in educational strategies may begin to play an oppositional role to regimes of truth constructed around the subject in the context of AIDS which will be necessary for a pedagogy whose priority is the acknowledgment and prevention of disease and death.
Elspeth Probyn writes about the project of differentiating bodies in terms of their locations as a “project which speaks of where bodies belong but that can’t quite write out of the desire for other belongings” (Probyn, 1995, 7). She further suggests that, “instead of the body as location, let’s take the body as loca-motion...Belonging set in motion” (Ibid.). The subject is perpetually destabilized by what Probyn calls “the desire for other belongings,” and what Freud might call identification. The process of identification is a process of desire, of wishing, of wanting to be; “if the ego is composed of identifications, and identification is the resolution of desire, then the ego is the residue of desire” (Butler, 1995, 244). Insofar as it manifests itself in the proliferation of identifications and the repeated constitution of the subject, “desire has been and will continued to be stalled as a point of departure” for theorizing “as long as that desire is defined as desire located in an object” (Probyn, 1995, 8). Thus, as long as AIDS education insists upon theorizing the desires and identifications of the pedagogical subject as stable and locatable, the process of becoming and the freedom to become will be stalled in both the work of education and the pedagogical subject. If the aim is to develop educational strategies around AIDS which acknowledge the many belongings and perpetual motions instigated through identification, then, in developing those strategies, educators must also adopt a Foucauldian ethic that, “instead of attempting to determine what we should do on the basis of what we essentially are, attempts by analyzing who we have been constituted to be, to ask what we might become” (Rajchman, 1986, 166-167). An AIDS education developed through such an ethic would understand the pedagogical subject as repeatedly constituted, as in a perpetual process of becoming.
AIDS education and its representations of the subject have contributed to the effects of disciplinary mechanisms which aim to identify and locate subjects and bodies according to predictable and stable social categories of identity and behaviour. Roger Simon writes that “freedom is not a state of being but an openness to a process of possibility. As a practice, freedom is not a passive state but an activity, a method, a mode of living as questioning and changing” (Simon, 1992, 22). In this way, the freedom to become depends on an ethic which allows for becoming. A new pedagogical ethic, which acknowledges the possibility inherent to a perpetual state of transformation and reconstitution, also demands the development of new pedagogical methods and strategies. Both the interdisciplinary method, as articulated by Roland Barthes, and the genealogical method of Foucault offer us clues as to what this new pedagogy might look like. As Barthes “argued many years ago, truly interdisciplinary work changes the object, it changes the point of departure so that instead of ‘founding’ the object, we follow it: it ‘is experienced only in an activity of production...it cannot stop...its constitutive movement is that of a cutting across” (Probyn, 1995, 7). Here, what is called the method of interdisciplinary work, follows the mutable and multiple existence of the object or the subject itself. In doing so, it does not normalize any one discourse about the subject, but incites or produces many discourses and knowledges in a “sideways” and anti-teleological movement. Similarly, Foucault offers us the method of what he calls a “genealogical project” which “entertain[s] the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge” (Foucault, 1980, 83). Genealogies thus produce a multiple and contradictory discourse or history
reflective of the subjects who make it. As a form of resistance, "a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from...subjection, to render them...capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal, and scientific discourse" (85).

What both an interdisciplinary and genealogical method, as presented here, have in common is their attempt to deconstruct and resist the establishment of foundations and boundaries. Indeed, we might think of these methods, not as inter-disciplinary, a name which implies the linking of disciplines, but as contra-disciplinary, a name which suggests the collapsing of formal and categorical boundaries. "This is not to say there is no foundation, but rather, that wherever there is one, there will also be a foundering, a contestation. That such foundations exist only to be put into question is, as it were, the permanent risk of democratization" (Butler, 1992, 16). The adoption of a method which resists the establishment of foundations would constitute AIDS pedagogy as a discourse and practice which refuses the logic and legitimacy of categorical names in identifying the subject. The strategies and educational materials of such a pedagogy would produce a representational discourse which aims to reflect the complexity of the subject and to incite the polymorphous identifications of the learner. I have seen a few recent campaigns, produced by community organizations, which stray from traditional notions of the portrait by utilizing extreme close-ups of the body and other experimental images. These representations not only call into question the effectiveness of locating the pedagogical subject along lines of social identity, but also invite the viewer to identify the multiple meanings and desires of the subject(s) in the photograph and in relation to it.
Instead of employing images which adhere to notions of a categorical subject, the AIDS poster produced by a method which refuses to found the subject might look something like the one pictured in Figure 15, where both bodies represented through the use of photographic collage resist categorizations of gender, race, sexual orientation, class, etc. Both of the bodies in this image are composed of a conglomeration of body parts which each reflect codes for various social locations, and together produce a meaning which incites identification and resists the use of singular names. The pedagogical subject or learner as represented here is a complex system of meaning which is both polymorphous and contradictory; the viewer is invited to identify in numerous and un-specified ways, which given a notion of the subject as stable and coherent would seem illogical and incoherent. Through these new strategies, photography is also perpetually re-constituted, much like the subject, and its use in a new method would begin to redefine its meaning and function as a medium, as well as the reading practices we develop in relation to it.

Figure 15. "If you don't give a fuck, you won't get a fuck. Use condoms for safe sex." (copyright information unavailable)
There is another way to think about the type of method a new ethic of becoming might incite. Wendy Brown asks,

What if we sought to supplant the language of “I am” -- with its defensive closure on identity, its insistence on the fixity of position, its equation of social with moral positioning -- with the language of “I want”? What if we were to rehabilitate the memory of desire within identificatory processes, the moment in desire -- either “to have” or “to be” -- prior to its wounding? (Brown, 1995, 221)

This question draws our attention, once again, away from the moment of social performance and recognition and into the moment of desire, the moment of wanting and wishing which instantiates identification. Identification is both a perpetual practice of desire and that which organizes social identity. Brown’s question seems to reiterate the possibility of resistance in the memory of desire’s repetition and motion. Cindy Patton also refers to the pedagogical possibility in this moment which she describes as ob-scene, where “ob-scene means something like before staged or indicates something before the moment of spatial visibility in official space. The implication is not so much a prior essence, or ‘real’ to which a staging refers, but, simply, the before here” (Patton, 1996, 141). As a politics, then, ob-scenity “offers a map composed through radically different coordinates” by “placing our bodies in an insurrectional posture prior to staging” (Ibid.). This map or method proposes that we engage in representational practices and discourse which refuse to found the subject and its sexuality, but instead incite sexual desire as a productive domain of possibility. Thus,

the next step may be to stop using the term “safe -- even safer -- sex”...Instead we must think about sex as a form of power that makes and saves queer lives. This requires us to stop defining and promoting an object, a sex that can be categorically distinguished from its multiple Others, the ones that are sustained as dangerous, deadly, etc. (155).
The naming and founding of subjects and practices through static categories which are constituted through mechanisms of normalization contributes to a pedagogy which teaches its learners to behave “appropriately” according to stable identifications rather than encouraging the articulation of any and all identifications through safe practices. That notions of good and bad, innocence and guilt, safety and risk have been grafted onto certain identifications, constituted as stable identity categories, has contributed to the continued transmission of HIV, especially in those communities not constituted as at-risk through discourse around AIDS. The construction of safer-sex practices as necessary in relation to a certain founding of sex according to social categories of identity has produced a discourse in which “having license to fuck without a condom is the new, all-American fantasy of heterosexuality rescued from queerness” (Patton, 1996, 155), of innocence rescued from guilt, of purity free from the taint of contamination. To engage in an ob-scene representational discourse is to recognize that un-named, un-founded, or “obscene practices resist the increased social control over sexuality which jeopardizes the sex that protects us” (144). A pedagogy which does not found sex through normalizing discourses and mechanisms, but instead celebrates sexual practice and desire as a process of perpetual transformation, will proliferate practices of the self in which safety is understood, not in terms of innocence or guilt, but as necessary to preserving the freedom of desiring, changing, living bodies.


