MOMENTS, AFFECTS, & TRAJECTORIES: EDUPUNK AND THE ROLE OF MOMENTS IN WORLD MAKING

by

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Abstract

On May 25th, 2008, Jim Groom, a professor and instructional technology specialist, coined the term Edupunk in a blog post as a reactionary response and critique of the cooptation and commodification of Web 2.0 tools by learning management system Blackboard. Edupunk gained widespread attention, and opened up discussion and debate on questions of education and pedagogy. Using Edupunk as a starting point of discussion, this thesis looks at the potentiality of moments and their impacts on world making. Drawing from the work of Ernst Van Alphen and affect theory, this thesis argues that moments "think." When we experience something (be it, visual art, text, video, or ordinary life), we feel its affects and think through the questions that it poses. Through affect, moments influence (individual and collective) change both through the potential trajectories of where they may lead us, and their connections to other moments that contribute to world making.
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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................ iii

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................ iv

Introduction Edupunk ..................................................................................................... 1

Chapter One .................................................................................................................. 10
  Introduction................................................................................................................ 10
  What is Metaphor? ...................................................................................................... 12
  Do-it-yourself ............................................................................................................. 13
  Anti-Corporatization ................................................................................................. 15
  Anti-Authoritarianism ............................................................................................... 17
  Metaphor and Affect ................................................................................................. 18
  Metaphor and Identification ...................................................................................... 23
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 26

Chapter Two .................................................................................................................. 30
  Introduction................................................................................................................ 30
  Defining culture ........................................................................................................ 32
  Collective Conscience .............................................................................................. 33
  Hebdige and the Meaning of Style ........................................................................... 35
  Countercultural Genealogy ..................................................................................... 36
  Negating the Existing Order .................................................................................... 38
  Moments as World Making ....................................................................................... 39
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 42

Chapter Three ................................................................................................................ 44
  Introduction................................................................................................................ 44
This thesis is about the ways in which moments have impact on and change our worlds. We hear something, see something, read something, experience something and it hits us. We feel something. Through the viscera, our heartbeat, breathing, affects run through the body, move us, and change the course of our thoughts. Moments can reveal dreams, potentialities of different lives, and possibilities for the future. In a flash, something pops up:

Everything depends on the feel of an atmosphere and the angle of arrival. Anything can feel like something you’re in, fully or partially, comfortably or aspirationally, for good or not for long. A condition, a pacing, a scene of absorption, a dream, a being abandoned by the world, a serial immersion in some little world you never knew was there until you got cancer, a dog, a child, a hankering...and then the next thing – another little world is possible. Everything depends on the dense entanglement of affect, attention, the senses, and matter. (Stewart in Gregg & Seigworth 2010, p.340)

Following from this passage, moments change the course of our thoughts, the (public and private) conversations we have, our next moves, and future moves (both individually and collectively). In this thesis, I argue that moments move us to think in new ways and take us in new directions.

To explore this argument, this thesis traces one text: a blog post by Jim Groom, a professor and instructional technology specialist at University of Mary Washington in Virginia, its affects, and the responses that spiraled from it. In his blog post “The Glass Bees,” Groom coined the term ‘Edupunk’: “an educational approach that combines creative drive with a maverick attitude, celebrating a kind of cocky, do-it-yourself confidence in which the educator—or possibly the student—designs the tools for teaching and learning” (Rowell, 2008). Edupunk
took off in the blogosphere. Many bloggers felt strongly connected to and inspired by the term. The invocation of punk made sense – punk was reactionary, anti-authority subculture with a DIY spirit – and Edupunk was built on similar principles.

On May 25, 2008, Jim Groom wrote an entry on his blog concerning his annoyance with corporate learning management systems (LMSs) after the release of Blackboard v.8. In the post, Groom explores the intersections between technology and power, through various dialogues he has encountered. First, he cites Ernst Jünger’s novel, *The Glass Bees* (1957). Groom was intrigued by science fiction author Bruce Sterling’s introduction to the book:

Jünger perceived that industrial capitalism is a ridiculous game, so he proved remarkably good at predicting its future moves...[He] understands that technology is pursued not to accelerate progress but to intensify power. He fully understands that popular entertainment comes with a military-industrial underside. (Jünger 2000, quoted in Groom, 2008, May 25)

Sterling suggests that Jünger, writing in 1957, critiques the idea that technology is inherently progressive and highlights how technology is used to intensify power. While technology is commonly cast as “a singular harbinger of possibility and liberation,” the novel captures the role of capitalism in shaping technology as a means of control (2008, May 25).

Groom tells us that after reading the novel, he was at a Brooklyn bar with his colleagues Brian Lamb and Keira McPhee, bringing home this point: “How do [we] understand the work [we are] doing in the field of EdTech (education technology) when in comes to the intersection of progress, power, and the voracious appetite of capital to co-opt and re-package the labor of others as its own, patented, insanely expensive, proprietary product?” Lamb responds that the question reminds him of Blackboard’s newest product announcement, Blackboard 8.
Blackboard advertises their new version of course management software as their contribution to education and Web 2.0, and claims the software will “enhance critical thinking skills” and “improve class performance.” In his blog post, Groom critiques these claims in two parts. First, human effort and collaboration enable the enhancement of critical thinking skills and improvement in class performance, not a technology or an LMS. Second, “[Blackboard is] taking the experiments and innovations of thousands of people and re-packaging them as their own.”

Groom continues:

BlackBoard makes an inferior product and charges a ton for it, but if we reduce the conversation to technology, and not really think hard about technology as an instantiation of capital’s will to power, than anything resembling an EdTech movement towards a vision of liberation and relevance is lost. For within those ideas is not a technology, but a group of people, who argue, disagree, and bicker, but also believe that education is fundamentally about the exchange of ideas and possibilities of thinking the world anew again and again, it is not about a corporate mandate to compete—however inanely or nefariously—for market share and/or power. I don’t believe in technology, I believe in people. And that’s why I don’t think our struggle is over the future of technology, it is over the struggle for the future of our culture that is assailed from all corners by the vultures of capital. Corporations are selling us back our ideas, innovations, and visions for an exorbitant price. I want them all back, and I want them now! (2008, May 25)

From this discussion of the protest of the commercialization and corporatization of education, Groom introduces a new idea: Edupunk

The moment was an emotive reaction to the use of corporate learning management systems (LMSs), such as Blackboard, which charge universities high prices for their web-based courseware. Instead, Edupunk advocates that instructors “do-it-themselves” using creative teaching methods instead of these pre-packaged learning systems. Within a week of the first post, Edupunk made its appearance in The Chronicle of Higher Education. Bloggers loudly proclaimed that they were Edupunk; they posted the details of their own Edupunk projects, created lists of their favourite Edupunks, and wrote a history of Edupunk, and conversely the
term was heavily criticized. The punk metaphor mirrors the ways in which subcultural formations both unite and divide individuals. Subculture has the dual feature of providing a sense of solidarity for those who identify with it and excluding those who do not. Edupunk invokes long-standing questions of the advantages and limitations of counterculture to achieve to political aims and goals. However, the reactions towards Edupunk stirred interesting debate and questions around education.

While the notion of Edupunk quickly developed discursive currency, there was also a strong reaction against the term. Punk subculture is representative of youthful angst, rebellion, and it was ephemeral – not a solid foundation for building a movement. In his blog post “Are you an Edupunk? I’m Not,” Doug Belshaw explains that he does not want to join the movement, because: “It harks back to a time when either I wasn’t born or was very, very young. I have no meaningful connection with the metaphor you’re trying to use” (2008, May 30). While some bloggers didn’t feel connected to the term, others felt greatly opposed to the term. For example, in his blog, Ken Carroll writes:

Am I the only one to find this Edupunk meme ridiculous? The adolescent ethos, music, etc, are matched only by the adolescent narcissism, anger, willful non-conformity, sanctimony, and tirades against authority. Fine, except this is all coming from teachers! (2008, June 1)

These responses brought to question the usefulness of the term if it divides individuals – who, for the most part agree on the resistance to corporate LMSs – but do not agree on the subcultural representations associated with the term being put forth to articulate this resistance. Garner Campbell argues:

If the metaphor of punk helps some folks rally their spirits and keep pushing for the kind of educational reforms I long for with every fiber of my being, okay, I guess—but from
here, and especially in the wake of all the comments I’ve been reading, it looks to me like the metaphor simply draws more lines in the sand. And I choose that metaphor very deliberately, as I think those sandy lines, whether on the playground or in the desert, can be very dangerous. Maybe I’m trying to say that I don’t think one has to draw a line in the sand in order to take a stand. (Campbell in Groom, 2008, May 25)

To argue this, following from Ernst Van Alphen, I use the theoretical framework of Herbert Damisch, as portrayed in such works as: *The Origin of Perspective* (Eng. Trans. 1994), *The Judgment of Paris* (Eng. Trans. 1996), and *Theory of the /Cloud/* (Eng. Trans. 2002), and Van Alphen’s adaptation of Damisch’s theory in his work *Art in Mind* (2005).

In *Art in Mind*, Van Alphen argues that *art thinks*. The argument rests on the idea that, in a sense, art has a mind of its own – it has the capacity to shape our intellect, to intervene in our lives by affecting our thinking and how we view the world, and ultimately, affect how we create our world. For Van Alphen: “Art is a laboratory where experiments are conducted that shape thought into visual and imaginative ways of framing the pain points of culture” (2005, p.1). Drawing from the work of Damisch, Van Alphen argues that: “one is invited to think ‘with’ the work of art, which means that one is compelled to start a dialogue with it by articulating questions of a more general – for instance, philosophical, political, or social – nature. Only when the beholder of art poses these kinds of questions will the work of art release its ideas.” He continues: “that which is historical about the work of art can only be truly understood when one allows the work to be a historical articulation of a general, more fundamental problem” (p.4).

“Art thinks” stands alone from the theoretical tradition of art history, which poses art as the product of a particular historical moment. The study of art history contextualizes artworks through the lens of history: How are artworks related to the time periods they are born out of? How is an artwork related to other works created in the same time period? How are artworks
related based on stylistic context (i.e. genre, design, format)? Instead, Van Alphen’s approach focuses on how art thinks, outside of historical context. He does not dismiss the importance of writing art history, but opens up a space for theorists to think about art outside of historical contexts. He writes:

One of the motivations behind the relatively new interdisciplinary projects of cultural studies and visual studies is to develop a frame as well as a discourse that enable us to understand cultural objects and practices, including those of high art and literature, in terms of broader social practices…An important difference between these interdisciplinary approaches and the more traditional ones, however, concerns the kind of genealogies within which cultural objects and practices are seen as being constituted. These are no longer limited to the history of artistic forms, of artists’ intentions, of patronage, or of the social history of art. In the words of Douglas Crimp: “far from abandoning history, cultural studies works to supplant this reified art history and other histories…What is at stake is not history per se [which is a fiction in any case], but what history, whose history, history to what purpose.” (p. xiii-xiv)

By separating art from its historical context, “[A]rt is ‘autonomous’ – not in the sense that it is independent of context but in that is has an agency of its own. That agency changes the status of the frame in relation to art. If art “thinks,” and if the viewer is compelled, or at least invited, to think with it, then art is not only the object of framing – which, obviously, is also true and important – but it also functions, in turn, as a frame for cultural thought” (p.xvi). Following from the idea that “art is a laboratory,” Van Alphen continues:

Although the dominant commonsense notions of art are still the expressive and conceptual ones, the importance of art is also quite seen in terms that assign a much more active function, that is, a performative one. Art is then conceived as the realm where ideas and values, the building stones of culture, are actively created, constituted, and mobilized. (p.1)

In Leonardo da Vinci’s treatise on painting, *Codex urbinas latinus 1270*), he gives the following advice to painters:
Do not despise my opinion, when I remind you that it should not be hard for you to stop sometimes and look into the stains of the walls, or the ashes of a fire, or clouds, or mud, or life things, in which, if you consider them well, you will find really marvelous ideas. The mind of the painter is stimulated by new discoveries, the composition of battles of animals and men, various compositions of landscapes and monstrous things, such as devils and similar creations, which may bring you honour, because the mind is stimulated to new inventions by obscure things. (quoted in Van Alphen, p.1)

Like DaVinci, Damisch and Van Alphen view art as an intellectual practice. It is not “an expressive, intuitive, sensuous, or emotional practice.” Art is a reflection; one in which the artist thinks, discovers, and invents (p.1). Van Alphen explains:

The French philosopher and art historian Hubert Damisch has taken Leonardo’s conception of art to heart. All of his writings are directed by the conviction that, in one way or another, paintings and other cultural products perform an intellectual or philosophical project. He never deals with paintings as mere passive manifestations of a culture or historical period, or as the product of the artist’s intention. Rather, the painter thinks and she does that in her paintings. Therefore, for Damisch a painting is a reflection: not in the sense of the passive definition of the word, as a mirror image, but in the sense of the active definition, as an act of thought. (2005, p.4)

In this way, art does not reflect the intentions of the artist, but thinks autonomously. The viewer is invited to think with an artwork, but in doing so, there is no claim of positive understanding. Instead the aesthetic experience is an attempt at understanding. In the words of Christoph Menke: “Aesthetic experience is a negative event because it is an experience of the negation (the failure, the subversion) of (the nevertheless unavoidable effort at) understanding” (p. xv). Van Alphen is suggesting that while art makes us think, it is the thought process that leads to more questions than conclusions. Extending this argument, in this thesis, I use Van Alphen’s framework to understand Edupunk as a cultural product. Edupunk is a text, a moment, and a metaphor with affective resonance.
While this thesis could have been written on another text, Edupunk hit me in a way that made me think about how and why I was moved by it. Through the chapters, I refer to Edupunk as both a ‘moment’ and a ‘text.’ Neither is meant to be a mutually exclusive concept, but instead, together they to emphasize two key elements: that the term is a product of a text and the text raised discussion at a particular moment in time. When referred to as a text, I am referring to Jim Groom’s initial blog post on Edupunk, “The Glass Bees” (2008, May 25). I discuss Edupunk as a moment to emphasize that when we experience “something” (be it, visual art, text, video, design, or ordinary life), we feel its affects and we think through it. While Van Alphen’s analysis focuses exclusively on “images and texts that belong to the institutional realm of high culture,” he states that it is not the “high culture” status of the images that he addresses but the argument can be extended to all cultural objects (p.xiv). Therefore, Edupunk can be understood as cultural object through Van Alphen’s framework. In the following chapters I expand on this idea:

Chapter One explores Edupunk as a metaphor, not defined as either a moment or a text, but by its poesis and affect. The mashup of punk and education was effective in raising attention and increasing dialogue surrounding a number of education issues. This chapter looks at the affective basis of the collective interest in the metaphor, primarily using Kathleen Stewart’s work, Ordinary Affects (2010).

Chapter Two discusses Edupunk as a moment. This chapter explores definitions of subculture and counterculture: first through the lens of Emile Durkheim and Dick Hebdige, and then through the lens of Greil Marcus, using his work Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century (1990). Marcus’ work lifts the veil on cultures (and subcultures and countercultures) considered as unified systems to be studied, instead juxtaposing various ‘moments’ throughout history and examining their connections and contradictions.
Chapter Three defines Edupunk as a text circulating within a public. This chapter provides a political framework for understanding how texts make change, using the works of Negri and Hardt, *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004) and Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (2005). These texts provide insights both into how communication structures work and how their structure enables the potential for social and political change.

My task here is to explore the relationships between texts, affect, and world making. Through these theorists, I will look at the role of moments in world making.
Chapter One
Metaphor and Affect

Introduction

Do we need another movement?
Do we need another ideology?
Do we need more labels?
Do we need more honorary titles, more designations of who’s cool and who isn’t, who’s phony and who’s not? Do we need more “are we too old” or “are we too young” or “who gets to use this voice” or “are we appropriating this voice” questions?

– Gardner Campbell, responding to Jim Groom, 2008, May 31

In the video “Edupunk: Battle Royale,” Jim Groom and his colleague, Gardner Campbell, duke it out over the meaning and reaction to Edupunk. The video begins with Groom dodging the question of how to define Edupunk. He states: “I don’t know if it needs to be defined… It can just be the moment it was, then go.” He understands the term has more value without a detailed description or definition. To define is to set limits to what Edupunk is and what it is not. To leave Edupunk undefined, it allows space for possibility and collective imagination. Instead, Groom focuses on the affect of the term, rather than developing Edupunk as a concept. He says:

There was obviously a really deep rooted reaction to a term. It became quickly a concept… Some would argue a meme; I would argue an ideology…I think it’s a stylistic approach just like punk music was a stylistic approach and it was a very specific political approach…[Edupunk] is a term that took on a life. (2009, February 23)

While Edupunk is left undefined by Groom, Stephen Downes, a senior researcher at the National Research Council of Canada, expands on Edupunk in his blog by identifying three core elements: First, it is “a reaction against the commercialization of learning—in particular, onerous copyright, things like lawsuits over patents by big corporations.” Second, “[i]t has come to symbolize the do-it-yourself aspect of educational technology, the idea that people can do the
same things that these expensive enterprise systems do with simple tools and simple methods, and not only can they do them, but they can frequently do them better.” This includes hands-on learning methods as well as the use of blogs, wikis, or Twitter in the classroom for the purpose of both dialectical learning and for free and open access to these technologies. And finally, “[t]he third ingredient of Edupunk is “thinking for yourself instead of being told what to think and learning for yourself instead of being told what to learn.” (2008). Edupunk promotes dialogical and perhaps dialectical education through the shared responsibility of debating, editing, creating, and sharing of content and information within the classroom.

While Edupunk utilizes the DIY, anti-corporatization, and anti-authoritarian elements of punk to articulate an educational approach, the metaphor also invokes a host of other interpretations of punk as style. Reflecting on the conversation that arose on the blogosphere after his initial post, Groom states:

[Edupunk] is a term that took on a life…It brought up a lot of distinctions about generations, different notions about how we think about our learning and our culture, and…it brings the logic of culture back into teaching and learning. (2009, February 23)

To explore how the term ‘took on a life,’ in this chapter, I begin with a consideration of the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (2003) and their chapter “Metaphors We Live By” (1980) in work The Production of Reality: Essays and readings on social interaction, edited by Jodi O’Brien (2005). Further, reading Kathleen Stewart’s Ordinary Affects (2007) and Eric Shouse’s article “Feeling, Emotion, Affect” (2005) against the limitations inherent in Lakoff and Johnson’s texts, I explore the affective impacts of metaphor. It is such affective impacts that serve as a basis for understanding the success of Edupunk and how moments have a force in the practice of world making.
What is Metaphor?

“New metaphors are capable of creating new understandings and, therefore, new realities.”
– George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*

In *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson argue that “no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis” (p.19). Metaphor is an analogy between two things or ideas, which allows us to understand and experience “one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, p.5). They critique theories of meaning that assume it is possible to give an account of truth that is free of human understanding; rather they argue it is through understanding that truth and meaning are conceived. Metaphors are devices that play a central role in understanding, despite not being grounded in “objective reality” – “if there is such a thing.” Therefore, how we conceptualize the world is based on metaphor; it is how we think, function, and understand the world (p.184).

Consider a few of the examples of metaphor from Lakoff and Johnson’s chapter “Metaphors We Live By” in *The Production of Reality: Essays and readings on social interaction* (O’Brien, ed. 2005):

*Theories (and Arguments) are Buildings*
Is that the foundation for your theory? The theory needs more support. The argument is shaky. We need some more facts or the argument will fall apart. We need to construct a strong argument for that. I haven’t figured out yet what that form of the argument will be…We will show that theory to be without foundation. So far we have put together only the framework of the theory. (p.105)

*Ideas are Resources*
He ran out of ideas. Don’t waste your thoughts on small projects. Let’s pool our ideas. He’s a resourceful man. We’ve used up all our ideas. That’s a useless idea. That idea will go a long way. (p.105)

*Argument is War*
Your claims are indefensible. He attacked every weak point in my argument. His criticisms were right on target. I demolished his argument. I’ve never won an argument
with him. You disagree? Okay, shoot! If you use that strategy, he’ll wipe you out. He shot down all of my arguments. (p.107)

In this chapter, and their book by the same name, Lakoff and Johnson construct a seeming endless lists of everyday metaphors, such as those listed above. While these metaphors are often used without notice, the authors show the pervasiveness of metaphor in understanding everyday concepts. They argue:

The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (p.103)

We make sense of the conceptual through experiential metaphor. Metaphors highlight specific features of a concept (and others remain hidden). Metaphors “are not merely things to be seen beyond. In fact, one can see beyond them only by using other metaphors” (2003, p.239). Using Downes’ definition of Edupunk as DIY, anti-corporate, and anti-authoritarian, in the next three sections, I will briefly outline how the punk metaphor has been taken up by various bloggers to provide a more thorough definition of Edupunk and to show how the term was a product of collective making.

Do-it-yourself

“We are building alternatives to all your plastic crap. Every last bit.”
– Rustin Wright, “D.I.Y. Manifesto”

Edupunk utilizes the do-it-yourself (DIY) spirit of punk by advocating for self-directed learning, information sharing, and straying from traditional styles of teaching and course design.
Web tools, such as blogs and wikis make it easy for people to create and collaborate – through collective storing, sharing, and editing of information. Edupunk advocates for hands-on, self-directed learning through techniques such as taking machines apart to see how they work and building structures with tools. Self-directed learning allows students to ‘choose their own path’ without guidelines outlined by an instructor, thereby opening up learning to an indefinite number of possibilities.

DIY means taking control of the means of production. It is being self-reliant and completing tasks, despite the lack of knowledge or expertise in a given area. It is the reminder: you can do anything. You can bake a cake, build a house, or teach yourself microbiology; all you need is access to the right tools and educational sources. The practice comes in many forms: DIY home repairs, cooking, gardening, video mashups, and notoriously making punk music. In 1976, punk rock was initiated by individuals who knew nothing about playing music picked up instruments and started bands. They were able to defy the boundaries of the musical elitism and create music without technical musical knowledge. The DIY spirit of punk rock is best summarized by the quotation in the 1976 fanzine Sideburns: “Here is a chord. Here is another chord. Now form a band.” Punk rock prizes self-production and self-distribution of albums and rejects the corporatization of music making. The punk DIY ethic rejects the need to purchase items or use existing systems or processes.

The role of DIY in punk culture serves two purposes: First, DIY allows individuals to create and be creative through doing, building, and making. It’s a process – a process of learning, of creating, of feeling accomplished with the completion of an end product and being able to share your creation with others. Second, DIY is a different kind of consumption. It’s creating an alternative to the dominance of buying pre-packaged, corporate goods – the product of capitalism

Punk communities have flourished through the creation of culture: music (DIY music production, distribution, and management), literature (zines), and education (workshops and skill shares). In turn, individuals do not have to rely on corporations for all of the goods or services that they consume, and individuals can share their skills with others outside of the capitalism system of exchange, through distributing free zines, facilitating free workshops, or offering assistance to others through volunteering time and service. As Duncombe writes: “Make your own culture and stop consuming that which is made for you” (p.1-2).

**Anti-Corporatization**

“Your future dream is a shopping scheme.”
– “Anarchy in the UK,” The Sex Pistols

Just as punk rockers bypassed corporations to self-produce music, Edupunks bypass corporate educational tools to plan their own lessons and build their own course websites. Edupunk advocates for the disruption of the standardization of Blackboard in post-secondary classrooms and educators’ reliance on corporate educational tools. DIY bypasses the capitalistic system of exchange – where corporations make products and consumers buy products – instead individuals create what they want. In Darcy Norman’s blog, he writes:

[Edupunk is] a movement away from what has become of the mainstream edtech community – a collection of commercial products produced by large companies. Edupunk is the opposite of that. It’s DIY. It’s hardcore. It’s not monetized. It’s not trademarked. It’s not press-released. It’s not on an upgrade cycle. It’s not enterprise. It’s
not shrinkwrapped. It’s about individuals being able to craft their own tools, to plan their own agendas, and to determine their own destinies. It’s about individuals being able to participate, to collaborate, to contribute, without boundaries or barriers. (2008, May 28)

While Blackboard is advertising for educators to use their tools to “improve critical thinking” and “classroom performance” (Groom, 2008, May 25), the tools being advertised are actually based on Web 2.0 technologies, built through the efforts of countless individuals and are available online for free. Blackboard is commodifying these applications and packaging these efforts as their own contribution to education technology. Steve Wheeler, a self-proclaimed Edupunk educator at the University of Plymouth states:

What we’re doing now as EduPunks is we’re kind of taking the same concept, the same ethos of the punk era and we’re applying it to education. We’re doing it ourselves. We’re using our own tools. We’re bypassing the educational systems that have been put in place by the corporate companies and institutions. That’s EduPunk. (Howard, Veerman, et al, 2010, March 19)

As blogger Rob Wall writes: “[i]t’s not about the technology – it’s about what the technology allows us to create. We have the power and right to create our own learning resources and our own learning without it being co-opted by corporate interests” (30 May, 2008).

While DIY resists corporate culture, DIY has also been commodified and used as a marketing tool by numerous corporations. For example, Home Depot’s slogan is “You can do it! We can help!” Some bloggers recognized the risk of the corporization and commodification of Edupunk. For example, blogger David Warlick writes:

I do not have any real objection to corporate embrace of these tools. We’re all trying to make a living. What worries me, though, is school officials hearing the buzz, and thinking that they can buy their way into the crowd, rather than learning their way in.
While Edupunk resists commodification of online learning environments, due to its aesthetic and affective appeal, Edupunk risks being commodified itself.

**Anti-Authoritarianism**

“Think for yourself, be yourself, don’t just take what society gives you, create your own rules, live your own life.” – Mark Anderson, “Positive Force” handout, 1985

Edupunk breathed new life into the question of authority in the classroom. Through the invocation of anti-authoritarianism and the punk movement, Groom calls for instructors to reject conventional education, and re-imagine pedagogy and the role of authority in the classroom with both teachers and students contributing and sharing the responsibility of editing, creating, and sharing of content. Blogger D’arcy Norman writes:

The punk portion of the label was also important because it pushed conversation in the direction of tearing down walls and breaking down hegemony. That is important, and needs to be talked about. We need to be talking about these topics that make us uncomfortable. (2008, June 18)

The anti-authoritarian education described by Edupunk draws on critical pedagogy and democratic education to advocate for anti-authoritarianism in the classroom.

In the video “The Edupunk Heritage: The Precursors of Open Learning,” Norm Friesen cites the work of pedagogue Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy as a precursor to Edupunk. Freire rejects the banking concept of education, which considers knowledge as “a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry” (1970/1987, p.58). Friere advocates for problem-posing education, which “rejects communiqués and embodies communications”
(p.66). It is a dialectical learning method where “[t]he students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers his earlier considerations as the students express their own” (p. 68).

Similar to critical pedagogy, Edupunk tries to help students to question and challenge practices of domination and the beliefs and practices that dominate. In effect Edupunk is an ongoing critique of teaching and learning processes. Edupunk is “student-centered, resourceful, teacher- or community-created rather than corporate-sourced, and underwritten by a progressive political stance. Edupunk…takes old-school Progressive educational tactics – hands-on learning that starts with the learner’s interests – and makes them relevant to today’s digital age, sometimes by forgoing digital technologies entirely” (Madsen-Brooks, 2008, May 28). It is “about individuals being able to craft their own tools, to plan their own agendas, and to determine their own destinies. It’s about individuals being able to participate, to collaborate, to contribute, without boundaries or barriers” (Norman, 2008, May 28).

**Metaphor and Affect**

“For the skin is faster than the word.”
– Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*

While Lakoff and Johnson succeed at making the case for the prevalence and significance of metaphor in language, their analysis does not include the affective aspects of metaphor. While the conceptual connections between “punk” and DIY education are apparent, this does not explain the affective and emotional responses to Edupunk. The debate in regards to whether or not Edupunk would be an appropriate metaphor for the anti-corporate Edtech movement were not primarily not about whether or not the metaphor was suitable for the movement in a
semantic, rational sense (i.e. does the metaphor fit?). Rather, the responses to Edupunk were expressions of the affective and emotional resonances the metaphor elicited. In this respect, the term Edupunk provoked position identifications based on the emotional legacy of the history of youth counterculture, while also invoking long-standing questions about the limitations of that counterculture. Bloggers expressed fears that the suitable resonances of the metaphor would divide members of the education technology public into camps of Edupunk and non-Edupunks.

While divided on personal feelings towards the term, both bloggers who agreed and disagreed with the term were affected by it. Edupunk would not have gotten such publicity if it had not raised such an affective response. In a word, Edupunk was able to capture an ethos, identity, and range of pedagogical and education practices. To define affect and discuss the affective responses to Edupunk, I am drawing upon Eric Shouse’s article “Feeling, Emotion, Affect” (2005) and Kathleen Stewart’s book Ordinary Affects (2007).

What is affect? How and what did Edupunk invoke through affect? In his article “Feeling, Emotion, Affect,” Shouse (2005) uses the definition of affect provided by Brian Massumi in his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus (2004). Massumi distinguishes between feeling, emotion, and affect. While both feelings and affects are felt through the body, feelings are personal and biographical, in contrast to affects which are ‘pre-personal.’ Feelings are sensations that have been checked against previous experiences and labeled, and emotions are social expressions of feelings, while affects are outside of and/or prior to consciousness. Unlike feelings, which have been checked against previous experiences and labeled, or emotions, which projects or displays a feeling, affects are non-conscious experiences (Shouse, 2005). However, affects are always subject to interpretations that help us to explain our feelings. According to these scholars, affects are intensities felt through the body – via “the facial
muscles, the viscera, the respiratory system, the skeleton, autonomic blood flow changes, and vocalizations” (Shouse quoting Demos, 1995).

In her work *Ordinary Affects*, Kathleen Stewart does not give a straightforward definition of affect, but through retelling scenes of affect she comes to define the term. Her work is part-theory, part-poetry as she writes an ethnographic account of “everyday” American life through a series of vignettes. Her scenes range from mass panics over Satanic ritual abuse in the 1990s, to passing a homeless person on the street and not knowing where to look, to silence washing over a Texas cafe after a couple walks in after a motorcycle crash. In each scene, she describes her reactions and the reactions of others to the events that make up her everyday life. She argues that these bodily reactions are affects - the links between bodies and the outside world. Stewart describes them as “the somethings” that throw themselves “together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and inhabitable.” They happen in “impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, in forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency, and in publics and social worlds of all kinds” (2007, p.1-2).

Stewart defines ordinary affects as moments of potentiality where the mind is set in motion and there’s no telling where one’s thoughts and feelings will go (p.2). “Things flash up - little worlds, bad impulses, events alive with some kind of charge. Sudden eruptions are fascinating beyond all reason, as if they’re divining rods articulating something. But what?” (p.68). She takes this idea further in her article “Atmospheric Attunement” (2009, March 1). Atmospheric attunement is:

- a collective sensing out of what might be happening… A state of alert saturated with the potentiality of things in the making in a personal, political and aesthetic ambit that has
not yet found its form but is always promising, and threatening, to take shape… The atmospherics of ordinary life pop with the alternating current between what gets actualized in a moment and what gets sensed, sharply or vaguely, with pleasure or pain, as a potential, a regret, something missing or something finally realized. (Stewart, 2009, March 1)

Through their pull on bodies, moments open up doors of possibility, where new worlds and potential futures come into view.

In this thesis, I take up both Stewart and Massumi’s perspectives on affect. For Stewart, the affects happen in the ordinary and the everyday. While I do not address ordinary affects specifically in this thesis, more research could be done on the role of such affects in moments and world making. In this thesis, I take up Massumi’s perspective on affect as articulated in Mary Zournazi’s interview with Massumi in her work *Hope: New Philosophies for Change* (2002). In the interview, Massumi states that he discusses affect as a way of talking about the ‘margin of maneuverability,’ “where we might be able to go and what we might be able to do” in every present situation (p.212). He continues:

I guess ‘affect’ is the word I use for ‘hope.’ One of the reasons it’s such an important concept for me is because it explains why focusing on the next experimental step rather than the big utopian picture isn’t really settling for less. It’s not exactly going for more, either. It’s more like being right where you are – more intensely. (p.212)

The impact of moments on world making echoes the bodily pulls of affects: “When we navigate our way through the world, there are different pulls, constraints, and freedoms that move us forward and propel us into life” (2002, p.210).

These perspectives on affects bring to question: what possible futures did Edupunk open up? What critical issues in education did it bring forth? How did the emotional responses to Edupunk divide the Edtech community on how the term was received? How is power animated
in the ordinary affects of the classroom environment? The term also brings forth questions on how classroom pedagogy and power structures could be shifted on a grand scale, and the role of individuals in that process. Dave Truss argues that the edtech community should be leading educational reform rather than identifying as a fringe group. He comments:

As I mention in my [blog] post, I’m not really a fan of the term edupunk, primarily because I think that most people that fit within the category are the Educational Leaders that we need to follow…I’d rather see Leaders on the cutting edge be recognized as such, and not as a fringe group. (Truss, in Couros, 2008, June 13)

Edupunk surfaces ideas of a minority group of ‘cool’ and innovative educators who resist hierarchical power structures and facilitate classes based on collaborative teaching and learning methods, but do not engage with or disrupt dominant education practices. The term invokes both the creative and destructive aspects of punk. For this reason, the term carries specific semantic and affective associations as argued by blogger Corrie Bergeron: “[The label of punk] carries a lot of baggage. We don’t really want total anarchy in the classroom, do we?” (2008, June 6).

What is the role of authority in the classroom and in movement building?

Edupunk suggests the animation of power in relatively ordinary moments, events, and reactions. Power and authority are inhabited in the body, just as they inhabit the structure of the education system. One’s relationship and values concerning power as inhabited in the body and exemplified through ordinary actions. In *Ordinary Affects*, Stewart writes:

Ideologies happen. Power snaps into place. Structures grow entrenched. Identities take place. Ways of knowing become habitual at the drop of a hat. But it’s ordinary affects that give things the quality of something to inhabit and animate. Power starts in animated inhabituation of things, not way downstream in the various dreamboats and horror shows that get moving. The first step in thinking about the force of things is the open question of what counts as an event, a movement, an impact, a reason to react. There’s a politics to being/feeling connected (or not), to impacts that are shared (or not), to energies spent worrying or scheming (or not), to affective contagion, and to all the forms of attunement
and attachment. There’s a politics to a way of watching and waiting for something to happen and to forms of agency... There’s a politics to difference itself - the difference of danger, the difference of habit and dull routine, the difference of everything that matters. (2007, p.15)

Stewart refrains from naming an overarching system of power (globalization, neoliberalism, capitalism) and instead emphasizes that power is present in the experiences of the everyday.

Metaphor and Identification

The punk metaphor allows many educators to express themselves and the movement in ways that were not capable without the metaphor. Through the punk metaphor, some educators gained a new vision of themselves, what they are doing in the classroom, and a vision for the future of education. Edupunk expresses a common identity amongst some educators – an expression of a DIY, anti-authoritarian, and anti-corporate ethos paired with the emotive power of punk. This provided a sense of collective belonging by connecting educators’ educational practice to what other educators are doing. This recognition of commonality serves both as a starting point of conversation and draws attention to the possibility of future mobilization in transforming education.

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However, the punk metaphor may affectively unwelcoming to some individuals based on their conception of punk rock, and race, gender, and class identities. Ken Carroll describes Edupunks as “forty year old tenured men in hoodies, talking about revolution.” Blogger Rob Wall similarly suggests Edupunk “might be a manifestation of our collective mid-life crisis (a lot of us seem to be in the neighbourhood of 40)” (30 May, 2008). While it didn’t come up explicitly in the discussion of Edupunk, punk is traditionally a white, masculinist construction. Although this has been heavily changed through the introduction of riot grrrl and queer core into punk scenes as well as the emergence of gender, sexuality, and race critiques of punk scenes within zines and public discussion, as is evident in the above quotes a gendered, restrictive notion of punk still is operative.¹

¹  Zines such as the 1980s Toronto-based queer punk zine JDs by Bruce LaBruce, riot grrrl zine Bikini Kill and The Riot Grrrl Manifesto, and Race Riot 2, a compilation zine on the intersections of race and punk, are amongst many punk publications that provide critiques of the way punk has privileged white, masculinist, and heterosexual associations.
The use of the punk metaphor also brought attention to the complexity and diversity of participants in the edtech public and how they view the Edupunk movement. Blogger Gabrielle Coleman writes:

The meanings, aims, visions, and aspirations of the open source community are difficult to pin down .... closer inspection of the movement reveals a cacophony of voices and political positions: anarchic ideals of freedom, “tribal” gift-economy rhetoric, revolution, Star Wars imagery, web manifestos, evangelization to the corporate sector, the downfall of the “Evil Empire” (a.k.a. Microsoft), grass roots revolution, consumer choice and rights, community good, true market competition, DIY (Do it Yourself) culture, science as a public good, hacker cultural acceptance, functional superiority, and anti-Communist rhetoric are but a number of the terms, images, and visions promulgated by and attached to the open source community. (quoted in Couros, 2008, June 13)

The metaphor articulated a shift in work culture. As Gardner Campbel states: “[In the future] you [will] come into a workplace and it’s not just here’s your workplace, here’s your set of tasks, do them over and over until you find another job, you quit, or you retire. It may be that the workplace becomes... another kind of learning community” (Howard, Veerman, et al., 2010, March 19). Edupunk captures a culture of workers who not only go to work and do their jobs, but also are passionate about what they do and promote change within their fields. Edupunk attempts to inscribe the common identity of many edtech bloggers who work in education technology departments at universities and colleges, as well as those in the edtech public sphere who research, write, and discuss issues related to education technology in their time “off work.” This research, writing, and discussions constitute forums that are not simply manuals for the “best” education technology, but discursive spaces where individuals engage with a variety of people (not only in their field) about various topics – sharing course information and structure, debating about the future of education technology, discussing pedagogy – but also doing this in a fun and engaging way through text, video, mashups, et cetera.
Edupunk is a call to form a new pedagogical culture: one that advocates not only for increased student participation in learning, but also for increased teacher participation. In a sense, Edupunk calls for teachers and students to “discover their own power” (Marcus, p.37) just as punk rockers did. This form of countercultural approach to change implies a rejection of the current system and individuals enacting this rejection by actions in the world. In this respect, the metaphorical culture of Edupunk culture captures calls for change to come through the individual – not through the top-down institutional provisions.

Conclusion

When first engaging with the term Edupunk, bloggers clearly had a series of emotionally charged reactions. Individual reactions to Edupunk exemplified the ways in which people are moved by affects. While rational debate is often seen as the only way to make an argument, world making is not simply the product of rational debate but also the affective pulls of bodily affects. Edtech bloggers expressed their connection (and disconnection) to Edupunk. While punk isn’t a cultural identity all edtech-ers identified with, it depicts a kind of emotive force and sense of connection to others that one feels through an engagement with a counterculture formation that clearly still elicits a psychodynamics of identification.

The punk metaphor categorizes DIY education as rebellious and an alternative to the dominant educational practice. This both served and worked against the metaphor. The punk metaphor served to form a common identity amongst some educators, infused with the emotive power of punk. Yet as the above discussion has illustrated, the frictions and connections between cultures, pop up in moments, and are felt through affect:

Shifting forms of commonality and difference are wedged into daily interactions. There are hard lines of connection and disconnection and lighter, momentary affinities and
around everything and anything at all: mall culture, car culture, subway culture, all the
teams and clubs and organizations…addictions of all kinds, diseases of all kinds, crimes,
grief of all kinds, mistakes, wacky ideas. There are scenes of shared experiences… But
everyone knows there’s something not quite right. (Stewart, p.42)

It is no surprise then that for some of those responding to the use of the punk metaphor, DIY
educators were rendered as part of a fringe group rather than at the forefront of transforming
educational practice. The construction of difference (locating one as being outside of the
dominant sphere of education technology) may inhibit the political significance of Edupunk and
how those who embrace it can make change if they are not willing to interact with the ‘dominant
sphere.’

Edupunk brought into focus similarities and differences between educators and how they
do education. Educational practice is not neutral, objective, and non-political as it is commonly
depicted. Edupunk echoes a democratic education or critical pedagogy perspective that education
should teach individuals to participate in the public sphere. Paulo Freire writes: “Democracy and
democratic education are founded on faith in men, on the belief that they not only can but should
discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of
democracy itself” (Freire 2005, p.33). Drawing from Freire, Thompson writes:

There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an
instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the
logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or, it becomes the “practice
of freedom”- the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with
reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Thompson in
Mayo 1999, p.5)

The Edupunk metaphor creatively presents this question of the transmission of generational
knowledge. While educators are commonly depicted as passing down the ‘dominant’ culture to
their students, Edupunk provide an image of educators passing down an alternative cultural
knowledge, teaching students to “deal critically and creatively with reality” in order to learn how to transform their world.

The metaphor brought to question not only readers’ views about education, but also the interconnections between culture and education, work and creativity, and the establishment and anti-establishment movements. The term propelled an array of thoughts and considerations: from viewpoints on corporate LMSs, to one’s relationship to counterculture, to thoughts on organizing and ideas on workplace culture. The term is not significant because it is a new idea; it is significant because of its affects – catapulting individuals into new ways of thinking (and doing).

Building on cultural memory, Edupunk has an affective and emotional pull that provoked interest and debate. Edupunk is not about the metaphor; it’s about the spaces of creativity and potential worlds its open up:

The affective subject is a collection of trajectories and circuits. You can recognize it through fragments of past moments glimpsed unsteadily in the light of the present like the flickering light of a candle. Or project it into some kind of track to follow. Or inhabit it as a pattern you find yourself already caught up in (again) and there’s nothing you can do about it now. (Stewart, p.59)

Edupunk captures a moment that brought forth dreams and nightmares about how to transform the education system and what the future of education could be like.

In the next chapter, I consider the role of moments in world making. While cultures (and subcultures) are traditionally taken up as distinct systems, Greil Marcus provides a different perspective: Culture is merely a constitution of moments. In the next chapter, I look at some theoretical approaches for understanding culture and counterculture. To begin, I discuss the definition of ‘subculture’ in opposition to ‘culture’, drawing from the work of Emile Durkheim’s definition of collective conscience. Next, I discuss Dick Hebdige’s articulation of punk rock and
Chapter Two
Countercultural Moments

Introduction

Edupunk brought forth various interpretations of punk from individuals’ memories and understandings of punk. Rather than having single meaning, bloggers unpacking the metaphor drew from different moments in punk and had conflicting feelings towards and images of punk. For example, Gardner Campbell argues that ‘punk’ encourages the destruction of the system without a plan for reconstruction. He states: “There is a concern that I have, that the energy of the word ‘punk’ can turn negative in ways that are not going to help us build...I just want be able to build something so that were not just looking at each other once everything is in pieces on the ground and saying ‘well now what?’” (Howard, Veerman, et al., 2010, March 29). However, other bloggers depicted punk as being constructive and DIY-focused. In his blog “Open Thinking: Rants & Resources from an Open Educator,” Alex Couros recalls:

> When it came to course design, this is how I felt. I didn’t have the skills to begin with, but the more I pushed myself, the better I became. I learned, discovered my art, had fun, and witnessed my students learn along with me. And this I discovered in bands like the Ramones, where none of the members were talented in any technical sense, but the band was able to influence the music scene and forever change the world.” (Couros, 2008, June 13)

These two comments provide contradictory accounts of punk, and yet both represent common depictions. This contradiction raises the question of how to more clearly define culture than by its common definition of homogeneity. Leading from this, this chapter looks at the questions: what is culture, subculture, and counterculture? This provides insight into the countercultural metaphor of Edupunk, and the role of (counter)culture in world making.
I begin with Emile Durkheim’s work on culture because he exemplifies the dichotomous mainstream/alternative distinction that is common in discussions of cultural production. Durkheim argues that the maintenance of social order is constituted through shared culture. While shared culture provides a common or commonality to serve as a basis for social cohesion, Durkheim’s claim that common culture needs to be reproduced to maintain a commonality to unite individuals refuses to recognize the implications of restricting the range of what is seen as legitimate forms of cultural production.

Moving away from Durkheim’s definition of culture, this chapter will explore Dick Hebdige and Greil Marcus’ work on counterculture. I include Hebdige’s work *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* because the conversations coming from the discussion of the usefulness of Edupunk as a metaphor. While Durkheim argues that a common culture maintains social cohesion, Hebdige argues that alternative culture disrupts the “normalization” of a dominant culture. The problem with this framework is that it uses the Durkheimian conception of culture as either maintaining or rejecting the dominant culture. To define cultural products as either reproducing or rejecting cultural norms ignores the complexity of cultural production.

As I will show, in *Lipstick Traces*, Marcus’ concern is countercultural ‘moments’ not the exposition of a coherent counterculture. This conceptualization of culture opens up space to ask: what are the linkages and tensions between various countercultural moments if not defined by a particular countercultural grouping? In this chapter, I will use Marcus’ framework for understanding culture to gain insight into how culture affects change.
Defining culture

A commonly used framework for theorizing culture is as a “…particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values, not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behavior. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture” (Williams, 1965 quoted in Hebdige, p.6). In contrast, subculture is often defined as a particular way of life expressive of meaning values that is both a part of and separate from the “dominant” culture. A few definitions of subculture are:

- a group of people with a culture (whether distinct or hidden) which differentiates them from the larger culture to which they belong. (“Subculture”, 2010, October 25)
- the ideas, art, and way of life of a group of people within a society which are different from the ideas, art, and way of life of the rest of society. (English Collins Dictionary, 2010)
- an identifiably separate social group within a larger culture, especially one regarded as existing outside mainstream society. (Encarta World English Dictionary, 2009). (all italics are my emphasis)

What do these definitions say about the relationship between culture and subculture? Subculture is a coherent but “distinct,” “hidden,” “different,” “separate,” and “outside” of an assumed homogeneous “dominant” culture. The concept of subculture comes into existence through its polarization to a dominant culture, and is defined by its perceived difference from the dominant culture. John Yinger (1960) writes: “[Subculture] has been used as an ad hoc concept whenever a writer wished to emphasize that normative aspects of behavior that differed from some general standard” (quoted in Jenks 2005, p.9). Subculture is therefore difficult to talk about without some reference to its different from the normative framing which gives it substance.
Subculture assumes an existence of a dominant culture that exists over and against subcultures, the marginalized cultures which stand in opposition to or outside of it. The concept supposes the majority of citizens who subscribe to dominant culture, acting as one mind, one body – one set of beliefs, behaviour patterns, aesthetic taste, et cetera. Hebert Spencer, a precursor to the structural functionalist tradition, coined this analogy. Spencer saw the various aspects of society – norms, customs, traditions, and institutions – as interrelated parts, like organs working together for the proper functioning of the body as a whole (Jones 1986).

Collective Conscience

Following from Spencer’s premise, Emile Durkheim sought to understand how societies maintain internal stability by studying social facts. As a foundation for his sociological framework, he emphasized the importance of strong centralized institutions to maintain social cohesion. Durkheim states: “Certain moral ideas became united with certain religious ideas to such an extent as to become indistinct from them…In a word, we must discover the rational substitutes for those religious notions that for a long time have served as the vehicle for the most essential ideas” (1925/1961, p.8-9). In turn, Durkheim argues that sociologists are needed to study, observe, and explain morality as distinct from religious morality. While morality could be found within various religious traditions, it was the role of the sociologist to study moral norms in order to discover a secular morality that individuals of various religious traditions, living within a single nation, could agree upon. The social being, or collective conscience, was to replace God as the moral authority (Dill, 2007, p.227).

Durkheim argued for this approach for the study of all social facts, understood as the values, cultural norms, and social structures that are coercive of and exist external to the individual (Ritzer, p.179). In one of defining texts of sociological theory he writes:
Sociological method as we practice it rests wholly on the basic principle that social facts must be studied as things, that is, as realities external to the individual. There is no principle for which we have received more criticism; but none is more fundamental. Indubitably for sociology to be possible, it must above all have an object all its own. (1897/1952, p.37-8)

Durkheim argues that the shared beliefs and moral attitudes within a society act as a unifying force within society, which he calls collective conscience (Jary & Jary 2005, p.93). The collective conscience is: “The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society that form a determinate system which has its own life.” This he called “the collective or common conscience…It is, thus, an entirely different thing from particular consciences…” (1893/1964, p.79-80). For Durkheim, morality is developed through individual self-restraint and the submission of the individual to society. The individual and society merge together in each individual: we have personal interests as the product of our mental states and we have collective interests that are connected to the system of ideas, sentiments, and practices of the group to which we belong (Dill, 2007, p.229). Collective conscience, then, is the realization and submission of our selves to this group.

Conversely, Durkheim posited that anomie, the lack of social cohesion or control, causes social instability. This instability is the result of citizens seeking out their individual interests over collective interests (Jenks, p.34). The concept of subculture is a fusion of contradictions: both a part of and distinct from culture. It is an expression of group interests derived from

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2 Durkheim use of the term ‘average citizens’ follows from his argument that sociologists should report on the ‘social facts’ of a society. For Durkheim, commonalities amongst the majority of citizens is the basis for his idea of national cohesion. However, this ‘average’ assumes that a common among citizenry does exist, and fails to recognize how reporting on supposed ‘averages’ excludes the reporting on the diversity amongst citizens, the problems of determining who is the ‘average,’ and how ‘averages’ may shift over time.
individualism and a source of anomie, but also provides a collective space for cultural expression outside of dominant cultural norms.

Hebdige and the Meaning of Style

Following Durkheim’s theoretical logic, cultural theorist Dick Hebdige argues that subcultures can subvert hegemony through opposition to the dominant culture. This is the primary theme of his work *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1988), one of the most well known interpretations of punk style. In the text, he writes:

> Style in subculture is, then, pregnant with significance. Its transformations go ‘against nature’, interrupting the process of ‘normalization’. As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the ‘silent majority’, which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus. Our task becomes […] to discern the hidden messages inscribed in code on the glossy surfaces of style, to trace them out as ‘maps of meaning’ which obscurely re-present the very contradictions they are designed to resolve or conceal (p.18).

For Hebdige, “[s]ubcultures represent ‘noise’ (as opposed to sound), interference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media…We should therefore not underestimate the signifying power of the spectacular subculture not only as a metaphor for potential anarchy ‘out there’ but as an actual mechanism of semantic disorder: a kind of temporary blockage in the system of representation” (p.90). Hebdige suggests that subcultural spectacles cause reverberation for the practice of dominant culture in the ordinary and everyday. Hegemony is “not universal and ‘given’ to the continuing rule of a particular class. It has to be won, reproduced, sustained” consistently. In turn, the consensus can be fractured, challenged, overruled (p.16).

Hebdige’s discussion of subculture follows from Durkheim’s formulation in that subcultures are distinct from culture. For both, subculture is a disruption to the norms of
everyday life. But in these two viewpoints, the connotation of this disruption differs. For Durkheim, subculture is anomie – the lack of social norms that leads to societal lack of cohesion. For Hebdige, subculture is read as ‘noise’ by a dominant culture and hence offers a valuable disruption in the orderly sequence of things that holds political potential. These theorists, and the many other theorists whose writings followed from Durkheim and Hebdige, have focused their work on the dichotomy of mainstream/alternative culture. In turn, neither subculture nor mainstream culture can escape the dichotomies of logic of their definitions. The definitions assume that mainstream and alternative cultures actually exist, and are in opposition to each other. Hebdige treats subcultures as homogeneous entities; studied within a fixed temporal and geographical framework (Mattelart & Neveu 1996, p.25). As will become evident, this approach ignores the inherent change, contradictions, and multiplicity within all cultures and subcultures.

Countercultural Genealogy

In Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century (1989), Greil Marcus presents an assemblage of moments – events taken from across time and place – found, cut, and pasted. In this respect he offers a non-linear way to rewrite countercultural history. The book begins as a historical narrative of the punk rock group The Sex Pistols, but soon turns into a journey across space and time, far from where The Sex Pistols began. Marcus builds an archive of previously unexamined and untranslated essays, manifestos, and filmscripts, old photographs, dada poems, punk songs, collages, and classic texts, unveiling a tradition of shared utopias, refusals, and demands. He takes artifacts from across movements, such as French Situationism, Anabaptistism, and punk rock, to write and rewrite history, tracing the links between the movements. Like punk collage, Marcus anachronistically put familiar objects into unfamiliar relationships – changing meaning by shifting context. It’s a montage of cultural critique – where
Dadaists leave off, the Sex Pistols appear, and Marx picks up the conversation again. He offers a dialectical of ideas that have never come in contact before. The book trails a common voice of cultural negation that makes an appearance throughout history.

Marcus’ collage suggests a lineage previously ignored – that all these moments, which are separated by period and geographical location in historical study share similarities that cannot be easily explained or disregarded by conventional notions of history. Just as the similar forms of domination and institutional hierarchies appear time and time again, “only in different garbs and ever more cunning disguises” (Newman 2001, p.1), resistance movements appear again and again, using slightly different tactics but maintaining some of their roots. Yet Marcus refuses to collapse these movements into each other. He writes:

The question of ancestry in culture is spurious. Every new manifestation in culture rewrites the past, changes old maudits into new heroes, old heroes into those who should have never been born. New actors scavenge the past for ancestors [not as equivalents] but as familiars” (1989, p.21).

Marcus found himself “caught in something that was less a matter of cultural genealogy, of tracing a line between pieces found in a story, than of making the story up… It is not so much an argument about the way the past makes the present as it is a way of suggesting that the entanglement of now and then is fundamentally a mystery” (p.22-3).

This lineage is significant for analyzing Edupunk for two reasons. First, it suggests that the demands that punk or Edupunk are making are not completely new, nor can they be reduced to ill-conceived tirades against authority. If they are perceived to speak through a familiar voice, it is because the collective juxtaposition of these expressions say much more than their reductive theorization as practices of resistance. To argue that using punk as a metaphor will lead to
“anarchy in the classroom” (Bergeron, 2008, June 6) or that the metaphor represents “adolescent narcissism, anger, willful non-conformity, sanctimony, and tirades against authority” (Carroll, 2008, June 1), reduces the creative potential of the metaphor, ignoring the vast number of interpretations that can be made of punk, and therefore, the imaginative potential of the metaphor. Countercultural moments contribute to world making in that they are connected to other moments and always have the potential to reappear in new forms.

**Negating the Existing Order**

At the root of every countercultural moment is an act of negation – a denial of existing order. This negation is a critique of the hegemonic order and the everyday practices that hold up that order. Marcus explains:

> The desire is patent and simple, but it inscribes a story that is infinitely complex – as complex as the interplay of the everyday gestures that describes the way the world already works. The desire begins with the demand to live not as an object but as a subject of history – to live as if something actually depended on one’s actions – and that demand opens onto a free street. Damning God and the state, work and leisure, home and family, sex and play, the audience and itself, the music briefly made it possible to experience all those things as if they were not natural facts but ideological constructs: things that had been made and therefore could be altered, or done away with altogether. It became possible to see those things as bad jokes, and for the music to come forth as a better joke. (p.6)

Negation explores the relationship between what is and what could be. A moment of cultural negation calls on the individual to evaluate the problems and injustices of the current system, and try to change the ways to act in order to negate the system (hegemonic order) and the underlying philosophies and practices upholding that system (hegemony).

Negation is an important aspect of resistance, but it is limited by the fact that the emotive power of rejecting the existing system does not necessarily lead to constructive action or building
Stephen Duncombe writes: “By looking for cultural and individual solutions for what are essentially structural and societal problems, and locked into the contradiction of being wed to the society it hates, the [countercultural] underground inevitably fails” (1997, p.194). Thus in Duncombe’s view, while the approach focuses on individual empowerment and cultural change, institutional changes are still necessary for fundamental changes in the education system to be made. However, Marcus’ argument suggests that moments of negation may be important in themselves – in how they articulate human desire and how they connect to other historical moments of this articulation.

Groom’s introduction of Edupunk negates the monopoly of corporate LMSs in online course content, and teachers “transmitting” their knowledge to students, rather than teachers and students engaging in dialectic education and creating together. The text captures a particular moment when Blackboard is implementing web 2.0 technologies in its design (and claiming the web 2.0 as its own). In this sense, Groom’s blog post was reactionary, but through his creative play of language, the term helped gain the attention of a larger community and from those conversations, the term inspired and expanded the conversation beyond critiquing Blackboard. The moment inspired a number of individuals by presenting a new way to think about education and what it means to be an educator.

Moments as World Making

In Marcus’ approach, he doesn’t seek to describe particular countercultures, but looks at particular moments that negate the established order. Using this approach, he links moments of countercultural negation from various times and places. How can Edupunk be understood as a linking moment (or a series of moments) rather than a coherent, well defined counterculture, which describes the values and norms of a particular group? This approach is actually advocated
by Groom in the video “Edupunk: Battle Royale.” As Groom describes it, the introduction of Edupunk was a “zeitgeist moment,” but “it could just be the moment that it was then let it go” (2009, February 23). If countercultures are taken up as an ephemeral series of moments, as in Marcus’ work, then it becomes clear that the unification of these moments through what is name “counterculture” is itself a fiction.

Moments do not just come and go. It is a contingent force at a particular moment in time that is connected to and builds on previous moments. While countercultures are often articulated as fads (that come and go without significant impact), cultural moments need to be viewed through their historical trace. Durkheimian-inflected cultural studies primarily takes up counterculture as norms and values; but this way of understanding counterculture ignores the contradictions and changes that occur within a counterculture, as well as the fact that what gets included or excluded in a so-called counterculture is in the hands of the theoretical attuned voyeur/author. Looking at various moments of countercultural practices unveils the fact that one moment is likely very different from the next; and the same norms and values are not necessarily being articulated in each moment that can be defined as part of a particular counterculture.

Acting out similar moments again and again proves even more limiting; in that countercultures can become just as boring, repetitive, and uncritical as the dominant cultures which they are fighting against. As Dick Hebdige writes in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*: “Like Andre Breton’s Dada, punk might seem to ‘open all the doors’ but these doors ‘gave onto a circular corridor’ ” (p.65). In this way, countercultures are limited, because they tend to produce repetition and mimicry through the reproduction of cultural expression. But if countercultures are lived as moments, not trying to reproduce past moments, but willing to be self-critical and try new things, then something else can happen. Then, it is no longer limited to
the confines of its own identity: punk, Dada, 60s counterculture, the Situationists, or its own rationale. As Isabelle Ancombe argued in 1978: “Punk must be willing to reject itself as it becomes established, to be open to exchange and to forgo the profits” (Marcus, p.197).

As moments, it can be hoped that counterculture will live again (and history tells us that it will). Countercultural moments negate the existing order; they are not ends in themselves. In 1975, John Berger wrote: “The revolutionary hopes of the 1960s, which culminated in 1968 are now blocked or abandoned. One day they will break out again, transformed, and be lived again with different results” (p.32-3). As an aboveground group, The Sex Pistols only lasted a little longer than nine months, and yet the group is a cultural icon. Marcus asks: “[I]s it a mistake to confuse the Sex Pistols’ moment with a major event in history – and what is history anyway? Is history simply a matter of events that leave behind those things that can be weighed and measured – new institutions, new maps, new rulers, new winners and losers – or is it also the result of moments that seem to leave nothing behind, nothing but the mystery of spectral connections between people long separated by place and time, but somehow speaking the same language?” (p.4).

Moments of cultural negation contradict the established norms; and they can show new ways of doing things and visions of possible futures. However, they do not necessarily lead to organizing for structural changes. If Jim Groom’s blog post and the responses to it is taken for what it is: moment where the dominant order of corporate rule in the classroom is negated and debated, a moment of vision, a moment of inspiration (for many) and a moment of desperation (for many others) – then it leaves room for and encourages the fact that many more moments are necessary to make change. The moment contributes to this change by providing a critique of the system and providing a vision of how the individual can personally make change. While the
moment does not ignite structural change itself, it does work to negate the present and imagine a future. “[I]f we wish to work for change, we cannot move in directions we do not see. We cannot work for a future we have not imagined” (Jakober in Easton & Schroeder 2008, p.30).

**Conclusion**

*“Da cosa nasce cosa. One thing leads to another.”*  
– Bruno Munari

Marcus’ fragmentary historiography provides a new understanding of culture that can provide new depth to the Edupunk metaphor. He takes countercultural moments out of their geographical and temporal contexts, to argue against the idea of countercultures as homogeneous entities defined by temporal and geographical space. He argues that moments negate the existing order and in doing so, open up the possibility of something new to emerge. As Marcus writes: Just as punk rock damned “God and the state, work and leisure, home and family, sex and play, the audience and itself,” moments of cultural negation make it “possible to experience all those things as if they were not natural facts but ideological constructs: things that had been made and therefore could be altered, or done away with” (p.6). In turn, moments of cultural negation affectively reveal the ‘un-naturalness’ of the everyday.

While moments of negation are often constructed as not having impact on world making, or simply as a disruption to norms (as in Durkheim and Hebdige), these moments pull us through their affective influences. Hebdige argued that subcultures create “noise,” and Durkheim argued that without collective conscience a society experiences anomie. However, neither of these explanations express the complexity and variety of impacts. Jim Groom’s declaration of education as ‘punk’ and its responses had the elements of a countercultural moment. This moment had various impacts and reactions, not all of which can be known. These impacts cannot
be categorized simply as “noise” or “anomie.” But rather, Marcus’ analysis mystifies the connections between moments.

It remains indeterminate as to how moments will reappear through other moments in the future. There is always potentiality in where moments may lead us, because moments create affects that pull on us and transform our thoughts. In The Affect Theory Reader, Stewart writes: “Affect matters in a world that is always promising and threatening to amount to something. Fractally complex, there is no telling what will come of it or where it will take persons attuned” (Gregg & Seigworth, p.340). Moments take us into trajectories unknown.

In Chapter Three, I explore how moments are products of collective making and interpretation. To provide a framework in which individuals are recognized as having the power to make change, I discuss Michael Warner’s Publics and Counterpublics (2002), and Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s Empire (2000) and Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire (2004).
Chapter Three
Beyond the Metaphor

Introduction

The introduction of Edupunk marked a pivotal point in expansion of the edtech public. It ignited a great amount of dialogue amongst blog readers and writers that was previously unmatched in the educational technology “community.” It was a point of convergence, where participants – many who already had been engaging in conversations about the role of and resistance to corporate educational technologies – discussed the question of how to frame the movement. Further, the term struck a cord with people who were previously outside of the edtech public. The term gained exposure in various venues of readership: news, blogs, podcasts, and a book on the subject, *DIY U: Edupunks, Edupreneurs, and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education* by Anya Kamanetz (2010).

Edupunk put a label on and brought attention to a variety of exciting projects popping up in higher education. For example, since the introduction of Edupunk, Jim Groom has been teaching *Introduction to Digital Storytelling* or ds106 (Groom, n.d.). The course is an open online course, where University of Mary Washington students can enroll in the course for credit, and others can enroll in the course for free without credit. Each student maintains a blog and posts daily photos on Flickr, as well as comment on each other projects, collaborate hosting the ds106 radio station, and create a variety of storytelling projects throughout the term using various mediums (audio, video, images, and text). Edupunk brings to light the multitude of websites hosting free course content, such as MIT OpenCourseWare, and the various ways in which individuals are doing self-directed education. Despite the corporatization and rising costs
of education, the increasing free, online course content posits an objection to and brings to question education as a capital venture. This chapter reviews the question: How did a conversation about Edupunk in the edtech blogosphere transform into a larger conversations about education and its conditions of possibility?

**Multitude**

To understand the public making of Edupunk, I use the works *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2004), Hardt and Negri outline the new global power, Empire. They state:

> The boundaries defined by the modern system of nation-states were fundamental to European colonialism and economic expansion: the territorial boundaries of the nation delimited the centre of power from which rule was exerted over external foreign territories through a system of channels and barriers that alternatively facilitated and obstructed the flows of production and circulation... In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries. It is *decentred* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. (p.xii)

This lack of boundaries means that Empire’s rule has no limits. First, it encompasses spatial totality: ruling the “civilized” worlds without territorial boundaries. Second, Empire represents itself as without temporal boundaries - a rule for eternity. And finally, they suggest that “the rule of Empire operates on all registers of the social order extending down to the depths of the social world. Empire not only manages a territory and a population but also creates the very world it inhabits” (p.xiii). Empire is a biopower that “regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and rearticulating it. Power is thus expressed as a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousness and bodies of the population – and at the time across the entirety of social relations” (2004, p.23-24). It is presented as force “in the service of right and peace” (p.15).
Citing Michel Foucault, Negri and Hardt argue that control is conducted not only through consciousness or ideology, but also in the body and with the body (p.27). Here they explain how subjectivity is produced within the institutions of Empire:

Two aspects of this production process should be highlighted. First, subjectivity is a constant process of generation. When the boss hails you on the shop floor, or the high school principal hails you in the school corridor, a subjectivity is formed. The material practices set out for the subject in the context of the institution (be kneeling down to pray or changing hundreds of diapers) are the production processes of subjectivity in a reflexive way, then, though its own actions, the subject is acted on, generated. Second, the institutions provide above all a discrete place (the home, the chapel, the classroom, the shop floor) where the production of subjectivity is enacted. The various institutions of modern society should be viewed as an archipelago of factories of subjectivity. In the course of life, an individual passes linearly into and out of these various institutions (from the school to the barracks to the factory) and is formed by them. The relation between the inside and the outside is fundamental. (2000, p.195)

In a totalized world governed by Empire, it seems that individual power is lost, or perhaps never existed. But Negri and Hardt suggest the combatant against Empire is also present within Empire: the multitude.

The multitude, according to Negri and Hardt, is “a multiplicity, a plane of singularities, an open set of relations, which is not homogeneous or identical with itself and bears an indistinct, inclusive relation to those outside of it” (p.103). It suggests that individuals are able to find a commonality through communication rather than through a passive sense of sameness. The goal of democracy in this case is not consensus, but a process of ongoing political formation based relations of similarity and difference. Multitude provides a bottom-up approach to politics, in which it is unveiled that we are creative forces in changing the world. There are two faces of globalization:

On one face, Empire spreads globally its networks of hierarchies and divisions that maintain order through new mechanisms of control and constant conflict. Globalization,
However, is also the creation of new circuits of cooperation and collaboration that stretch across nations and continents and allow an unlimited number of encounters. This second face of globalization is not a matter of everyone in the world becoming the same; rather it provides the possibility that, while remaining different, we discover the commonality that enables us to communicate and act together. The multitude too might thus be conceived as a network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that provides the means of encounter so that we can work and live in common. (2004, p.xiii)

While Empire tries to cast the multitude as the People, pushing towards a common identity, homogeneity, and having one will (p.103), the multitude, instead, is defined by its relations of similarity and difference; the network only finds commonality through the communication of such. Negri and Hardt write: “The common we share, in fact, is not so much discovered as it is produced… Our communication, collaboration, and cooperation are not only based on the common, but they in turn produce the common in an expanding spiral relationship” (p.xv). The common, in this sense, is not a common based on identity as articulated by Durkheim, but a common is founded on communication and language itself.

The way that language was used to form a common in the case of Edupunk provides an example of this. Edupunk connected people through a conversation in which people produced a common marked by agreement and dissent. It was not an agreement on the use of the term that created a common but the conversation about the term itself put people in conversation with one another with the consequent production of a common. Individuals who felt an identity connection to Edupunk and individuals who disagreed with term were connected through this common. The commonality of the multitude is not founded on consensus, but is founded on debate and disagreement.

One good model for understanding the multitude is The Internet. The various nodes remain different but also are all connected. The network has no external boundaries; new nodes
and new relationships can always be added (p.xv). How can an ever expanding and multi-nodal network arrive at a decision? Negri and Hardt use the model of brain functioning described by neurobiologists:

The brain does not decide through the dictation of some center of command. Its decision is the common disposition or configuration of the entire neural network in communication with the body as a whole and its environment. A single decision is produced by a multitude in the brain and body. (p.338-9)

The multitude produces cooperation, communication, and social relationships; the multitude “not only demands an open and inclusive democratic global society, but also provides the means for achieving it” (2004, p.xi).

Negri and Hardt have contested the various criticisms directed against their thesis. The first objection is that without a central leadership (or a party), the multitude appears to be anarchistic. However, their argument for the power of creative and collaborative efforts of individuals is not an argument for statelessness. They argue that the multitude is created in communication, not anarchism or spontaneous collaboration of singular social subjects: “Like the formation of habits, or performativity or the development of languages, this production of the common is neither directed by some central point of command and intelligence nor is the result of spontaneous harmony among individuals, but rather it emerges in the space between, in the social space of communication. The multitude is created in collaborative social interactions” (2000, p.222).

The second objection is that the multitude appears unrealistic and utopian. However, they state:
We have taken pains to argue that the multitude is not merely some abstract, impossible dream detached from our present reality but rather that the concrete conditions for the multitude are in the process of formation in our social world and that possibility of the multitude is emerging from that tendency. That said, it is important always to remember that another world is possible, a better, more democratic world, and to foster our desire for such a world. Multitude is an emblem for that desire. (p.227)

In other words, the multitude is not a concrete plan of action. Rather, it is a projected formation based on Hardt and Negri’s analysis of conditions now emergent in globalization. Through the multitude, they are trying “to work out the conceptual bases on which a new project for democracy can stand” (p.328).

The Public Sphere

Negri and Hardt state that the commonality of the multitude is founded and continuously produced through communication. However, they do not provide an understanding of how this communication network works. Michael Warner’s *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002) provides a full description of how publics communicate, thereby providing further explanation for how the multitude operates. Publics are constituted of individuals brought into a relationship with one another through their engagement with the same or related “texts” (which might take the form of exhibitions, videos, podcasts, TV shows, sports events, performances, et cetera). Taken together Warner’s concept of publics and Negri and Hardt’s notion of multitude provide a framework for understanding the dance of individual and collective power in making social and political change through moments, texts, and communication.

Warner defines ‘public’ is not the conventional sense of the term of a social totality, as in ‘The public,’ or ‘a public’ in the sense of a concrete audience or crowd witnessing an event, but rather as that entity a formed through communication regarding one or more “texts” and their
circulation (p.14). While the distinctions between the three types of publics are not always clear, Warner outlines what he means by a textually based public, through seven main features:

1. “A public is self-organized.”
2. “A public is a relation among strangers.”
3. “The address of public speech is both personal and impersonal.”
4. “A public is constituted through mere attention.”
5. “A public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse.”
6. “Publics act historically according to the temporality of their circulation.”
7. “A public is poetic world making.” (p.67-114)

First, a public is self-organized, in the sense that the discourse is organized by nothing other than the discourse itself. As long as books are published, websites posted, shows broadcast, and the like, publics exist; because publics exist by virtue of being addressed (p.67). Texts – written, as well as visual and audio texts – are read (seen, heard) by people at different times and at different places by otherwise unrelated people. By engaging with a text, people are engaging in a public. Warner writes: “Speaking, writing, and thinking involve us – actively and immediately – in a public” (p.69). Publics are elusive, yet powerful, because they unite otherwise unrelated people – providing a sense of belonging, without the assumption of sameness. Personal identity does not in itself make one part of a public; belonging to a public is not a permanent state of being, but happens through participation – paying attention is enough to make you a member (p.71).

Second, a public is a relation among strangers. Addressing a public is reaching out to strangers. Since one cannot know everyone personally within a public, strangerhood is “the necessary medium of commonality” (p.75). Publics are not made up of individuals of a particular cultural or social group. While this type of grouping may be associated with a public, publics are
not founded on identity. Strangers are brought together based on participation, rather than a perceived ‘sameness’ (p.75).

Third, the address of public ‘speech,’ which includes writing and the posting of images, is both personal and impersonal. Warner continues:

Public speech can have great urgency and intimate import. Yet we know that is was addressed not exactly to us, but to the stranger we were until the moment we happened to be addressed by it… To inhabit public discourse is to perform this transition continually, and to some extent it remains present to consciousness. Public speech must be taken in two ways: as addressed to us and as addressed to strangers. The benefit in this practice is that it gives a general social relevance to private thought and life. Our subjectivity is understood as having resonance with others, and immediately so. (p.76)

With public speech, we may recognize ourselves as addressees and/or recognize public relevance to our private life and identities, but public speech does not address us on the basis of our identity. We are part of a public by virtue of participation alone – a commonality we share with an indefinite number of strangers also engaging in a public (p.78).

Fourth, a public is constituted through mere attention. Warner writes: “If you are reading this, or hearing it or seeing it or present for it, you are part of this public” (p.87). It is not a question of the quality of attention, but rather active uptake that puts you in relation to others. Therefore, a public is not a timeless belonging, but has a free, voluntary, and active membership. However, one text alone cannot constitute a public; publics are necessarily intertextual. Warner writes: Unlike a nation, which one is a part of regardless of “being awake or sleep,” “sober or drunk,” “alert or comatose,” being part of a public is not a timeless belonging but something that one must engage in through attention (p.89).
Fifth, a public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse. This means that no single text, no single voice, no single genre, or medium can create a public; they are insufficient in creating the kind of reflexivity that is necessary for a public (p.90). Anything that addresses a public is meant to undergo circulation (p.91).

Sixth, publics act historically according to the temporality of their circulation. Warner writes:

Publics have an ongoing life: one doesn’t publish to them once for all… It is the way texts circulate, and become the basis for further representations, that convinces us that publics have activity and duration. A text, to have a public, must continue to circulation through time, and because this can only be confirmed through an intertextual environment of citation and implication, all publics are intertextual, even intergeneric (p.97).

And seventh, a public is a poetic world making. By promising to address anybody, publics commit, in principle, to the possible participation of any stranger (p.114). Publics constitute poetic world making by shaping individuals’ perspectives and constituting understandings of society. Publics use the ‘poetic-expressive dimensions’ of language, visual effects, and other aspects of representation (Fraser 2006, p.157).

The Edtech Public

Edupunk exemplifies the poetic world making described by Warner in Publics and Counterpublics. Edupunk is the poetic construction of a metaphor for Groom’s own edtech identity and understanding of the edtech public. This poetic world making inspired a discussion of various issues in the edtech public and their connections. The edtech “community” can be more accurately defined as a public, because it is a relation amongst strangers, as exemplified by the way in which Groom’s blog post reached many others in cyberspace who were previously
“strangers” to each other. It is the relation amongst strangers that enabled Edupunk to grow and go off into various trajectories. The edtech public is not centred on a single text, but a host of “texts” in the form of blogs, videos, and books.

From Groom’s perspective, the edtech “community” is a counterpublic, at least in Warner’s sense of the term. As Warner states, a counterpublic, “against the background of the public sphere, enables a horizon of opinion and exchange;” in contrast to publics, “its exchanges remain distinct from authority and can have a critical relation to power…[thus]… Counterpublics are, by definition, formed by their conflict with the norms and contexts of their cultural environment, and this context of domination inevitably entails distortion” (p.56). Unlike subcultures, which are based on a precise demography, counterpublics are “meditated by print, theater, diffuse networks of talk, commerce, and the like.” Therefore, since it is a relation amongst strangers, unlike subculture, “[a counterpublic’s] extent is in principle indefinite” (p.56).

Warner makes a distinction between ‘publics’ and ‘counterpublics’ to highlight a public’s relationship to the dominant power:

Public opinion is not the adequate term for these alternative networks of expression born in resistance because, as we have seen, in the traditional conceptions of public opinion tends to present either a neutral space of individual expression or a unified social whole – or a mediated combination of these two poles. We can only understand these forms of social expression as networks of the multitude that resists the dominant power and manage from within it to produce alternative expressions. (Warner, p.263)

This distinction by Warner echoes the conception of power as Negri and Hardt. For Warner, it is the multitude that resists the dominant power.
The Multitude in the Classroom

In both the works of Warner (publics), and Negri and Hardt (multitude), world making is described as a collaborate process amongst individuals. By this definition, Edupunk was not Jim Groom’s creation, but the creation of countless individuals who participated in the discussion. The array of opinions on Edupunk and the various issues it brought up exemplifies the multiplicity of voices represented by the multitude. The conversation did not find consensus, but instead produced a common language to discuss various issues. The conversation began in the edtech blogosphere and quickly expanded to other venues: a write up in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, a book by Anya Kamenetz (and a forthcoming DIY education guide by Kamanetz funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), discussion at various conferences, and news coverage by sources such as *Rabble, The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*.

In *DIY U: How Edupunks, Edupreneurs, and the Coming Transformation of Higher Education*, Kamanetz argues that higher education institutions will soon be forced to change their educational practices (for example, adding more online education classes) and to decrease tuition prices in order to keep up with the competition in the higher education marketplace. Kamanetz reports on a possible trajectory in the trends of higher learning, but she fails to include a critical analysis. Instead, she bypasses Groom’s critique and sees technology as a means to upset traditional hierarchies in education (p.x). In Kamanetz’s neoliberal take on education, DIY education becomes a means to cut public spending and compete in the global marketplace of higher education. She writes:

> The claims we make on behalf of formal education are at times exaggerated. On its own it is no panacea. And there’s a dangerous confusion between ends and means – between growing educational institutions and advancing the cause of learning itself. Yet the power of learning, while mysterious, is real. America can’t remain a global economic powerhouse while it slides to the middle of the heap in education. (p.ix)
Further, she reduces college to “nothing more than an elaborate and expensive mechanism for employers to identify the people who were smarter and harder workers and had all the social advantages in the first place, and those people then get the higher-paying jobs. Now that it’s illegal to discriminate in employment by race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation, judging people by where and how much they went to school is just about the only acceptable form of prejudice left” (p.35). Here, Kamanetz makes a critical point that individuals do not have equitable access to higher learning, and therefore having higher qualifications for a job is a privilege that individuals do not have equitable access to, despite affirmative action laws in the United States. Instead of advocating for accessibility to higher education, she suggests that higher education is merely a mechanism to discriminate against individuals. These arguments show the dark underbelly of where claims for DIY education can lead. If higher education is merely a means to sustain race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation privileges, then why not do away with it? If formal education is merely an unnecessary and expensive means of doing education, then why not implement DIY education as a cheaper means?

Publics are sites of learning founded on collaboration and exchange, where participants discuss, debate, and collaborate in the creation of new ideas and collective directions. This collaborative making and discussion that created Edupunk exemplifies the democratic education it advocates for. It is through the debate and disagreement that the edtech public was able to discuss the term and have it take form. The multitude is the democratic formation of the public sphere, and in the same token, it exemplifies how democratic education works. Negri and Hardt write: “Simply by considering a proposal one gains a new, critical perspective on the global
system. Each proposal, in this sense, is a pedagogical tool. Every person who thinks, ‘That’s a good idea, why can’t we do that?’ learns an important lesson” (2005, p.309).

Conclusion

Moments are public creations that grow and take form through debate and multiplicity of interpretation. Through communication and exchange, we produce and innovate together in networks. The construction of Edupunk was not Jim Groom’s creation, but the creation of countless individuals who participated in making and remaking the metaphor. As exemplified by the multitude, the purpose of the conversation was not to come to consensus, but instead, found ‘a common’ within which to discuss various issues. Through creation within the sphere of the Internet, the conversation developed and expanded by opening itself to those previously “strangers” to each other who were then able to publish their own responses to the discussion. The innovative ‘moment’ of Edpunk was only made possible through the collaborative efforts of individuals, not the genius of one individual. Negri and Hardt state: “If there is an act of genius, it is the genius of the multitude” (2004, p.338). The reflexivity of counterpublics supports the argument that moments take us in trajectories unknown.

Massumi argues that affects can be more constructive than making a ‘critical’ argument which tends to objectify and judge something:

‘Critical’ practices aimed at increasing potentials for freedom and for movement are inadequate, because in order to critique something in any kind of definitive way you have to pin it down. In a way it is an almost sadistic enterprise that separates something out, attributes set characteristics to it, then applies a final judgment to it — objectifies it, in a moralising kind of way. I understand that using a ‘critical method’ is not the same as ‘being critical’. But still I think there is always that moralising undertone to critique. Because of that, I think, it loses contact with other more moving dimensions of experience. It doesn’t allow for other kinds of practices that might not have so much to do with mastery and judgment as with affective connection and abductive participation. (p.220)
Edupunk created a space where educators could discuss educational practice without focus solely on critique, but also the dreams of the future of education without naming one plan of action.

In “Affect, Noise, Silence, Protest: Ambient Citizenship,” Berlant writes: “Public spheres are always affect worlds, worlds to which people are bound, when they are, by affective projections of a constantly negotiated common interestedness” (2009, November 20). Affects enable a common interestedness amongst participants in a public sphere, the starting point by which the multitude can function. Through the multitude, moments fragment the overarching power system. Negri and Hardt’s overall distinction between ‘Empire’ and ‘multitude’ is a top-down or bottom-up approach to power. Affects can combat biopower on the level of embodiment where biopower takes place. Stewart writes: “Power doesn’t just force us down certain paths, it puts the paths in us, so by the time we learn to follow its constraints we’re following ourselves” (p.223).
Conclusion
Moments, Affect, and World making

Almost three years after it was introduced, on February 23rd, 2011, Groom posted a goodbye letter to Edupunk on his blog:

Dear EDUPUNK,

I’m terribly sorry I had to do this through my blog, this is not easy for me at all, honestly. This post may be the last memory we ever share on this blog, but I have to come clean: I’m done with you because I decided to be with your best friend #ds106. I know this is cold, and I’m really sorry. Don’t let it get you all upset inside, we had a good run, and we seemed to respect each others space. I didn’t exploit you, never took your name in vain to make money, never even did a presentation about you—that said you were quite the icebreaker—and you certainly garnered me more attention than I deserved. For a while there I though we really had a future together, but your history of flirting and seducing the neo-liberals who want to dismantle public institutions has been a real turn off. In fact, the last straw has been your indecent exposure in the title of yet another book by Anya Kamanetz that keeps me from being even remotely interested in continuing this relationship with you.

I mean, when did you stop dating journalists and start dating advocates for a mechanized vision of DIY education? You and I had deep institutional roots, and I am still proud to serve the public mission, why have you turned from this vision? I don’t know, EDUPUNK, I’m confused. I know I don’t own you, I know I have to let you go, but damn it… I loved you once! And I have a feeling your new lovers have moved away from any pretense of “reporting the state of education” and into the realm of advocating for a new corporate ed model. What’s more, I’m afraid they might continue to pimp out your good name—so be careful out there—it is a money hungry world. It might seem all fun and good right now, but just wait until they stick you in a cubicle and have you cold calling kids for that much needed education insurance they’ll need when corporations control the educational field. (2011, February 23)

Responding to neoliberal and capitalist interpretations of Edupunk, Groom rejects the metaphor because it has gone into a trajectory he did not intend for it to go: it became a new corporate model for education. Since Edupunk no longer fits his vision of education, he bids farewell to the metaphor.
The moment captures a potential trajectory that bloggers had previously predicted: the commodification of Edupunk. In an earlier blog post, Groom suggests: “[M]aybe Edupunk has to die to be born again in some more radical fashion that resists the all-encompassing logic of capital that refuses to rest until every alternative is subsumed into a potential market for commodification” (2009, August 29). This passage mirrors an argument made by Dylan Clark in *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (2003). He writes:

Perhaps that is one of the greatest secrets of subcultural history: *punk faked its own death*. Gone was the hair, gone was the boutique clothing, gone was the negative rebellion (whatever they do, we’ll do the opposite). Gone was the name. Maybe it had to die, so as to collect its own life insurance. When punk was pronounced dead it bequeathed to its successors – to itself – a new subcultural discourse. The do-it-yourself culture had spawned independent record labels, specialty record stores, and music venues: in these places culture could be produced with less capitalism, more autonomy, and more anonymity. (Muggleton & Weinzierl ed., p.234)

Following from Marcus’ account of counterculture, moments are not isolated but project themselves into other moments, leading to multiple impacts and trajectories. These trajectories show that world making happens in the everyday. The act of moving from one moment to the next moment that allows the impacts of one moment to grow and take form. Returning to Van Alphen’s argument that “art thinks,” it is not the intentions of the creator, but the ways in which moments make us think that influence where moments will take us. Through the multitude, moments get taken up in various ways. Moments influence not only new ways of thinking, but inspire and effect new moments and ways of thinking.

Edupunk unveiled some of the complexities of the interplay of moments and affects in making change. It is through affect that we come to understand how moments arouse the interest of individuals and take them on various paths of thought. It is through affects that we are swayed into new modes of thinking, and it is through these ‘pulls’ or ‘sways’ on the body that social
change is possible. Affects give a sense of urgency, as a way to prepare and alert the body to what it is experiencing. By amplifying our awareness of our biological state, affect has the ability to influence consciousness (Shouse 2005). Silvan Tompkins explains:

The affect mechanism is like the pain mechanism in this respect. If we cut our hand, saw it bleeding, but had no innate pain receptors, we would know we had done something which needed repair, but there would be no urgency to it. Like our automobile which needs a tune-up, we might well let it go until next week when we had more time. But the pain mechanism, like the affect mechanism, so amplifies our awareness of the injury which activates it that we are forced to be concerned, and concerned immediately. (Tomkins 1995, p.88)

Through amplifying our awareness to something, affects can reveal that ‘which needs repair.’ By doing so, affects can bring light to the ways in which our worlds are in need of repair, and therefore, impact collective healing and societal change. Our ability to collectively produce social change rests on our ability to effect and be affected. However, the question of how to effect and be affected is complex and indeterminate. One may predict a specific trajectory, but it is impossible to foresee all trajectories that a moment may and will go in the multitude, a system of ever expanding nodes. Moments cannot be understood by linear understandings of cause and effect.

While art and culture are often cast as being ‘outside of’ the political realm and world making, the intersection between the multitude, publics, moments, and affect suggest something different. World making occurs through moments. Just as we experience biopower of Empire in the every day, through our bodies and interactions with the world, we also experience the multitude, which through affects and dialogue are potentialities of change. Affects are shifts in power where the needs of the body, mind, and spirit come into view through intensities and influence the public making of the multitude. These run counter to the biopower of Empire.
Cultural products can reveal dreams and nightmares, potentialities of different lives, and possibilities for the future. Cultural moments, from habitations of our everyday lives to spectacles of countercultural negation, change us. They capture our attention, change the course of our thoughts, and invite us to “think” with them. As Negri and Hardt state: “[O]ur dreams make necessary (if not yet possible) another world” (p.312).
Works Cited


