Concepts in Disciplined Orientations of Visual Arts Education
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Abstract
The paper analyzes Jürgen Habermas's theory of constitutive
interests (1971) to derive technical, practical, and critical
knowledges. These are engaged with Arthur Danto's theory of the
Artworld (1964) in a discipline oriented matrix of nine cells.
The purpose of the matrix is to identify, sort, and evaluate
curriculum concepts in art education. The matrix will be applied
as a useful conceptual tool for siting the domains of the visual
arts (studio practice, art history, criticism, and aesthetics).
It is further claimed that this meta-framework avoids the
internal problems of relativism and the external problems of
social relevance which have plagued disciplined representations
of fields. The matrix provides opportunities for curricula to
foster autonomy, authenticity and responsibility. Thus
facilitating the outcome of developing educated persons in the
context of contemporary society.

Introduction
    The substance of this paper emerges from ongoing inquiry
into the dilemma of the standing of art history as a domain
within the educational experiences of the subject visual arts.
The author is presently engaged in doctoral research into an
appropriate model for art education coherent with the general
tenets of discipline based education. It is ironic that during
the period in which this investigation has been pursued we have
seen in Australia a significant educational diminution of the
autonomy of the visual and other arts in the interests of the
development of an aggregated key learning area applicable to the
administrative priorities of the National Curriculum project.
This trend has occurred parallel with but in opposition to the
emergence in the United States of a renewed application of the
concepts of disciplinarity specific to the subject of art
education (Greer 1984, Clark, Day, & Greer 1987, Eisner 1987,
Dobbs 1988, Efland 1988, Levi & Smith 1991). DBAE as it is
presently known within the United States is itself a contested
initiative which is bedevilled by association with various
conservative educational agendas within the North American
system.
    DBAE claims the advantages of completeness, integration, and
inclusiveness by stipulating the domains of the discipline as the
organizing structure for visual arts education. The initiative,
however, has been criticized by many, as regressing in
implementation, to the status quo of formalism, the privileging
of high art forms at the expense of popular and collective
traditions, the promotion of elitism in favour of excellence at

the expense of equity and so on (Efland 1990, 1989, Pearse 1992, 1983). The proposal of a meta-organiser based on a synthesis of Habermas' Knowledge and Human Interests (1971) and Danto's notion of the Artworld (1964) represents an attempt to retain the advantages of subject autonomy, and coherence with its professional field while avoiding the charges of social irrelevance and conservatism which have attached to disciplined initiatives both in present and past manifestations.

The concept of framing as entailed in this research is a widely acknowledged notion in contemporary intellectual discourse. It embodies the sense of a "frame of reference" which recognises that we ourselves are participants in the events and phenomena we intend to observe; it also entails a sense of perspective, recognizing that facts and theories may be subject to a range of interpretations and analyses. Frameworks and the notion of framing an inquiry also admit a limitation of our

knowledge. They suggest relativism, or, at least, competing research solutions and acknowledge the likelihood of theoretical revision in the light of new evidence, other frames, and competing perspectives. A framework may also be seen as a meta-theoretical device, allowing one to triangulate methods from the particular priorities of fields such as art history and art education to the genetic sources of the artworld within the terrain of the social and cognitive sciences. A framework, by fulfilling a meta-theoretical role allows for checks and balances to be applied to an emerging model and further facilitates critique of the model from a range of perspectives.

Many educationists have touched on Habermas' theory of cognitive human interests which constitute knowledge kinds (e.g., Bredo & Feinberg 1982, Giroux 1981, Grundy 1987 1990, Kemmis 1993, Parsons 1986, Popkewitz 1984, Pusey 1986, Young 1989). In the interest of constructing a genetic epistemological framework, I will commence with an investigation of Habermas and proceed to use his definitions of knowledge to construct one axis of a matrix which sets out parameters of knowing. Habermas foreshadows that knowledge interests operate in what he terms social media and, indeed, each particular kind dominates one social medium. Thus the technical interest resides primarily in the medium of work, the practical interest in the civic medium of society and family manifest through language, the critical interest in the medium of power attained by the self through opportunities for self-reflection.[1] I propose to substitute kindred media from the domain of the artworld to complete the matrix using Danto's definitions from his 1964 paper. By using the artworld as a particular construct, it is possible to generate a strategy for siting the various domains of the discipline Visual Arts in order to focus on the art-historical one while preserving a systematic structure which could, in other research contexts, apply equally

to the other arts domains.

Jürgen Habermas' Theory of Constitutive Human Interests

Habermas' approach to the explication of knowledge differs from some classic positions in that he rejects the view that knowledge exists apart from the world and is available to be discovered by mankind. He propounds a development of the alternative tradition that knowledge is recognized as something which humanity together initiates. The point of Habermas' inquiry is an understanding of the underlying means and motivation for action. Habermas' social philosophy is practically oriented. He writes that,

there are three categories ... of inquiry for which a specific connection between logical-methodological rules and knowledge-constitutive interests can be demonstrated .... The approach of the empirical-analytical sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest: that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporates a practical one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory cognitive interest (1971 308).

Here we see the resolution of incomplete, yet competing, educational research paradigms identified by researchers such as Popkewitz (1990), Guba (1990), and Pearse (1992), among others, and the incorporation of a balanced relationship between each domain of knowing. Habermas provides a definition denoting that interest in general is the pleasure that we connect with the idea of the existence of an object or an action ... it expresses a relation of the object of interest to our faculty of desire" (1971, 198). Interests, Habermas argues, are connected with the notion of rationality, central to his entire project. They, further, express a need or, alternately, produce a need. Habermas' definition proceeds from the premise that our basic human orientation is towards pleasure. The fundamental source of pleasure is the creation of conditions for the security, maintenance, and reproduction of mankind. The creation and

maintenance of these conditions implies a rational sense. This perspective places Habermas in the same tradition as Kant and Fichte. He goes further, however, in examining Hegel and Marx to advance the argument that what separates the human being from other life-forms is the act of speech. Speech provides a universally accessible, non-instrumental mechanism on which social relations, structures, institutions may be built. It is within the speech act that the character of mankind is evidenced and the interest in rationality is manifested.

Raymond Geuss, writing in The Idea of a Critical Theory abstracts Habermas' perspective thus:

To be a human agent ... is to participate at least potentially in a speech community ... but no agent can be potentially a member of a speech community who cannot recognize the difference between

true and false statements in some general way or who doesn't in
some way know what it means for a statement to be true.
Geuss goes on to elaborate the meaning of a true statement,
all agents would agree if they were to discuss all of human
experience in absolutely free and uncoerced circumstances for an
indefinite period of time. So anyone ... will thereby stand
committed to agreeing with us on what to count as conditions of
"free and uncoerced discussion" ...(1981, 65).
The emphasis on speech and dialogue is an important strategy
because it allows that knowledge is social, both socially
constructed and enacted. The complementary delineation of social
media allows us to recognize what domain prompts certain actions
by actors. Habermas' work is concerned with the examination of
organizations and beliefs which sustain social systems while
subjecting individuals to universal regimentation. He
acknowledges that our late capitalist system is both successful
and potentially infinitely self-correcting. Yet for all its
success, the dominant socio-political arrangements of our day
have an inexorable tendency to impinge on the autonomy and
lifeworld of the individual in the interests of the systematized
group. Habermas seeks rationality and understanding through self-
reflection communicated to peers as a process for revelation of
the erosion of individual rights and interests and as a
realisable antidote to regimenting trends.

     The fundamental interest in rationality leads to a
commitment to understanding, and it avoids the Post-
Structuralist, Post-Modernist problem of the self-aware,
alienated, individual, who is powerless before the all-
encompassing system. Rationality, knowledge, and finally,
understanding focus on intersubjective structures implicit in
linguistic actions. Thus, for example, in the construction of a
sentence three contextual features are universally present no
matter what the background language or culture. These are: an I
to IT relationship between the speaker and the world, an
objective dimension; I to YOU, intersubjective relationship
between the speaker and the hearer, which represents a social
dimension; and, finally, there is the I to ME reflexive
relationship of the speaker to his or her subjective world of
intentions, beliefs and desires, which marks out the subjective
dimension.

     Habermas' tripartite model of knowing applies to any human
discipline. It allows a means for sorting amongst interests and
creating a necessary and sufficient map of cognition for
educational purposes. His theories have the advantage of general
relevance rather than special or particular influence. By
positing a linguistically grounded process for rational argument
Habermas, in the context of the present study, acts as a link
between the educational concerns of DBAE and humankind's stake in
communicating, justifying and understanding arguments. This is
the heart of the process of investigation represented by

historians that will be applied in the subsequent research.
In selecting Habermas and engaging his work with the

definition of the artworld provided by Danto (1964), I am siting
the investigation within the broad tenets of modernism. I argue
that this is ethical and pedagogically defensible on the grounds
that, first, learners are entitled to an understanding of the
conventions of a domain before being urged to critique, revise or
otherwise deconstruct it and, secondly, that despite contemporary
fashion it is capricious for a teacher to be satisfied with a
fragmented or deconstructed field in the context of learning
experiences (see also Kemmis 1993). A self-aware student can be
even more disadvantaged and powerless if a means for remediation
of inequity and progress to knowledge and control does not come
with the reflective intelligence of how susceptible an individual
may be at a given time.
A Habermasian or modernist conceptual framework has been
proposed for the inquiry as a general representation of artworld
knowledge against which the educational model for art history
education will be developed. This gambit is initiated as a means
of testing, critiquing and ultimately warranting proposals for
educational action. It is intended that in using a generic
cognitive framework of knowledge and human interests derived from
Habermas' social theory of communication engaged with the
definition of the substance of the artworld originating in the
work of Arthur Danto, a stable and exhaustive set of criteria
will be generated into which the components of art history and
art education will be sorted. I shall proceed to an introduction
to the elements of Habermas' cognitive map of knowledge.
Technical Interest: Empirical-Analytic Knowing
This knowledge kind is grounded in the need of the species
to survive and prosper. Historically it has been achieved through
humankind's capacity to control and manage. Technical knowledge
involves notions of what can be done to improve a set of
circumstances, it is regulatory and thus rule-governed. In this
sense it is analogous to the conceptual "knowing that". Habermas
says that at the human level, the interest in the preservation of
life is rooted in life organized through knowledge and action
(1971 308). Habermas, in common with others defines knowledge
constituted within the empirical-analytic sciences as
theoretical, comprising "hypothetico-deductive connections of
propositions which permit the deduction of law-like hypotheses
with empirical content" (1971 309). He elaborates that empirical-
analytical knowledge aspires to predictive power which is secured
in the real world as "feed-back monitored action" (309).
Having identified the scientific kind, the cognitive
interest itself is defined as "interest in technical control over
objectified processes (309)". Technical knowledge is therefore
efficient knowledge which is instrumentally valued for its

potential exploitability. The technical is manifest in the world
of work as more efficient or more productive regulation of
manufacture.
Practical Interest: Historical-Hermeneutic Knowing
     Historical-hermeneutic sciences are the cultural sciences,
those realms where the evidence cannot be manipulated in the
systematic sense of, say, Physics. It includes historical and
cultural kinds of investigation. Habermas defines this as the
interest of understanding, and as such it is negotiated in
language and dominates the social media of civic life. It is
comparable with Rylean "know how" (1949) and is enactive or
performative in character, hence Habermas' appellation of
"practical" and "practice". The element of negotiation is
implicit in the hermeneutic methodology which aims to interpret
events in order to understand their significance and thus
introduces an ethical concern. Shirley Grundy (1987) considers
that the efficacy of historical-hermeneutic knowledge is judged
"according to whether the interpreted meaning assisted the
process of making judgements about how to act rationally and
morally (1987 14)".

Habermas defines the historical-hermeneutic sciences as:
gain[ing] knowledge in a different methodological framework. Here
the meaning of the validity of propositions is not constituted in
the frame of reference of technical control. The levels of
formalized language and objectified experience have not yet been
divorced. For theories are not constructed deductively and
experience is not organized with regard to the success of
operations. Access to the facts is provided by the understanding
of meaning, not observation. The verification of law-like
hypotheses in the empirical-analytic sciences has its counterpart
here in the interpretation of texts. Thus the rules of
hermeneutics determine the possible meaning of the validity
statements of the cultural sciences (1971 309).
     The phrase "interpretation of texts" is suggestive as it
allows that, in negotiating historical and ethical territory, one
is obliged to consider not only the primary material evidence of
events but also prior interpretations and explanations of it.
This is essential to the practice of hermeneutics. The
interrogation of texts is also vital to the process of art
historical explanation, which appears to acknowledge revision as
a central explanatory platform. Habermas is also signalling that
the interpretation of actions requires a mediating step such as
is provided by recorded data for example, photographs, field
data, a narrative record, film, or video. By the use of such
mediating devices actions are recorded and thus preserved in
order to be more closely studied at a future date. The artwork is
an example of such a mediating record of an event. The methods of
the historian and the critic are instances of hermeneutic

methodology applied in the interest of formulating an
understanding of the object of investigation.

This practical knowledge kind is described by Habermas as
subjective. This further distinguishes it from technical
knowledge kinds. The subjective quality of practical knowledge
acknowledges that objectivity is not available, that we are all
part of the setting under investigation and that interpretation
requires the action of subjects with other subjects. Thus we
always apply our comprehension of identified traditions to
ourselves and our situation. Hegel termed this kind of knowing as
intersubjective and Habermas follows his lead by talking of
interaction constituted in interpretive language. Subjects do not
act on their environment or setting, as these are not necessarily
tractable to change and manipulation. Rather, the subject acts
with the environment, effecting an interaction or transaction to
which both parties must agree. Agreement is, I infer, brought
about through the communicated understanding of meaning. This is
consistent with Habermas' concern with reason-giving and
rationality. In communicative action this becomes the domain of
consensus. Grundy defines practical knowledge as:
The interest which generates subjective rather than objective
knowledge (that is knowledge of the world as subject rather than
knowledge of the world as object). This interest could be defined
in the following way: the practical interest is a fundamental
interest in understanding the environment through interaction
based upon a consensual interpretation of meaning (1987 14).
The technical and the practical are synthesized via the
conditions of the third knowledge kind, that of the critical
sciences, or as Habermas terms it in Knowledge and Human
Interests, emancipatory knowledge. This element of Habermas'
cognitive theories has been subject to considerable revision and
amendment in the light of subsequent ntellectual debates.
Critical Interest: Emancipatory-Communicative Knowing

Critical human interest is the fundamental and synthesizing
force of human knowledge. This is the arena of reasoning
reflection which enables the construction of an evolutionary path
to social autonomy. Through self-reflection the individual
becomes cognisant of his or her responsibility within the social

milieu. The awareness of social responsibility opens the way for
an evolution to independence from coercive exigencies. Thus
Habermas sees freedom or "emancipation" as a balanced synthesis
of autonomy and responsibility. The emancipation that follows
from the inward turn of the ego is an individual experience but
due to the inexorably social and interactive quality of human
existence the freedom of the one is inseparable from the freedom
of the many.

The technical and practical interests contribute to the
capacity of the individual to act critically and reflectively but

together they remain insufficient to facilitate the development of autonomy. The technical is primarily oriented to control, and is thus tacitly coercive in intent. The practical, with its emphasis on transactions and negotiated communicative debate, is vulnerable to strategies of deceit. Consensus for Habermas has the potential to be a form of manipulation, and his debate with Gadamer regarding the limitations of hermeneutics, and particularly the inadequacy of tradition as a criterion for truth, point to his concerns. This point is important, as several critics dismiss Habermas as promoting a consensus theory of truth, a position which he rejects vigorously.

Independence and autonomy are implicit in the act of speech. This is the point which Geuss makes, as previously noted, when speaking of the heart of Habermas' theoretical position that we are all members of speech communities. Grundy asks the question "How does the emancipatory interest translate into action in the real world? (1987 18)" Her answer is to suggest that the interest "gives rise to autonomous, responsible action based on prudent decisions informed by a certain kind of knowledge (1987 18). This knowledge is tied to notions of the critical. It generates critical theories which explain how coercion and distortions operate to limit freedom for the individual and the society. Historical examples of critical theories include Freudian psychology, Marxism, liberation theology, and feminism. The theory must be taken beyond abstract recognition and authenticated by the individual (or group). Self reflection leads to authentication because it promotes the individually experienced apprehension that "this is true for me". When Habermas makes authenticity a condition for verification and validity of statements he means that the individual authenticates the matter by becoming personally engaged with its consequence.

When classroom teachers and educators think of a satisfactory learning experience they are often concerned with promoting levels of authenticity. Bruner (1960), for example, was concerned that subjects be represented to learners in an authentic manner. This involves necessarily providing learners with opportunities to personally encounter, wrestle with and resolve material. Lest Habermas seem a long way from art education, let me restate the fact that the valuing role of aesthetics is in part to convey a sense of qualities and provide individuals with the tools for authentic and non-coercive encounters with things in the visual realm. Habermas' constitutive interests allow teachers to transcend the oppressive propensity for factual acquisition and move learners to more speculative and critical positions over time. The warrant for this strategy becomes the development of independence and facilitation of emancipation, that is, autonomy in the individual and ultimately in the group. In the most subtle and powerful sense, this is the way of making experiences meaningful, of imparting canonical learning and providing the learner with tools

to subsequently critique and be freed from any oppressive or
distorting consequences of the canon itself.

If my argument were to pursue the dialectical scaffold of
inquiry, seeing the three interests as analogous to the three
points of the dialectic, then the critical interest would be the
synthesizing agent. Habermas asserts that:

we can methodologically ascertain the knowledge-constitutive
interests of the natural and cultural sciences only once we have
entered the dimension of self-reflection. It is in accomplishing
self-reflection that reason grasps itself as interested.
Therefore we come upon the fundamental connection of knowledge
and interest when we pursue methodology in the mode of experience
or reflection (1971 212).

I am conscious of the abbreviated and simplified treatment
which the previous discussion accords to Habermas' work. In other
contexts it will be necessary to dissect and apply Habermas' work
in a more detailed and discursive manner, particularly taking
into account his more recently translated work. However, to do so
in the context of my study would be to dramatically extend the
brief and lose sight of the central problem, which is the
position of art history in education. I am therefore taking a
minimalist approach and applying Habermas in a stipulative
fashion for the sole purpose of constructing a meta-theoretical
conceptual framework for the educational model for art-historical
practice.

Habermas' constitutive theories provide a stable and general
set of conditions for generating cognitive undertakings of an
educationally significant kind. His tripartite scheme is relevant
to educational applications and the whole of the DBAE structure
of four domains could be positioned within his scheme using the
latter as a meta-theoretical organizer. In the context of my
present study only the art-historical domain of DBAE will be so
addressed and positioned. The limitation of my brief comes from
an apprehension that the position of art history is particularly
equivocal within the educational subject. However, I suspect the
virtue of combining Habermas and Danto to generate an organizing
structure within which all of the contributing domains can be
sited as both discrete contributing disciplines which constitute
the field as a whole, while at the same time allowing the
possibility for actors to instrumentally integrate the domain of
art history with the domain of studio practice for the purpose of
evolving a successful artwork. A coherent strategy could be
constructed across the field and mechanistic implementation
strategies are more surely avoided than is the case with the
orthodox model of DBAE seen in the United States. Habermas,
however, while generally adequate, proves insufficient when
turning to the detail of the visual arts themselves. To
compensate for this inadequacy and to secure the meta-theoretical

construct into which DBAE itself can be sorted I advance Arthur Danto's version of the institutional theory of the arts found in his paper "The Artworld".

Arthur Danto's "Artworld" Theory

Danto's theory of the artworld, constructed in the sixties, was designed to deal with a set of aberrant or anomalous cases which did not appear to fit the paradigms represented by hitherto dominant theories of art and aesthetics. Traditional theories such as the Platonic model which construed art as mimesis, imitation, or representation, the Fry/Bell model which asserted that art was significant form, the Tolstoian/Deweyian construct of art as expression all failed satisfactorily to account for a range of contemporary developments such as Abstract Expressionism, Pop art, and Post-painterly abstraction or "colour-field" painting. Danto suggests that a theory of art to be adequate must be helpful to the individual in enabling her to recognize instances of its application.

The Artwork

Danto commences with a delineation of the artwork. His discussion, following Kuhn, indicates that theories of art refine and allow greater problem-solving precision and that they are agreed upon unreflectively until anomalous cases begin to appear amongst objects which purport to be artworks. Danto, however, cautions that "telling artworks from other things is not so

simple a matter." Part of the reason for the ambiguous position of artworks is that the terrain traversed by artist and audience is constituted artistic in virtue of the application of artistic theories. Thus, for Danto, one use of theories, in addition to helping us discriminate art from the rest, consists in making art possible (1964 155).

Danto proceeds, in the spirit of Thomas Kuhn (1970), to analyze how the dominant paradigm, in this case the Imitation Theory of art, or "IT" becomes anomalous, and finally, inadequate as a measure to account for artistic innovations such as Post-impressionist painting at the commencement of the twentieth century:

To get them accepted as art .... required not so much a revolution in taste as a theoretical revision of rather considerable proportions, involving not only artistic enfranchisement of these objects, but an emphasis on newly significant features of accepted artworks, so that quite different accounts of their status as artworks would now have to be given .... a criterion for the acceptance of a new theory is that it account for whatever the older one did, nothing had to be transferred out of the musée des beaux arts (1964 156).

Danto eschews the temptation of significant form, and constructs instead a "reality theory of art" "RT" to explain artworks which are "non-imitations" intended not to deceive.

These objects are not imitations and not facsimiles. They are "a
new contribution to the world" (157). Danto contends that it is
in terms of reality theories that the artworks of the present
must be approached. Having constituted a theory of art as a
theory of intentionally-made real objects Danto must deal with
the problem of exclusions. What, for example, makes Robert
Rauschenberg's 1955 work "Bed" an artwork rather than a
dysfunctional utilitarian object/bed?

The Artist/Audience

For Danto, the reciprocal engagement of artist and audience
plays a formative role in construing objects and images as
artworks. To talk of real artwork/objects requires a particular
kind of discourse, which Danto characterizes in terms of the "is"
of artistic identification. Despite the abstraction of this line
of argument, the "is" of artistic identification exists in the
vernacular practice of speech, as when a child points to a
triangle and says "That is me" (1964 159).

The is of artistic identification; in each case in which it is
used ... [is] stands for some specific physical property of, or
physical part of an object; and ... it is a necessary condition
for something to be an artwork that some part or property of it
be designable by the subject of a sentence that employs this
special is (160).

Artistic identifications are not arbitrary, the selection of one
artistic identification leads to a requirement to give others and
at the same time precludes the beholder from advancing
alternatives. Different identifications will be incompatible with
each other as they effectively create and maintain separate
worlds within the work.

Danto is left with the protest of the Philistine that all
there is to see is paint. This sentiment may be matched with the
intentions of the Minimalist, the Field painter or the non-
objective abstractionist with a penchant for titles like "No. 7"
or "Untitled". This dilemma is challenging, particularly for the
layperson. Danto turns to the "is of artistic identification" and
observes that the artist has intentionally and in full
apprehension of a body of art history and theory, turned away
from literary and material references to return to the physical
and formal properties of paint. Thus:

He has achieved abstraction through rejection of artistic
identifications, returning to the real world from which such
identifications remove us .... His identification of what he has

made is logically dependent upon the theories and history he
rejects .... To see something as art requires something the eye
cannot decry an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of
the history of art: an artworld (1964 162).

The Artworld

Danto to this point has covered all theoretical and

aesthetic bases except one, what of the work of bricolage or
artworks that are facsimiles rather than non-artworks, and real
objects that are found, selected, and signed as the only
indication of artistic intention Warhol's autograph dollar
bills, Duchamp's Urinal/Fountain? Here the sustaining
interpretive context of the artworld is critical. Outside the
gallery, a Brillo box is a pasteboard carton, what makes the
difference is "a certain theory of art."
It is the theory that takes it [the object] up into the world of
art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it
is .... without the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and
in order to see it as part of the artworld one must have mastered
a good deal of artistic theory as well as a considerable amount
of ... history .... It could not have been art fifty years ago
role of artistic theories, ... as always, to make the artworld,
and art, possible (164).

    Art histories and theories facilitate the task for audiences
and artists of talking interpretively about objects and images
which are consequently warranted as artworks. Danto constructs a
truth-table of predicates to demonstrate how his reality theory
engaged with the is of artistic interpretation works to expand
the available parameters, subsume existing styles and kinds of
art, and to regulate the potential future intentions of artists
as purposive-rational actors. The substance of his table is that
every "object N" may be paired with all antecedent objects of
disparate kind which become "objects not-N". It does provide a
persuasive working schema of how an innovation for an individual
artist becomes a relevant convention for all artists. In this
sense the artworld, like the discipline of history, is
retroactive and our available armament of interpretive gambits is
increased with every innovation. The manner in which older
artworks may be reinterpreted is likewise enhanced. Without
entering the fragmented domain of postmodernism we can, using
Danto, talk of audiences and authors and the reciprocal
relationship between the individual stakeholders and collective
institutions of the artworld. Thus, says Danto:
It is the retroactive enrichment of the entities in the artworld
that makes it possible to discuss Raphael and De Kooning
together, or Lichtenstein and Michelangelo. The greater the
variety of artistically relevant predicates, the more complex the
individual members of the artworld become; and the more one knows
of the entire population of the artworld, the richer one's
experience with any of its members (166).

    In the penultimate paragraph of his discussion Danto briefly
alludes to the "weightmakes" of the artworld, those powerbrokers
such as museums, connoisseurs and the like who manipulate or
favour certain artistic predicates over others. This is not a
thread which is developed in the context of this paper. However,
it is one which can be profitably addressed educationally by
engaging Danto's tripartite scheme with Habermas. The potential

for critical speculation is important in educational settings,
particularly when contemplating an institution as socio-
culturally driven as is the visual arts.

Danto's artworld allows for the autonomy of histories and
theories of art and provides a means for a systematic
investigative framework whereby the learner may consider the
perspective of the artist/audience, the interpretation of the
artwork and the significance and scope of histories and theories.
These considerations may be undertaken conceptually,
performatively, or critically, and (potentially) embrace any of

the four domains of the arts although such a brief will not be
attempted here. While it initially may appear outrageous to
engage Habermas with an art historian such as Erwin Panofsky
(1939) the two figures have a considerable amount in common at
least at the level of theoretical construction. Both share a
peculiarly Teutonic discursiveness which is almost unfashionable
in the present climate, but which allows for the development of
great depth of description and analysis because of the wide-
ranging nature of their expertise. They are both Modernists
which enhances cohesion between the two, and they share a
scholastic preference for synthesizing arrangements which are
tripartite in nature. Habermas amplifies the socio-cultural
nature of the historical enterprise while providing critical
tools which are tacit and vestigial in Panofsky's writings.
Habermas and Michael Baxandall (1985), an art historian and
theorist whose work will be analysed relative to this framework,
will complement each other in terms of Baxandall's notion of
inferential criticism and his psychological underpinning of many
of his described critical processes. The linguistic nature of
Habermas' social theories provides a sympathetic scaffold for
particularizing the concatenated structure of narrative
explanations which necessarily negotiate with the unalterable
material evidence and which have as their central purpose the
need to better our understanding of events.

Danto is put forward here as means to organize the visual
arts as a disciplined field without resorting to the four domains
thus avoiding the false polarization of activities and the
mechanistic pitfalls of implementation which have occurred in
some North American settings. In New South Wales at present all
theoretical activities are identified with historical pursuits
which are further characterized in syllabus documents as
"mediated experiences". I seek a meta-theoretical conceptual
framework into which the four contributing domains of studio,
criticism, history and aesthetic themselves may be more
exhaustively sorted. The organizing framework, originating as it

does outside of the interests of education, provides a means to construct disciplinarity without foundering on the shoals of specialism inherent in the adoption of the model of the critic, the historian, the artist or the aesthetician none of which are appropriate or relevant outcomes for the majority of students who undertake experiences of the visual arts in school settings. What these students do share, however, as a realistic aspiration in common with all educated individuals is the desire to be sure-footed consumers and participants in the artworld. This goal is suggestive of the capacity to perceive the arts without coercion, to make decisions in an fashion which is informed by knowledge, to apprehend and appreciate cultural values and transmit cultural traditions. The societal orientation of Habermas engaged with the artworld particularity of Danto is of assistance to the educator in the task of formulating these outcomes.

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NOTES

1.   Jürgen Habermas, Knowledge & Human Interests, (Boston, 1971). Habermas presents this as a series of theses pp. 312-314. These are:
    1. The achievements of the transcendental subject have their basis in the natural history of the human species.
    2. That knowledge equally serves as an instrument and transcends mere self-preservation.
    3. Thus that knowledge-constitutive interests take form in the medium of work, language, and power.
    4. That in the power of self-reflection, knowledge and

interest are one.

5. That the unity of knowledge and interest proves itself in a dialectic that takes the historical traces of suppressed dialogue and reconstructs what has been repressed.

. See Chapter 9 of Knowledge and Human Interests for a review of Kant and Fichte. pp. 191-213.

. Jürgen Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 2., (Boston, 1985) pp, 344-46.

. Jürgen Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action Vol. 1 (Boston, 1984). pp. 31 ff. Habermas is indebted here to the analytical explication of validity claims undertaken by Stephen Toulmin in The Uses of Argument, (Cambridge, 1958).

5. "Mündigeit": See Grundy, op., cit., p. 16.

. Hans Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method 2nd ed. New York, 1975 & 1979

. See, Plato's Republic "Book X" reprinted in Dickie Sclafani & Robelin, Op. cit., (1989) pp. 20-31; Roger Fry, Vision and Design, London, 1920; Clive Bell, Art. London, 1914, particularly pp. 13-37; See Leo Tolstoy What is Art? (1893) Indianapolis, 1960; John Dewey, Art and Experience, New York, 1934.

. Arthur C. Danto "The Artworld" pp. 155-168 in Joseph Margolis, Philosophy Looks at the Arts: Contemporary Readings in Aesthetics, (Philadelphia, 1987). See p 155.

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work/objects requires a particular kind of discourse, which Danto characterizes in terms of the "is" of artistic identification. Despite the abstraction of this line of argument, the "is" of artistic identification exists in the vernacular practice of speech, as when a child points to a triangle and says "That is me" (1964 159).
The is of artistic identification; in each case in which it is used ... [is] stands for some specific physical property of, or physical part of an object