MEDIA EDUCATION LAB Working Paper Series

Editor: Jiwon Yoon

MEL Working Paper No. 201

The Role of Media in Adolescent Identity: A Literature Review

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The paper was written for Communication Theory I class, taught by Prof. Fabienne Darling-Wolf in the fall of 2006.

Published by Media Education Lab, Temple University, School of Communications and Theater, Media Education Lab, 1A Annenberg Hall, Philadelphia PA 19122.

Please cite as:

RobbGrieco, M. (2007).The Role of Media in Adolescent Identity: A Literature Review. *Media Education Lab Working Paper Series*. Retrieved DD.MM.YYYY, from http://www.mediaeducationlab.com/

The Role of Media in Adolescent Identity Formation: A Literature Review

Michael RobbGrieco

Abstract

Two types of general theoretical approaches account for most studies discussing media and adolescent identity. Media effects approaches assume that media influence adolescent behavior, beliefs, and attitudes in measurable, predictive ways. Cultural studies approaches seek to describe how adolescents involve media in their own experiences and senses of culture, community and identity. Media educators should offer adolescent students the wisdom of each approach. In hopes of facilitating media educators' recognition and pursuit of diverse perspectives, this paper reviews the major scholarly contributors and contributions that constitute these trends in thinking about the roles of media in the identities of adolescents.

Introduction

In looking at the main title of this paper, the reader should be wary of the sweeping generalizations that seem to discount important distinctions. Which media? Can the roles of print, music, television and internet be lumped together? Can identity be discussed without specifying aspects of class, race, or gender? Does adolescence even exist? The affirmative answer to the last question is assumed in the discussions and studies that concern this paper. However, it is worth mentioning that the developmental construct of adolescence has developed relatively recently in western cultures (Kroger, 2004) and it may apply differently or not at all in various cultural settings around the globe (B. B. Brown, Larson, & Saraswati, 2002). As for the other questions, most studies account for distinctions among media and aspects of identity, and many studies focus on particular dimensions of such variables to yield topics like "the influence of erotically explicit independent female rap music on upper class white teen girls' sense of sexual power and practice." Despite such great specialization of focus on particular media types and aspects of identity, two types of general theoretical approaches account for most studies discussing media and adolescent identity. At one end of the spectrum, many studies take a media effects approach. This perspective assumes that media influence adolescent behavior, beliefs, values and attitudes in measurable, predictive ways. At the other end of the spectrum, cultural studies approaches seek to describe how adolescents involve media in their own experiences and senses of culture, community and identity. Media educators should have a sense of these major trends in approaches, and should offer their students the wisdom of each. While it is important to specify particular media and aspects of identity and culture in order to formulate and critically discuss claims about the roles of media in adolescence, without a sense of the general approaches that arrive at such claims, media educators risk presenting their students a myriad of specific investigations and model practices which, despite their apparent diversity, may be biased toward a particular approach. In hopes of facilitating media educators' recognition and pursuit of diverse perspectives, this paper reviews the major scholarly contributors and contributions that constitute these apparent trends in thinking about the roles of media in the identities of adolescents.

Media Effects: Adolescents Under the Influence, Development at Risk

Cultivation Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Uses and Gratifications theories (Bryant & Zillmann, 1994) provide the foundation and backdrop for current discussions of media and adolescence from the media effects perspective. Cultivation analysis "focuses on the

consequences of exposure to its [*television's*] recurrent patterns of stories, images, and messages" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994, p. 37) by identifying recurring patterns through content analyses, measuring frequencies of use, and comparing heavy users to light users within demographic groups to determine attitudinal consequences (p. 21). Although Cultivation Theory centers on the medium of television, effects researchers have extended its theoretical and methodological approaches to all media, as we shall see below. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communications (1994) emphasizes the role of media as symbolic environments which "expand the range of models" portraying "patterns of thought and behavior" allowing observers to "transcend the bounds of their immediate environment" (p. 69). Models can introduce new behaviors, provide new competencies required for new behaviors, or strengthen or weaken restraints over previously learned behavior. This emphasis on the power of media modeling compliments Cultivation Theory by articulating the processes of how learning from models and symbolic environments manifest in both immediate response and lasting patterns of behavior, attitudes, and affective dispositions. However, Social Cognitive Theory has staked a middle ground between approaches to explaining human behavior in a "one-sided determinism" depicting behavior "as being shaped and controlled either by environmental influences or by internal dispositions" (Bandura, 1994, p. 61). Bandura posits a triadic reciprocal model where three influences bi-directionally affect each other to determine "psychosocial" function: 1. behavior; 2. cognitive, biological, and other internal factors; and 3. environmental events (p. 62). While his early work railed against the "self-validating" psychoanalytic tradition of theorizing internal needs and drives (Bandura, 1977, p. 6), Bandura's model of triadic reciprocal determinism includes the influence of "cognitive, biological, and other internal events." These "other internal events" reopen the door to the discourses of internal needs and drives, which have allowed for media effects approaches, traditionally biased to examine the environmental influence of media, to expand and integrate discussions of audiences' Uses and Gratifications. According to Alan Rubin, Uses and Gratifications "underscores the role of psychological and social elements in mitigating mechanistic media effects" (Rubin, 1994, p. 418). These elements are detailed in terms of "concepts such as motives, needs, uses and sought gratifications...as antecedents to behavior" (p. 424). Using ethnographic and self report survey methods measuring at the individual level, researchers have developed typologies of motives for media use, "such as learning, habit, companionship, arousal, relaxation, escape, pass time" (p. 425). By providing such specific typologies, Uses and Gratifications theories help articulate how

audience motives mitigate the effects of media cultivation and behavioral modeling. Several studies of Uses and Gratifications from diverse cultural settings have found age to be “the most significant correlate of the motives” (p. 425). Thus, the media effects perspectives have been directed to study by age groupings, leading to specific discussions of adolescence. In discussions of adolescence founded in the theories outlined above, media effects perspectives seek to 1. discover the frequencies and typologies of media exposure, uses and sought gratifications particular to adolescent age groups, 2. analyze the content for prevalent attitudes and behaviors represented by media texts, 3. measure correlations between frequency and typology of use with the presence of corresponding cultivated or learned behaviors, and 4. distinguish these media effects from other factors that may produce behaviors, attitudes, affective dispositions and beliefs.

Although rarely explicit in the discussion, the interests in adolescence as a phase of development in psychological and behavioral studies are often absorbed into media effects perspectives founded in the theories mentioned above. From a decidedly media effects perspective**,** Victor Strasburger and Barbara Wilson have appropriated and synthesized models from psychoanalytic (such as, Erikson, 1968) and behavioral (such as, Vygtosky, 1978) psychology traditions to summarize the “turbulent” time of adolescence in terms of five developmental challenges: 1. identity formation by differentiating from parents and others; 2. increased independence in terms of activity away from family, economic autonomy, 3. importance of peers and 4. risk taking, 5. puberty and sexual development (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002). In this example we see a typical, often latent framework for the media effects work in studying adolescence. Below, a review of some major contributions to the media effects perspective on adolescence will reveal studies that seek to empirically describe and measure the role of media in these five areas of developmental challenge. However, it is important to first note the studies that verify media as a major component of adolescent experience.

In order to assert media influence as cultivating attitudes and modeling behaviors, media effects approaches depend on a demonstration of media use as a pervasive activity in adolescents’ lives, one that may compete or combine with the influences of lived experience. Donald Roberts has undertaken extensive, ambitious studies “to describe U.S. youth's access and exposure to the full array of media” (Roberts, 2000, p. 8). His random sample surveys of 8 to 18 year olds throughout the U.S. show that “American youth devote more time to media than to any other waking activity, as much as one-third of each day,” and “Most households contain most media... and the majority of youth have their own personal media” (p. 8). Roberts is careful to

nuance these general conclusions noting that, “overall, media exposure and exposure to individual media vary as a function of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and family socioeconomic level” (p. 9). From studies of European contexts, Keith Roe adds parents’ educational status, the adolescent’s academic commitment, and measures of cognitive development as three more significant factors predicting adolescent media exposure (Roe, 2000). Studies such as these discover variables which significantly mitigate adolescent exposure to various media, then posit the variables as demographics for subsequent studies to consider in their approaches. They provide the necessary groundwork for measuring the effects of media modeling and cultivation while they also direct the choice of relevant media for content analyses and the scope of investigations into media uses and sought gratifications. Often, such studies of media exposure also begin to address the issues of adolescent development outlined by Strasburger and Wilson. For example, Donald Roberts (2000) begins to address the first two challenges (1. identity formation by differentiating from parents and others, and 2. increased independence) through survey and media diary methods which sought to describe “the social contexts in which media exposure occurs” (p. 14) in terms of how often adolescents use media alone or with others, and whether those others are peers, siblings, or parents. He found that “among 8 through 13 year-olds, ‘alone’ is the second most likely social context for viewing; most of their television viewing occurs in the presence of siblings and/or peers. For 14 through 18 year-olds, however, ‘viewing with siblings and/or peers’ is the second most likely social context because most adolescents view television while alone,” and “adolescents experience most screen media without parental presence” (p. 14). Data from these types of studies is almost always cited in the preponderance of media effects studies that address the last two of Strasburger and Wilson’s challenges of adolescence, risk taking and puberty/sexual development.

The developmental challenge of risk taking in adolescence seems to frame the majority of studies from the media effects perspectives, which investigate various media’s roles in cultivating and modeling risky behaviors such as violence, aggression, and sex. The discourses of health professionals combine with popular discourses of social ills and health concerns to articulate the particular behavioral types a society considers risky, which, in turn, tend to frame and direct discussions and studies of media and adolescence. “Concerns with the presentation of violent media have characterized the history of the mass media and their development,” which has been the focus of “a vast body of research” that “can be reduced in terms of either methodologies or hypothesized effects” (Gunter, 1994, p. 201). Some of the most significant of

these methodologies and hypothesized effects have been summarized above in relation to Cultivation Theory and Social Cognitive theory. Decades of research substantiating these theories have culminated in Joanne Cantor's (2000) claim in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* of "an overwhelming consensus in the scientific literature about the unhealthy effects of media violence" (p. 30). This claim of "overwhelming consensus" comes despite the warnings from the researchers themselves, cited by Cantor, who elsewhere point out that "question marks can be raised about the accuracy and reliability of the data produced by any of the most commonly applied research procedures" (Gunter, 1994, p. 209). Cantor goes on to cite meta-analyses (Paik H, Comstock G., 1994) correlating hundreds of studies showing that:

> Media-violence viewing consistently is associated with higher levels of antisocial behavior, ranging from the trivial (imitative violence directed against toys) to the serious (criminal violence), with many consequential outcomes in between (acceptance of violence as a solution to problems, increased feelings of hostility, and the apparent delivery of painful stimulation to another person)...desensitization is another well documented effect of viewing violence. (Cantor, 2000, p. 26)

The documentation of unhealthy effects of sexual media have not reached such a critical mass as to inspire the rhetoric of "overwhelming consensus," but the pioneering work of Jane D. Brown, Jeanne R. Steele and Kim Walsh-Childers has clearly organized the discussion. In their seminal edited volume, *Sexual teens, Sexual Media: Investigating the Media's influence on Adolescent Sexuality* (2002), the sexual activities under review are attractiveness, dating, touching, orientation, first intercourse, coercion, disease, and unintended pregnancy (p. 7). The editors present a theoretical model of "teen sexual media diet" (SMD) echoing the shape of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's familiar food pyramid by charting the types of media teens consume from a base of "Passive" to an apex of "Interactive" media genres and texts. Five chapters of the volume present content analyses that "provide current pictures of what sexual content looks like in the media from which adolescents choose their daily media diets" (p. 13). In their introduction, Brown, et al, cite Social Learning Theory and Cultivation Theory proclaiming that "the studies in this book either implicitly or explicitly work from the predictions and explanations offered by these theories" (p. 16). One of the most powerful claims of Cultivation and Social Learning media effects has come most recently via the *Pediatrics* journal article *Sexy Media Matter: Exposure to Sexual Content in Music, Movies, Television, and Magazines Predicts Black and White Adolescents' Sexual Behavior* (Brown et al., 2006). The study uses an index

measure of “sexual media diet” (SMD) in longitudinal surveys to reveal that white adolescents measured to be in the top 20% of the random sample in density of sexual media diet from age 12 to 14 later reported having had sexual intercourse between age 14 to 16 more than twice as often as girls who had sexual media diets with densities in the lower 80%, while “black teens appear more influenced by perceptions of their parents' expectations and their friends' sexual behavior than by what they see and hear in the media” (p.1021). Although the study calls for more research to “fully understand the relationship between exposure to sexual media content and adolescents' sexual behavior,” they claim that theirs “is one of the first studies to establish the basic connection” (p. 1022). In addition to this thorough application of Cultivation and Social Learning theory to the study of adolescent risk taking, Brown has also studied how the adolescent developmental challenge of puberty/ sexual development itself factors into the teen sexual media diet. Through a study showing that girls whose physiological sexuality develops earlier consume more sexual media than girls who develop later in adolescence, Brown has developed the idea that sexual media act as a sort of “super peer” counseling earlier developing sexual teens in the absence of significant counsel from family and school (Brown, Halpern, & L'Engle, 2005). These studies focusing on sex and violence exemplify how Cultivation and Social Learning theories tend to be applied in the study of adolescence through the developmental lens of “risk taking.”

Uses and Gratifications theoretical approaches tend to balance this risk taking focus with the other adolescent developmental issues. Reed Larson and Jeffrey Arnett summarize how adolescents use media for “self socialization” (Arnett, 1995), which approximates the adolescent developmental issues of differentiating from parents, gaining independence, and valuing peers as outlined by Strasburger and Wilson (2002). From a range of ethnographic studies, Arnett (1995) has abstracted a typology “intended to represent the most common uses of media by adolescents” (Arnett, Larson, & Offer, 1995). Arnett outlines media use categories of entertainment, identity formation, high sensation, coping, and youth culture identification, which “except for entertainment are theorized to be developmental, in the sense they may be more important for adolescents than for children or adults.” Christenson and Roberts’ influential book *It’s Not Only Rock and Roll* (1998) exemplifies the Uses and Gratifications paradigm by deriving a similar typology from surveys of the self identified music uses of adolescents in comparison to content analyses of the music, as interpreted by professional sociologists, psychologists, musicologists and the adolescents themselves. The approach investigates correlations and discrepancies

between interpreted themes and expressed uses as well as observed uses. These correlations and discrepancies constitute evidence which corroborate or refute popular, sociological and psychological views of adolescent development (Christenson & Roberts, 1998). The aggregate nature of Uses and Gratifications studies, aggregate typologies of uses compared with aggregate content analyses, defines its scope of study. Lawrence Grossberg (1992) points out that while Cultivation and Social Learning principles place audiences in a passive role and Uses and Gratifications "seeks to rectify these weaknesses by seeing the audience as the active principle," the latter theory "potentially leads back into a kind of passivity—for the audience interpretation is always determined by something outside of its actual encounter with the text" (p. 156). Grossberg sees each case as measuring ways "the audience makes the text fit into its experiences" while treating these experiences as "nothing more than already defined structures of meaning, interpretive practices, or social psychological functions, which are themselves only the product of previous cultural and communicative practices" **(**p. 156). Thus, by following theoretical approaches which measure distances from aggregate trends and norms, the media effects perspectives do not afford discussion of adolescents as producers of their own identities and cultures. At the other end of the spectrum, we find the cultural studies approaches begin with precisely this concern.

Cultural Studies: Media as Means to Adolescent Cultures

Cultural studies perspectives of media and adolescence range widely from descriptions celebrating adolescents' appropriations of media uses and texts to create new communities and identities, to critical views analyzing adolescent cultural relations to dominant cultural forms via media and other social institutions. Rather than approaching media as a behavioral and attitudinal effects-producing influence modified by demographics and aggregate patterns of use, discussions from these perspectives involve an articulation of the complexities of culture, which Hall and Jefferson (1976) describe as "that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life and give expressive form to their social and material. . . experience" (quoted in Hebdige, 1979, p. 446). Furthest from the effects perspectives, at the celebratory extreme of cultural studies, media have been discussed as providing the material with which social groups construct their identities and communities, as exemplified by several studies of fan communities.

In her review of popular film representations, Lisa Lewis (1992) has shown that "fandom is overwhelmingly associated with adolescence or childhood" (p. 157). Through

ethnographies examining several television fan communities, Henry Jenkins (1992) has challenged the popular mainstream's "stereotypical conception of the fan as emotionally unstable, socially maladjusted, and dangerously out of sync with reality" (p. 13). In sharp contrast to such depictions from effects perspectives as Jeffrey Arnett's in *Metalheads* (1996) which profiles the uses and gratifications of heavy metal music by youth cultures described (similarly to the fan stereotype) in terms of their dangerous deviance from the mainstream, Jenkins focuses on the television audience's ability to attend to meanings that serve their own purposes and to transform texts to suit their needs and desires. Jenkins (1992) adopts and expands the idea of "textual poaching" from Michel de Certeau (1984), who used the term to articulate the limited power of individual media consumers, the "poachers," to choose and use meanings made by producers of various media texts, the "land owners" in de Certeau's metaphor. De Certeau's textual poachers sustain and entertain themselves by nimble readings chosen nomadically from a vast mass media menu, but the poachers remain relatively powerless enjoying their own transient meaning-making without constructing their readings in any coherent, lasting forms to rival the powerful positions represented in the produced media texts they choose. According to Jenkins (1992), "Fan reading, however, is a social process through which individual interpretations are shaped and reinforced through ongoing discussions with other readers" (p. 45). In *Textual Poachers,* Jenkins (1992) thoroughly details particular instances of how television fans' readings of common mass media texts develop through community discussions and through fans' own media productions demonstrating that "Fans possess not simply borrowed remnants snatched from mass culture, but their own culture built from the semiotic raw materials the media provides" (p. 49). For Jenkins, fans elevate the act of "textual poaching" to an art form, and furthermore, they construct their own art world of aesthetics by which the fan community judges its members' new cultural artworks (new fiction, songs, paintings, etc) made from the raw materials of their common favorite media texts. Such celebratory views of fan communities offer a much different way to discuss the role of media in adolescence as media become a means to creative identity construction. Instead of providing material for appropriation, video games and internet communities offer simulated contexts for interactive experiments with identity. While effects perspectives often focus on measuring social modeling effects in video games and cultivation possibilities of trends in internet and game content, Sherry Turkle's approach in *Life on the Screen* (1995) discusses "the story of constructing identity in the culture of simulation" where game players feel that "the self is constructed and the rules of social interaction are built, not

received" (p. 10). Turkle shows that the very concepts of identity as a unitary self may give way to a postmodern model of multiple identity when we observe behavior in virtual worlds. *Life on the Screen* (1995) follows several case studies of children and adolescents playing with various identities through virtual communities and games in various virtual settings. Through these case studies, Turkle poses the question as to whether players play roles or engage in parallel lives, demonstrating at the very least how "we can move through multiple identities, and we can embrace—or be trapped by—cyberspace as a way of life" (p. 231). Jenkins' recent work has celebrated the participatory cultures developing in massive multi-player online games such as *Sim City*, and he has identified "performance" as a crucial media literacy skill for students to learn "the ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 4). While Jenkins and Turkle have focused discussions on the methods, means, and opportunities media offer to participatory cultures and creative social and personal identity construction, others have sought to describe the ways members within those participatory cultures acquire and use power.

In Lisa Lewis's edited collection *The Adoring Audience: Fan Cultures and Popular Media* (1992), John Fiske elaborates his ideas on the power dynamics of participatory culture in a chapter entitled *The Cultural Economy of Fandom*. Fiske uses Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) metaphor of cultural capital, which "people invest and accumulate" within an economic system of taste culture that "distributes its resources unequally and thus distinguishes between the privileged and deprived" (Fiske 1992, p. 31). For Bourdieu (1984), access to these taste cultures can be acquired via educational institutions or inherited in lifestyle preferences passed on by privileged classes as a sort of "official" cultural capital. Thus, the accumulation of cultural capital often coincides with high economic and social status, but it can be amassed significantly without corresponding economic means. In addition to expanding Bourdieu's axes of discrimination of class and economics to include race, gender and age, Fiske's theoretical approach recommends the extension of Bourdieu's sophisticated analyses of dominant taste cultures to the subordinated capital of popular taste cultures "produced outside and often against official cultural capital" (Fiske, 1992, p. 32). Sarah Thornton (1995) exemplifies the application of this theoretical approach to discussion of youth cultures in her ethnographic study of *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, in which she shows youth dance club cultures to be "riddled with cultural hierarchies...briefly designated as: the 'authentic' versus the 'phoney', the 'hip' versus the 'mainstream', and the 'underground' versus 'the media'" (p. 4). For Thornton,

"distinctions are never just assertions of equal difference; they usually entail some claim to authority and presume the inferiority of *others*" (p. 10). While studies like Thornton's describe how, "fandom offers ways of filling cultural lack and provides the self esteem and social prestige that goes along with cultural capital" (Fiske, 1992, p. 33), classic cultural studies have been more critical of the economic and social subordination of such subcultures and the degree to which they can resist domination by the mainstream.

In 1979, Dick Hebdige criticized a developmental view of adolescence (as seen above in various media effects perspectives) claiming:

> Most writers still tend to attribute an inordinate significance to the opposition between young and old, child and parent, citing the rites of passage which, even in the most primitive societies, are used to mark the transition from childhood to maturity. What is missing from these accounts is any idea of historical specificity, any explanation of why these particular forms should occur at this particular time. (Hebdige, 1999, p.442)

The historic specificities which concerned Hebdige and his colleagues were explained in terms of class struggle in a Marxist (or neo-Marxist) tradition. Exemplifying and extending the classic British Cultural studies of Hall and Jefferson's *Resistance through Rituals* (1976), in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) Hebdige emphasizes how late 1970s British white working class youth created the punk styles of dress, music, and social interaction to express class oppositions in addition to their expressions of differentiation from older generations. Later, he examined youth culture styles of upper class "mods," middle class "teddy boys" and gender bending "Bowie-ites" to show how youth subcultures not only stake out their own identity apart from their parents' cultures, but also negotiate the problems of their parents' cultural classes (Hebdige, 1999, p. 448). Although these studies show how "subcultures cobble together (or hybridize) styles out of the images and material culture available to them in the effort to construct identities which will confer on them "relative autonomy" within a social order fractured by class, generational differences, work etc." (editor's note introducing Hebdige, in During, 1999, p. 441), Hebdige points out that in addition to providing groups with influential images of other groups, they "also relay back to working-class people a 'picture' of their own lives which is 'contained' or 'framed' by the ideological discourses which surround and situate it" (Hebdige, 1999, p. 449). Thus, such classic cultural studies, represented here by Hebdige, "see media and commerce as 'incorporating' subcultures into the hegemony [the dominant power structure], swallowing them up and effectively dismantling them" (Thornton, 1995, p. 9).

While the classic British cultural studies perspectives share with media effects perspectives a common concern about dominant influences on adolescents, all perspectives seeking to describe adolescent identities in terms of cultural systems tend to privilege adolescents' own cultural production as it resists, appropriates, and poaches meaning from media texts rather than measuring reception and reflection of mainstream media messages.

Concluding Thoughts: Implications for the Development of Media Education

This paper has sought to review discussions of the role of media in adolescence as they have arisen from two distinct ranges of perspectives, which I have grouped as media effects and cultural studies. Distinctions between approaches to media education seem to derive from or, at least, correspond with the distinctions between these two perspectives outlined in the sections above. Prominent health researchers and psychologists in the media effects traditions consistently call for educating parents about the threats and limitations media pose via cultivation and social modeling effects, and for such educated parents to modulate the effects of their children's media use by viewing, listening and using with them (see, for example, J. D. Brown & Cantor, 2000; Cantor, 2000; Hogan, 2000; Larson, 1995; Strasburger & Wilson, 2002; etc). These researchers also routinely mention the possibilities of media literacy education in schools to insert the teacher in this role of modulating and mitigating effects, as well as the potential for students' media literacy skills themselves to modulate media effects towards healthier attitudes and behaviors (J. D. Brown, 2006; Strasburger & Wilson, 2002). Art Silverblatt's *Media Literacy: Keys to Interpret Media Messages* (2001) offers a curriculum adaptable for middle school through college classes, which seems to directly address these media effects concerns as it centers on demystifying the construction of mass media news and entertainment in terms of textual components, manipulative techniques, and production ownership. Silverblatt's focus on media message construction and delivery is just one component of W. James Potter's theoretical basis for media education. In *Theory of Media Literacy: A Cognitive Approach* (2004), Potter suggests that curricula develop specifically from an elaborate understanding of media effects in terms of risk and the process of influence including factors of natural ability, developmental maturity, psychological drives, and sociological factors—all in addition to the teacher's tasks of imparting knowledge of media content and industries as found in Silverblatt. Potter's theoretical basis for media education expands within a media effects perspective to ideas of psychological and sociological needs and drives which

seem to proceed directly from Uses and Gratifications theory. David Buckingham (2003) criticizes media effects approaches to media education such as Potter's and Siverblatt's for privileging the teacher's ideology, for encouraging students to make self righteous critical observations to distinguish themselves as superior, and for emphasizing the negative shortcomings of media without acknowledging complexities of taste and pleasure. From his cultural studies background, Buckingham has developed a production focused philosophy of media education which most often suggests that teachers create activities through which students create their own media texts for authentic audiences. As the classic cultural studies perspectives outlined above, Buckingham shares the media effects perspective concern for mitigating dominant influences on adolescents. However, Buckingham believes that students should learn about the effects of media as cultural producers rather than as wary receivers. While he includes much of the same material about media message construction and delivery as Silverblatt (2001), students' relationships to the formal concepts develop through experimentation and play using media in communicative projects with ongoing self evaluation of progress and success. The teacher guides this process of experience and reflection to ensure that useful concepts are abstracted and extended to other projects as well as to discussions of mass media texts. Thus, students experience the power relations between producers and audiences, and must negotiate criteria of success and failure with audience expectations, tastes, and responses while considering analogous mass media efforts and various greater cultural contexts. In this way, students may discover, understand and perhaps create or control their own places as cultural producers in broader contexts of our media saturated culture. Henry Jenkins' (2006) vision for the Macarthur Foundation's project, *Building the Field of Digital Media and Learning*, suggests a repertoire of skills which focus entirely on developing the means of participatory culture through digital media use with very little concern for modulating media effects or even recognizing dominant producers and messages. From Silverblatt and Potter to Buckingham and Jenkins, we see how the distinct scopes of media effects and cultural studies perspectives in discussing the role of media in adolescence correspond with the distinct scopes of approaches to media education.

I believe the ranges of both media effects and cultural studies perspectives should contribute to a full vision of media education. Media educators must find a way to directly address media effects health concerns while offering opportunities for students to produce their own cultural texts and understandings through media. I doubt that a balance between protectionist, critical and participatory methods would produce results detrimental to the goals of

either media effects or cultural studies concerns. Media Education curricula should work to achieve such a balance.

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