

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

I am struggling with this objective. I am sick and tired of writing papers or even making a proposal for the purpose of being read by one person for the purpose of receiving a grade. I think I am at the point where I should be writing with a larger audience in mind and should be writing with the intention of submitting paper to journals.

What I need is some type of topic that there is little existing academic research and requires primary research or topic areas where the academics have missed a vital part of an argument. My last paper for Dr. Carpenter was of this nature. Through secondary research I discovered that there was little academic research in Japanese Manga, specifically "Hentai" because the west considers this pornography. The little research that does exist were little islands of research without a global connecting theme. I found the global connecting theme and demonstrated by idea hopping or "island hopping" that the separate small arguments supported one global argument.

The global argument was more and more women were turning to reading Hentai to retreat into a fantasy world to escape the message of "motherhood" delivered by the Japanese government's ideology. Within the Hentai I discovered that the same message was being delivered semiotically by Japanese censorship laws but the Japanese women readers were not recognizing the same message was being delivered in this retreat world. The connection everyone missed was why this ideology is so important to the Japanese government. The Japanese population is decreasing and fewer women are having children. The Japanese government has an apocalyptic fear of the imperialist U.S. and that one day Japanese/American relations will come down to one more apocalyptic showdown: nuclear destruction of Japan and an elimination of Japanese society. The Japanese have never forgotten Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The theme repeatedly appears in their Anime and Manga.

The link was found in a sub-genre of Hentai called "Tentacle-sex" where helpless women who appear to be teenage adolescents are raped by tentacle monsters who have apocalyptic orgasms with their victims sometimes to the point where the victim disintegrates. One paper drew a connection to the helpless adolescent girls representing Japan and the tentacle monsters as the U.S. I found connections through other various author's text which demonstrated what seems like a loose connection was a strong bridge from one island of thought to another. The purpose of pushing motherhood in Japan is to increase the size of the Japanese population because a larger population ensures a better survival rate if the Japanese/American apocalypse occurs.

I picked up the paper in the second week of the spring and Dr. Carpenter thought I was really on to something worth pursuing. I have not had the time to straighten out the paper because of commitments in tutoring, 324, 407, and 495 but will return to the paper once the semester is over.

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

The point of my long winded explanation is that I believe I have the ability to make contributions in various academic areas but I want to research with a more lofty intended purpose: that of being published. I regularly look at the end of journal articles looking for statements an author has said something to the effect that "there is little research in 'this' area, more research is required in this area, the data is inconclusive, We are not aware of the effect on someone or some group and other areas that indicate more research is necessary. My research is analogous to a kid standing in a stream overturning rocks looking for some new un-cataloged species of life. This has more purpose in my mind than just re-hashing the same old arguments using other scholar's secondary research and support.

Topic One: Proposal to study the discourses within my mother's artwork created during the 1960's or Struggling for Liberation: Georgina Paul's account of using art as a means of conducting a sociopolitical discourse.

The purpose is to record the artist's words and explanations of what she meant by the imagery and symbols in a particular piece of work, i.e. what is your argument? What does the symbolism mean?

We all know her work will be left behind after she dies. The object is to capture the artist's original intent, meaning, and content within a particular artifact. My mother's strongest, most ambitious period of making these *creations* was the 1960's, a period of civil upheaval: controversy over the Vietnam War, Civil Rights for Blacks, and the Women's Liberation Movement.

As an example on painting is called "The Bluebird's of Happiness." The entire image is painted in bright pastel colors many of the symbols appear as though they are in tissue paper as one image is shown underneath another. In other words, some objects in the image are transparent. There is an image of a white horse kicking its head skyward, mouth open, teeth showing, one hoof up rearing on its hind legs. There are blue birds (as in the color blue) superimposed in strategic places or positions on the horse and are attacking the horse while other blue birds are in the process of descending on the horse with the rest of the blue bird community. The horse is a soul individual.

The argument is the wants of society versus the wants of the individual. The literal meaning is the blue birds insist that in order to be a part of the community, the horse must be happy. The horse on the other hand, is not happy and does not want to be happy. The horse wants to lead a life of misery self-designed by choice.

The horse's discourse is "Why should I lead a false life in order to appease society? I see the world as cruel and miserable and chose to live within the bounds of society with a dark mind. For me, this is to accept the truth and not turn an eye away

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

from the world's ugliness. For even within ugliness there is beauty. I chose to be a realist and work with what I have been given. You (the blue birds) also make a choice (a false choice) to ignore misery by putting on a false persona of happiness when happiness is far and few between. In your macabre you think that by cloaking yourselves in happiness and gathering in unity that everyone should subscribe to your life philosophy. If not, this becomes a struggle between 'us' versus 'other.' Why must I lead a life that is false in order to appease society?" This is the horse's discourse.

The blue bird's discourse is "You're right Ms. Horse, there is little happiness in this world but why wallow in the misery and rejoice to the fact that one is alive and that not all is darkness for God's creatures, particularly man has an affinity for darkness. Yet God is the light and within that light is the happiness of loving God. Within the light is love, peace, and happiness." This is the blue bird's discourse.

Within the household are several discourses going on at the same time. My brother marries at age 18 because he gets his girlfriend pregnant. My older sister has married and in order to do so she has converted her religion from Catholicism to Protestant. My sister has now become over-religious and constantly quotes from the bible in her letters to home. My father is suspected of infidelity due to an incident at my brother's wedding reception. Women in society are exercising their civil rights for equality as my mother also decides that she will exert her rights for liberation from being a mother and a housewife.

with them but what those discourses are I do not know and they will only be revealed through a series of interviews with my mother the artist.

A main complication with this pursuit is my inability to get up to Pennsylvania to photograph the paintings and bring them into the research so that all can see these paintings and constructions. I do not have the time while in school nor the money to run back and forth to Pennsylvania. In addition, I do not own a digital camera which would make image capture less complicated considering lessons learned in creating the visual argument in the history of UMBC food in the ENGL 324 class.

Topic Two: Proposal to Caitlin for joint research in Manga and Hentai.

Topic one was an email to Caitlin Wychgram and I to perform joint research in the topic of the Manga. "Two things crop into my mind about the "Researching Communicative Practices" communicative objective. I am thinking about image analysis in terms of communication. I propose a joint research proposal an analysis of Manga texts. There are several reasons for this. You know how to read Japanese text and how to read Manga but you're struggling with the course. I am not struggling with the course but I am struggling with analyzing the Manga. I do not have any Manga and cannot afford to buy any. You

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

on the other hand, buy and read Manga on a regular basis. From my academic analysis of Hentai last semester I discovered that Manga and Hentai are two areas with little academic research yet there is a rich social discourse being conducted within these texts that few Westerners are able to read. On the other hand, Anime, Manga, and Hentai have become huge exports from Japan to Western cultures in particular the United States who's citizens have more disposable income than anyone else in the world. In essence, as Westerners we are shut out of the social discourse being conducted within the Manga because very few Americans understand Japanese culture or Japanese history. We already had this conversation and we both know the Japanese culture is nothing like ours. The culture is entrenched in ancient traditions, ceremonies, rituals, both spiritual and secular most of which is expressed in the form of semiotics (the science of signs). If Shipka goes for this what happens would be that we would be doing joint research but writing separately. That is also provided that we can coordinate schedules for researching. If you chose not to for whatever reason you can feel free to enter the body of this email in your goals and choices as something you chose not to do." How much deeper the discourse within this one painting is I do not know and only an interview will reveal more. There are many other paintings and constructions, which I know also have discourses associated with them but what those discourses are I do not know and they will only be revealed through a series of interviews with my mother the artist.

A main complication with this pursuit is my inability to get up to Pennsylvania to photograph the paintings and bring them into the research so that all can see these paintings and constructions. I do not have the time while in school nor the money to run back and forth to Pennsylvania. In addition, I do not own a digital camera which would make image capture less complicated considering lessons learned in creating the visual argument in the history of UMBC food in the ENGL 324 class.

Topic Three: Continuation on the theme of Manga and Hentai.

Proposal for a paper that demonstrates by not allowing a visual, content analysis of Hentai labeling Hentai as "pornography" the social discourse within the Hentai cannot be sufficiently analyzed by using written text alone to convey the meanings contained within the visuals. This discourse would demonstrate the affordances and constraints of both visual communication and written communication is an area that has little research by academics.

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

Topic Four: Continuation on the theme of Manga and Hentai.

Steven Norfolk and I have been having continuing conversations about Japanese Anime since we both learned that we are watching the stuff and since Dr. Carpenter said the word "Anime" once and only once maybe the sixth week of the fall semester 2005. I have written two analytical papers in content analysis and mixed analysis while poking and prodding into the social discourses being conducted within these visual texts. Steven seems to have a good grasp on some of the aspects that elude me at times and may be able to provide some guidance in the literacy practices of reading the Manga from the Japanese perspective. The literacy that I would be studying is that of semiotics for Manga text unlike Western comics does not have text. Much of the symbolism involves ancient Japanese traditions, religious beliefs, and spiritual myths. Much of what is depicted is entranced in rituals that the Japanese understand as a culture but shuts out Westerners. Hence what Westerners "read" in the images are very different meanings than the Japanese interpretations. My fascination with this area of pop culture is that the West, especially the college crowd loves this stuff but in many cases understand little of the symbolic messages being delivered and that there are larger sociological, political, ideological, cultural arguments and critics within the symbolism that has not been analyzed by researchers. One point that I had brought out in my last paper is that more Japanese women are reading Hentai texts which depict women in extremely abusive demeaning roles. I would like to find out why they [Japanese women] are gravitating towards these texts as fantasy retreats and exactly what is their fascination with these texts considering that in practically all cases women are demoralized in the Manga.

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

Topic Five: Research for images through web sites.

I would like to explore what is available within the Special Collections portion of the library to see what surprises may come up. I have considered a literacy practice of reading images focusing on the images of my two hometowns Westbury, LI, NY and East Meadow, LI, NY. I once saw what I will call a coffee table book on the town of Westbury that had photographs going further back beyond Lindbergh's famous takeoff for his transatlantic flight in the "Sprit of St. Louis" reaching into possibly the 80's. The pictures spoke volumes to me because I remember much of what was shown throughout the community and this helped me to remember how my town had changed and matured over the course of 36 years. Many of the places and buildings that occupied specific traces of land no longer existed except in the traces of childhood memories. What was amazing was how strong those memories were and the personal narratives that revolved around the sight of a long gone image. The author of the picture book had a small description. For me, the picture generated several stories and incidents revolving around the place or space. These stories were impossible for my mind to access without the visual stimulus.

East Meadow holds a similar history. I lived on the edge of two adjacent towns. Our postal address was Westbury but we actually lived on the edge of the "East Meadow." The East Meadow Fire department served our area and not the Westbury Fire Department. We attended school in the East Meadow School district and not the Westbury School district. I lived next to a cultured manicured County Park larger than New York's Central Park. There were two major airfields, one military, one civilian, a horse trotter's racetrack, a county hospital that my brother installed the elevators in and a county jail. The literacy is in seeing images from different time periods of the area and the personal narratives the images generate. I once talked about this on the Internet and several people from various parts of the country and other countries were fascinated with the stories because my way of life and growing up was not theirs. Their claim was that my stories were unique and that what I experienced was not of the norm. The suburb and I were practically born at the same time. The portion I grew up in was the now famous "Levittown" project after WWII. I am not clear if this information exists in the UMBC library. I would feel rather passionate about this research and even writing a paper on the topic provided that I understood what journal I was targeting.

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

Topic Six: A tangent of the Westbury project--

The Photographic History of the Land UMBC Resides On

I am less passionate about this topic because I have no connection or loyalty to this place residing between the towns of Arbutus and Catonsville. My suspicion is that photographic images would be plentiful though. I have heard stories that originally some of this land was part of a light detainment jail farm. I lived next to such a facility and farm in East Meadow but his facility was increased to medium security when I left in 1993. This may be part of the history for when one exits or enters the campus from the interstate route 95, at the entrance, there is a silo that is maintained as a symbol that this land was once a farmland. The other history with this land is one of the still standing buildings that was originally part of the State psychiatric hospital of Willow Grove. All that is left of this institution is on the opposite side of Wilkins Ave. that is still a large sprawling campus used for conducting research. As I said, I have less passion for this particular topic.

Topic Seven: The use of music or sound to pass secret messages within a listening community.

Smaller public radio stations and college radio stations did this in N.Y., Lancaster, PA, and Philadelphia, PA, so I can't see why this would be different in Baltimore. I also overheard or read one of Elisabeth's posts about DJ'ing Hip Hop and Rap on weekends talking about the insider language within the community in which she spins records. Sometimes these literacies can even be restricted to that specific nightclub. The use of conducting conversations through the music is nothing new. The way this worked is a person would go to the DJ and ask for a specific song to be played. Sometimes there was a request for a dedication, sometimes not. Sometimes there was what is known as a "shout out to the house." In other words, someone's small circle of friends would recognize the "nickname" used, recognize that the "shout out" was meant to address them and this was a sort of "Hey, listen up..." Knowing the person and the song played the listeners could recognize the message being delivered either through the type of music requested, the style of sound/tone, or by the lyrics. Another discourse that was conducted was to ask for three songs. One could construct a complex message for others again by the same means but now the narrative was longer. Still others, a song may have had special meaning to someone and could be played out of revenge to send an ugly message to someone that they wanted to remove themselves from the club either for the evening or permanently. This means of communication is also common in private parties. One

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

person knows the other and also knows that a particular song holds a special meaning to them. In other cases they could be messages being passed between lovers or ex-lovers for the purpose of attraction or repulsion. Elizabeth Piccirillo's description of literacy practices on the club scene also fuels this interest. Sarah Miller could also provide valuable insight in this area. Because I know them somewhat as classmates they might be willing to introduce me to other people they know within the scene who may be willing to be interviewed within the space and explain the literacy practices being conducted thus providing primary research. These ladies listen to different genres of music therefore the languages may vary according to the genre and scene and some portions of the language may be universal when compared to my own experiences. I do not know what the possibilities are because I do not know what kind of scholarly research exists in the area or how to search for this literacy practice.

Topic Eight: Instant Messaging (IMing) in English compositional classes while situated in computer labs as a form of disengagement and rebellion.

This I observed in a technical writing class where the professor was giving a presentation on presenting. The computers were set up to old school seating and theories of learning with the students in "flyer formation" classic rows and columns all running parallel. This places the computer monitor in a position where the professor cannot see what the students are doing. While presenting using PowerPoint it is impossible to walk around the room to create engagement as some speakers may. With the monitor obscuring the professor's view provides the opportunity for disinterested students to disengage with the presentation and entertain themselves by IMing classmates. I have never done this so I am curious as to what the content of these conversations.

Topic Nine: MOO's

While in ENGL 486 I encountered a few papers in this area of literacy and I am curious as to what is a MOO. In addition I wonder considering this is not a well known area what may be learned about literacy in such a space.

Topic Ten: Extends from MOO's

The content of IMing while playing as a gaming team within a team oriented Internet game space.

Topic Eleven: Does an online tutoring session change the dialog between a tutor and a tutee? Is the Dialog the same or different? How does this literacy differ?

Workshopping Researching Communicative Practices

April 13 and April 18, 2006

Shipka's ENGL 407 Communicative Objective #2

Christopher Paul

Topic Twelve: The literacy of chess.

I went back to our original posting of describing literacy practices and noticed that may fall into the category of visual and body language. Greg Masters several times has mentioned that there is a text, a narrative, and a literacy to the game of chess. I learned the game years ago but never had people around me who played so I cannot really play myself. I mean to say I can play but someone who avidly plays chess like Greg would slaughter me so easily I wouldn't represent much of a challenge. I have a fascination for the intellectual qualities of the game even though some consider the game to be as exciting as watching paint dry. The speed of this game is in the player's mind where we are not privy to see. I think what may be interesting is interviewing many avid chess players after watching a particularly important chess game and analyze their particular views as to how they "read" a game. In other words, primary research of many chess players focused on one particularly high level tournament. The interesting part may be in how the community "reads" the particular game and how their "reads" differ. Interviewing the players may add a different insight for the players will undoubtedly will have "read" the game differently considering that they were center stage and within the "circle of conflict" while the observers or fans are far outside the "circle of conflict."