VIDEO SCRIBBLING WITH PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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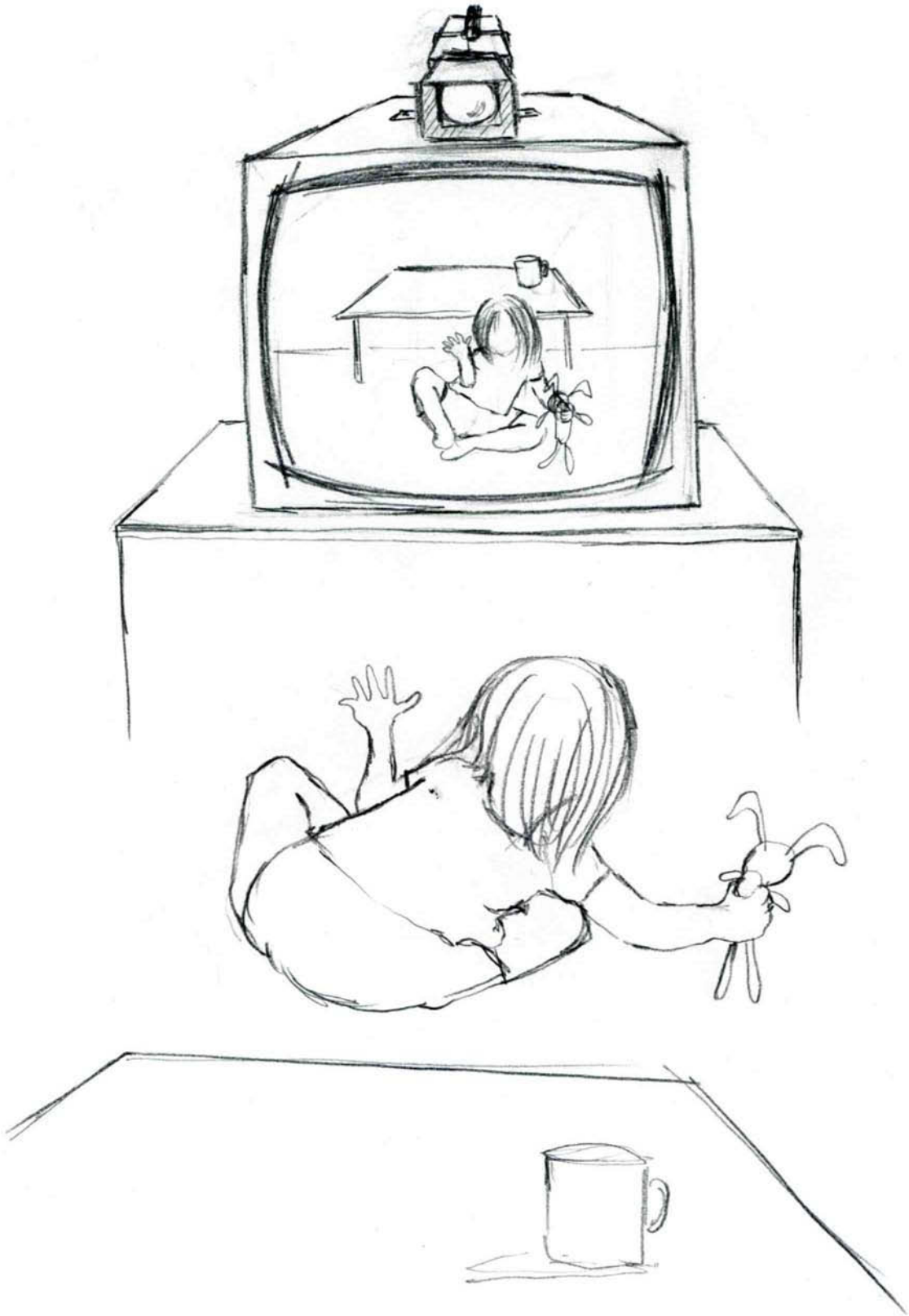

Fig.1

ABSTRACT

Video Scribbling with Preschool-Aged Children

Alexandre Pagé

> "Television is not a credit course in anything. but it very definitely has the marks of a natural environment in which the child forages and finds his way…"
>
> (**McLuhan & Fiore**, 1968, p.70)

While literacy programmes for young children deem it important to introduce the rudimentary codes and structures of reading and writing as early as possible, this is sadly still not the case for all media. After half a century of analyzing the effects various television programmes have on young children, we have all but ignored the crucial skills required to decode the complex television language and how these skill are acquired. The merits of content are often discussed, yet rarely is television itself the topic. This research proposes a process which hopes to grant the opportunity for children to "video scribble," much like they would scribble with a crayon, thereby learning through an active interaction with the medium. Using a basic setup in which a camera feeds live images into a television set, this project allows for children to directly play with the medium of video, rather than passively consume it. Encouraged to interact with TV and participate in the act of production, young children will be given the opportunity to experiment and test the inherent codes, rules and limitations of the technology.

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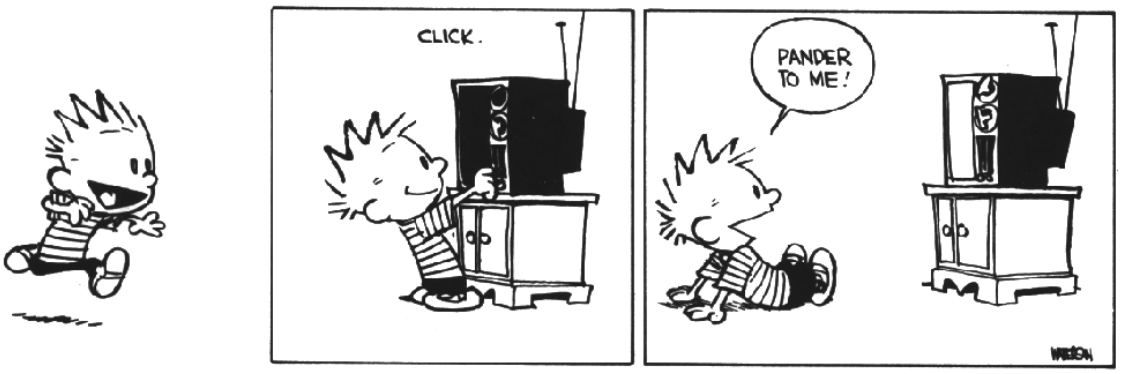

Fig.2

> "I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book."
>
> (**Groucho Marx**)

INTRODUCTION

Television was my technological nanny. Growing up, its comforting cathodic glow allowed for escape into fantastic realms, dramatic lives and exciting foreign locations. The technology my parents feared would turn me into a zombie, instead inspired me more than any other form of communication. My dedicated immersion into this medium not only serves as the foundation for my professional career, but it also shapes the way in which I experience the world.

It is therefore not surprising that my biased approach should lead me to defend television, not only as a worthwhile vehicle for entertainment and a respectable art form, but also as an important educational tool. Although it is true that television has long been used to complement education—*Sesame Street* for example effectively helps children acquire basic language skills—the medium of television itself is more often than not subservient to the education of another subject matter, used merely as a vessel. A vessel filled with cargo cannot reach port, if those at the helm are unable to navigate. A shortcoming that should, in my opinion, be addressed if we truly hope to foster critical media literacy amongst children.

Watching television seems simple enough, but beneath the apparent ease of use, complex physical, psychological and sociological forces are at work. This then begs the question: How do we learn to watch TV? Do we grasp, through sheer exposure alone the rules that shape this medium? Does viewing then suffice? If it does, could we, or should we, go beyond this basic understanding?

For better or worse, television is an integral part of most children's daily routine. From infancy onwards they faithfully sit and watch. Feverish debates rage amongst adults who either praise the merits of certain programmes over others, argue as to how many hours of exposure are deemed healthy, or even advocate that children should be shielded from television entirely. Despite all these disputations, little research has, so far, been conducted to allow for a better understanding of the process by which children learn to watch, and how they make sense of the complex codes that constitute the language of television.

> "So if preschoolers can't analyze or produce media, and it is inappropriate for them to have access to things we know they can't understand, what might media literacy mean in the context of early childhood education? Formal research on the teaching of media literacy to preschoolers is almost non-existent, so no one can yet suggest a definitive answer."
>
> (**Rogow**, 2002, URL)

It is, in my opinion, perhaps only partially, but undoubtedly possible for children to comprehend any medium. This project is hence an attempt to debunk the argument that children lack the ability to make sense of media language, specifically television. The question posed should therefore not be whether we should teach media literacy to preschool-aged children, but rather how we could do so. The following chapter will begin by suggesting a methodological shift away from predominant, content-based concerns. In subsequent chapters, I will offer a possible solution in the form of an activity.

1. THE ANECDOTE

It was while on a trip to Romania that I seriously began to ponder these questions. I visited Bucharest in the summer of 2008. Good friends had invited me to dine in a restaurant; their three-year-old daughter Lana accompanied us. As would be expected of a child her age, she had quite a hard time sitting still. As the evening progressed, we adults frantically struggled to keep her entertained. I had my small, point-and-shoot digital still camera with me and without a second thought, handed it over to her

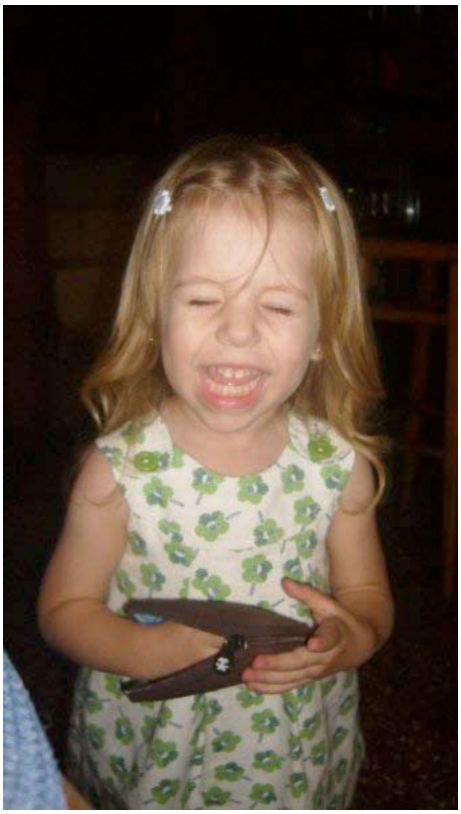

Fig.3

We were all surprised at the pictures she took. She handled the camera well and needed little help operating it. Her composition, framing and ratio of "keepers" put my own photography to shame. Most important however, was the unabated inventiveness she showed while playing with my not-so-cheap camera.

I had always thought of my technological gadgets as adult toys, but to see such a young child use it in this way brought me to ask: Why don't we let children play with our technology more often? Principally, I wondered if this experience with Lana could translate to video. Determined to find out, I bought Lana a small video camera, one specifically designed for children (but recommended for an older age group.) I met her and her mother in a McDonalds six months later in the suburbs of Montreal. I was anxious to see her reaction.

I gave her the camera. After a few seconds of fiddling with the toy, she put it aside and returned to her fries. Trying my best to salvage what I thought was a total failure, I accompanied her to the jungle gym. Her curiosity was boundless, yet she couldn't care less about the camera. Why? I had even bought her the pink model with the cute little yellow flower patterns. Exhausted by the cramped crawling spaces and frenzied chases, disappointed by what appeared to be a futile attempt to get her to use this new toy camera, but mainly just tired from twenty minutes of being a kid, I sat down and found solace in my fries. I had brought my own toy, a small portable HD camera, and began recording our meal. She could see herself on the small LCD display of my camera. Fixated by her own image on the small screen, she touched her face and suddenly exclaimed: "I have lips."

Fig.4

> "All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."
>
> (**Pablo Picasso**)

Artists, or at least artists as I envisage them, are child-like in many respects. Artists and children are both prone to experience problems with the concept of delayed gratification. Creativity and immediacy are often tied at the waist and inspiration rarely appreciates being held back. In short, children and artists tend to be impatient sorts. I state this as a generalization rather than a fact and humbly include myself in the observation. Lana's lack of patience with the video camera made it clear to me that the act of recording moving images required her to wait for results, something she could not be bothered to do. Curious as she may have been, she seemed only interested in immediacy. The immediate results afforded by a camera's LCD screen.

2. THE LITERATURE

> "It seems clear that future research into new media and online literacies will need to be multifaceted and multidisciplinary in order to study the dynamism and fluidity of people's engagement with emerging new media forms."
>
> (**Nixon**, 2003, p.411)

In keeping with Nixon's call for a multi-disciplinary approach, my research project fuses a variety of academic fields and is based on theories borrowed from art education, media studies, linguistics as well as general education.

> "If we see media literacy as vital to life in the "Digital Age," then we should begin the acquisition of that literacy as early as possible."
>
> (**Rogow**, 2002, URL)

Great efforts are made in the home environment to ensure children are exposed to language at a very young age. Parents encourage the rudiments of reading by introducing simple concepts of an alphabet—ABCs for example—in the first years of life. This is done years before their children are of age to attend an educational institution, yet...

> "…the vast majority of media literacy materials and strategies have been designed for middle and high schoolers and, more infrequently, elementary level students. Rarely are those resources developmentally appropriate for preschoolers. "
>
> (**Rogow**, 2002, URL)

We do not wait for children to enter school before we introduce them to the basics of written and spoken languages; why then are we content with exposing them to television and its complex codes at the same age whilst offering no assistance, no reference to its building blocks?

> "Television is not a credit course in anything, but it very definitely has the marks of a natural environment in which the child forages and finds his way…"
>
> (**McLuhan & Fiore**, 1968, p.70)

Children somehow seem to "learn" to watch television by merely watching. Yet the process of how they do so remains, for the most part, a mystery. How can we introduce, or at least assist, children in their attempts to make sense of the television language? Most of us were never "taught' how to watch TV—we just did. It should be no surprise that we are unable or unaware of the grammar that regulates it. After all, wherein lies the necessity to teach something we ourselves, were never taught.

> "Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the content of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.18)

For McLuhan, less attention should be placed on what we watch, the true influential force of any medium lies not in what is said, but rather in how it is said, hence conveyed: Language is key. As adults, we have little understanding of how television operates and influences us. This lack of awareness has brought us to devalue the educational potential of television on the whole. Too often distracted by concerns over content, many disregard or overlook the key role played by media as methods of information transmission, or ways television uses to convey information, which often trumps even the information itself. After all, what good would a nutritionist be, if he or she had no knowledge of the digestive system?

What good is media education if it does not take into account how we assimilate information? A child's diet would be poor indeed if it was determined solely on nutritional value. Would a mediatic diet not equally be poor if based solely on content?

Sadly, after half a century feverishly researching what children watch, the focus of our attention still stubbornly remains concerned with content. We have sidelined the process of how children watch TV, distractingly focusing our attention instead, on what it is they are watching. I do not wish to deny the importance of age-appropriate content, but rather suggest that a far greater issue requires our attention:

> "In this idea originated the plan of the 'Lyrical Ballads'; in which it was agreed, that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith."
>
> (**Coleridge**, 1817)

The term "suspension of disbelief," coined by Coleridge almost two hundred years ago is still widely used today. It has come to encompass under its terminological umbrella; that sought-after moment when readers or viewers are no longer consciously aware of the fact they are taking in a fabricated work of fiction. To accomplish this feat, novels, television programmes and movies depend on our consent to be deceived as well as our unawareness of the technical tricks used to do so, the tricks of the trade. Indeed, viewers rarely question why they laugh whilst watching one scene or cry during another, and seldom consider the hidden mechanisms at work to accomplish these reactions.

Naturally, few are those who would consider grammar structure whilst reading a book, nor question the use of a specific camera angle when watching a film; but these technical decisions inevitably influence our experience and reception of the work. The use of an omniscient narrator, jump-cut editing sequences, strong key lighting—these are but a few examples and these trick conveys a specific and predictable response in the viewer. The printed words and transmitted images can only create suspension of disbelief through the use of these codes. Mixed in using time-tested formulae much like snake oil, media act as did vendors of the Wild West, both depending on our consensual unawareness of the ingredients for their concoction to take effect.

We actively help young children understand traditional literary codes through games and songs. We adults even use television to reinforce the learning of traditional literacy with educational programmes—but what is televisual language? Dr. Daniel Chandler, who co-authored *The Dictionary of Media and Communication* writes that:

> "Television and film use certain common conventions often referred to as the 'grammar' of these audiovisual media. This list includes some of the most important conventions for conveying meaning through particular camera and editing techniques... "
>
> (**Chandler,** 1994-2012)

These televisual conventions can be, much like in written and spoken languages, combined to create innumerable variations of a text. From the camera placement to lighting, from duration of a shot to the use of non-diagetic sound, every single convention is embedded with meaning. Silent film conventions differ from sound films, and much like textual or oral grammar, the codification of information conveyed elicits specific emotional reactions.

It would be beneficial, then, to concentrate our efforts on teaching children the basics of this language. Much like music or sports, repetition and practice lead to an understanding of the rules; this does not imply all will play in professional leagues however.

Learning to speak and read is an exhaustive process. The acquisition of any language, whether oral or written, requires an understanding of implicitly and explicitly complex codes. This is also true for television. Most children naturally learn to speak before they learn to write. In the case of television however, we almost exclusively learn to watch through prolonged and repeated, passive exposure. In essence, we learn to decipher how the medium speaks, but remain, for the most part, illiterate. Most of us cannot talk back, nor answer in the same language television speaks. Since we never learned the rules and structures that regulate the medium, we are only capable of listening or reading it, but are incapable of speaking or writing in the televisual language.

3A. THE CODES

> "Given that the dialogue of children's programs, at least educational programs and probably others as well, is within the processing abilities of young children, there are opportunities for a rich interaction between the child's codes and the codes of the medium."
>
> (**Rice**, 1984, p.55)

Indeed, prolonged exposure to any code tends to lead to an understanding of it. But it is important to keep in mind that although television viewing is often seen as a passive activity, television as a medium, argues McLuhan, is tactile in nature.

> "One of the most vivid examples of the tactile quality of the TV image occurs in medical experience. In closed-circuit instruction in surgery, medical students from the first reported a strange effect—that they seemed not to be watching an operation, but performing it. They felt that they were holding the scalpel. Thus the TV image, in fostering a passion for depth involvement in every aspect of experience, creates an obsession with bodily welfare."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.286)

If McLuhan is right, why then does there seem to be so little physical output on the part of children when they watch television? Is there an untapped potential for greater active participation within the medium? Perhaps the content of children-oriented television programmes is at fault. One must remember all television programmes aimed at children are conceived, written and produced by adults.

Ratings, demographics, educational goals as well as many other factors all influence the decisions that befall these producers. Despite their educational benefits and the good intentions of adults involved in their creation, such children-oriented content does little to help young viewers freely experiment with, and express themselves through, the medium of television.

Merely watching television is therefore insufficient; watching television created by adults simply indoctrinates children into the adult methodology of viewing. We create television that we believe is best suited for children, but what do we inculcate onto them by doing so? How can we be certain it is best for them when it appears to have done little for us? A new approach is needed.

First, we learn to read, then we learn to write. The limitations of any given medium only become clear once we have a chance to experience them first hand, when we are exposed to the mechanism with which they operate, and are witness to the conventions that regulate our experience. Once we have absorbed enough of these examples passively, we can then begin to express ourselves using these same methods actively. Passive acquisition and active participation follow and complement one another in the learning process. The solution I propose is therefore quite simple: Since we cannot expect children to analyze or produce with a medium they do not fully understand; we adults must adapt the complexity of the medium in accordance with the cognitive skills of the target group we wish to teach.

> "If mother shows Mary "how to draw," she imposes her adult imagination upon her child's."
>
> (**Lowenfeld,** 1954, p.16)

The problem does not reside, in my opinion, on the inability of children to produce or make sense of such complex information streams, but rather on what **Pariser** (1983) defines as "the notoriously widespread habit of projecting mature aesthetic criteria onto the work of children." (p.51) The adult assumption that complexity implies an impossibility to teach is erroneous at best. Rather than dissuade us from trying to teach complex adult concepts, re-examining and deconstructing our adult portions into bite-sized morsels of information may make more sense, at least it might to the children we are teaching.

Complexity is a natural obstacle to learning—this is true at any age—but it should never be a deterrent from teaching. The burden rests on the shoulders of those who wish to teach these complex sets of skills: How can they be made accessible? A possible solution is to adapt the material into a form that can be challenging while retaining the most basic, comprehensible elements deemed appropriate for the target developmental stage. The expectation is not that children will comprehend overnight a set of elaborate codes, conventions or skills, but rather that they will, over time, acquire and collect the knowledge required to do so. This, Pariser argues, qualifies more as an apprenticeship. Once children have gathered enough information and skills to begin decoding a given medium, they start to form a comprehensive understanding of the language spoken to them. Once enough experience is acquired, they can go beyond decoding and begin to re-encode or produce in the target language if they so wish.

A problem arises however, for how can we quantify such an educational endeavor? Just as in a master-apprentice relationship, the capacity to gain experience, emulate and later use acquired skills is difficult to substantiate. The degree to which such teaching is successful greatly depends on countless variables ranging from the mastery of the one passing on the skills to the willingness and capacity of the apprentice to receive them. Therein lies the goal of this research.

> "There is a need to identify the nature of the scaffolding and adult support children need as they create multimodal, digital texts."
>
> (**Marsh**, 2006, p.503)

They cannot yet read novels by Joyce yet we encourage them to try their hand at reading. They cannot yet paint like Renoir, yet we encourage them to paint nevertheless. Why then, should we simply claim that they cannot produce video and leave it at that?

3B. THE CAMERA CRAYON

> "The formative power in the media are the media themselves."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.21)

As humans, we pride ourselves on our ability to make and use tools; we adapt these tools to fit the job at hand. In turn, the tools we create not only allow us to shape our environment, but redefine us as species. Media are such malleable tools. If we can build it, surely we can also adapt it to fit the cognitive capabilities of children. To do so with video production, we need only deconstruct the textual components of television to its most basic elements. We must attempt to do this outside of our expectations and our adult understanding. That is to say, we cannot expect children to approach television as we adults do.

> "It is then this highly differentiated form of activity, the ability to relate expression and medium so intimately and uniquely to each other that they are so essential to each other that none can be replaced, which constitutes' creative intelligence."
>
> (**Lowenfeld**, 1960, p.25)

Spurring on the creative intelligence of young minds requires activities that appeal to their interest and allow them to express themselves in relevance to their reality. During early stages of scribbling, children freely develop the motor and visual skills they need to express themselves with crayons and paper. It is by playing with these creative tools that they begin to comprehend the rules and codes that regulate the medium. I claim this, despite the severe lack of substantiated, empirical data and evidence, but founded on personal experience. I have spent over a decade working with creative media tools, adapting to new technologies, and I am now considered a specialist in my field. The knowledge and skills I acquired through apprenticeships and thousands of hours interacting with the medium were key in forming my methodological approach.

> "To discover and explore what different art materials can do, to learn their behaviour, is also one of the very desirable trends, which the child develops through creative activities."
>
> (**Lowenfeld,** 1964, p.7)

Scribbling, drawing, and later writing are acquired through such active interactions with the medium. By giving pre-school children the chance to play and interact with video in a similar manner, using activities that are suited to their cognitive capacities will undoubtedly give them the chance to explore the rules and limitations of the technology in a similar manner: Video scribbling.

3C. ART EDUCATION

Limits and games are, according to **Pariser** (1983), key to art creation.

> "...two elements link the art work of children and adults; one is the common presence of limits—whether imposed by technical and psychological naïveté, or self-imposed as a function of the particular game the mature artist has elected to play. The other common element is that no matter what the origin of these limits, it is always a problem-solving act to realize personal expression within the structure of the game. To the extent that the child is struggling to clarify his/her status in the world, and to clarify the organization of the environment, using limited means to that extent the child is prototypical of the mature artist who also struggles, using limited means, to make sense out of environment and self."
>
> (**Pariser** 1983 p.50)

When engaged in this problem-solving activity, Pariser argues both artists and children attempt to understand the operating conventions of a given medium. By playing with these conventions, they can begin to adapt their newfound mode of expression to their own subjective desires. In my view, Pariser's call for an "apprenticeship" approach to art education can be applied to other media, including, video production. **Lowenfeld** (1949) in an article titled "Technique and Creative Freedom," calls attention to the importance of using an age-appropriate medium to encourage creative activity. Should the medium be too complex, he argues, it risks discouraging the child. Here I would add that the medium need not be age-appropriate per se, but rather that any medium can and should be adapted to the target age group in order to avoid discouraging children from using it. Children's creative exploration should be challenging yet suited to their capacities and as free as possible from adult expectations. The goal should not be to have children produce clearly comprehensible adult works, but rather for them to make sense of the process through experiments, trial and error as well as creative play. A scribble or doodle is a form of self-expression for a child and finding new ways to facilitate them using other media to express themselves similarly.

3D. MEDIA LITERACY

To date, research in Media studies has but sporadically dealt with pre-school aged children. To my knowledge, even fewer studies directly address production with this age group. In order to develop an appropriate methodology, I will summarize a pertinent research project conducted with children under five years of age:

Susan Roberts and **Susan Howard** (2005) are Australian researchers who conducted observational studies of young children as they watched *Teletubbies*. The programme, produced by the BBC, was aimed at pre-school aged children. It featured four costumed characters with television screens on their bellies. The purpose of the study was to investigate, in detail, the physiological and emotional responses to the televisual text. A random episode was chosen from the series and shown to ten boys and ten girls aged between 14 and 24 months. The participants spoke English at home and came from working or middle-class families.

Every child involved in the study was familiar with the programme. The participants were observed watching the episode either at home or with other children at a daycare. By using these familiar settings, the researchers sought to create an environment that most resembled the children's natural viewing experience. Children were also given the chance to sit or stand but they were neither encouraged nor instructed to do so. Video was also recorded as they watched the programme. In the data analysis phase, the resulting video documents of the participants were synchronized with the Teletubbies episode in order to better observe which audio-visual elements triggered specific reactions.

4. METHODOLOGY

Video has long been an important documenting tool for research. The versatility of the medium, specifically within teaching-based research, is exemplified by **Schuck & Kearney,** (2006) who described their use of "digital video to highlight important incidents, expressions, conversations, and activities, as well as to develop ideas, illustrate points, and provide consistency between the topic being researched and the ways of researching it." They go on to point out that "the use of digital video as a methodological tool has proven to be an effective way of illuminating the study's results and providing valuable insights that might not otherwise be available."

Video offers great potential as a data-gathering tool. This methodological approach is reliable and sound, yet uses but a fraction of the immense potential video can afford. Furthermore, the resulting documents produced may deceptively be interpreted as impartial, but video documents can never truly be, by any means, fully objective. Researchers, through their decisions on camera placement, editing and other technical variables, also decide to use certain associated conventions. Whether they are aware of these conventions or not, every technical aspect of the video language can skew the objectivity of the documentation and, as a result, influence those who view and interpret the resulting data.

Triumph des Willens (**Leni Riefenstahl**, 1935) is without a doubt the most notable and infamous example of a documentary in which, the calculated use of these conventions, propagandized its bias. This Second World War film was commissioned and staged to solidify the mythos of Adolf Hitler as a benevolent, quasi-divine, ruler. When wielding media conventions that possess such powerful potential to influence, I deem it imperative not to lose sight of my own subjectivity, whilst developing a methodology for this project.

The use of video in this research is therefore best informed by the "informant-made video" methodology described by **Lachapelle** (1994). His data gathering method involved the use of a camera by participants to document an aesthetic experience, followed by a review session of the footage with the researcher present. The video camera in this process is used simultaneously as a data collecting tool (**Schuck & Kearney,** 2006) and as a production apparatus for the creation of "informant-made video" documents (**Lachapelle**, 1994). I introduced minor modifications to Lachapelle's methodological approach so as to suit the target age group of this study: The camera, rather than be handed to participants, was made static. After a trial pilot project, I also deemed it necessary to discard the audio component. The retransmission of live broadcast causes issues of delayed audio feedback; this technical issue was deemed too distracting and was therefore avoided by not retransmitting live audio during the activity.

The live "informant-made video" activity consists of static long shot, the simplest of composition: A video camera was set up on a tripod in the play area of a Montreal-area daycare. Directly connected to the camera, a small television set would broadcast a live feed from the camera, acting, in essence, as a mirror. The participants were encouraged/allowed to freely experiment and hold the reigns of the medium, to test its limits and explore the potential of the basic codes that compose the image. This activity will henceforth be referred to as video scribbling.

My study took take place at a fully bilingual pre-school institution located in the ethnically diverse borough of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in Montréal. All children who attended this daycare were relatively fluent in both French and English. Approximately thirty to forty children attend the daycare on any given day, typically divided into two main age groups, each group with its own room. Each of these sections is assigned two child-care workers (four child-care workers for the entire institution) and each child-care worker is responsible for a sub-group consisting of approximately 10 children.

The participants in my study consisted exclusively of children from the older age group section (3 to 5 year olds). The two child-care workers assigned to this older section assisted with the activity and occupied the children who did not wish to participate. The activity was set up in a corner of the daycare so children could freely come and go, participating when they wished. It is important to note that participation was encouraged but not required.

I had no desire to obtain a purely ethnographic account of behaviour. My objective was to encourage participation without stringent guidance or direction. I therefore elected to act as a "creative participant" (Lévy-Bruhl). It was important to get acquainted with the children and familiarize myself with the daycare environment before beginning the project. In order to do so, I visited on several occasions, helping the child-care workers with small tasks and at their behest and recorded a video of the talent show organized for the parents. It is also during this preliminary phase that I worked out most of the technical details for the activities.

Two weeks before the first activity was set to begin, I met with the children and the daycare staff for informal conversations. At this point, I described the procedures to be used to the daycare educators and organized a "voluntary attendance" meeting for parents. During this explanatory meeting, I gave a brief description of the project and answered questions concerning the procedures to be used. A consent form was also distributed and explained (Appendix B, p.45). I asked the parents if they agreed to have their children participate and to sign the form. All parents and guardians consented to have the children in their care participate.

5A. PROCEDURE

I collected data over two video scribbling sessions, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. I then reviewed each video document and extracted extensive time-code based logs. The guidelines I used are described in detail in a later section. (Data Analysis - Section 5B)

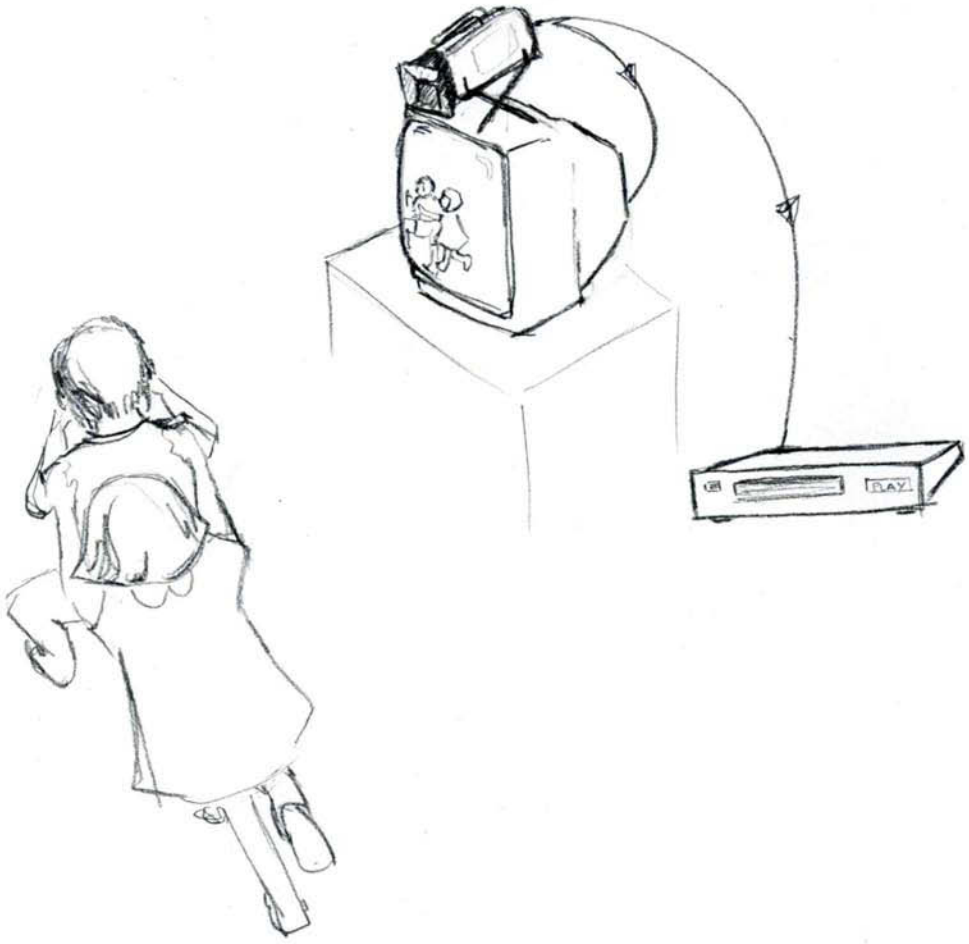

Fig. 5

Session 1 - Video Scribbling

> "An art material and its handling is only a means to an end. A technique should not be taught as such, separated from its meaning. Used at the right time it should help the child in his desires for self- expression."
>
> (**Lowenfeld**,1949, p.3)

In this first session, I set up the camera/television (Fig. 5) facing a foam-matted area in a corner of the room. Without any prompts or explanations, children were encouraged to gather in the area. No instructions were given, nor were the children asked to use the chairs that had been placed facing the television. The session lasted approximately 20 minutes. While the children freely went about watching and playing, their actions were broadcast in real time, on the television screen. Toys and costumes belonging to the daycare were nearby, stored in boxes, and the children were free to use these during the activity.

I had conducted a pilot project with a group of children months earlier at the same daycare. During this pilot project activity, a daycare worker had the children perform a song-and-dance-routine, which was distracting the participants from the activity. Since my activity seeks to obtain as many spontaneous reactions as possible, I specifically asked the daycare workers to avoid any adult interventions whenever possible. I was adamant that during these activities, all adults abstain from giving specific instructions, unless it was deemed absolutely necessary. The only exception which lead me to intervene and give instructions at times, was in cases of disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour amongst the children.

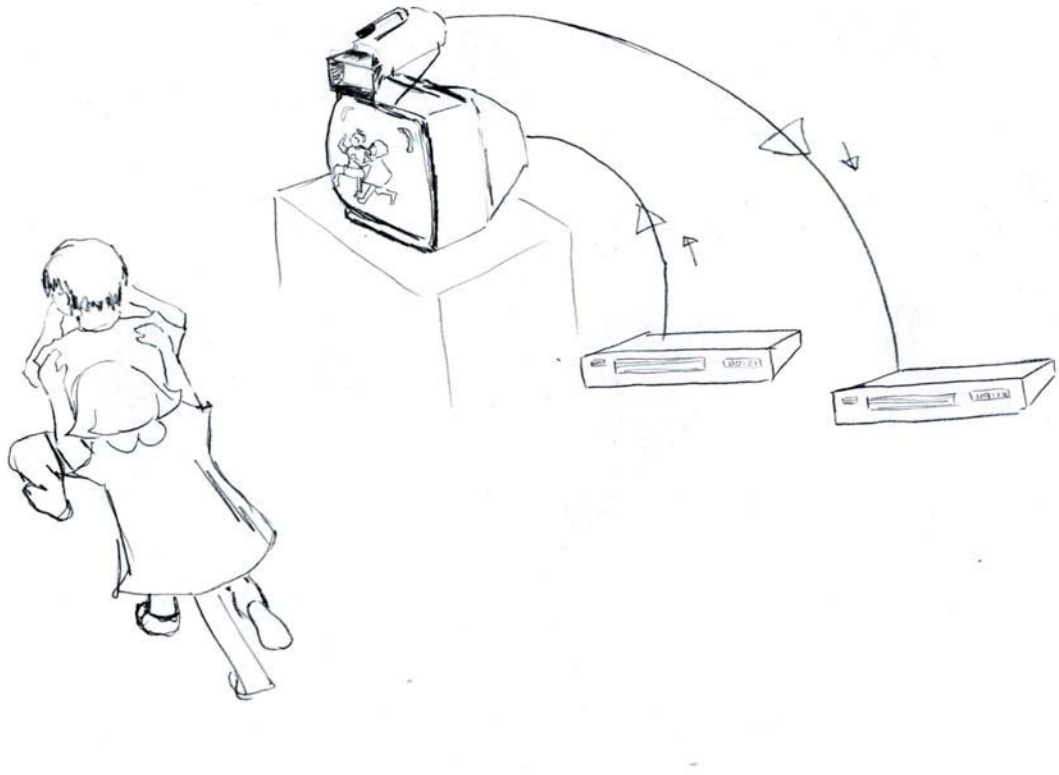

Fig. 6

Session 2 - Post Viewing

> "Post viewing permits the participant and researcher to take distance from the immediacy of the original experience and carry on forth to another level of understanding."
>
> (**Lachapelle,** 1994, p.24)

In this second session, the camera was set up to in the same fashion as previously described with one important difference: A video deck was added so as to play back the footage shot during the first session (Fig. 6). The camera recorded the children's reactions as they watched the footage recorded during the first session. Just as was the case in the first session, no specific guidelines were set. Plastic seats were arranged in front of the television, but children were not instructed to use them. I asked questions to the children as the activity progressed, and as in the first session, also made sure to halt any behaviour deemed inappropriate.

Post-Production - Data Analysis

The resulting video footage from the first and second sessions served as an exercise in creative exploratory play and qualitative documentation. Once the first two sessions were over, I combined and edited together the video documents. The result is a documentary where the image and audio track on the left consists of the footage recorded in the first session, while the right image and right audio track is entirely composed of footage shot during the second post-viewing session.

I synchronized the videos and analysed them using a generated time-code. Time-code, a standardized measuring tool in video production, is typically broken down into specific frames, seconds, minutes and hours. I then used these reference points in order to compare actions and reactions of the children between the two sessions. A sample of my data analysis log is included (Appendix A, p.44).

5B. DATA ANALYSIS

The video documents gathered offered an enormous amount of data. In order to analyse this wealth of information, I developed a set of criteria specifically for this project. These criteria, detailed below, were adapted from various sources, predominantly from writings by **Lowenfeld** (1954, 1960) and **Pariser** (1979, 1983):

Spontaneity: Children often ignore or are unaware of conventions when engaged in the act of scribbling. The participants' movements were systematically noted, whenever they left the activity or moved out of the field of vision of the camera, for example. Such actions expose to the participants the physical limits of the medium, and give them the opportunity to experiment with the conventions that regulate the boundaries of the frame.

Kinetic Response: What types of movements are the children engaged in (Waving, jumping etc…)? How do they act and react to the mediation of space within the frame?

Visual Response: What are the children looking at? What is their level of visual attention? What stimulates their interest within the frame? What external elements distract them from the frame?

Some analytical guidelines were also adapted from the interpretative viewing of **Roberts & Howard, S** (2005):

Attention Level: How focused are the children when watching? What are they paying attention to on screen? How much time do they spend looking at specific elements? Is their attention sporadic or concentrated? How engaged are they with the screen as they watch themselves?

Parasocial Response: What are their physical responses to the actions they see on screen? How to they act with one another as they watch? What types of interactions do the children have with one another during the activity? Do they help others participate or hinder others from participating? How do their social interactions relate to the activity, if at all?

Pleasure: What are their facial, verbal and physical reactions to what they are doing and seeing? Can their facial and verbal response indicate they are enjoying the activity?

Session 1: Kinetic

> "TV is above all, an extension of the sense of touch, which involves maximum interplay of all the sense."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.290)

Fig.4

The activity began with the children either sitting down on chairs or on the floor. Sitting in front of a television strikes me as either a learned, or habitual response. It is my experience that both children and adults inevitably sit down without being prompted when chairs are placed in front of a television. The daycare often plays DVDs for the children using the very same television and I had the chance to observe them watching *Mulan* (Tony Bancroft, 1998) a few days before conducting my project. I was told, and also witnessed first hand, that it is also common practice for the child-care workers to instruct the children to sit down before starting the film. For my activity however, the children were never instructed to sit—they simply did, most likely repeating - perhaps out of habit - that they had done or been instructed to do many times before.

Upon starting the activity however, many of the children stood on their knees, some even got up and moved closer to the television. Those that remained seated were afforded a poor view of the screen and began trying to sway their heads from side to side to get a better view of the screen. One boy in particular remained seated on the floor mats for the first few minutes and frowned at the children blocking his view. Their behaviour during my activity was in stark contrast to what I had observed the same children do whilst watching a DVD days before. When watching a film, they rarely ever stood or moved from their seats.

Watching tends to be a physically passive activity. We are cognitively active when viewing television, the multi-sensorial stimuli (audio-visual) require sustained levels of mental concentration. It is therefore telling that most of the children immediately began to physically engage in the activity and moved around without being prompted to do so. Cognitive and physical attention would, one assumes, then operate simultaneously during this activity. A drawback however, came as the area in front of the television grew more and more crowded. Children tried to get ever closer, and pushing as well as shoving did result. Despite these minor altercations, the activity prompted mainly positive physical interactions.

The children waved a great deal, keeping their eyes fixated on the screen as they did. There is an inherit reflexivity in this action as they were seemingly waving at themselves, acknowledging and attempting to make sense of their own image. The act of waving was one of the first responses children had once the activity began and it continued throughout. It should also be noted that once a child waved, others would often mimic the action and began to wave as well. Many of the children also pointed at their own image on the screen. Furthermore, children moved their arms and legs in various manners; one girl cusped her hands to make goggles. Again, the frequency and general positive physical response they exhibited does seem to indicate an overall interest in the activity.

There appears to be a desire on the part of the children to test the boundaries posed by the medium, suggesting a great deal of curiosity and a desire to explore the resulting effects of their physical movements. Waving, pointing and all the aforementioned actions appear to be attempts at better understanding just how their mediated image operates within the confines of the television screen. Lacan refers to this as an awareness… "…signaled by the illuminative mimicry of Aha-Erlebnis… where is expressed situational apperception, an essential point of the act of intelligence." (**Lacan**, p.93) Self-reflection, or what Lacan described as the mirror stage, is considered to be a pivotal point in the cognitive development of a child. The mirror or reflected image...

> "…bounces back immediately in the child into a series of gestures where he playfully experiences the relationship of assumed movements of the image in relation to his reflected environment, and from this virtual complexity in relation to reality which is then doubled, either to his own body or to others, perhaps even to objects next to him"
>
> (**Lacan**, p.93)

As the children are experimenting and testing the boundaries of the technological reflection, they see the results of their actions through the medium in real time, just as they would in a mirror. There is no possible suspension of disbelief in such a situation; participation is by default, required. When the viewer is also a protagonist, any lack of participation on the part of the viewer, inevitably leads to a lack of content. Unlike traditional television viewing, children participating in a live broadcast such as the one provided by this activity are not only physically engaged and less prone to passive, motionless viewing, but also cognitively resolving the limitations of the medium as they create their own content.

Session 1: Spontaneity

Children did interact with the limits of the frame. There are a few occurrences where children were partly out of frame, either because they were standing too far back from the camera and their heads were not appearing on screen or they were too far to the left or right of the camera and their bodies were consequently out of frame. The best example is of a girl who returned to the activity after leaving for a few minutes. She stood at the very back where the foam mattresses ended. Her body was visible on screen but her head was cut off. Upon noticing this, she bent down, all the while looking at the television screen. Again, her action also suggests a cognitive realization as to the space and boundaries of the framed image.

I also encouraged them to experiment further by popping either my hand or head in and out of frame. I explained to the participating children during the activity that whatever they did on the space delimited by the foam mattresses would appear on the television. These interventions on my part were meant to serve as a form of apprenticeship. Whenever I instigated such actions, the children would react by laughing or pointing, some later mimicked my hand gesture, partially leaving the frame and putting their hands up as I had, always looking at the television. It would be presumptuous to assume that the children clearly understood all that was implied by these gestures, that they had cognitive epiphanies each time they waved their hands, but there were signs demonstrating that they were, at the very least, interested to do so and to see the results.

Session 1: Parasocial

Children interacted with one another, sometimes holding each other, tapping one another on the head or shoulders. A boy repeatedly put his hand on a girl's head, such playful social interactions occurred throughout. The children did turn their attention away from the screen for a few moments whenever interacting with one another, but they quickly returned their gaze to the television once the social moment had passed. In some cases, as mentioned previously, intervention on my part was needed to avoid minor altercations, yet in general, the exchanges remained playful and friendly.

> "That our human senses, of which all media are extensions, are also fixed charges on our personal energies, and that they also configure the awareness and experience of each of us."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.35)

Interestingly, some children mimicked other children's gestures. If one child began to wave for example, others inevitably followed suit. The group seemed divided, some children would instigate a certain action, others would mimic them. The children also picked up costumes and began to dress up in front of the camera, again instigated by one child, others followed suit. Playing with one another, mimicking, dressing up; all of these social interactions are indicative of their sustained and active participation. The format of the activity appears to act as a catalyst which encourages social interaction amongst the participants whilst also allowing for interaction between participants and the medium. The children taking part in the video scribbling session were motivated to play with one another and then observe the result on screen. This live video format seems to encourage much more social interaction than passive viewing of pre-recorded content.

Session 1: Attention Level - Visual Response

> "As an extension and expediter of the sense life, any medium at once affects the entire field of the senses."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.54)

Fig.5

The children rarely looked away from the television screen during the activity. There were naturally some exceptions. Children were, at times, distracted by external stimuli, for example. For the most part however, the children's attention was predominantly focused at the screen. When they did divert their attention, they did so only for a short moment. It is important to note that not all of the children present at the beginning of the activity remained for its entirety. Participation was not mandatory, so children could come and go as they pleased. Of the children who participated, and of those who returned to the activity, their attention remained on the television. Also of note is the sustained participation of the children who elected to stay. The activity offers no specific tasks or goals that could encourage or motivate children to remain engaged for prolonged periods of time.

Their sustained attention far exceeded my expectations and might suggest that the reflexive aspect of viewing themselves on television not only appeals to children of this age group, but can do so for prolonged periods of time.

Session 1: Pleasure

The children exhibited a great deal of pleasure from participating in the activity. They often laughed or screamed, opened their mouths in exclamatory manners, grimaced. Their reactions were exuberant—laughter, for example, was also, at times, followed by physical movements such as a dance or frantic waves. The only exception were minor altercations, pushing or shoving, in what appeared to be a competition to acquire the closest, and therefore best, viewing spots. Aside from these few moments, the children displayed what I would qualify as joy throughout the activity.

Session 2: Kinetic

Fig.6

During the second session, children began the activity just as they had the first: by sitting down. Although four of them left in the first minutes, those who stayed promptly got up and moved in ever closer to the television, just as they had done during the first session. During both sessions, a core group of approximately five children were present for the entire 20 or so minutes. The other children came in and left throughout the duration of the activity. The attention afforded by the children during the second session was relatively on par with that of the first session. Children mainly watched the screen. The children often physically reacted to seeing themselves or others on screen; pointing, talking, grimacing, gesturing in various ways, mimicking what they saw on screen.

If the first session footage they were viewing showed a child waving, raising their hands or dancing, the children watching during the second session would wave back, raise their hands or mimic the dance, all the while watching the screen attentively. A young girl began to kick her feet up, touching them with her hands and walking whilst doing so. But the most poignant event occurred when a girl, seeing herself on screen, tapped her own chest and exclaimed: "Moi."

> "What sustains the child's interest in his/her work is its capacity to help him/her reflect on events and organize a sense impressions."
>
> (**Pariser**, 1983, p.52)

The children's actions during the first session and their reactions during the second session all indicate a high level of physical participation. Interestingly during the second session, despite being shown previously recorded material, the children were just as physically involved as they had been during the first session.

Session 2: Spontaneity

Unlike the first session, there was little possibility for the children to directly interact with live footage during the second session as they were watching pre-recorded material. They did, however, react to seeing themselves on screen, often pointing or calling out the name of the child they were watching on screen. The most notable reaction came approximately three minutes in: The children laughed as they watched footage of me propping my head into the frame.

Reviewing the footage with the participants in this second session elicited many spontaneous reactions, the enthusiasm was however, slightly less fervent during the second session. I speculate that watching previously recorded footage, since it does not offer the same level of immediate interaction as does live footage, is less exciting and hence generated slightly less participation. The live creation of images seems more enthralling than that of viewing pre-recorded images.

Session 2: Parasocial Response

As noted before, the children would often call out the name of a child they saw on screen. During this second session, children were less inclined to mimic each other's actions, reacting instead to what they saw on screen and mimicking the actions of the footage they were watching from the first session. Towards the end of this second session, a young girl who had put on a costume during the first session asked me if she could get a costume and dress up again. I agreed and she ran to get a princess dress, put it on in front of the camera and began to dance.

Session 2: Attention Level - Visual Response

Fig.7

Attention levels during the second session were very similar to the first. Fewer children remained for the entire activity; this may partly be due to the fact that some of the children who had participated in the first session did not attend daycare on the day of the second session. Most of the children who remained for the entirety of the first session however, also stayed for the duration of the second session. The children who remained throughout both sessions showed sustained interest.

Session 2: Pleasure

Just as was the case during the first session, the children seemed happy and responded positively during the entire second session. They seemed slightly less exuberant, they laughed and smiled just as in the previous session, but their actions and reactions were more subdued. As pointed out earlier, I believe this may be due to nature of the post-viewing activity which does not offer the possibility for direct interaction with the video footage.

5C. DATA INTERPRETATTION

The activity I conducted and the data gathered from it both suggest that it is possible to begin the "acquisition of (media) literacy as early as possible." (**Rogow**, 2002, URL) Pre-school-aged children appear to be capable of participating in an activity that is tailored to their cognitive skills and which encourages playful and creative participation. I propose that video scribbling does offer the "opportunities for a rich interaction between the child's codes and the codes of the medium." (**Rice**, 1984, p.55) By breaking down the video production process into core elements, this activity allowed children to freely experiment with the concept of the video image frame without overwhelming them with some of the more complex codes such as editing. Video scribbling does not instruct children how to produce video documents, but it does, as the activity demonstrated, provide for the video equivalent of a sheet of paper for them to scribble onto.

As McLuhan pointed out of the medical students who "seemed not to be watching an operation, but performing it" (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.286), television evokes our senses in a very tactile manner. The children responded physically to seeing their image on screen, and reacted by performing in front of the camera. Video scribbling elicits active participation, waving, pointing, dancing and jumping. The children interacted with the medium in ways they rarely do when watching a pre-recorded programme.

When afforded the possibility of seeing their own image on screen and in real time, participants experience television from a radically different point of view. The video scribbling activity allows, to a certain extent, for personal control over the medium; watching television shifts from a passive consumption event to a tangible, productive act.

What I herein refer to as *video scribbling* could be used to encourage the inclusion of media literacy in early childhood education. It demonstrates that pre-school-aged children are able to interact in different ways with media and disproves the misconception that it is not beyond their capacity to do so. This activity is but a small step; it is ultimately up to us adults to make accessible, cognitively understandable and challenging media for children.

Granted, the resulting video documents from this activity will never be broadcast on television (ethical guidelines in fact, forbid any distribution whatsoever). But if there could be a video equivalent to hanging a child's drawing on the fridge door, video scribbling would, in my opinion, qualify. The exploration of any medium through creative activity is but a first step. Such activities allow children "to discover and explore what different art materials can do, to learn their behaviour" (**Lowenfeld,** 1964, p.7) Like children's scribbles on paper, video scribbling offers both a playful activity and learning experience.

CONCLUSIONS

> "The artist is the only person who does not shrink from this challenge. He exults in the novelties of perception afforded by innovation."
>
> (**McLuhan & Fiore**, 1968, p.12)

We have been witness to the exponential spread of media in the last decades. We have also experienced unimaginable leaps in technology. The older generations struggle to keep up with these rapid advances whilst the younger generations relish the changes, seamlessly integrating every new form of communication into their concept of identity, with little or no effort.

> "We are more frantic to recover and put together the pieces of the shattered image than any past society. Whatever. It is this impulse that motivates the orgy of rear-view mirrorism, everything from scholarly reconstruction of remote and dinky cultures to *Gone with the Wind*."
>
> (**McLuhan & Fiore,** 1968, p.126)

Much of the discourse and research regarding new media technologies emerges from this adult nostalgia for traditional literacy, for the "good ol' days". Skeptics of the changes and flux in technology, many fearfully discount what is new by looking back at what was. Television is no exception. There is an abundance of content-oriented research projects that link television, video games and other electronic media to various social malaises: violent behaviour, poor school performance, illiteracy, obesity— the list is continually expanding.

> "Media culture, including online culture, has become integrally bound up with children's and teenagers' affiliations, identities, and pleasures."
>
> (**Nixon**, 2003, p.407)

For decades, television was perceived as a drug, rotting the brain of our youth. Thankfully, many educational institutions have embraced media studies as part of their curricula and the prejudices against the "idiot box" are eroding. Yet, television is still stigmatized and riddled with prejudice.

We walk out of the shop with the latest smart phone and a year later, it is considered vintage. These tiny handheld devices are now more powerful than a personal computer was ten years ago. As machines upgrade faster than we have the chance to understand, we are left with little chance to stop and ponder on the implications these changes bring to our sense of identity. But those who side for or against such changes are debating a moot point. Technology is neutral in nature; what we choose to do with these technological advances, is what embeds the machines with morality. If McLuhan was right and media truly are an extension of ourselves, then claiming television or any video broadcast as morally corrupt would be as preposterous as questioning the moral ambiguity of one's arm. It is we who transfer our morality onto these tools. The arm, like the television, operates within certain limitations and it is up to us to find the best ways to exploit and use these tools to their full potential.

> "The young people who have experienced a decade of TV have naturally imbibed an urge towards involvement in depth that makes all the remote visualized goals of usual culture seem not only unreal but irrelevant, and not only irrelevant but anemic. It is the total involvement in all-inclusive *nowness* that occurs in young via TV's mosaic image. This change of attitude has nothing to do with programming in any way, and would be the same if the programs consisted entirely of the highest cultural content. The change in attitude by means of relating themselves to the mosaic of TV image would occur in any event. It is, of course, our job not only to understand this change but to exploit it for its pedagogical richness. The TV child expects involvement..."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.292)

The goal of this study is less to offer conclusive answers or an all-encompassing solution, but rather to build the foundation for a simple user's manual. Using, adapting and tweaking readily available technologies—video cameras, mobile phones, computers—we can create simple activities for children of any age. The content is irrelevant. How the children interact and learn to manipulate the language of these machines; therein lies the untapped potential for learning: All that children need is a blank canvas.

> "In a highly visual culture, it is difficult to communicate the non-visual properties of spatial forms as to explain visuality to the blind."
>
> (**McLuhan**, 1964, p.290)

It is never too early to start. If children can become involved with media at the earliest developmental stages, they are more likely, later in life, to better understand how the medium shapes them and in turn, how they can shape it.

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APPENDIX A

(pages 15/20 - Sample Video Data Log)

00:02:36;02 boy screen left looks up at me smiles and looks back at television
00:02:41;16 I pan camera up
00:02:43;28 girl screen right plays zombie looking at the television
00:02:47;10 girl screen right talks to television and waves hello********
00:02:55;03 I pan camera down
00:02:57;03 I pan camera up
00:03:00;27 girl screen right talks to me
00:03:03;08 kids laughing looking at me (they saw me pop my mouth in frame day 1)*****
00:03:06;18 girl screen right opens and holds her mouth
00:03:08;15 girl back screen right crouches down looking at television
00:03:14;13 girls back screen right jumps up and down on her knees
00:03:17;18 I move camera back into long shot
00:03:18;21 girl back center puts her hands over her eyes and puts her face down
00:03:22;10 girl looks at television, laughs and looks at me
00:03:26;14 girl back screen right screams at television, boy front looks at her and puts hand
00:03:28;22 girl back looks left and right
00:03:30;21 girl back taps boy front on head
00:03:31;27 girl back points at me (talking)
00:03:36;06 girl back points at television
00:03:40;21 girl back and girl screen right both point at me (reacting to day 1)*****
00:03:43;08 girl back points at television
00;03:47;07 girl screen right looks at girl back
00:03:49;25 girl back puts hand on her chest (me?? reaction to talk-day 1)
00:03:52;10 girl back putting both hands to her chest
00:03:54;09 girl screen right moves arms up and down looking at girl back and television
00:03:56;28 boy center points at television
00:03:57;28 boy center crosses arms over shoulders moving frantically
00:04:01;29 girl back frays through and points at television
00:04:04;06 girl screen right crosses arms over shoulders and moves frantically on her knees
00:04:13;19 girl back lifts right hand and has excited mouth open look on her face
00:04:22;11 boy and girl front look at each other (talking)
00:04:26;14 girl back excitedly holds arm of boy standing screen left
00:04:27;21 boy screen left standing shrugs girl off
00:04:30;23 girl screen right and back put hands to mouth
00:04:33;10 girl back lies on her back excited
00:04:36;12 girl back raises hand (reaction to day 1)****
00:04:38;02 girl screen right raises hand (reaction to day 1)****
00:04:38;26 girl back moves body up and down whist kneeling
00:04:40;01 boy front center looks at me and raises hand (reaction to day 1)***
00:04:48;20 girl screen right turns back to girl back and claps her hands
00:04:51;15 boy center makes quiet motion to girl screen right
00:04:55;25 girl screen right turns back to girl back (talking?)
00:05:01:25 girl back puts hands to mouth laughing
00:05:02;06 girl screen right points at television (herself-day 1)***
00:05:03;10 boy center pushes girl right
00:05:03;29 girl back puts hand to television eyes wide open (reaction to day 1)***
00:05:06;00 boy center puts hand on girl back's arm
00:05:06;12 girl screen right puts hand up (reaction to day 1)***
00:05:10;02 I pan camera left
00:05:10;07 girl come into frame screen left
00:05:12;02 pan camera up
00:05:12;15 girl enters frame screen right looks at television arms stretched mouth opened
00;05:17;03 I move camera into low angle shot

APPENDIX B

(Sample Consent Form & Information Session Script)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH ON

VIDEO SCRIBBLING: PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN CREATIVELY PLAY USING VIDEO PRODUCTION.

I hereby give permission as child-care workers, parent or legal guardian of the child in my care to participate in a research program being conducted by Alexandre Pagé of the Art Education Department of Concordia University.

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A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: To introduce the basic concepts of video production to a group of pre-school aged children and create an environment in which they can creatively interact with the medium in a playful manner.

B. PROCEDURES

Research will take place in the daycare and consist of anywhere from two to three sessions. Each session will last approximately thirty (30) to forty five (45) minutes. Children will be encouraged but not obliged to play and interact with a video camera and television, their actions will be recorded. All activities will take place under the supervision of their child-care workers and the researcher.

The first session will use a camera directly connected to a television. Children will have approximately 30mins. to freely interact and watch themselves play, their image will be broadcast directly to a connected television so that they can see a live image of themselves playing. The second session will use the same setup. A camera will again be connected to the television and a VCR will be added to playback the footage shot during the first session. In this second session, children will be given the chance to watch what they recorded during the first session.

The goal of this research is to better understand how children understand television content when they are in control of its production. The project looks to study how children act and react to television when they actively participate rather than passively watch.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

The child-care workers will be present during the entirety of all research activities and the researcher will work directly with the staff to insure the well-being of the children at all times. If at any time, child-care workers wish to pause or end an activity, the researcher will do so. Should your child or children wish to stop participating in an activity or if you should wish for them to stop participating in this research, your child will be able to return to regular daycare activities without negative consequences. If you do not wish your child to appear on video, his or her image will be "black matted" from the footage (a black bar will be inserted on top of the image of your child)

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS (CONT.)

All video shot during this research will be used for research purposes only and will not be made public or distributed. Videos can be viewed by the children, their parent(s), guardian(s) or members of the daycare upon request. These video documents will not be released and can only be viewed in the presence of the researcher. Results of the research will be made available to you upon request. All results will respect the confidentiality of the children involved, their images will appear on video but their names will not be used. Screening of the videos may also take place during the thesis defence at Concordia University. If you wish to attend this meeting, please contact the researcher for details.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

• I understand that I am free to withdraw consent for the child in my care to discontinue participation at anytime without negative consequences.

• I understand that my child's name will be withheld, however their video likeness will be revealed.

• I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME OF INSTITUTION (please print)

_____

NAME OF PRINCIPAL CARETAKER FOR THIS INSTITUTION (please print)

_____

SIGNATURE

_____

NAME OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN (please print)

_____

SIGNATURE

_____

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Brigitte Des Rosiers, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 ext. 7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia .ca

APPENDIX C

(Information Session Script)

VIDEO SCRIBBLING: PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN CREATIVELY PLAY USING VIDEO PRODUCTION.

(to be read aloud by the researcher to all attending the session)

"The goal of this research is to observe pre-school children as they interact with basic video production tools. The project will consist of two or three sessions in total.

During the first video scribbling sessions, children will have the chance to play with a fixed video camera. This camera will send a live feed of their actions onto a television set. Children will be free to play and interact while they watch the television, which retransmits whatever they are doing in real time. The second session will use a similar set-up, but rather than seeing a live broadcast, children will watch footage of the previous session. A third session, similar to the second, could be possible, time permitting. All sessions will last thirty to forty-five minutes. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of how children comprehend and interact with the medium of television through the use of active and creative play rather than passive watching.

I am therefore asking you, as the parents or guardians of the children who attend this daycare, for your consent. I will only conduct these video scribbling activities with the children whose parents or guardians have agreed, in writing, to their participation. You are under no obligation to consent for your child to participate and such a refusal will have no negative consequence for you or your child. Should you consent to your child to participate and at any time during or after the activities, feel uncomfortable with his or her taking part in the project, you can discontinue without any negative consequences for you and your child. Should a request to discontinue and to be excluded be made, the image of said child will be "black matted" from all video footage. Only the first names of the children will be used in this study, their full identity, last names and any other personal information, will remain confidential. No personal information will be used nor revealed for the purposes of this project, nor made public in any way.

The video footage which will result from this study will be used strictly for the purposes of the research project. No footage will be shown nor broadcasted in any public setting, nor be released in any public or private form. As parents or guardians of the children involved, you may request to review parts of, or the entirety of the footage gathered. Should you wish to do so, I will gladly arrange for a meeting with you. All video footage to be viewed will be done in my presence.

I have consent forms with me. Please read it carefully. If you consent that your child participate in the study, please fill in the form and sign in the space provided. Should you have any questions or comments, you can either raise them here with me now or contact me via email or phone at any time."