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Being Interdisciplinary Is So Very Hard to Do

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I

INTERDISCIPLINARY HAS LONG BEEN A FAMILIAR WORD in discussions of education and pedagogy, but recently it has acquired a new force and urgency, in part because as an agenda interdisciplinarity seems to flow naturally from the imperatives of left culturalist theory, that is, from deconstruction, Marxism, feminism, the radical version of neopragmatism, and the new historicism. Each of these movements, of course, should be distinguished from the others in many respects, but it is fair to say that they are alike all hostile to the current arrangement of things as represented by (1) the social structures by means of which the lines of political authority are maintained and (2) the institutional structures by means of which the various academic disciplines establish and extend their territorial claims. Often this hostility takes the form of antiprofessionalism, an indictment of the narrowly special interests that stake out a field of inquiry and then colonize it with a view toward nothing more than serving their own selfish ends.

In the antiprofessional diatribe, specialization stands for everything that is wrong with a practice that has lost its way, everything that is disappointing about an educational system that seems out of touch with the values it supposedly promotes. Of course the antiprofessionalist attack on specialization is by no means the exclusive property of the left: it has long been a staple of conservative jeremiads against the decline of culture in a world where all coherence is gone and the center has not held. Indeed, at times it is difficult to distinguish the two ends of the political spectrum on this question. When Russell Jacoby reports that intellectuals have moved out of the coffeehouses and into the faculty lounge and complains that by doing so they have abandoned their responsibility to the public — “as professional life thrives, public culture grows poorer and older” (8) — we might well be hearing the voice of Lynne Cheney contrasting the vigorous cultural life of the American mainstream to the increasingly narrow and jargon-ridden practices of the academy.

Yet, if both the left and the right can lay claim to an anti-professionalism that regards with suspicion activities tied narrowly to disciplinary pressures, there is nevertheless a difference in the ways in which the antiprofessional stance is assumed. The difference is one of sophistication and complexity in the presentation; whereas the right tends to issue its call for a general, non-specialized pedagogy in the same flag-waving mode that characterizes its celebration of the American family, the left urges its pedagogy in the context of a full-fledged epistemological argument, complete with a theory of the self, an analysis of the emergence and ontology of institutions, and a taxonomy of the various forms of pedagogical practice, from the frankly oppressive to the self-consciously liberating.

At the heart of that argument is the assumption that the lines currently demarcating one field of study from another are not natural but constructed by interested parties who have a stake in preserving the boundaries that sustain their claims to authority. The structure of the university and the curriculum is a political achievement that is always in the business of denying its origins in a repressive agenda. Knowledge is frozen in a form supportive of the status quo, and this ideological hardening of the arteries is abetted by a cognitive map in which disciplines are represented as distinct, autonomous, and Platonic. Once knowledge has been compartmentalized, the complaint continues, the energy of intellectuals is spent within the spaces provided by a superstructure that is never critically examined. Disciplinary ghettos contain the force of our actions and render them ineffectual on the world’s larger stage. In Michael Ryan’s words, the present disciplinary “divisions conceal the relationality” of supposedly independent enterprises

and prevent us from seeing “that they are nothing ‘in themselves’ and that they constitute each other as mutually interdependent determinations or differentiations of a complex system of heterogeneous forces” (53-54). One who uncritically accepts the autonomy of his or her “home enterprise” and remains unaware of the system of forces that supports and is supported by that enterprise will never be able to address those forces and thereby take part in the alteration of that system.

This analysis of our situation implicitly includes an agenda for remedying it. One must first (and here Bruce Robbins is speaking) “affirm ... that no institution is an island” and that while “exercising our profession, we simultaneously occupy overlapping and conflicting institutions” (3). We must, that is, become sensitive to what Vincent Leitch calls “the ‘made up’ quality of knowledge” as our present institutional categories deliver it to us (53): and then, as S. P. Mohanty urges, “we must seek to suspend the process of this continuity, to question the self-evidence of meanings by invoking the radical — but determining — alternatives that disrupt our ... discourses of knowledge” (155). That is to say, and Jim Merod says it, we must learn “to situate texts in the field of institutional forces in which they are historically conceived” rather than rest content with regarding them as the special isolated objects of an autonomous practice (92). Once we do this, the smooth coherences and seamless narratives that form the basis of our present knowledge will be disrupted; artificially constructed unities will fall apart; the totalizing discourse in which discrete and independent entities are put into their supposedly natural places by a supposedly neutral discursive logic will be replaced by discontinuity, disorientation, decentering, transformation, fluidity, relation, process. Moreover, as the bonds of discourse are loosened, the mind will be freed from the constraints those bonds imposed, and the person thus freed will move toward “the full development of all human faculties” (Ryan 49), leaving behind the narrowness of vision that befalls those who remain tied to the confining perspectives of the ideologically frozen divisions of intellectual labor.

Of course the program requires some mechanism of implementation, and it is here that we arrive at interdisciplinary study by a route Jeffrey Sammons charts for us. Sammons points out that American education derives from a German model whose goal is “the cultural formation of the self so that it might teach the fullness of its potentialities” (14). In the context of that model it is the task of particular disciplines to contribute to that fullness and avoid the temptation to become ends in themselves, to become nothing more than training schools for entrance into a trade or profession. It always happens, however, that as soon as disciplines are fully established they come

quickly to believe in the priority of their own concerns and turn from their larger mission to the training of professionals for whom those concerns are not only prior but exclusive. In short, the structure of the curriculum, or rather the very fact that it has a structure, works against its supposed end, and therefore something must be built into that structure to counter the tendency to produce nonresponsive spheres of self-contained complacency. By definition interdisciplinary studies do exactly that — refuse to respect the boundaries that disciplines want always to draw — and thus encourage a widening of perspectives that will make possible the fullness education is supposed to confer.

Although Sammons and Ryan share the word *full* as a component in their briefs for interdisciplinary thinking, they mean different things by it. Sammons's fullness is the fullness of the imagination. He writes, however critically, in the tradition of High Humanism, and that is why he can locate the potential for destabilizing activity in the humanities or, as he calls them, "the disciplines of the imagination," of a Coleridgean faculty that sees similarities and differences as constructed. Such a faculty, he claims, is inherently "subversive," and therefore the humanities are inherently subversive because they introduce "people to the inexhaustible alternative options of the imagination" (10). Persons so introduced would be "full" in the sense that their intelligences would not be captured by any one point of view but would, rather, be engaged in exploring points of view other than those authorized by current orthodoxies.

To someone like Ryan (or Robbins or Merod) all this would seem suspiciously familiar, especially when Sammons approvingly quotes Robert Scholes's assertion that "poetic texts are designed to discomfort us" (Scholes 43). Left ears will hear this as just another version of a hoary and suspect *disciplinary* claim, which, instead of decentering the curriculum or exposing its affiliations with political and economic forces from which it thinks itself separate, gives it an even firmer center in the humanities and then has the nerve to call that center "subversive." Insofar as such an agenda envisions a fullness, it is merely a fullness of the reflective intellect, an intellect detached perhaps from any of the particular interests that vie for territory in the academy but an intellect nevertheless confined in its operations — however full — to that same academy. What Ryan, Merod, and Robbins want is a fullness of *engagement*, a mind and person that refuses to segregate its activities, to think, for example, that literary study is one thing, participation in the national political process quite another. They would say that the point is not to determine which of the presently situated fields of study is the truly subversive one but to call into question the entrenched articulations within

which the divisions between fields (and knowledge) emerge, and *thereby* (or so the claim goes) to subvert the larger social articulation within which the articulations of the academy are rendered intelligible and seemingly inevitable. In short, for these more radical voices, interdisciplinary study is more than a device for prodding students to cross boundaries they would otherwise timidly respect: it is an assault on those boundaries and on the entire edifice of hierarchy and power they reflect and sustain. If you begin by transgressing the boundaries, say, between literature and economics as academic fields of study, you are halfway to transgressing the boundaries between the academy and its supposed “outside,” and you are thus brought to the realization that the outside/inside distinction is itself a constructed one whose effect is to confine academic labor to a neutral zone of intellectual/professional play — a realization that then sends you back to operate in that zone in a way that is subversive not only of its autonomy but of the forces that have established that autonomy for their own unacknowledged purposes. In this vision, interdisciplinary study leads not simply to a revolution in the structure of the curriculum but to *revolution tout court*. In the classical liberal paradigm, interdisciplinary studies seek only to transform the academy while maintaining the wall between it and the larger field of social action; and thus, as Ryan points out, “the radical position of pedagogic activism for the sake of an alternative social construction seem[s] a deviation” (49), an intrusion of the political into precincts it is forbidden to enter. Radical interdisciplinarity begins with the assumption that the political is always and already inside those precincts and that the line separating them from the arena of social agitation is itself politically drawn and must be erased if action within the academy is to be continuous with the larger struggle against exploitation and oppression.

II

It is a stirring vision, but it is finally at odds with the epistemology that often accompanies it. That epistemology is either deconstructive or psychoanalytic or a combination of the two, and in any of its forms its thesis is that “meanings do not exist as such [that is, as freestanding and “natural” entities] but are produced” (Mohanty 15). What they are produced *by* is a system of articulation from which we as either speakers or hearers cannot distance ourselves, because we are situated within it. Since that system (call it *différence* or the unconscious) is the unarticulated ground within which specification occurs, “it” cannot be specified and al-

ways exceeds — remains after, escapes — the specifications it enables. What this means, as Shoshana Felman observes, is that knowledge is “a knowledge which does not know what it knows, and is thus *not in possession of itself*” (40). That is, as knowledge it cannot grasp, or name the grounds of, its possibility, and whenever it thinks to have done so, those grounds are elsewhere than they seem to be; they are once again under the would-be knower’s feet. It is to this point that Felman quotes Lacan — “the elements do not answer in the place where they are interrogated, or more exactly, as soon as they are interrogated somewhere, it is impossible to grasp them in their totality” (Felman 29) — and she might just as well have invoked Derrida as he explains why *différance*, although it makes presentation possible, can never itself be presented: “Reserving itself, not exposing itself. . . . it exceeds the order of truth but without dissimulating itself as something, as a mysterious being. . . . In every exposition it would be exposed to disappearing as disappearance. It would risk appearing: disappearing” (122). Or again, “the trace is never as it is in the presentation of itself. It erases itself in presenting itself, muffles itself in resonating” (Derrida 133). That is to say, the truth one would know has always receded behind the formulations it makes possible, and therefore those formulations are always ignorant of themselves and incomplete. Indeed, ignorance, the forgetting of the enabling conditions of knowledge (conditions that cannot themselves be known), is constitutive of knowledge itself. Thus, Felman declares, “human knowledge is by definition that which is untotalizable, that which rules out any possibility of totalizing what it knows or of eradicating its own ignorance” (29). It follows then that if ignorance is the necessary content of knowledge as presented at any particular moment, knowledge is not something that should be preserved or allowed to settle, since in whatever form it appears it will always be excluding more than it reveals; and indeed it is only by virtue of the exclusions it cannot acknowledge that it acquires a (suspect) shape.

Not surprisingly, the pedagogy demanded by this insight is a pedagogy of antiknowledge, of the refusal of knowledge in favor of that which it occludes. There must be a new way of teaching, one that “does not just reflect itself, but turns back on itself so as to *subvert itself* and truly *teaches* only insofar as it subverts it self” (Felman 39), a pedagogic style that in Lacan’s words is “the ironic style of calling into question the very foundations of the discipline” (qtd. in Felman 39). Lacan is referring to the discipline of psychoanalysis but, vigorously pursued, the strategy calls into question the foundations of all disciplines, since those foundations will in every case be made of ignorance and therefore must be first exposed and then removed.

The way to do this is to work against the apparent coherences that support and are supported by ignorance and to engage in a kind of guerilla warfare in which the decorums disciplines ask us to observe are systematically violated, so that we proceed, “not through linear progression, but through breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities” (qtd. in Felman 27). Rather than teach meanings, we must undo the meanings offered to us by hidden ideological agendas, poking holes in the discursive fabric those agendas weave, replacing the narcotic satisfactions of easy intelligibility with the disruptive disease of relentless critique. The call to battle is sounded in summary but representative form by Vincent Leitch in the name of Roland Barthes:

... uproot the frozen text: break down stereotypes and opinions; suspend or baffle the violence and authority of language; pacify or lighten oppressive paternal powers; disorient the Law; let classroom discourse float, fragment, digress. (51)

And then what? Does the pedagogy of anti-knowledge hold out the hope of anything beyond its repeated unsettling of whatever claims us in the name of established knowledge? It is in the answer to this question that the tension between the political and the epistemological arguments for interdisciplinary studies comes to the surface. In the political argument, which sees us currently inhibited in our actions by lines of demarcation we did not draw, the demonstration that those lines and the distinctions they subtend are not natural but historical will remove their power and free us from their constraints. “The classroom,” says Jeffrey Peck,

then becomes a productive rather than a reproductive environment. ... In the spirit of critical reflection meanings and values of traditional pedagogy can be scrutinized.... The intersubjectivity of meaning can be exposed, and education institutions, the classroom, the discipline, and the university can be seen to construct and condition knowledge. In this way literary study, as the study of textuality, . . . reveals the epistemological structures that organize how we know, how our knowledge gets transmitted and accepted, and why and how students receive it. (51)

To this heady prospect, which will end, Peck predicts, with students becoming better readers “of their own lives, as well as of texts” (53), the epistemological argument poses a dampening question — from what vantage point will the “structures that organize how we know” be revealed? — and the answer can only be, from the vantage point of a structure that is at the moment *unrevealed* because it occupies the position formerly occupied by

the structures it now enables us to analyze. The strategy of “making visible what was hidden” can only be pursued within forms of thought that are themselves hidden; the bringing to light of what Edward Said calls “the network of agencies that limit, select, shape, and maintain” meaning requires the dark background of a network that cannot be seen because it is within it that seeing occurs (34-35). Partiality and parochialism are not eliminated or even diminished by the exposure of their operation, merely relocated. The blurring of existing authoritative disciplinary lines and boundaries will only create new lines and new authorities; the interdisciplinary impulse finally does not liberate us from the narrow confines of academic ghettos to something more capacious; it merely redomiciles us in enclosures that do not advertise themselves as such.

In short, if we take seriously the epistemological argument in the context of which the gospel of interdisciplinary study is so often preached, we will come to the conclusion that being interdisciplinary — breaking out of the prison houses of our various specialties to the open range first of a general human knowledge and then of the employment of that knowledge in the great struggles of social and political life — is not a possible human achievement. Being interdisciplinary is more than hard to do: it is impossible to do. The epistemological argument deprives the political argument of any possible force, because it leaves no room for a revolutionary project. Or, rather, it leaves us with projects that look disconcertingly like the disciplinary projects we are trying to escape. Either (as some contributors to a recent piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* complain) the announcement of an interdisciplinary program inaugurates the effort of some discipline to annex the territory of another, or “interdisciplinary thought” is the name (whether acknowledged or not) of a new discipline, that is, of a branch of academic study that takes as its subject the history and constitution of disciplines. Either the vaunted “blurring of genres” (Clifford Geertz’s now famous phrase) means no more than that property lines have been redrawn — so that, for example, Freud and Nietzsche have migrated respectively from psychology and philosophy to English and comparative literature — or the genres have been blurred only in the sense of having been reconfigured by the addition of a new one, of an emerging field populated by still another kind of mandarin, the “specialist in contextual relations” (Alton Becker; qtd. in Geertz 521).

III

Needless to say, this is a conclusion many are loath to reach, but in order to avoid it, the proponents of radical pedagogy must negotiate an impasse produced by one of their own first principles, the unavailability of a perspective that is not culturally determined. Since a perspective from which the determinations of culture can be surveyed is a requirement of the radical project, one must ask how that project can even get started. In general, two answers have been given to this question. The first is to move from Robbins's observation quoted above, that "while exercising our profession, we simultaneously occupy overlapping and conflicting institutions," to the critical practice of allowing the claims made on us by one institution to stand in a relation of challenge to the claims made on us by another. As Samuel Weber puts it, "in interpreting a literary text, an interpreter will not necessarily be limited to confronting those interpretations previously certified as inhabiting the discipline of literary studies"; rather, "he may also invoke interpretations emanating from other regions (philosophy, psychoanalysis, etc.) and these in turn may well challenge the unifying assumptions of the discipline of literary studies in America" (38). That is to say, one's practice within a discipline can be characterized by invocations of and frequent references to the achievements, dicta, emphases, and requirement of other disciplines.

This is certainly true (my own practice, like yours, has often been answerable to such a description), but the question is, does the practice of importing into one's practice the machinery of other practices operate to relax the constraints of one's practice? And the answer I would give is no, because the imported product will always have the form of its appropriation rather than the form it exhibits "at home"; therefore at the very moment of its introduction, it will already be marked by the discourse it supposedly "opens." When something is brought into a practice, it is brought in in terms the practice recognizes; the practice cannot "say" the Other but can only say itself, even when it is in the act of modifying itself by incorporating material hitherto alien to it. As Peter Stearns says of history (and it could be said of any discipline). "What has happened is that social historians have borrowed topics, concepts and vocabulary . . . but they have then cast them in an essentially historical frame," and he adds. "This is something . . . more modest than a 'blurring of genres'" (qtd. in Winkler 14). Just so, and it is hard to see how it could be otherwise: terms and distinctions could arrive intact in the

passage from one discipline to another only if they had some form independent of the discipline in whose practices they first became visible; but, in our brave new textualist-historicist world, terms and distinctions are no less socially constructed than anything else, and therefore the shape they appear in will always be relative to the socially constructed activity that has received them and made them its own.

Moreover, if materials, concepts, and vocabularies take on the coloring of the enterprise that houses them, so do practitioners, and that is why the second strategy by which pedagogy will supposedly transcend the disciplinary site of its activities fails. That strategy is a strategy of self-consciousness, and it requires us, while performing within a discipline, to keep at least one eye on the larger conditions that make the performance possible. (This is the implication of Robbins's subtitle: "Toward Productively Divided Loyalties.") While some agents confine themselves to the horizons of a particular profession, others situate themselves in the wider horizons of a general cultural space and therefore manage to be at once committed and not committed to the labors they perform. It is the latter group that keeps faith with a higher vision by not forgetting "the forces and factors" that underlie and give point to local urgencies (Weber 37). They remain aware of "the reader's and writer's immersion in a network of social forces that both grant and limit the possibility of intellectual authority" (Merod 93): and unlike their less enlightened brethren they resist the tendency of any "regime of truth" to deny its "constitutive dependence on what it excludes, dethrones, and replaces" (Weber 38). That is, they contrive to practice a particular craft without buying into the claims of that craft to be self-justifying and autonomous and without allowing the perspective of that craft to eclipse the other perspectives that would come into view were the craft's demands sufficiently relaxed.

The question is, as it was before, is this a possible mode of action? Again the answer is no, and for reasons that will become clear if we rephrase the question: can you simultaneously operate within a practice and be self-consciously in touch with the conditions that enable it? The answer could be yes only if you could achieve a reflective distance from those conditions while still engaging in that practice; but once the conditions enabling a practice become the object of analytic attention (against the background of still other conditions that are themselves unavailable to conscious inspection), you are engaging in another practice (the practice of reflecting on the conditions of a practice you are not now practicing), and the practice you began to examine has been left behind, at least as something you are doing as opposed to something you are studying. Once you turn, for example, from actually performing

literary criticism to examining the “network of forces and factors” that underlie the performance, literary criticism is no longer what you are performing.

The point of course is tautological, and it would seem unnecessary to make it, except that in recent years it has been obscured by an illegitimate inference that has been drawn from a legitimate thesis. The thesis is the one we began with: disciplines are not natural kinds; they emerge in the wake of a political construction of the field of knowledge. The illegitimate inference is that since disciplinary boundaries are constructed and revisable, they are not real. But of course they are as real as anything else in a world in which *everything* is constructed (the world posited by those who make this argument); even though the lines demarcating one discipline from another can in time blur and become rearranged, until that happens the arrangements now in force will produce differences felt strongly by all those who live within them. Although it is true that disciplines have no essential core (another way of saying that they are not natural kinds), the identity conferred on them by a relational structure — a structure in which everything is known by what it is not — constitutes (however temporarily) a core that does all the work an essentialist might desire, including the work of telling community members what is and is not an instance of the practice it centers. Someone who says, as I have done in the previous paragraph, “that’s not literary criticism” has said something that has a basis in fact, even if that fact itself — the fact of the present shape of a diacritically constituted discipline — is one undergoing continual modification and transformation. Again the lesson is only apparently paradoxical: because the core of the discipline is a historical achievement, it is capable of alteration, but as an achievement it exerts, if only for a time, a force that cannot be ignored or wished away.

This does not mean that a worker in a discipline knows its core in the sense of being able to hold its differential (nonpositive) identity in mind. Indeed, in order to function in the discipline (as opposed to being a student of its formation), the fragility of that identity is something the worker cannot know or at least must always forget when entering its precincts. The mark of that forgetting is the unintelligibility to practitioners of questions one might put from the outside, questions like (for teaching) “why is it that you want your students to learn?” or (for criminal law) “why should we be interested in the issue of responsibility at all?” or (for history) “why would anyone want to know what happened in the past?” You can’t be seriously asking these questions and still be a member of those communities, because to conceive of yourself (a phrase literally intended) as a member is to have forgotten that those are questions you can seriously ask. This is the forgetting that Weber, Robbins, Merod, and others excoriate, but it is also the forgetting that is

necessary if action of a particular kind is ever to occur. Denying and forgetting are not reformable errors but the very grounds of cognition and assertion. If one were to remember everything and deny nothing, assertion, directed movement, politics itself would have no possible shape.

Some of those who find magic in the word *interdisciplinary* come very close to making this point but shy away from it at the last moment. Richard Terdiman observes, correctly I think, that while “we attend to the content of our instruction, we are fundamentally, but imperceptibly, molded by its form” — that is, by the disciplinary structures within which the instruction occurs — and that therefore “the ideological representation of the world is involuntarily naturalized even through critique of its specific detail” (221). “Are our ways of teaching students to ask *some* questions,” asks Barbara Johnson, “always correlative with our ways of teaching them *not to ask* — indeed to be unconscious of — others?” (“Teaching” 173). The answer is yes, and because the answer is yes our pedagogical imperative, no matter how radical its stance, will always turn out, as Terdiman observes, “to have sources and serve interests other than those we thought” (222). In the act of producing this insight, Terdiman terms it “unhappy.” But why? All it means is that we will never achieve the full self-consciousness that would allow us at once to inhabit and survey reflectively our categories of thought, but that incapacity only affects our ability to be gods; and were we indeed to become gods, no longer tethered to the local places within which crises and troubles emerge, we would not feel the urgencies that impel us forward. The fact that we do feel these urgencies and are moved by that feeling to act depends on the very limitations and blindnesses Terdiman and company deplore. It is only because we cannot achieve an “authentic critique” (Terdiman 223) — a critique free of any political or conceptual entanglements — that the critiques we do achieve have force, even if it is the nature of things for the force of those critiques to be as vulnerable and transient as the conditions that give them form.

The impossibility of authentic critique is the impossibility of the interdisciplinary project, at least insofar as that project holds out the hope of releasing cognition from the fetters of thought and enlarging the minds of those who engage in it. The obvious response to this conclusion is to point out that interdisciplinary studies are all around us. What is it that all these people are doing? The answer has already been given: either they are engaging in straightforwardly disciplinary tasks that require for their completion information and techniques on loan from other disciplines, or they are working within a particular discipline at a moment when it is expanding into territories hitherto marked as belonging to someone else — participating, that

is. in the annexation by English departments of philosophy, psychoanalysis, anthropology, social history, and now, legal theory; or they are in the process of establishing a new discipline, one that takes as its task the analysis of disciplines, the charting of their history and of their ambitions. Typically the members of this new discipline will represent themselves as antidisciplinary, that is, as interdisciplinary, but in fact, as Daniel Schön points out, they will constitute a “new breed” of “counter-professionals/experts” (340). Nor is there anything necessarily reprehensible about these activities. Depending on one’s own interests and sense of what the situation requires, the imperial ambitions of a particular discipline may be just what the doctors ordered; and it may equally well be the case that, from a certain point of view, the traditional disciplines have played themselves out and it is time to fashion a new one. For my own part I subscribe to both these views, and therefore I find the imperialistic success of literary studies heartening and the emergence of cultural studies as a field of its own exhilarating. It is just that my pleasure at these developments has nothing to do with the larger claims — claims of liberation, freedom, openness — often made for them. The American mind, like any other, will always be closed, and the only question is whether we find the form of closure it currently assumes answerable to our present urgencies.

Biographical Note: The author is Professor of English and Law and Chair of the Department of English at Duke University. A version of this paper was presented at the 1988 MLA convention in New Orleans.

End note

¹Stephen Booth tells me that this formulation may be too strong, and he reminds me of an experience many of us will be able to recall, knowing while watching a horror movie that certain devices are being used to frighten us and yet being frightened nevertheless despite our knowledge. In experiences like this an analytical understanding of what is happening exists side by side with what is happening but does not affect or neutralize it. It would be too much to say, then, that when engaging in a practice (and watching horror movies is a practice) one must forget the analytical perspective one might have on the practice at another time. It would be more accurate to say that an analytical perspective on a practice does not insulate one from experiencing the practice in all its fullness, that is, in the same way one would experience it were the analytical perspective unavailable.

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