Aesthetic Evangelists:
Conversion and Empowerment in Contemporary Community Art

Grant H. Kester

1 During the last few years a new set of assumptions about the role of the artist has emerged in the United States as part of what is being called the "new public art."(1) This "new genre" of public art, according to critic Suzi Gablik, "takes the form of interactive, community-based projects inspired by social issues."(2) In fact, the new public art might be more accurately termed the new community art to the extent that questions raised by the interaction of the artist and particular, often urban, communities have played a central role in its evolution. Further, this work tends to be less concerned with producing objects per se than with a process of collaboration that is understood to produce certain pedagogical effects in and on the community. In this way the new, community-based public art represents a transition from an earlier model of public art that involved the location of sculptural works in sites administered by public agencies - either federal, state, or local governments or other administrative bodies (airports, parks, etc.) - or alternately, private locations (for example, some of the works in the "New Urban Landscape" exhibition at the World Financial Center in Battery Park City in 1988).

The growing influence of this new public art is evident in the proliferation of articles, conferences, books, exhibitions, and commissions. It can also be observed in the changing funding mandates of major private foundations, for whom "community" has become the buzzword of the moment. There are a range of positions among private sector funders, from the Lannan Foundation in Los Angeles, which is shifting almost entirely from arts funding to funding for "social issues," to the MacArthur Foundation - the largest private funder of media arts in the country - which has re-written its program guidelines to explicitly reject media "art" in favor of "community-based organizations that are working to promote social justice and democracy through media," to the Lila Wallace/Reader's Digest Foundation, which has developed new programs to fund artists who work with "communities" - however that might be defined.

The terms "public" and "community" imply two very different relationships between the artist and the administrative apparatus of the city. The public artist most commonly interacts with urban planners, architects, and city agencies concerned with the administration of public buildings and spaces, while the community-based public artist more commonly interacts with social service

agencies and social workers (women's shelters, homeless advocates, neighborhood groups, etc.). In each case the interaction between the artist and the community is mediated through a discursive network of professional institutions and ideologies that the artist collaborates with and, in some cases, seeks to radicalize or challenge.

The shift toward a "new" community-based public art is evident in Chicago curator Mary Jane Jacobs's two most recent projects. The works she included in her exhibition for the 1991 Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina ("Places with a Past"), although involving a degree of interaction between the artist and a given site, by and large remained within the sculpture/installation mode. On the other hand, the works in her most recent and highly publicized project, ("Culture in Action: New Public Art in Chicago" held in the summer of 1993), were developed, in Jacobs's words, "with the co-participation of an artist, but also with a lot of decision-making happening on the part of constituent-collaborators who are not artists - like students, and in the case of some of the other projects: factory workers, mothers in a public housing development, AIDS volunteers, gang youth, and so forth."(3)

The new public art draws, both consciously and unconsciously, from the history of progressive urban reform. This is clear in its concern with ameliorating problems typically associated with the city (homelessness, gang culture, "at-risk" youth, etc.), as well as in the relationship that the community-based public artist takes up with various constituencies and communities. Concepts such as "empowerment" and "participatory democracy" that found political expression during the 1960s in the policies and programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity or the National Welfare Rights movement, are re-emerging in the rhetoric of the community-based public artist. Jacobs's most recent project reaches even further back into the history of urban reform; she is currently working on research for a park dedicated to Jane Addams, the founder of a turn-of-the-century settlement house in Chicago, which will feature sculptures by Louise Bourgeois.

In the following essay I will analyze the new public art, and the emerging institutional and ideological identity of the public artist, in relation to changes in the system of arts patronage, the current "moral economy" of capitalism, and the historical development of progressive urban reform in the U.S. This investigation will be divided into three sections. In the first section I will examine what might be called the representational politics of community art, establishing a general framework for analyzing the relationship between the artist and the community; in the second section I will analyze the current ideological and cultural context within which community-based public art must operate, as well as its historical antecedents; and in the final section I will provide a short case study of a particular project in an attempt to clarity these methodological and ideological constraints.

THE POLITICALLY COHERENT COMMUNITY

The delegate is one who assigns sacred tasks to himself.
Pierre Bourdieu, "Delegation and Political Fetishism"(4)

An analysis of community-based public art must begin with the vexing question of how one defines "community" itself. This question leads to a number of complex political issues, due in part to the fact that in the art world today the term "community art" is often used to demarcate those works that

are produced by, or address, subjects defined by their difference from a white, upper-middle class norm. For the purposes of this paper I will understand the term "community" to have multiple meanings. Community can be defined in relation to spatial or institutional boundaries (urban neighborhoods, trade unions, prison populations, etc.); in relation to specific issues (free speech, environmentalism, health-care reform, etc.); or in connection to specific identities (racial, national, ethnic, gender or class-based, etc.). Obviously in any given project these categories overlap and complicate each other.

The "community" in community-based public art often, although clearly not always, refers to individuals marked as culturally, economically, or socially different either from the artist or from the audience for the particular project. Typically these projects are assumed to be based on some degree of collaboration between the artist and a given subject or group of subjects (prisoners, the homeless, the urban poor, etc.) This "collaboration" might consist simply of a particular group ("the homeless"), functioning as the subject matter for a project, or it might extend to the artist somehow involving a given subject or group of subjects in the process of creative decision making (for example, Krzysztof Wodiczko "consulting" the homeless regarding the design of his "Homeless Vehicle"). Examples include performances (John Malpede's group Los Angeles Poverty Department), multi-media installations (Alfredo Jaar's "One or Two Things I Know About Them" at the Whitechapel Gallery in London and Dawn Dedeaux's "Soul Shadows: Urban Warrior Myths"), art-making projects (Hope Sandrow's Artists and Homeless Collaborative), and even public "sculptures" (Wodiczko's "Homeless Vehicle" and "Poliscar").

The production of these works often involves the artist in a complex set of negotiations across a myriad of social and cultural boundaries (race, gender, sexuality, class, status, geography, etc.). No single boundary of difference is wholly determinate. And in each of these often overlapping cases the "artist" is differentiated (or aesthetically "distanced") from the community as an enunciative channel, matrix, or catalyst. Each of these functions in turn implies a particular representational relationship of speaking "for," "through," "with," "about," or "on behalf of" other subjects whose own unity as a "community" is in turn the product of contingent processes of identification. The fact that this exchange can never be entirely organic typically leads to one of two responses in the art world. First, it can lead to a general dismissal of any attempt to analyze or question the position occupied by the artist in the name of a kind of denuded poststructuralism which views the artist's transgression of (what are seen as wholly arbitrary) social and cultural identities as inherently liberatory. All too often this view simply provides a convenient alibi for the fact that these liberatory transgressions always seem to move from a position of greater to lesser privilege; the open door of identity swings in only one direction because it is generally the artist who has the cultural and the financial resources necessary to "transgress" boundaries and identities in the first place.

The other common response to the contingency of the artist/community relationship is a kind of fetishization of authenticity in which no artist may be allowed to work with or represent any group or community of whom the artist is not an integral part. But it seems to me that there is an inherent discursive violence committed any time one subject speaks for another, no matter how firmly they are anchored within a "common" community. A community must to some extent be constructed out of the specific subjectivities of its members in a process that will, inevitably, promote or legitimate some aspects of these subjectivities at the expense of others. The rejection of any form of discursive interaction between artist and community that does not qualify as wholly integral can be both quixotic and counterproductive, I would suggest a third alternative, which would be to address each case of artist/community interaction as a specific constellation of difference (subject of course to broader, more socially and culturally consistent trajectories of difference and privilege), that requires its own strategic response.

In his essay "Delegation and Political Fetishism" Pierre Bourdieu analyzes the problematic relationship that pertains between a given community and the "delegate" who chooses, or is chosen, to speak on its behalf. Bourdieu conceives of this relationship in terms of a kind of political semiotics. The delegate is the signifier for a referential community, constituency, or party. In political negotiations the delegate "stands for" the absent community (as Bourdieu writes, the delegate functions "as a sign in place of the totality of the group").(5) Bourdieu wants to question the apparent naturalness of this signifying relationship and the belief that the delegate is merely the passive reflection of a prior political entity. As he argues, while the delegate does derive his identity, and the legitimacy of his political position, from the mandate of the community, it is also true that the "community" itself comes into existence (politically and symbolically) through the expressive medium of the delegate.

There are two interrelated meanings of the term "representation" at play in Bourdieu's essay. The first refers to the act of political representation - a process by which the community, through its own electoral procedures, selects an individual subject to speak its collective will in political debates. Within the representational dynamic of community politics, Bourdieu warns, the contingency of the act of delegation is often "forgotten" and the delegate emerges, through a kind of "social magic," as a fetish, a "moral person" who has sacrificed all to become the literal embodiment of the community's will.(6) We can observe something of this process in the rhetoric of community artists who position themselves as the vehicle for an unmediated expressivity on the part of a given community. As Sandrow, founder of the Artist and Homeless Collaborative, writes:

I'd been doing so many exhibitions [of her own art work] and wanted to get more involved
in the community. [Homelessness] was an issue I saw every time I walked out the door . . . .
I wanted to understand, but I never knew what they thought. I thought that art, which was
what I had to offer, could be a means for them to speak for themselves. (italics mine)(7)

The second mode of representation occurs as the delegate confirms and legitimates his or her political power through the act of literally representing or exhibiting the community itself, in the form of demonstrations and other political performances. The delegate must "mobilize the group . . . in a demonstration or display of the group's existence . . . the spokesperson demonstrates his legitimacy by demonstrating or displaying those who have delegated him." This act can sanction what Bourdieu describes as an "embezzlement" in which the delegate claims the authority to speak for the community in order to empower himself politically, professionally, and morally.(8)

The confusion that exists between political representation and symbolic representation is evident in community art projects that fail to distinguish between the artist's ability to "exhibit" a given community in a project, performance, or image (an ability which is typically made possible by the artist's privileged relationship to the various institutions charged with public management of "communities" such as the homeless, the incarcerated, etc.), and the authority to take up an enunciative position that is sanctioned by that group's social experience. A recent example of this confusion is provided by Jaar's exhibit "One or Two Things I Know About Them" staged at the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1992. Jaar was invited to produce a site-specific work at Whitechapel and elected to produce a piece about the Bangladeshi community in the vicinity of the gallery. The result was a large multi-media installation ostensibly about the cultural and economic conditions of Bangladeshi workers. As part of the installation Jaar commissioned photographs of several young Bangladeshi women to be hung in the gallery. These images were then "captioned" with racist and sexist descriptions of Bangladeshi women workers taken from an East Indian factory owner.

The irony of this gesture was clear to Jaar, who used his professional authority as an expert in the regulation of symbolic meaning to override collaborator Gayatri Spivak's objection to this decision.(9) However, the women themselves had other ideas. They came to the gallery prior to the opening and, seeing their images with the inflammatory texts, demanded that they be removed. This resulted in a long series of exchanges between the women, Jaar, and the gallery staff that ultimately led to the images being removed altogether. This situation was relatively unusual. In many community-based public art projects it is precisely the community whose voice is never heard. The institutional authority of the artist, and their privileged relationship to channels of "legitimate" discourse about the project (through media coverage, their alliance with sponsoring and funding agencies, etc.), conspire to create the appearance of a harmony of interests even where none may actually exist.

The signifying authority of the community artist is based on two points of ideological anchorage. First, their authority is understood to derive from the process of a pedagogically-based collaboration. This is an "exchange" in which the artist, by surrendering some degree of his or her creative autonomy in negotiations with a given group over the production of a project, is understood to have gained in return some authority to speak from the group's position or on their behalf. The second point of anchorage is founded on a moment of transference (usually some event in the artist's past), that establishes a moral equivalence between their position and that of the community. Thus, Jaar is authorized to speak on behalf of Bangladeshi women, or to represent them from a position of moral outrage, because of his own past as an exile from a repressive regime (Chile). In the Pratibha Parmar/Alice Walker film Warrior Marks (1994), Walker is able to identify with the African women who have endured genital mutilation because, as she describes it, she received her own "patriarchal wound" when she was shot in the eye with a pellet gun by her brother when she was seven years old.(10) Sandrow was able to more fully identify with the homeless after her own brush with tragedy, related by a sympathetic critic:

Deeply affected by the misery that was Catherine Street [a homeless shelter in NYC], Sandrow recalls that it often took days to recover from her visits. Still, not until 1988, when her blossoming career suffered a derailment after an accident destroyed two years' worth of work she had made for a solo show . . . did [Sandrow] finally begin to understand how it felt to have no control over one's own life . . .(11)

Bourdieu's analysis can help us to appreciate the contingency of the delegate's position, and to question the tendency of some community artists to unproblematically identify their interests (professional, political, creative, moral, economic, etc.) with those of the community. Too often community artists imagine that they can transcend the very real differences that exist between themselves and a given community by a well-meaning rhetoric of aesthetic "empowerment." At the same time there is a degree to which Bourdieu, in his desire to emphasize the autonomy of the delegate/signifier, disavows the autonomous development of the community. While there is clearly a certain circularity in the signifying relationship between artist and community I would not grant the delegate the creative autonomy allowed by Bourdieu.

I want to emphasize the importance of an a priori community - a community that exists prior to the "creative" act of delegation. This community comes into existence not just as an effect of the delegate's signifying powers, but as a result of a highly complex social and cultural process. For the purposes of my analysis this process can be understood to take place in two stages. The second stage, as outlined above, occurs as the community appoints or determines a delegate who will speak on its

behalf. However, this act must be preceded by a process of political self-definition through which the community itself is formed. This process unfolds against the experience of a collective mode of oppression (racism, sexism, classism, etc.) and within a set of shared cultural and discursive traditions. These "politically coherent" communities emerge after undergoing a process of internal debate and consensus formation. This formation almost always takes place against the grain of the dominant culture, which survives by individualizing social relationships in which the distribution of power is based on differences of class, race, gender, and sexuality.

Examples of politically-coherent communities are quite wide-ranging, from more formal entities such as the National Welfare Rights Organization (and its local manifestations), to prisoner's rights groups, to more ad hoc formations such as the Bangladeshi women who protested against Jaar's installation. The politically-coherent community can come into existence almost anywhere there are individuals who have struggled to identify their common interests (and common enemies) over and against a social system that is dedicated to denying the existence of systematic forms of oppression. This is not to say that these communities are monolithic, rather, their existence and operation is characterized by an ongoing process of exchange and debate within and among individuals who have typically been spoken for, managed, regulated, represented, and frequently demonized by outsiders located in positions of ideological and institutional authority.

There is a tendency in community-based public works to define the participants who make up a given project's community serially, as socially isolated individuals whose ground of interconnection and identification as a group is provided by an aesthetically ameliorative experience administered by the artist. Within this dynamic the artist takes on the delegate's role and attempts to literally "create" a community consciousness out of the atomized social detritus of late capitalism. The kinds of "collaborations" that arise out of this dynamic tend to be characterized by a degree of paternalism (albeit well-intentioned and sometimes even well-received). Typically the artist sets out to challenge the subjects, to expand their awareness and engage them in a process of critical self-reflection and analysis. The artist's role is to resuscitate their sense of self-esteem and to provide them with a meaningful creative experience that will allow them to become "participants in their own reclamation."(12)

A very different kind of "collaboration" would arise out of a project produced with a politically-coherent community. In this case the collaboration would be characterized by a more equitable process of exchange and mutual education, with the artist learning from the community and having his or her own presuppositions (about the community and specific social, cultural, and political issues) challenged and expanded. Consider how the Jaar installation might have been different had he consulted, and attempted to learn from, the women whose condition he was so anxious to portray. I'm not arguing that artists shouldn't work with individuals outside the context of politically-coherent communities (although I would suggest that the artist's own imaginary construction of a given community plays a significant, if often unacknowledged, role in most collaborations). Rather, I simply want to note the danger that artists face in employing a kind of individualizing address which, intentionally or not, reinforces the very political ideologies that communities have struggled to define themselves against. I cannot emphasize too strongly the political stakes involved in the tendency to individualize (and pathologize) the experience of oppression that is a hallmark of the ascendent conservative world view. I will examine this world view in more detail in the next section.

MALLEABLE SUBJECTS AND MORAL PEDAGOGY

There is a heritage of noble obligation which young people accept and long to perpetuate.
The desire for action, the wish to fight wrong and alleviate suffering haunts them daily.

- Jane Addams, "Address to the Ethical Culture Societies," 1892(13)

Having outlined some of the methodological questions raised by community-based public art I now want to examine the more general ideological climate in which this work is being produced. This examination must begin with an understanding of the current moral economy of capitalism, and the history of liberal reform. More specifically, this outpouring of compassion and concern over "community" must be understood in relation to the successful assimilation in the US. of conservative arguments about the underlying causes of poverty, social and cultural inequality, and disenfranchisement. President Bill Clinton's capitulation to conservative rhetoric concerning the precipitous deterioration of "values" in America, and the need for "individual responsibility" caps over a decade of relentless work by the right wing to shift the center of the debate over these issues (part of the so-called "culture war" of the American right).

Welfare policy is one of the most symbolically powerful locations for this debate. A group called "Empower America" - whose leadership includes former Reagan "drug czar" and Department of Education director William Bennett
 and former Department of Housing and Urban Development director Jack Kemp - is challenging Clinton with a call to eliminate welfare funding entirely, to force all current recipients of welfare onto the job market (such as it is), and to place all children born to the poor out of wedlock in orphanages. Their argument is that welfare does nothing but encourage young women to have children and that it has destroyed the moral fiber of the poor. It is not coincidental that the two primary areas of conservative attack, at least until the recent assault on the "gay agenda," have been welfare and arts funding. Both of these areas of public policy provide conservatives with an arena in which to attack the moral pedagogy of the state. Welfare "teaches' young women to have illegitimate children and to shirk responsibility (for work and for reproduction), while arts funding allows the state to support "deadbeat" degenerates who can't earn a real living and whose works "teach" bad, anti-American values. Both can be viewed as symptomatic of a general cultural and moral decline.

Conservatives have successfully repudiated the "excesses" of state intervention during the New Deal and the Great Society, portraying any attempt by the government to intervene into the "natural" play of market forces as precipitating a moral crisis in capitalist culture in which the poor will refuse to work and will make unreasonable claims for unearned "entitlements." The cause of poverty in this scenario is not the systematic structure of capitalist labor markets and investment decisions within the context of the global economy but, rather, the moral inferiority of the individual subject (which is in turn the partial product of a polluted culture). There has been a flood of new books, including Bennett's Book of Virtues (1994) and Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington's The Fourth Instinct: The Call of the Soul (1994), in which conservatives argue that the real problem in the U.S. today is a lack of moral character among individuals, and that existing social problems can best be solved not by the state, but by the efforts of private individuals and organizations that develop programs focused on building the character of the poor. Thus we have moral pedagogy (designed to counter the "bad" moral pedagogy of the state) rather than any real attempt to alleviate the actual conditions of poverty and joblessness, much less any attempt to address their root causes. The rhetoric employed here varies widely with conservatives showing their typical flare for pastiche. Huffington's book, currently on the bestseller list, borrows from faded '70s New Age jargon to argue that state-sponsored welfare effectively robs the rich of the opportunity for "spiritual growth" provided by individual acts of

philanthropy.(14) However, there is also a consistent concern with personal transformation, most notably in the persistent use of the concept of "empowerment," which has been taken from its original context in progressive models of pedagogy developed during the 1960s and 1970s.

Prominent conservative columnist George F. Will, in a syndicated column titled, "The Lethal Crisis in Welfare" (June 1994), provides a useful precis of the conservative position:

The new, grimmer understanding is that many of the urban poor do not lack only the things government can dispense - food, housing, money. Rather, theirs is a poverty of inner resources . . . Today's task. daunting because [it is] novel, is the deliberate regeneration of the 'social capital' of habits and mores necessary for civilized living . . .(15)

The rhetoric of "inner resources" and "social capital" is striking. We encounter a similar explanation of black poverty in Charles Murray's The Bell Curve (1994). Of course there is nothing particularly new about arguments that the poor are morally depraved or mentally incompetent. We need only go back three decades to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's (D-NY) influential report "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," (1964) in which Moynihan suggested that the cause of persistent black poverty was not racism or economic and political disenfranchisement, but rather a "tangle of pathology" with a fatally flawed, woman-centered family structure at its core. Moynihan's recommendations included mandatory military service for young black men to ensure their exposure to "an utterly masculine world . . . away from women, a world run by strong men of unquestioned authority."(16) But even Moynihan's argument is merely a contemporary manifestation of a long-standing set of conservative ideas about poverty, morality, and the relationship between the individual, society, and the state. Over 150 years ago in his Philosophy of Right (1821), G. W. F. Hegel expressed concern about the presence of a "penurious rabble" that might receive support from the state "directly" and not by means of their own labor, thereby destroying their "feeling of individual independence and self-respect."(17) And Lord Lytton in England and the English (1876) castigates the "moral degradation" encouraged by the "Poor-laws" in terms that are entirely contemporary:

The effects of the Poor-laws on the social system are then briefly these; - they encourage improvidence, for they provide for its wants; they engender sexual intemperance, for they rear its offspring; by a necessary reaction, the benefits conferred on the vicious pauper, become a curse on the honest labourer.(18)

Politicians and philosophers have for at least the past century and a half been obsessed with mapping the mental and emotional landscape of the poor with the goal of regulating it to meet their needs. The poor are understood as malleable subjects, dangerously susceptible to corrupting moral influences, whose consciousness can be formed and transformed through the application of pedagogical techniques. It was during the mid-nineteenth century that a model of organized social policy based on this concept of the individual first coalesced. Early reform movements centered in cities in Western Europe and the U.S. attempted to provide the emergent industrial bourgeoisie with the tools necessary to morally regulate the urban working class. These movements addressed themselves to a broad range of maladies associated with the concentration of dangerous populations of immigrants and the working class in the industrial city. The "friendly visitor" as a combination of model subject and bureaucratic spy; the judicious dispensation of advice as well as, or in place of, alms, the constant concern with discriminating between the "deserving" and the "undeserving" poor, and the primary focus on the moral regeneration of the poor over any real concern with systematic changes in the surrounding society, are all hallmarks of a "Victorian" model of social policy.

8

Late nineteenth and early twentieth-century activists in movements ranging from tenement reform, to moral purity and abstinence campaigns, to immigrant education programs, can be viewed as a vanguard faction of the professional-managerial class (PMC). The PMC are characterized by an interrelated set of ideologies. Although they have access to the privileged lifestyle of the middleclass, and are in fact employed by the bourgeoisie (as Barbara and John Ehrenreich note in their classic study of the PMC, they have an "objective antagonism" to the interests of the working class), they nevertheless believe that they can offer "rational" solutions to problems such as urban poverty, class-conflict, poor housing, unemployment, disease and overcrowding.(19) This belief is based on their control of, and faith in, a set of sophisticated symbolic and analytic skills, forms of "scientific" urban planning, and a specialized technical language that allow them to view the city and its problems from a 'universal' and class-transcendent position. Through their command of these skills they can intervene in any cultural environment to promulgate and administer progressive solutions to the various crises of industrial urbanism.

Although there were certainly Victorian reform projects aimed at making changes in the physical infrastructure of the city (rebuilding tenements, creating hospitals and schools, etc.), the particular aspect of Victorian reform that I am interested in here conceives of the working class itself as a mass to be transformed through the implementation of a moral-pedagogical program. A prototypical example of this is provided by the settlement house movement, which was highly influential in both Britain and the U.S. during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This of course is where Addam's young settlement house workers, "haunted" by the need to "right wrongs," enter the picture. The workers were earnest young men and women from the middle and upper class establishing outposts of bourgeois normalcy (significantly in the form of an exemplary "home" or domestic environment) in the midst of immigrant neighborhoods. One of the most important features of this model of reform is the pedagogical relationship that exists between the poor "object" of reform, and the enlightened reformer or social worker.(20) At the center of this model is a matrix of personal transformation derived originally from evangelism, due in part to the fact that many of the most influential charity agencies and social reform movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were sponsored by evangelicals and evangelical denominations.

Evangelism specifies a particular dynamic or relationship between the reformer and the subject-to-be-transformed or "converted." In this process the "bad" subject (characterized by moral depravity, defective family structures, and lack of identification with bourgeois norms) must be transformed into a "good" subject (characterized by respect for the transcendent authority of property, identification with an individualistic ethos, etc.). One of the central features of Victorian welfare is the spectacle of the repentant subject who must demonstrate his or her reformation through the recitation of a conversion narrative in which they accept personal responsibility for their sinful condition. The bad subject must become the author of his or her own salvation under the guidance and oversight of a good subject. The deformed subject becomes a vehicle through which the well-formed subject can experience identification with a universal or transcendent subjectivity - one's proximity to God increases in proportion to the number of souls one is able to "harvest." The good subject can only experience the plenitude of his or her identity through the process of externalizing his or her will in the appropriation and salvation of "other souls. (As nineteenth-century American missionary John Hyde

wrote from India, "Oh God, give me souls or I die!").(21) The deformed must exist, or rather, the non-bourgeois subject must be defined as deformed, as the necessary complement and justification for the self-perception of their own moral beauty and excellence. We see the secular expression of this transcendence in the characteristic PMC belief in the objectivity of their position as "neutral" professionals standing "between" capital and labor and making use of a universal language to create a

more equitable social order.

Today, with the successes of the conservative culture war, we are witnessing the resurgence of a set of ideas about morality, the state, poverty, and personal responsibility derived from this Victorian model. Conservatives have appropriated and modified the rhetoric of Victorian-era reform in order to create an interpretive framework within which a whole series of interrelated economic conditions can be blamed on the actions of particular "dangerous populations." The two primary targets of this discursive process in the recent Congressional elections were migrant workers and single, African American mothers on welfare. In each case the pariah subject is understood to have violated a moral economy and to be demanding "entitlements" that should be "earned" in the marketplace. The function of social policy within this dynamic is to reform the individual, failed subject.

I embark on this rather circuitous historical tangent in an attempt to provide some sense of the ideological context in which community-based public art is coming to function. The history of welfare and social policy, and the accompanying issues of class, professional status, cultural difference, and fiscal sociology, are seldom referenced in discussions of community art, but I would argue that this history is of central importance for a full understanding of community art practice, perhaps now more than ever. More specifically, I would contend that the function of the community artist can, in at least some respects, be productively compared with that of the reformer or social worker. Both the community artist and the social worker possess a set of skills (bureaucratic, diagnostic, aesthetic/expressive, and so forth) and have access to public and private funding (through grants writing, official status, and institutional sponsorship) with the goal of bringing about some transformation in the condition of individuals who are presumed to be in need. Recall that the social worker, especially within the conservative or Victorian model, is not meant to simply dispense money to the poor but to engage in their moral regeneration. Also, both the artist and the social worker share a belief in the universality of the discourses that they deploy in their work with the community. For the community artist their guardianship of "art," "creativity," or the "aesthetic" plays the same role that "science" does for the reformer. It is a universally-applicable language that allows them to transcend the specificity of their own social and cultural positions. Obviously the institutional apparatus that administers and supports welfare is much larger than that which supports community art, but the growing interest among foundations in "community" issues is precisely such that the distinction between community art and welfare or social policy is in some cases quite fine.

The historical discourse of Victorian or conversion-based welfare has three implications that are significant for my analysis of community art. First, if presumes that the "cause" of poverty and disenfranchisement is primarily individual rather than systematic. Within this dynamic the reform subject (the "poor," the "homeless," etc.), are understood as a kind of resource or raw material to be transformed. Community art is typically centered around an exchange between an "artist" (who is understood to be "empowered," creatively, intellectually, symbolically, expressively, financially, institutionally, or otherwise), and a given subject who is defined a priori as "in need of" empowerment, access to creative/expressive skills, etc. Thus, according to the Artist and Homeless Collaborative's statement of purpose, "the practice of creating art stimulates those living in shelters from a state of malaise to active participation in the artistic process." Wolper has made this instrumentalizing connection explicit by comparing the "reclam[ation] of areas of land devastated through misuse or neglect" to the "reclamation" of "society's throwaways".(22) The effect of this focus can be to elide any argument from systematic causes and to put in its place a closed circuit of creative personal transformation presided over by the artist as exemplary subject. Unless the artist works actively to discourage it, this focus on the primacy of individual transformation implies (1) that the individual is morally or emotionally flawed, (2) that this flaw bears a causal relation to their current (economically, emotionally, socially, or creatively) "disempowered" status,

and (3) that the artist is in a position to remedy this flaw, and to provide the subject with what Will would call the "social capital necessary. for civilized living." Thus Malpede's Los Angeles Poverty Department, a performance group that includes homeless and formerly homeless people, is celebrated for the fact that it can "rehabilitate" some of its participants. As one member noted in a recent interview: "I was a drunken sot living under a bush in Santa Monica, stealing beer. Now I live in a great apartment and I just directed a show. It was a great experience. I never thought I ever had a chance to do anything in the art world and I had very low self-esteem about being successful in any way. Now, after five years of being an actor in LAPD I feel really confident . . ."(23) I certainly wouldn't want to argue that there is anything wrong with someone turning their life around. But what is potentially sacrificed with this testimonial is the recognition that people are not homeless simply because of low self-esteem, but because of an entire range of economic and political forces that conservatives such as Will are very anxious to obscure and naturalize.

The second implication has to do with the kind of relationship that exists between the artist and the mechanisms of public and private patronage. Within the Victorian model the act of giving must be a fundamentally private transaction (an essentially individual act of moral kindness or benevolence) brought about not by a sense of obligation or guilt (which would imply a systematic relationship between poverty and the affluence that allows philanthropy), but by a spontaneous and natural outpouring of moral compassion by individual citizens for their fellow creatures. It is important from a conservative point of view that social programs be supported by private foundations and individuals, rather than as a deliberate project of the state, because state sponsorship would constitute a kind of political admission that poverty is not merely a personal problem but is a structural effect of the economy that the state has an obligation to relieve.(24) To this extent then, the source of arts funding, whether from public agencies or from private foundations, has a considerable ideological significance.(25)

I would contend that the community artist is in many cases being positioned as a kind of social service provider. In some cases support is being given to artists' projects by organizations or funders whose primary interest is no longer in the arts but in social programs. This is significant because conservatives have been partially successful in arguing that existing, state-sponsored, social programs have failed and that "new approaches" are necessary. Thus, artists are being placed in the position of providing alternatives to existing forms of social policy. To the extent that artists (consciously or not) subscribe to a set of ideas about poverty or disempowerment that are available to conservative co-optation, they contribute to the dismantling of existing social policy (such as it is) and its replacement with a privatized notion of philanthropy and moral pedagogy.

The third implication has to do with the structural relationship that exists between the community artist and various groups and individuals with whom they work. Within a "Victorian" model of welfare the act of giving to the poor is understood to derive from a universal reservoir of human sympathy and benevolence, and it is precisely this ostensible "universality" that endows the welfare provider with their moral authority. The greater the social and cultural gulf that separates the giver from those they assist, the more profoundly do they feel themselves to have transcended the specificity of their own class and social position. This universal (bourgeois) subject is able to enjoy all the privileges that are specific to their class membership, while at the same time claiming the moral authority to speak on behalf of those whose exploitation makes their own privilege possible, Within this system, "others," (and for Victorian reform this would include slaves, "fallen women," the poor, heathens, etc.) become the necessary vehicles for the bourgeois subject's own spiritual evolution. This transcendence can only occur so long as any troubling causal or structural relationship between the philanthropist and the "other" is suppressed and replaced with a rhetoric of individual and spontaneous charity. This is why Huffington can make the rather absurd argument that

state-sponsored welfare is wrong because it robs the rich of the opportunity to experience a moral transcendence in the act of self-less giving.

The implications of this complex relationship for community artists are manifold. I am not suggesting that community artists are engaged in some unholy ideological alliance with Huffington. What concerns me is the extent to which those of us committed to a progressive cultural practice might inadvertently corroborate certain structural features of the conservative position. I'm interested here in a persuasive cultural mythology, grounded in romanticism, in which the artist is imagined as a kind of trans-historical shaman who has ostensibly sundered him or herself from all other social and cultural identities, privileges, and commitments. Freed of these bonds, artists are able to identify themselves with any and all other subjects - the poor, the homeless, etc. - and further, are able to feel their oppression and to express their pain and moral outrage.

Within this mythology the artist becomes a channel or medium for the congealed residues of both their own and other people's experiences of social oppression. Each new site, issue, or community becomes another opportunity to reaffirm their social transcendence through the universal language of art, which can bridge cultural differences and heal social divisions. The artist is no longer a particular individual, located at the intersection of a set of historically specific class, racial, sexual, and other identities, but rather, a universal and nomadic empath

. In the case of the community artist it is the ostensible "universality" of the aesthetic itself which allows them to claim a moral or pedagogical authority in cultural and social domains where their intervention might otherwise be regarded with some suspicion.

12

URBAN WARRIOR MYTHS - A CASE STUDY

While I've certainly given evidences of liberal tendencies and political positions I have come out of this experience and I have to constantly bring up conservative positions in my own thought, and I don't know yet how to resolve that.

- Dawn Dedeaux(26)

In order to make what is an admittedly complicated analysis somewhat more concrete I want to conclude by examining a community art project that has gained a great deal of attention in the U.S. during the last two years. The project, "Soul Shadows: Urban Warrior Myths," was developed by New Orleans-based artist Dawn Dedeaux. "Soul Shadows" is a massive installation composed of literally dozens of monitors and security cameras, mural-size photographs, taped music, and videos, all contained in a specially designed and constructed architectural space that features 10 enclosed video viewing rooms arranged along each side of a 65-foot long "Hall of Judgment." The installation grew out of an "art in the prisons" project that Dedeaux developed in New Orleans. Dedeaux worked closely over a period of several months with prisoners, in some cases juvenile offenders as young as 14 years of age, on a variety of art projects, including video production, mask-making workshops, and the creation of artists books. As Dedeaux collected videotape and other materials during her work with the inmates she began to develop an idea for a much more ambitious undertaking: a vast multi-media installation that would address the crisis of crime and poverty.

"Soul Shadows" was first staged in Baltimore, and has subsequently been almost entirely re-constructed in Rochester, NY, New Orleans, and, most recently, in Los Angeles. This project has already cost over $100,000 and has attracted the support of literally dozens of public and private

foundations, funding agencies, banks, and other institutions.(27) It is being widely touted as a model for progressive community art. In Rochester a consultant for the city's school district raised money from local banks, foundations, and arts organizations to keep the installation up past its official closing in order to use it as part of an anti-drug program in area high schools.(28) This cross-sponsorship between arts funders and social service funders is emblematic of the patronage trends discussed earlier.

Upon first entering the installation one is confronted with a long row of half open "doors" which are actually large photographs of wrought iron security doors. Behind each door is a small, dark room with a chair or couch located in front of a monitor. The monitors play videotape segments that Dedeaux recorded while working in the prison. These include a range of materials - for example, footage of a dance performance by juvenile offenders or scenes from a political rally in New Orleans. The majority of them, however, feature interviews with inmates and gang members. After passing by these video bays one enters a closed off area that features a large screen video projection of the young victim of a drive-by shooting. Returning to the main installation one moves down the central "Hall of Judgment," on either side of which are images of silhouetted figures that have been enlarged from still frames of Dedeaux's videotapes. A bank of red lights at the base of the walls are presumably intended to suggest fire. At the end of the hall is a large oval room, the "Tomb of the Urban Warrior," which contains about a dozen or so larger-than-life photos of a young African American man in various poses and costumes. There is in addition a second set of video bays on the opposite side of the Hall of Judgment.

I would argue that in a number of crucial ways the model of community art practice on which "Soul Shadows" is based corresponds to the conservative ideology outlined earlier, particularly in the relationship that is constructed between Dedeaux and the inmates who are both the subject matter for this project and at least one of its communities. First, Dedeaux was able to gain a highly regulated access to this particular "community" through her status as a "professional" with particular diagnostic and therapeutic skills. She functioned as an artist/socialworker - an exemplary subject who could expose the incarcerated to the healing power of the aesthetic through proximity and example. This institutional orientation was in turn related to her ideological orientation. Her work with prison populations was, from the outset, predicated first on the perceived emotional or psychological lack of the incarcerated, and second, on her ability, as an artist, to bring about some transformation in this condition. Thus her intention, as she has expressed it, was "to introduce [the inmates] to the joy of the creative process . . . I wanted them, in a kind of contagious way, to experience that creative energy . . . . That touches the soul, it's a replacement for drugs, it's a replacement for crime. Because it's this energy level."(29)

Much of the publicity generated by the project has focused not on the individual prisoners that Dedeaux interviewed (who, with the exception of brothers Paul and Wayne Hardy, the "stars" of the installation, function as ciphers of black criminality and poverty), but on Dedeaux's own "heroism" in crossing boundaries of racial and cultural difference and entering what is perceived as the dangerous domain of the prison. An article in Art Space magazine describes "Soul Shadows" as a "risk-taking project," which has "open[ed] up new avenues of thought about pressing social issues."(30) And, according to a flyer circulated during the Rochester installation: "Dedeaux has taken risks in order to make a statement that will reach young people put off by [the] simplistic "'Just Say No' solutions of the past . . . "This risk is understood to be two-fold. First, Dedeaux, a white woman, took a risk by entering a prison of young, chiefly male, offenders. Second, Dedeaux "risks" the negative response of those small-minded people in the art world who would ask what business she has making use of the incarcerated to advance a set of ideas about race and criminality on the basis of 18 months of prison art workshops. Here Dedeaux the transcendent subject is seen as boldly challenging conventional

boundaries of social and cultural identity in an instance of what critic Joe Lewis calls "cultural mingling." As Lewis writes:

The trouble with a lot of politically motivated art is a failure of nerve. Artists who produce work that they know is not favored by our established regime are not necessarily taking risks, since they can forecast the results. Truly taking a risk means not knowing what's going to happen in the end . . . .(31)

Dedeaux's production of "Soul Shadows" is thus premised on a complex dynamic of privilege, authority, and access. The ultimate validation of Dedeaux's power of aesthetic transcendence is provided by her relationship with Wayne Hardy, a notorious drug dealer and gang member in New Orleans who was looked upon with awe by her juvenile students. Dedeaux's access to Hardy, literally embodied in larger than life-size photographs of his partially nude body, provides one of the central images in the installation. Dedeaux met Hardy in a courtroom during a murder trial and established a rapport with him. She was eventually able to conduct extensive videotaped interviews with him and his brother, and was even able to convince him to pose in various costumes that are intended to refer to the history of art and to modern pop culture icons. These wall-size prints are featured in the segment of the installation called "the Tomb of the Urban Warrior." They portray Hardy dressed as various archetypical figures, ranging from John Wayne and Rambo to St. Sebastian, Shiva, Nike, and Poseidon.(32)

In an interview about the project Dedeaux recounts the highly charged moment when she first revealed her access to Hardy to the young inmates:

I brought the tape the following day into the prison, into the juvenile dorm. I hooked it up and they asked what I was showing them today. I said I did an interview with the Hardy boys and they all started laughing. They said that if I'd gotten near the Hardy boys, I'd be dead now . . . I hooked up the equipment and five minutes later there I am with the Hardy boys. They looked on in disbelief . . . and they just gravitated, 96 in one dorm all shoved up in front . . . . You could hear a pin drop. They hung on to every word for an hour and a half. Deputies came out; everybody was in disbelief. This was the highest concentration and attention span ever. It was real life. This wasn't George Bush or William Bennett talking about drugs. This was one of their heroes saying he was ready to give it up, saying "maybe we better rethink this." That's much better than some social worker saying "be a good boy."(33)

This cathartic moment clearly made an impression on Dedeaux. She learned that by gaining access to Hardy and the "real life" authority that he signified, by possessing him conceptually and creatively as the subject matter of her art, she could gain respect and legitimacy in the eyes of her young charges. I believe she learned that this access could bring her legitimacy in the art world as well. Dedeaux asserts her power over her students by proving her access to an even greater "authenticity," or realness. This is also how she gains authority over "us" as middle-class viewers in an art context, by trading on her image as an intrepid explorer of the social landscape, journeying into the "belly of the beast" to return with a diagnostic report on the culture of poverty and crime.

Having achieved this access and this authority, what does Dedeaux do with it? Implicit in "Soul Shadows" is a narrative cycle of personal redemption that the work of art both documents and is intended to catalyze. This cycle begins, as does the conservative model outlined earlier, with contrition. Thus, Hardy provided Dedeaux with a videotaped interview in which he "warns" her young students about the dangers of a life of crime. The talking-head interviews that predominate in the video area provide the repeated spectacle of grieving black inmates offering confessional

accounts of their involvement with crime. More specifically, in these narratives the prisoners construct their criminality almost entirely in terms of their own guilt and responsibility. One particularly wrenching interview with an African American woman features her sobbing warning not to "make the same mistakes" that she did. Another admonishes the viewer: "Since I've been in jail I've had time to take an inventory of myself and see where I made my mistakes . . . I was out for myself, I was wrong."

The experience of contrition is understood as the prelude to an aesthetically-driven process of redemption and personal transformation, described in one exhibition pamphlet as "the "journey towards self actualization." Thus, despite the dire social conditions that Dedeaux's installation portrays, as one flyer has it, the "overall message of the piece is one of hope . . . . The artist reveals her belief that within each of us there is the potential for transformation." And, as Lewis writes:

The most provocative and re-occurring issue addressed here is the notion of change. No matter how far down an individual may have gone, the realization that it is possible to change, to rise up and overcome, is perhaps the most miraculous of all transformative experiences.(34)

Just what kind of "change" is at issue here? The transformative impulse generated through "Soul Shadows" is directed at adjusting the emotional and psychological condition of the incarcerated through a kind of spiritual/aesthetic therapy administered by the artist as exemplary subject. It is no doubt the case that the experience of prison might produce a degree of self-reflection and soul-searching. It is also quite conceivable that this experience might lead to truly positive changes in someone's life. However, the inclusion by Dedeaux of this kind of material, with no real attempt to articulate its relationship to broader social conditions and forces, and in the context of existing conservative arguments about moral depravity among poor and working-class people of color, is both irresponsible and potentially damaging to the very "community" that Dedeaux hopes to assist. For the white, middle-class viewer, on the other hand, the project provides a comforting moral transcendence and aesthetic mastery over a "population" that might otherwise pose troubling questions about his or her own race and class-based privilege.

The problem of an individualizing rhetoric of personal transformation is underscored by the decisions that Dedeaux made in her selection of a "community" for this project Prisons are particularly problematic institutional sites at which to deploy a program of "community" art since the incarcerated are not a "community" by choice and those politically-coherent organizations that do exist within prisons (prisoner's rights groups, etc.) have had to struggle against the individualizing rhetoric of the criminal justice system to define themselves and their common interests. Rather than work with a politically-coherent community in the prison (a collaboration that might well have challenged many of Dedeaux's own preconceptions), Dedeaux chose to work with younger inmates (children are the exemplary subjects of reform because they represent the individual at his or her most malleable state) and the Hardy brothers, a pair of very intelligent but relatively nihilistic gang members. Dedeaux presents the prisoners primarily as individuals whose only common link is their tragic fate, a condition brought about by social neglect and their own moral failure.

Dedeaux has argued that one of her goals in this project is to provide a kind of "scared straight" experience for so-called "Youth at Risk," and in fact the Rochester venue bused high school kids in for tours on this basis. But this justification rests on the rather dubious assumption that poor or working-class children are oblivious to the social costs of poverty and crime that they live with every day. Stated another way, it suggests that "at risk" youth need Dedeaux to assimilate and organize their own cultural and social experience and re-present it to them before they can be expected to fully understand it. Under the auspices of this point of view Dedeaux's installation provides the very

spectacle that conservatives wish to see promulgated - criminality is the result of an individual lack of moral character; prison produces repentant subjects who accept sole personal responsibility for their wrong-doing.

The possibility of systematic social change is thus foreclosed, not only by the triumph of conservativism, but by the assimilation of an evangelical model of personal transformation that is left unarticulated to any larger social context. Dedeaux has argued that it is not her intention to "place all the burden of change on the underclass," and that "there is only hope for the future if society develops mechanisms to support the transformation."(35) However, precisely what these mechanisms might be is never defined, or even raised as an issue in the work. Aside from some pop-sociology references to the over-emphasis on material gain in American culture there is absolutely no effort in "Soul Shadows" to link images of prison life or gang life to a systematic critique of the current drug economy, urban unemployment, or any of the myriad of political, economic, and social forces that produce and reproduce these conditions.

In fact, Dedeaux believes that questions such as these are beyond the proper domain of the artist. As the installation flyer from Rochester notes, Dedeaux:

. . . aims to avoid the polemics of specific politics and social policy, leaving that course for the masters of those professions. [Instead] the artist employs cross-cultural/art historical references that her own discipline clearly qualifies her to do. This is the function of an artist in the interdisciplinary world - finding the bridges, the mirrors, and in the case of "Soul Shadows," finding a way for the viewer not to immediately blame, but rather to understand.(36)

I think it is notable that for Dedeaux the artist's proper "function" stops at precisely that point at which his or her work might raise troubling questions of "politics" and "policy." Community artists are "qualified" to diagnose the emotional maladies of the incarcerated, and to unthinkingly reiterate the most problematic commonplaces of conservative ideology, but when it comes to diagnosing the structural features of the urban economy they suddenly find themselves out of their depth. The question I would want to raise about this project, and the relevance that it has for community-based public art in general, is precisely how Dedeaux has chosen to demarcate the limits of community art practice. How do we define the performance of community art as a cultural discourse? What kinds of knowledge are legitimate and what kinds of knowledge are understood a priori to be beyond the specialized skills of the artist?

My concern in discussing Dedeaux's project is not to trivialize the potential benefits it had for the participants or for subsequent viewers (these have, at any rate, already been repeatedly celebrated in the surrounding discourse of press-releases, foundation grant applications, news reports, artists' statements and interviews, etc.). Rather, I am concerned with the relationship that community-based public art projects such as this one have to broader currents in public policy and the ideological structures that surround poverty, criminality, and the "underclass." As I have attempted to show in the preceding discussion I believe that the artist who chooses to navigate through the highly contested and complex symbolic fields that surround "dangerous populations" such as the homeless, the incarcerated, and the urban poor, will need to prepare themselves with something more than good intentions and "intuitive wisdom."(37)

Despite the criticisms of various community-based public art projects that I have developed in this essay it seems clear that many of these projects provide positive benefits for their various constituencies and that any single project will undoubtedly include both successful and less successful components. If I have focused on the less successful aspects it is in part because of my

sense that much of the dialogue around this work has been characterized by a certain circularity in which critics have been reluctant to challenge the claims made for it by community artists themselves. This has, unfortunately, left the field of critical analysis almost entirely to right-wing ideologues who denounce this kind of work out of hand and encourage a general skepticism about it among the broader public. Community-based public art is at a crossroad in its development as a mature practice (or set of practices); it has reached a point at which it can sustain, and benefit from, a response that is supportive of its goals without sacrificing a critical distance.(38)

NOTES

1. The most recent center of attention for this work has been curator Mary Jane Jacobs's "Culture in Action" project in Chicago. See Carole Tormollan, "New Public Art in Chicago," High Performance, (Spring 1994), pp. 50-54.; Allison Gamble, "Refraining a Movement: Sculpture Chicago's 'Culture in Action,'" The New Art Examiner, (January 1994), pp. 18-23. Another important point of reference was the symposium "Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art" held at the San Francisco Museum of Art in November 1991. See Suzanne Lacy, "Mapping the Terrain: The New Public Art," (part 1) Public Art Review, vol. 4., no. 2, (Spring/Summer 1993), pp. 14-17, and "Mapping the Terrain: The New Public Art," (part 2), Public Art Review, vol. 5, no. 1, (Fall/Winter 1993), pp. 26-33.

2. Suzi Gablik, "Removing the Frame: An Interview with Mary Jane Jacob," The New Art Examiner, (January 1994), p. 14. Having noted this "new" interest in community-based art I would want to acknowledge the persistent labors of a committed group of artists who have been working, in some cases for over two decades, on a progressive community-based art practice. Some of the individuals with whom I'm familiar include Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge in Canada, Conrad Atkinson. Stephen Willats, Peter Dunn and Lorraine Leeson, and groups such as the Black Audio Film Collective and the Hackney Flashers in the U.K., and Martha Rosier, Suzanne Lacey, and Fred Lonidier in the U.S. Of particular importance here are the community art and workshop initiatives developed under the Greater London Council (GLC) between 1981 and 1986. On the GLC see Owen Kelly, Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels, (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1984).

3. Ibid, p. 51.

4. Pierre Bourdieu, "Delegation and Political Fetishism," Language and Symbolic Power, John B. Thompson, ed., Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, trans., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 210.

5. Bourdieu, "Delegation and Political Fetishism," p. 206.

6.Ibid, p. 207.

7. Cited in Andrea Wolper, "Making Art, Reclaiming Lives: The Artist and Homeless Collaborative," But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism, Nina Felshin, ed., (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), p. 258.

8. Bourdieu, "Delegation and Political Fetishism," p. 207.

9. See Gayatri Spivak's letter to the editor, "Invisibility of the sweatshop worker' in the Manchester Guardian (March 8, 1994). Also see David Widgery, "Journey of a good man fallen," Manchester Guardian, (February 17, 1994), p. 22, Lynn MacRitchie, "When politics and art don't mix," Financial Times, (February 29, 1992), p. 37, and Eddie Chambers's review of Jaar's Whitechapel exhibition in Art Monthly (April 1992), pp. 19-20.

10. See Seble Dawit and Salem Mekur10ai, "The West Just Doesn't Get It," The New York Times, (December 7, 1993), section A, p. 27. Also see Cylena Simonds. "Missing the Mark," Afterimage 21, no. 8, (March 1994), p. 3.

11. Andrea Wolper, "Making Art, Reclaiming Lives: The Artist and Homeless Collaborative," p. 259.

12. Ibid, p. 251.

13. Jane Addams, "Address to the Ethical Culture Societies," Twenty Years at Hull-House, (New York, NY: Signet, 1981), p. 93

14. See Irene Lacher, "Eyes on a Cosmic Prize," Los Angeles Times, (Sunday, February 20, 1994), Part E, p. 1. and Plane McLellan, "Jung at Heart," The Washingtonian, (May 1994), pp. 80, 172-173. As Huffington notes: "welfare has created a cycle of entitlement and resentment, where there should be a cycle of gratitude and trust . . . . I think gratitude is a wonderful emotion . . . . I don't mean gratitude for a hot meal, but that sense of well-being and connectedness that often comes unbidden . . . . For me, giving is not just for those you give to. It is for you." McLellan, "Jung at Heart," p. 172.

15. George F. Will, "The Lethal Crisis in Welfare," in the Manchester Guardian Weekly, (June 26, 1994), p. 17.

16. Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), p. 88.

17. G. W. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Right, translated with notes by T.M. Knox, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 150.

18. Lord Lytton, England and the English, (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1876), p. 125.

19. See Barbara and John Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class," in Between Labor and Capital, Pat Walker, ed., (Boston: South End Press, 1979).

20. Barbara Cruikshank provides an interesting, and relevant, analysis of the origins of "empowerment" rhetoric in the Great Society social programs of the mid-'60s in "The Will to Empower: Technologies of Citizenship and the War on Poverty," Socialist Review, vol. 23, no. 4, (1994), pp. 29-56.

21. Francis McGraw, John Hyde: The Apostle of Prayer, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1970), p. 16.

22. Wolper, pp. 253, 251.

23. Linda Burnham, "LAPD Inspects Raleigh," Art Papers, Vol. 18, no. 3, (May/June 1994), p. 22.

24. As Cruikshank notes: "Activist neo-conservatives like Kemp and Richard Darman delight in 'stealing one of the left's words,' aiming to 'empower' the poor by allowing them to govern their own housing, or, in other words, by privatizing public housing projects. In Kemp's formulation, public housing residents could become self-governing, relieving the government of its obligation to govern." "The Will to Empower: Technologies of Citizenship and the War on Poverty," p. 33.

25. British writer Owen Kelly, analyzing the community arts movement in Great Britain, notes the interrelationship between questions of patronage and the epistemological construction of the "community" by the artist: "The communities with whom we work are not really our customers, since an increase in their support and enthusiasm will not necessarily increase our grant, just as a decrease in their interest will not necessarily decrease our grant. In institutional terms, they [the community] are our 'clients,' and what that really means is that they are the raw material upon which we work, on behalf of our customers, who are the agencies to whom we sell the reports and documentary evidence of our work." (italics mine), Owen Kelly, Community, Art and the State: Storming the Citadels, pp. 106-107.

26. Susan E. Cohen and William Johnson, "Conversation with Dawn Dedeaux," The Consort, (September 1993), p. 11.

27. When Dedeaux's installation opened in Los Angeles it was criticized by some members of the African American community who objected to its glamourized portrayal of gang members. See Suzanne Muchnic, "Soul Shadows Exhibition: $19,000 Well Spent?" Los Angeles Times, (Saturday, May 1, 1993), Part F, p. 10 and "Artist Set to Be Heard in City Cultural Dispute," Los Angeles Times, (Monday, May 31, 1993), Part F, p. 2. Also see Cynthia Wiggins, "Jail Sell," Afterimage 22, no. 3, (October 1994), pp. 10-11.

28. Consultant Marie Barnes's other plans included arranging supervised visits to the installation for youth on probation and suspended city school students, as well as a "de-briefing" room staffed by social workers, psychologists, and school counselors. See Elizabeth Forbes, "Street Fight," Rochester, NY Democrat and Chronicle, (Tuesday, August 17, 1993), p. 1C.

29. Susan E. Cohen and William Johnson, "Conversation with Dawn Dedeaux," p. 2.

30. Joe Lewis, "Dawn Dedeaux: Soul Shadows: Urban Warrior Myths," Art Space, (March/April 1993), p. 74.

31. Ibid.

32. Dedeaux's intention here is, on the one hand, to provide some kind of spurious art historical legitimacy for urban violence, as she says: "it's to elevate the struggle of the streets, the here and now, these people, their rituals, their aspirations, and to give them equal billing, equal presentation, equal stage to the way in which we present the remnants of other cultures that have preceded our own." At the same time she argues that the references to ancient and contemporary mythologies are intended to show young, would-be criminals that "What [they're] doing is not novel. There have been warriors who have put their lives on the line all along. It's nothing new. It's nothing unique. It's a waste of time." In this interview Dedeaux does not elaborate on the apparent contradiction between "elevating" the "struggle of the streets" and proving that it is a "waste of time." Susan E. Cohen and William Johnson, "A Conversation with Dawn Dedeaux," pp. 12-13.

33. Jamie Moses, "Danger! Danger! Drive-By Shooting in Progress," Buffalo, NY Art Voice, vol. 4, no. 13, (June 30-July 13, 1993), p. 8.

34. Joe Lewis, "Dawn Dedeaux, Soul Shadows: Urban Warrior Myths," p. 75.

35. Susan E. Cohen and William Johnson, "Conversation with Dawn Dedeaux," p. 18.

36. "Soul Shadows: Urban Warrior Myths - Sponsored by Fleet Bank," ("Montage '93," Rochester, New York, May 1993).

37. Suzi Gablik, "Deconstructing Aesthetics: Toward a Responsible Art," New Art Examiner, (January 1989), p. 32.

38. This essay is an expanded version of a lecture given at the conference "Littoral: New Zones for Critical Art Practice," held at the School of Visual Arts, University College Salford, England, September 8-11. 1994. The conference was organized by Ian Hunter and Celia Larner of Projects Environment. In addition to Ian and Celia, I would like to thank the following people for their comments: Jo Bannister, David Harding, Steve Mulvaney, Stefan Szczelkun, Anna Williams, and Camila Mesquita (who brought the work of the Artist and Homeless Collaborative to my attention) and the rest of the students in my Contemporary Issues seminar at the Visual Studies Workshop.

19

20