

The article advocates a Fluxus based experimental pedagogy which is particularly well suited for scholarship confronted with film and electronic media. Fluxus works have the potential to work the frame of reference, and, by doing so, encourage creativity, and what Saper calls "invention-tourism." The theory explored in Fluxacademy focuses specifically on the use of intermedia for interactive education.

FLUXACADEMY

From Intermedia to Interactive Education

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Craig Saper, pp. 79–96
Visible Language, 26:1/2
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In an archive's file on Fluxus participant Ken Friedman, a loose page of scribbled notes suggests the potential connection between the alternative arts and pedagogy.¹ The page is entitled *The Academy of Fluxus*, and it provokes us to consider the connections between Fluxus and the academy in flux. Although people associated with Fluxus are usually thought of as artists, their work also addresses the contemporary crisis in education.

In terms of the academy in flux, scholars confronted with the information explosion, electronic media, and demands for easier access to knowledge have begun to suggest new strategies (e.g., interaction, non-sequential ordering, etc.) and a new metaphor (i.e. tourism) for scholarship and education. Fluxus applied these same strategies and the tourism metaphor to artworks which can function as models for educational applications. While scholars have suggested the usefulness of, for example, describing learning with hypermedia computer programs as a tour of information, they have not worked through applications on a broad-scale. Fluxus has already suggested potential routes.

It is a commonplace to explain that Fluxus was not concerned with the formal issues of an art medium; for example, *intermedia* (Dick Higgins' term for much Fluxus activity) plays off of, but is not synonymous with, *multimedia* precisely because the stress is on works which resist formal categorization as belonging to any (or even many) media.² *THE DISTANCE FROM THIS SENTENCE TO YOUR EYE IS MY SCULPTURE* (1971) by Friedman suggests this *intermedia* quality. Not only does the work challenge our definition of sculpture (and art), but it also suggests a social network built on *interaction* among people, activities and objects.

In a letter to Tomas Schmit, George Maciunas argued that Fluxus' objective was social, not aesthetic, and that it "could have temporarily the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art."³ This social project specifically concerns the dissemination of knowledge: the social situation of pedagogy. Simone Forti suggests that in the context of this social (anti-aesthetic) project, Fluxus work does not have any intrinsic value; the value of the work resides in the ideas it implies to the reader, spectator, participant, etc. She goes on to explain that, "when the work has passed out of their [the producers'] possession, it is the responsibility of the new owner to restore it or possibly even to remake it. The idea of the work is part of the work here, and the idea has been transferred along with the ownership of the object that embodies it."⁴ Forti explains that in the process of transferring ideas, the audience performs the piece. The work is "interactive."⁵ The term interactive suggests the shift away from the notion of passing some unadulterated information from an author's or teacher's mind directly into the spectator's/student's eyes and ears. Instead, the participants interact with the ideas, playing through possibilities rather than deciding once and for all on the meaning. Higgins' description of Fluxus "art-games" can function as a coda for a particular type of playfulness

employed in the Fluxus pedagogical situation. He writes that in the art-games one “gives the rules without the exact details,” and instead offers a “range of possibilities.”⁶ The details of the actual event are left open.

Aesthetics, usually defined in terms of stable criteria (formal, social relevance, artworld history, etc.), gives way to a Fluxus traveling research strategy, a kind of nomadology, a science of flux. The most thorough study of nomadology occurs in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s encyclopedic volume *A Thousand Plateaus*. Not coincidentally, that volume begins with Fluxus associate Sylvano Bussotti’s *Piano Piece for David Tudor*. Indeed, one could argue that Deleuze and Guattari build implicitly on the Fluxus model of scholarship,⁷ however, in terms of the current argument, we need only mention that nomadology offers “another way of traveling and moving: proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going instead of starting and finishing.”⁸ Fluxus works the middle, the *inter-*, of media, research, and action, and makes use of what Deleuze and Guattari call “becoming” and “involving.”

Becoming is involutory, involution is creative. To regress is to move in the direction of something less differentiated. But to involve is to form a block that runs its own line ‘between’ the terms in play and beneath assignable relations.⁹

In terms of the effort to involve, Fluxus runs its own line between art activities and everyday life, audience and performers, education and entertainment. Its works play through the borders or work the frame in order to explore involution as an invention strategy.

John Hanhardt explains that Fluxus work challenges the social and cultural frames of reference. He specifically examines how Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell “removed television from its conventional setting by incorporating it into their performances and installations.”¹⁰ Furthermore he states that these works disrupted the frames of reference by using humor. Hanhardt defines humor as “a subversive action from inside the frame that mocks or undermines conventions of behavior – to highlight the obvious.” He continues by quoting Umberto Eco, who,

reminds us of the presence of law that we no longer have reason to obey. In so doing it undermines the law. It makes us feel the uneasiness of living under the law – any law.’ The work of Paik and Vostell attempted to undermine the ‘law’ of television by employing collage and de-collage to make us uneasily aware of how television functions as a medium shaping our world views.¹¹

Significantly, these works do more than merely criticize a dominant mode of television; they work the frame of reference. Academic scholars choose various conceptual axiomatics and methodologies (e.g., Marxist or Neo-Marxist, Formalist or Neo-Formalist, etc.), but they usually do not challenge the essential foundation of the modern University: scientific normativity. The normativity appears, not in the content of an argument (radical or not), but rather in the modes of presentation and demonstration. The work of the FluxAcademy, on the other hand, chal-

lenges the framing of reference in order to transform modes of writing and approaches to pedagogy. In discussing this type of transformative work, Jacques Derrida explains that “those who venture forth along this path...need not set themselves up in opposition to the principle of reason, nor need they give way to ‘irrationalism.’” Instead, he explains that the chance for this type of activity appears in a “wink” or a “blink,” it takes place “in the twinkling of an eye.”¹² The “wink” of the FluxAcademy does not pretend to destroy the frame, nor does it claim to stand outside the existing institutions of academics. It works the frame. Derrida suggests that this working of the frame occurs “between the outside and the inside, between the external and the internal edge-like, the framer and the framed, the figure and the ground, form and content, signifier and signified...the emblem for this topos seems undiscoverable; I shall borrow it from the nomenclature of framing: the *passaportout* [the matting].”¹³ Erving Goffman has written an extensive analysis of the effects produced by working the frames of reference. He explains that the primary experience of a participant confronted with, for example, a Fluxus happening is to become “*interactionally disorganized*” [emphasis added].¹⁴ Reading interaction in terms of how Fluxus (dis)organizes and disseminates knowledge can help explain precisely the effects produced by a Fluxed pedagogy. Goffman explains that when the audience encounters an event like a Fluxus happening watching becomes doing; it would be a mistake to argue that a listening, watching and still audience is passive. In fact, the opposite may be the case. The breaking of the normal reference can actually induce involvement. Goffman explains, however, that the initial reaction to the event will probably be negative.

If the whole frame can be shaken, rendered problematic, then this too can ensure that prior involvements – and prior distances – can be broken up and that, whatever else happens, a dramatic change can occur in what it is that is being experienced...negative experiences...¹⁵

Among the various ways to shake the frame or reflexively examine the frame and its dissolution, Goffman mentions brackets, direct address to the audience, the “fool” character in a play, and, in terms of Fluxus, the spectacle-game. The spectacle-game addresses the whole matter of the show under presentation and, in doing so, sets in motion a merger of performers and spectators; in some sense, the spectators (and their expectations) are put on stage.¹⁶ One way Fluxus plays the spectacle-game is to announce a performance in a conventional way; the audience arrives and some of the expected activities occur, but the traditional performance does not take place. In this situation, Goffman explains that an audience is made “conscious of its own restrictive conventions.” Fluxus happenings, create a situation where the audience has to interact with the frame of reference. As Goffman explains in a discussion of happenings, “actual performances of this kind often do succeed, of course,

in driving the audience up and down various keys in their effort to arrive at a viable interpretation of what is being done to them.”¹⁷ As we will see, this type of self-reflexive thinking is crucial not only for understanding Fluxus work, but also education in general.

Joseph Beuys (Fluxus Associate) has commented on his working of the pedagogical frame by stressing the shamanistic aspect of his work. The shaman works his wonders by disrupting the normal order of things; rules of classification and rational methods give way, for a moment, to the interference of the shaman’s work. Beuys explains that “when I appear as a kind of shamanistic figure, or allude to it, I do it to stress my belief in other priorities and the need to come up with a completely different plan for working with substances. For instance, in places like universities, where everyone speaks so rationally, it is necessary for a kind of enchanter to appear.”¹⁸ Again, like the shaman, and Fluxus pedagogy in general, Beuys wants to stimulate rather than merely transmit information. This stimulation is a kind of invention strategy. This invention strategy works the frame with a “wink,” which functions as a becoming or middling; it leads to interactionally disorganized participants who function in a state of involution (involve). We can describe this Fluxus scholarship as a nomadic type of invention: picking-up ideas and running with them.

Academy In Flux

Fluxus’ irreverent wit not only criticized the aesthetic criteria of the “Artworld,” but also the frame of the organization and dissemination of knowledge. The work inherently suggests an alternative to formal readings of artworks. Instead, exploring the notion that artworks do not reflect reality, these Fluxus works constitute a social connection. They have more than a physical manifestation; they also suggest a way of organizing information in order to change the way we understand and share information: precisely a pedagogical project.

1. *Interaction/Intersections*, a term reminiscent of *interactive art*, now orients much of the research on designing computer programs for educational applications. While learning used to depend a great deal on “following along,” the current notion of interaction denotes a way of organizing and sharing information which allows users to connect any piece of information to any other piece of information. This organizational mechanism suggests an alternative to the sequential logic of reading a book; interaction connotes a web of associations: non-sequential learning; the ability to access and study even insignificant details; and quite often, game-like situations for learning.¹⁹

2. *Tourists*. Hypermedia, the electronic form of interactive education, allows users to create materials, make and follow links, and access information without clearly delineating between the modes of author and readers; and, because any user can add materials or links, the overlapping interactions make distinction between original and found informa-

tion moot.²⁰ In any event, the structure of learning changes: the terms student and teacher no longer accurately describe the learning experience in the hypermedia environment. Instead, the metaphor of touring and tourism better describes the ways a user navigates around non-sequentially organized information. These new hybrid learning situations sometimes follow well-charted routes and sometimes meander. Significantly, the participant functions much like a tourist who can wander off and make different connections.²¹ However, if the interactive environment is designed as a *guided* tour the extent to which any user can meander around the information is limited.²²

Interactive education allows for the mixing of structured orientations and meandering tours through information. Although one can use the book-centered forms of interpretation, the interactive format allows users to also explore alternatives to book-centered logic. According to the Grapevine project on designing hypermedia programs for educational applications, "as a space-time-traveling tourist, your first choice is to decide on a brief Highlight Tour, a Regular Tour, the Full Tour,"²³ or (we might add) a detour. Fluxus offers a detour.

3. *Detour (working the frame)*. Working the frame leads to what Paul Feyerabend calls an "open exchange," because each move a participant makes, influences and determines every other move by constantly switching frames of reference. For Feyerabend, there are two ways to exchange ideas. The guided exchange has participants adopt a specified tradition and accept only those responses that correspond to its standards, while the open exchange has the participants develop the tradition as the exchange goes along. Even fictitious or apparently nonsensical theories work for communities engaged in this type of on-going exchange. According to Susan Stewart, switching frames of reference *requires* an ability to entertain nonsensical information. She goes on to explain that nonsense is "a domain between realizable domains...It is a place to stand in the middle of change." Nonsense offers "the motion which is characteristic not only of change, but of learning as well."²⁴ The connection between learning and nonsense is precisely the intersection/interaction explored in the FluxAcademy. In order to learn something, one must be able to use the information in new and different situations. As Stewart explains, "learning depends upon freeing the message from the constraints of the situation-at-hand."²⁵ Because learning depends on the progressive decontextualization of information, it relates to the apparently out-of-context and encourages learning by liberating information from particular contextual and functional constraints. Through the effort to apply information outside of the situation where you learned it, a self-reflexive learning about learning takes place. The learner must "break" or work the frame of reference in a particular situation in order for the information to have a use in other situations.²⁶ With its specific use of nonsense, the FluxAcademy offers a particularly apt model for a transitional pedagogy based on an open exchange of

knowledge and encourages learning as a form of problem solving. Information is applied across frames of reference; a kind of alchemical reaction among intersecting/interacting elements is set off. One could call this aspect of the FluxAcademy invention-tourism.

Pedagogy on Tour

The ideas and members of Fluxus grew out of experimental pedagogies at Black Mountain College during the summer sessions of 1948 and, especially, 1952²⁷ and at the New York School for Social Research during John Cage's 1958/59 seminar. Black Mountain College focused on a redefinition of the arts by stressing a holistic/experimental approach rather than a technical or formal approach to art. The 1952 summer session added to, and changed, this experimental approach to art. Cage, fast becoming a major influence on the experimental arts, brought to the summer session his concerns with the *I ching*, "chance," etc. His *Theatre Piece #1*, which assigned a specific time bracket within which each performer had to perform a specific action, became the prototype of "Happenings." Buckminster Fuller summarized the experimental nature of these influential summer sessions: "failure is a part of experimentation, you succeed when you stop failing." Although Black Mountain College eventually folded, the teachers present during those two summer sessions (including Cage, Fuller, M.C. Richards, and Merce Cunningham) conspired to create a traveling school: "the finishing school was going to be a caravan, and we would travel from city to city, and it would be posted outside of the city that the finishing school was coming...we would finish anything...we would really break down the conventional way of approaching school."²⁸

George Maciunas also planned for the organization of a school. In a prospectus for the New Marlborough Centre For The Arts, he described a think-tank which would devote itself to:

1. study, research, experimentation, and development of various advanced ideas and forms in art, history of art, design and documentation;
2. teaching small groups of apprentices in subjects not found in colleges;
3. production and marketing of various products, objects and events developed at the centre; and
4. organization of events and performances by residents and visitors of the centre.²⁹

Thus it does not require a large leap of the imagination to claim that Fluxus works and social structures address pedagogical concerns. More importantly, Fluxus works became models for alternative forms of social organization. Indeed, as Estera Milman explains, "Fluxus work (objects, paperworks, publications, festivals, and performances) and the movement's social structures became congruent and interchangeable."³⁰ Because they function not as mere objects, but as clues to a special form of social organization, the works can provide models for *interactions* among students, teachers and information. In fact, it could

be argued that George Maciunas' manifesto for Fluxus could function equally well for education in the electronic age.

FLUX ART: non art-amusement forgoes distinction between art and non-art forgoes artist's indispensability, exclusiveness, individuality, ambition, forgoes all pretension towards a significance, variety, inspiration, skill, complexity, profundity, greatness, institutional and commodity value. It strives for nonstructural, non-theatrical, nonbaroque, impersonal qualities of a simple, natural event, an object, a game, a puzzle, or a gag. It is a fusion of Spike Jones, gags, games, Vaudeville, Cage and Duchamp.³¹

Of course, we have more than manifestos to use as guides for appropriating Fluxus for the academy in flux; we have the objects, games, gags, etc. The goal here is to use Fluxus as a model for pedagogy and, what better place to begin than with Ken Friedman's *Visa Touriste (Passport to the State of Flux)* (1966/77). In his efforts to find a topos for his description of working the frame, Derrida, finally chooses the image of the *pass-pourtout* [matting of a picture]. This homophonic pun with "passport too," expresses quite nicely the transient working of the frame found in Fluxus work. Friedman's passport supposedly enabled the bearer to "pass freely without hindrance" into a Fluxfest. The passport also suggests a peculiar kind of tourism. It suggests an altered social relation, a different way to proceed. The passport gives the bearer the right of entry into what Milman has defined as "a country whose geography was a figment of the communal imagination, whose citizenry was transient."³² Robert Filliou's *Permanent Creation* (instead of art) asks participants to create their own territory. *His Territory 2 of the General Republic*, located in a farmhouse outside Nice, dedicated itself to pedagogical research into genius and "stupidology." In this way, Fluxus connects this transient approach to invention and creates what one might call an invention-tourism. The metaphor of touring and travel connects specifically to an "interactive" invention; an invention-tourism. And, this is precisely the theoretical model interactive education has asked theorists to create. This sort of alchemical tourism or transported-tourism plays through the old metaphor or vehicle of tourism and examines the implication of a new vehicle.

In his work, *Fish-Video*, Nam June Paik offers the alchemical or hybrid intersection between invention and tourism that the passport (*pass-partout*) suggests. He uses a video projection of postcards with live fish swimming in front of the projections in a tank. The "Then-Far-Away" postcards play off of the "Here Now," and begin a process of thinking about tourism in relation to time and memory. The "exotic" tropical fish represent a traditional promise of tourism. Yet, Paik's work functions not as celebration of exoticism of foreign countries (e.g., Korea) as in some forms of tourism; instead it places tourism in relation to the blurring of the new/world far-away/close-at-hand. Because it (dis)organizes (without opposing) the traditional classification of exotic as far-away, it places tourism in relation to an interactive invention process. We might rename

Paik's work as "Go Fish," which would suggest an invention strategy, a rhetoric for coming up with ideas: playing with how we classify and organize information.³³ The transition from Paik's *Fish-Video* to the "Go Fish" educational strategy presents a startling logic. It not only seems to mock traditional norms of scholarship and to suggest a connection based on a pun on the word/image of fish, but it also suggests a way of translating Fluxus work into Fluxus pedagogy. In this example, interpreting the image/work as an activity allows us to think about the work as the embodiment of a social relationship: a game-like activity. The spectacle-game, the term Goffman uses to describe works which disrupt the frame of reference, suggests a pedagogical game which works the frame in order to provoke invention.

Post-Cognition

In his book on intermedia, Dick Higgins describes the post-cognitive alternative to the cognitive model of education. He defines cognition as the "process of becoming known by perception, reasoning or intuition." Higgins is also concerned with "the expressionistic, self-revealing, and uncovering of reality (transcend personal view) in order to interpret the world in new way."³⁴ Futurists, Dadaists, Duchamp, Cage and others have explored the disappearance of the cognitive dimension in art and culture. It was Henry Flynt, who coined the phrase conceptual art, who began using the term post-cognitive. The cognitive model attempts to interpret and describe reality and, at least in its current incarnation, attempts to postulate the abstract rules of supposedly pure unadulterated thought. Conceiving of social interaction in terms of an algorithmic thought-code machine, cognitive explanations describe supposed origins of moves in a thought-game rather than generating novel moves. The post-cognitive works set out to play the game rather than determine who made the rules or where they come from. In short, the post-cognitive creates novel realities.

Higgins explains that Fluxus work fits into a postcognitive model. In fact, if we attempt to find a logic in Fluxus activities, they resemble *Zen koans* more than a reflection or description of social or artistic realities. These activities-koans have a peculiar structure which allows for both simplicity and an alchemical disruption or "breaking of the frame of reference." Greg Ulmer describes this structure and provides an example by quoting Joseph Beuys.

Another decisive fluxus element was the 'lightness and mobility of the material.' The Fluxus artists were fascinated by the opening up of the simplest materials to the total contents of the world...[Beuys]: "Everything from the simplest tearing of a piece of a paper to the total changeover of human society could be illustrated."³⁵

Fluxus works function by turning the most particular (even autobiographical elements) into widely disseminated ideas. Beuys' transformation of his autobiographical art into first a Fluxus program and, from there, into a grassroots participational political movement and then into the Green

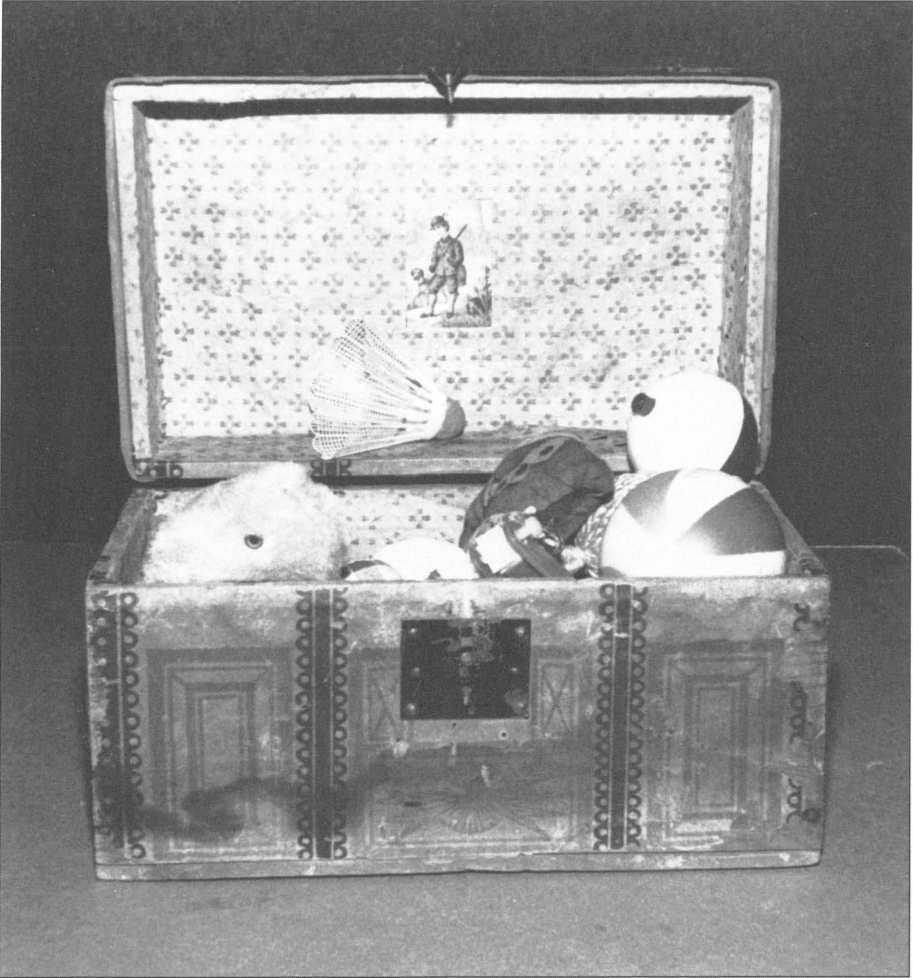
Party offers the most obvious example of this process.³⁶ This transformation is part of an “Instant Theory,” which suggests, once again, that academic scholars can make use of the simple and quick structure of Fluxus work.³⁷ The works will not offer much to those who fail to interact with the activities-koans; their works will offer little to those looking for a description of the world. Yet, to anyone willing to take the peculiar course of training suggested by the FluxAcademy, these activities will lead to post-cognitive transformations.

Course of Training

In Nam June Paik’s *Monthly Review of the University for Avant-Garde Hinduism* (1963), one finds torn postcards, strange messages from different parts of the world and essays in an envelope stamped with the review’s title. The significance of the work resides in the interaction with the particular koan-activity. It suggests that the University for Avant-Garde Hinduism exists somewhere in transit, and that being “in transit” is an aspect of the University’s peculiar course of training. George Brecht’s *Valoche/A Flux Travel Aid* (1975) offers an aid in traversing this course. It contains 26 balls (gaming toys, sports balls, fake eggs, etc). According to Brecht, this square wooden *necessaire de voyage* (17th, 18th, or 19th century traveling kit, often cylindrical wood, to fit into a saddle bag) can accompany one on many journeys including visits to the after-life. He explains that “in the last month of his life, George Maciunas was preoccupied with assembling these works and was in the process of making a special one for himself when he died.”³⁸ The neologism, *valoche*, suggests *valise*, *valuables*, and even the colloquial term *valoose*, which means “money” (and is used by American soldiers traveling in places where Arabic is spoken). The traveling aid offers a way to move between frames by “having a ball” with the 26 letters of the alphabet. It is precisely on the level of the play of letters that Fluxus activities work.

Media Education

Fluxus films attempt to reinvent the wheel (i.e., they attempt to invent a protocinema within a mass produced industrial mechanism) in order to ask what if the history of film had taken a different route. The Fluxus films (and Maciunas’ graphic design) focused on the moment when popular culture was still not institutionalized to the point of a modern industry. Dick Higgins describes Maciunas’ choice of type style (“extremely ornamental type faces, such as *Romantique*”) as “deliberately archaic.”³⁹ Fluxus went back to the protocinematic experiments of Muybridge and the cinema’s first decade for models of film making. In doing so, they desedimented the perceptual and cultural experiences now buried by Hollywood’s mode of film making. Tom Gunning explains that in the way these early films restructure both traditional representations of space and “the relation of spectacle to the audience we may find a link to avant-garde practice.”⁴⁰ The same preoccupations of the early and



George Brecht, *Valoche 1959–1975*. A Flux Travel Aid. Small sea chest filled with objects and toys, 18.5 x 18.5 x 30.5 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection. This copy was found in George Maciunas' room after his death in 1978. Photograph by Hollis Melton.

proto-cinema appear in the Fluxus films, many of which are experiments in time and movement without any narrative progression. These Muybridge-type experiments in time-motion studies (stoppages in Duchamp's terminology)⁴¹ suggest the same pre-occupation with travel, movement, and movement/travel as change as we have seen in other Fluxus work. We can see the Muybridge-like isolations of particular movements (and the effort to capture the progression of time) in the flux film of an Eye Blink, Higgins' mouth eating motion, Ono's film of but-tocks moving, or Paik's clear film accumulating dust, or Maciunas' flip-

book made from stills of Ono's face smiling and relaxing. In terms of the early cinema's use of short reels, Fluxus films often were film loops about two feet long. Maciunas also explored the possibility of a different history of cinema with his rope in sprocketless projector.

A fluxus media education teaches us through the projection of a "what if" situation. In repeating the proto-cinematic experiments in the contemporary world, they did not make a nostalgic return to a phenomenological project of isolating animal and human movements. Instead, they used the frame of reference of those earlier cinematic experiments to disrupt both the perverse phenomenology of the Muybridge studies and the contemporary narrative cinema. Afterall, there is a difference between Ono's film of buttocks moving and Muybridge's proto-cinematic investigations of a horse galloping. Both focus on the isolation of a single movement, but the content of the films makes the Fluxus work a corrosive joke and the Muybridge experiment merely a document about an attempt to capture the truth of a movement. Fluxus projected the possibility of a cinema which would use "the relation of spectacle to the audience" as a vehicle for invention rather than mere description. With this possible muse of media in mind, the FluxAcademy uses machines not merely as processors of information but as provocations for learning.

Learning Machine

For the Fluxamusement center, John Lennon and Yoko Ono designed/planned a series of dispensing machines. These included machines which dispense water (without a cup), sand and glue, an endless stream of water, slugs (for money), and a crying machine which would dispense tears. Those machines led the way to the most important contribution to FluxAcademy, a learning machine. Yoko Ono's *Chewing Gum Machine Piece* (1961) which placed wordcards in a gum machine, hints at how a learning machine might work. We get a more developed version of this possibility in George Brecht's *Universal Machine* (1976), which consists of a box with many diagrams and pictures printed on the bottom inner surface of the box. The diagrams resemble nineteenth-century drawings of animal life. A number of objects (a golf tee, marbles, plastic numbers, coiled string, etc.) are loose inside the box. The directions explain how to use the machine:

...for a novel: shake the box, open, chapter one. close. shake the box. open. chapter two. close. shake the box...for poems: substitute line one for chapter one, etc. For plays; Actor one. For dance: movement one. For music: sound one. For event score: event one...For biography: divide life into units, shake for each unit makes biography substitute countries and make histories; substitute religions and make spiritual narrative; substitute families and make genealogies...5. write question, put it in box, open, conjunction of paper edges, words on paper, holes in paper with the objects and the images of floor of box answers question...9. Are you sad? Shake box. obtain joke.

10. resolution of marital problems. 11. consider adding or subtracting objects; extending or contracting images on floor of box. 12. For generating new languages, logics, mathematics....15. Inventing. Consider any two elements in an existent relationship. Replace either or both elements and/or the relationship using the Universal machine. Consider repeating....18. Travel itineraries.

The *Universal Machine* sets up a situation where the participant uses a series of variable combinations to write novels, plays, and biographies, solve problems, tell jokes, make further plans, or even change the parameters of the machine. The fifteenth possibility, Inventing, explains a process which resembles the basic methods described above in terms of the FluxAcademy. When two elements have an “existent relationship,” then they both appear in the same frame of reference. If one replaces one or both elements using an arbitrary constraint, then the disrupted frame produces both the nonsense associated with learning through decontextualizing information and the interactions/ intersections associated with a relay in-transformation (or involution). The eighteenth possible use of the machine, “Travel Itineraries,” also suggests the way the machine produces an invention-tourism. The *Universal Machine* (reminiscent of the early name for the computer) suggests a way to combine information, not as part of a descriptive system (as a cognitive work), but as part of generative interactions (as a post-cognitive work). In this way, the machine functions on both the particular and the general level simultaneously: both the general rules and the particular situation shift with each move in the “open exchange.”

Maciunas had experimented with machines which use arbitrary constraints to change the frame of reference. His *Learning Machine*, Preliminary Version, (1969) functions as the transitional work between Fluxus and the FluxAcademy. It would have contained charts, diagrams, and atlases; it would have recategorized fields of knowledge. Maciunas only completed a two-dimensional diagram and tabulation, which was intended as the first surface of the three-dimensional storage and retrieval system. Even these incomplete plans suggest a plan for using electronic media for a memory theater dedicated to invention rather than mere descriptions. Indeed, one could argue that the machine hints at a Fluxus memory (post-cognitive, involutory, and interactive).

Maciunas' machine lists all knowledge in a classification system. For the most part the grid is not exceptional. It closely resembles traditional taxonomies of knowledge, and it suggests the classifications found in memory theaters – systems of classification and organization used in remembering large amounts of information (even all known information). In the memory theaters of Giulio Camillo, all knowledge was stuffed into an imaginary Roman amphitheater. This encyclopedia, thesaurus and poetry machine became “a work of manic idiosyncrasy, resembling a private museum like those of [Duc Jean Floressas] des Esseintes, [Joris-

Karl] Huysman's paragon of decadence."⁴² The Learning Machine resembles this effort to describe all knowledge.⁴³ The use of a memory theater shifts the process of knowing and remembering from an organic cognition to a discursive practice.

There are a few anomalies in Maciunas' system. For example, he includes a heading called uology. This apparent neologism suggests a science of "u." Of course, there is no traditional science of uology, but the possibility of such a science suggests the play between the particular and the general discussed above. Another suggestive neologism is flexography, which may hint at a flexible writing practice – a way to write in the FluxAcademy. In terms of how the Machine organized information, the term "food" is listed under "light," which is in turn listed under "chemical," which is listed under "engineering." This suggestive organization makes one re-think the way we normally classify the notion of food. In another organizational aberration, "textual criticism" is listed under philology, which is in turn listed under cybernetics, which is in turn listed under biological sciences (which appears as two separate headings). Cybernetics is listed under math *and* under physiology. In terms of organizational suggestiveness, the art and design section is the most interesting because it appears to function as a *mise-en-abyme* for the rest of the memory grid. Everything in the rest of the classification grid is at least suggested in the art and design section. Different than most classifications of art and design, sculpture has no listing, and painting and drawing have only minor listings. In most traditional taxonomies those three listings would be the dominant areas. Maciunas' classification does not quite match mere description of art and design. One possibility suggested by the classification is how a category can shift from one heading to another; for example, cinema is listed under photography, but there is a special listing for "expanded cinema." What Maciunas does in this work, and in his chart on the history of art movements, is to provoke new possibilities through the unusual classification of information. The startlingly wide scope of the art and design classification includes wars, orgies, prisons, clouds, fountains, shells, insects, food, cybernetics, etc. This notion that any and all of these can be included in discussions of art and design makes the system a provocation as much as a description; how, for example, can one make insects into art or how are they already aesthetic or part of design?

As mentioned above, besides a few anomalies, the *Learning Machine* does not, at first, appear to diverge from traditional taxonomies of knowledge. Yet, on closer examination it does not organize the information into epochal categories; that is, it does not put the categories into headings according to historical chronologies, movements or periods, nor does it organize the information according to authors, artists, inventors, leaders, etc. Much of the knowledge taught in universities and especially in secondary schools depends on these markers for legitimacy. We rarely have departments or pedagogies premised on a taxonomy which organizes information in alternative to history and "great men."

The *Learning Machine* works the frame of reference for organizing our knowledge; it suggests alternatives to disseminating that knowledge; and, it also functions (potentially) as a generative machine producing interactions within and among our frames of reference. These interactions (e.g., asking why orgies and wars are included as art and design) suggests more than a semiotic reading of culture as designed; it suggests that culture and taxonomies are open to art and design, that in an open exchange of knowledge even nonsense may play a crucial role in learning, and that if you do not risk anything, do not give a part of yourself, then you will never understand either *uology* or *flexography*.

In (Trans)Formation of the FluxAcademy

Changing classification methods from the notion of a Book to the notion of a Machine changes how we read and understand knowledge. In the Book model we read once, and we move from knowing-nothing to truth, argument or moral of the book. It offers a kind of window on the world. One starts with a given theme or idea, and unpacks the ideas in a chronological sequence: 1, 2, 3. The Machine model (with hypermedia as an example) allows for many readings, many juxtapositions; it suggests an infinite allegorization or metaphorization of information as it finds itself as a frame for other bits of information. This poetic or jig-saw puzzle method of reading also leads to a delayed effect, and a knowing by interacting. The argument about a shift in models or frames from the Book to the Machine (electronics as a logic not a medium) is not a modernist argument about the purity of a single medium (in this case, electronics); rather it suggests the tensions this constellation of socio-discursive effects (computers in the classroom) foregrounds. Fluxus deals, at least in part, with a socio-discursive frame (i.e., pedagogy, learning, invention), and the works offer strategies for working (on) that frame; it does not offer a particular set of common formal properties or techniques, nor a shared set of aesthetic preoccupations, nor an epochal explanation (authors, movements, etc.); rather, understood in terms of the Learning Machine, Fluxus work teaches us about taxonomic frames (and the breaking or playing with those frames). This essay has explored how these experiments actually work the frame, and how these frame breaking works function as a "passport to" (not merely a pun on *passe-partout*) an imaginary continent of social relationships. These pedagogical activities work as symbiotic, antidotal, or homeopathic shocks to the academic system. They use the Learning Machine, not as an object of study, but as a *passe partout* for the (Flux)Academy.

NOTES

¹ From the archive of Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Estera Milman, Director. Pincus-Witten argues that "ephemeral notebook pages [are] typical of Fluxus flourish," Robert Pincus-Witten, "Introduction," in *Fluxus*

Codex, ed. Jon Hendricks (New York, 1988), p. 37.

² Dick Higgins, in *A Dialectics of Centuries: Towards a Theory of the New Arts* (New York, 1978), pp. 12–17. See also, Stephen Foster and Hans Breder, *Intermedia* (Iowa City, 1979), and *Theoretical Analysis of the*

Intermedia Art Form: A Round Table Discussion (New York, 1980). In a poster entitled "Some Poetry Intermedia," Higgins offers a number of definitions of intermedia. "Intermedia differ from mixed media in that they [intermedia] represent a fusion conceptually of the elements: for instance, opera is a mixed medium since the spectator can readily perceive the separation of the musical from the visual aspects of the work, and these two from the literary aspect." Higgins also explains that it is "pointless to try and describe the work according to its resolvable older media." He coins the term intermedia in order to "describe art works being produced which lie conceptually between two or more established media or traditional art disciplines." My definition of intermedia differs from Higgins' slight stress on *formal* innovation: "the intermedia appear whenever a movement involves innovative formal thinking of any kind, and may or not characterize it." I am of the opinion that formal innovation is irrelevant to an object's or event's status as intermedia.

³ Cited by Pincus Wittin in Hendricks, p. 37.

⁴ Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion* (Halifax, 1974), p. 45. cf. Dick Higgins' "Five Traditions of Art History, An Essay" (a poster). Higgins categorizes Fluxus under the phrase Exemplative Art, which he defines as "art as illustration or example or embodiment of idea, especially abstract conception or principle." See also, Lucy Lippard, *Six Years* (New York, 1973).

⁵ Forti, p. 58.

⁶ Higgins, "Intermedia," pp. 20–21. See also, Schechner, Richard. "Happenings," *Tulane Drama Review* 10 no. 2 (Winter 1965). Schechner argues persuasively that happenings resemble scientific laboratory experiments.

⁷ In another article, I take up this connection at greater length. Craig Saper, "Electronic Media Studies: From Video Art to Artificial Invention," *SubStance* 66, (1991) pp. 114–134. This article uses Nam June Paik's *Tele-Cello* as an alternative model for using electronic media. The cello's body is constructed from three video monitors. When one plays the strings with a bow, visual images on the three screens echo the musical vibrations. This Fluxus instrument looks and functions quite differently than the dominant designs of computers and software. Computer designs often depend on a simplified notion of cognition as a metaphor for how computers "should" work, while the *Tele-Cello* offers a post-cognitive model of how computers *might* work. Instead of designing computer programs to function as computational code machines, the post-cognitive design

uses the computer to generate potential paths around and through information. The article concludes with a demonstration of the postcognitive model. In that simulation of a computer hypertext journey, the "player" performs, rather than merely reads, *A Thousand Plateaus*. The performance suggests a "plateau of intensity" around the issues of a "Mind Without Cognition" and "Artificial invention." The discussion here on FluxAcademy serves as a useful introduction to the Tele-Cello performance of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1987), p. 25.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 238–9.

¹⁰ John Hanhardt, "Dé-collage/Collage: Notes Toward a Reexamination of the Origins of Video Art," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (Aperture with BAVC, 1991), p. 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Including quotation from Umberto Eco, "The Frames of Comic 'Freedom,'" *Carnival*, Thomas A. Seboek, ed. (Berlin, 1984), p. 18.

¹² Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason: The University In The Eyes of Its Pupils," in *diacritics* 13 no. (fall/1983), p. 16.

¹³ Jacques Derrida, "Passe-partout," in *The Truth in Painting*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago, 1989), pp. 11–12.

¹⁴ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Expertise* (Boston, 1986), p. 375.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 399.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

¹⁸ Joseph Beuys, interview, in Robert Filliou, *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (Cologne and New York, 1970) p. 23, quoted in Gregory Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Joseph Beuys to Jacques Derrida* (Baltimore, 1986), pp. 237–238.

¹⁹ Researchers in educational media note that the computer offers "not merely stacks of books, articles, videotapes, and the rest, but a wealth of material like that [books, articles, videotapes, etc.] *connected or linked* to form paths that lead students to intriguing byways and illuminating vista points." Robert Campbell and Patricia Hanlon, "Grapevine," in *Interactive Multimedia* ed. Sueann Abron and Kristina Hooper (Redmond, Washington, 1988), p. 161.

²⁰ Norman Meyrowitz, "Issues in Designing a Hypermedia Document System," in *Interactive*

Multimedia, p. 37.

²¹ See also, Bernard Frischer, "Links or Stories – A Compromise," in *Interactive Multimedia*, p. 302.

²² Thomas Anderson notes, "If we think of the information spreadsheet as a map, then we can package 'tours' simply by specifying which places (data cells) are to be visited in what order. For each such tour, we can create an advance organizer that previews what the tour is about and where it goes. Then we can create a voice-over that ties the individual pieces of media together into a coherent whole. This is what we did for the orientation tours." Thomas Anderson, "Beyond Einstein," in *Interactive Multimedia*, p. 203.

²³ Campbell and Hanlon, p. 191.

²⁴ Susan Stewart, *Nonsense Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature* (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 202–203.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

²⁷ Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge, Mass, 1987). Ray Johnson, founder of the New York Correspondence School and very influential in the Mail-Art movement, attended Black Mountain College as a student that summer.

²⁸ Buckminster Fuller quoted in *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, p. 156.

²⁹ "Prospectus for New Marlborough Centre for the Arts," by G. Maciunas (xerox).

³⁰ Estera Milman, *Fluxus and Friends; Selections from the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection* (Iowa City, 1988), n.p. cf. Musgrave, Victor. "The Unknown Art Movement," *Art and Artists*, special issue on "Free Fluxus Now" 7 no. 79 (Oct., 1972).

³¹ Maciunas' Manifesto, reproduced in Milman. While Vaudeville, Cage, and Duchamp have secured prominent places in scholarship on art and mass culture, Spike Jones remains a somewhat marginal figure. Yet, his "Musical Depreciation Revue" offers a whole array of useful jokes, gags, puns, spoonerisms, etc. In 1942, Spike wore a crown of corn(y) ears as the "King of Corn" in one of his publicity stunts. In 1982, forty years later, I attended a lecture/demonstration on Cage, Duchamp and Punctures in which the professor held up an ear of corn. That lecture changed dramatically the course of my life. In a "time bomb" effect, I just now realize, in 1992, the importance of POP to the FluxAcademy and the future of cultural studies.

³² Milman, n.p.

³³ Sean Cubitt offers a condescending criticism of Paik's *Fish Video*. He argues that although Paik plays with tourism, the image still suggests an imperialistic fund of images (a bank, a hoard, a treasure, etc.). Sean Cubitt, *Timeshift: On Video Culture* (NY: Routledge, 1991), 117. My reading of the work suggests that the images are something more and other than a "fund" (Cubitt's word, not Paik's). Ken Friedman describes Paik's performances as "interactive." Ken Friedman, "Fluxus Performance," in *The Art of Performance*, eds. Gregory Buttock and Robert Nicholas (NY, 1984), p. 64.

³⁴ Higgins, *A Dialectics of Centuries: Towards a Theory of the New Arts*, 7 and Dick Higgins, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia* (Carbondale, 1984), pp. 20–21.

³⁵ Greg Ulmer, (citation) 240; quoting from Gotz Adriani, Winfried Konnetz and Karin Thomas, *Joseph Beuys: Life and Works*, trans. Patricia Lech (Woodbury, NY, 1979), p. 79.

³⁶ Pincus-Witten, p. 16. Larry Miller's interview of Maciunas appears in a posthumous issue of *avTRE* (#11, March 24, 1979) dedicated to the Fluxus founder. Maciunas explains that Fluxus is "more like a way of doing things." He goes on to elaborate what this entails by repeating that "Fluxus is gag-like...a good inventive gag. That's what we're doing." In order for the gag-like element to work, objects and events must have a very simple "monomorphic" structure. Fluxus offers a way to reduce concepts and ideas to simple gag-like events or objects. When taken-up by the audience (when they "get it"), these *sapates* or deceptively small gifts can lead to many transformations like the bits and pieces of Beuys' autobiography which later provoked the foundation of the Green Party.

³⁷ Craig Saper, "Instant Theory: Making Thinking Popular," *Visible Language* 22:4 (1988), pp. 371–398. This manifesto for Instant Theory investigates alternative ways to package, disseminate, and represent knowledge. It focuses on two related questions. Can particular ways of sharing information provoke creativity? And in order to sell these evocative and provocative ideas, can we use pop culture's effects as strategies? These strategies function for the conservation of the (im)possible and the relay/caution of the suggestive. The FluxAcademy shakes-n-bakes Instant Theory to make it useful for pedagogy.

³⁸ Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, p. 215.

³⁹ Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," special issue on "Fluxus Research," *Lund Art 2* (no. 2) p. 37.

⁴⁰ Tom Gunning, "An Unseen Energy Swallows the Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film," in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (Berkeley, 1983), p. 356.

⁴¹ Craig Adcock, "Marcel Duchamp's 'Instantanés': Photography and the Event Structure of the Ready-Mades," in "Event" *Arts and Art Events*, ed. Stephen Foster (Ann Arbor, 1988), pp. 239–266. Adcock explains that Duchamp understood "that time could affect artistic outcomes" (239); for example, the description of the Ready-Mades as "instantanés" or "snapshots" suggests the effort to capture a moment of public taste from the flow of time. The object implicates the passage of time. In terms of the Fluxus films, Duchamp's *3 Stoppages etalon* suggests not only the freezing of a moment (string twisting freely and then glued down as it lands), but also a homophonic reference to Muybridge's serial-photographs of a horse galloping (one can translate *etalon* as both standard and stallion). Yoko Ono's film of buttocks moving not only follows Duchamp's efforts to "reduce, reduce, reduce" the image to a single gag and Muybridge's effort to isolate serially a particular movement, but her film also suggests another frame of reference to the horse/stallion homophonic chain: her film is, afterall, of an ass.

⁴² Michael North, *The Final Sculpture: Public Monuments and Modern Poets* (Ithaca, 1985), p. 136.

⁴³ See also, George Maciunas, *Expanded Arts Diagram* (a poster/diagram charting out an amazing genealogy of Fluxus in terms of many other art movements).