**Attentive Outrage and Fine Art Higher Education: A manifesto of the liminal**

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**Abstract**

This paper outlines the concept attentive outrage as a potential underlying principle for a manifesto of the liminal for fine art higher education in the UK. Crystallized from past activist experience and scholarship in the face of the here and now socio-political context of the UK and beyond, it defines attentive outrage as an *optimistically evocative, critical attitude with momentum* that can be inspired via studio based fine art teaching. It

proposes that attentive outrage in fine art higher education depends upon six intricately linked commitments to be shared equally by academics and students which capture: the nuances of intersectionality, managing dominant embodied social matter, critiquing cultural presences in the curriculum, recognizing the productive-conflictive tensions between cultural essentialism and cultural apporiation within the discourse of academic standards and artistic merit, fostering radical willfulness and pragmatic wisdoms, and articulating the impact of this in terms of the outcomes of students’ programmes in a manner that can address the needs of higher education governance mechanisms.

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Art Education, Social justice, equalities

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***A manifesto of the liminal 1.***

## **Introduction**

This paper outlines the concept attentive outrage as a potential underlying principle for a manifesto of the liminal for fine art higher education in the UK. Crystallized from past activist experience and scholarship in the face of the here and now socio-political context of the UK and beyond, it defines attentive outrage as an *optimistically evocative, critical attitude with momentum* that can be inspired via studio based fine art teaching. As a manifesto *of* the liminal, it accepts that its approach is transitional, sitting on moveable boundaries related to intersectional identity experiences and disciplinary cultures. As such my starting point is the need for fine art curriculum designers to recognise that their designs need to be in a constant state of transition with respect to dominating cultures and intersectionality. Intersectionality in the context of this paper refers to the tapestry of threads that composes who we are, often viewed asconcerning contradictions within dominant cultural norms (and thus the location for seemingly societally justified prejudice) related to ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disability, nationality, religion, socio-economic background, and age that we live with every day (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004). As a result, each intersection accentuates and accelerates where dominant socio-cultural and political norms within a variety of cultural hegemonies limit perceptions of our value. The commitments required to unpick the resultant effects are culturally dependent and, in the north Atlantic context, connected to intersectionality’s original definintion within black feminist theorizing (Cooper, 2016). As such this paper concentrates on the UK context rather than universalizing more broadly.

Within the argument set out here, it is accepted as an a priori assumption that attentive outrage should foster student-driven mediations of the paradox of fine art as simultaneously a social disrupter in the face of inequalities and as an enabler of social amnesia and evasion in relation to equality and diversity. The origins of the manifesto, as they emerged through a process of abductive reason and autobiographical threads, are described before the discussion turns to the paradoxes that attentive outrage seeks to address in Art Schools. It

proposes that attentive outrage in fine art higher education depends upon the following six intricately linked commitments to be shared equally by academics and students:

1. A responsibility to understand how visual practices play a role in constituting and intensifying *intersectionality.*
2. An obligation to comprehend the *power of white, ablest, matter* (and why it matters) through the curriculum, where such matter is recognized as neither random nor trivial, composed of norms relating to disability, race, heterosexuality (and the consequent limiting to forms of acceptability in terms of sex, sexuality, and gender), socio-economic worth, age, religion.
3. A promise to strategically re-member and dismember the cultural presences that underpin such matter whilst acknowledging that how students make relevance is not necessarily resolved by adding alternative visual presences.
4. A duty to constant inquiry about the relationships between visual disruptions, degree-level standards of originality and artistic merit, cultural essentialism, and cultural appropriation.
5. A pledge to simultaneously foster student-centred, radical willfulness through evocative incoherence and community oriented pragmatic wisdoms via shamelessly structured learning encounters.
6. A considered interaction with methods for demonstrating the impact of the outcomes from this approach, including engaging with governance mechanisms that are now part of the creative arts educational ecology in the UK.

**Origins of a Manifesto of the Liminal: A cocktail of abductive reason and autobiography**

“*How did we come to forget*?”

This question was raised by Ben Schatz, a San Francisco lawyer and lead performer with the *Kinsey Sicks* at the Edinburgh Fringe in August 2017, a man who cut his professional legal teeth defending predominantly gay AIDS patients in the Reagan years before combination therapy. It intersected for me with two other Arts experiences: the Tate’s *Queer British Art Exhibition 1861-1967* and seeing *Angels in America* streamed live to Glasgow from the National Theatre in London the week after the Grenfell Tower tragedy in which the artist [Khadija Saye](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/17/khadija-saye-artist-was-on-cusp-of-recognition-when-she-died-in-grenfell) (one amongst many) died (Barlow, 2017; Kushner, 1991-93; Topping, 2017). I struggled to find the *queer* in the Tate, though there were plenty of height-of-and-fading-Modernist-Empire, white English homosexuals, not surprising given the period and the canon represented. Yet *queer* seemed an out of place description for the art represented. Admittedly less catchy but in admiration of Eva Sedgwick’s seminal work on gay culture of the period, perhaps *British Art Before the Closet Fragmented* would have been more honest (Sedgwick, 1990: 68-69). The senior lawyer in *Angels*, Roy Cohn, is a very particular face internalised structural homophobia. In real life, he was a corrupt American attorney who, before his death of (homosexual sex related) AIDS in 1986, represented and befriended Donald Trump (Baram, 2017). And Khadija Saye’s image, flashed across the news, was a palpable memorial to continued disadvantage within the Black and Minority Ethnic communities and artists within them. All of this came on the back of conversations with students about intersectionality and decolonizing the fine art curriculum. In the space of a month, the bricolage of current affairs and artistic critiques (past and present) of the state of visual culture came together to exhibit the sting in the tail of postmodern British identity race and sexuality politics: despite some improvements, prejudices shored up with structural advantage were alive and kicking.

Moreover, the intermingled experiences reiterated visual arts’ capacity to manifest simultaneously subversive provocation and forgetful compliance. I am referring particularly to visual creativity’s paradoxical characteristic of articulating equalities-based injustice in unsettling ways whilst sometimes abetting forms of social amnesia and evasion which re-inscribe inequalities. As Doris Sommer notes, “through art we reframe experience, offset prejudice, and refresh our perception of what exists so that it seems worthy of attention” (Sommer, 2014, 10). At the same time, however, through art we can obfuscate all of these. In some respect, the Tate’s *Queer Art* exhibition exemplified this, the art at one time challenging, now somehow familiar, reassuring, safe, and silent on its role of reiterating a canon rather than decolonizing our assumptions of it.

Perhaps more immediately relevant as evidence linking this patchwork of observations to fine art in *higher education*, were the reports and research demonstrating how inclusion has remained elusive both within Art Schools and beyond into the cultural and creative ‘industries’ (Taylor & O’Brien, 2017; Brook, et al, 2018). Fine art in the academy is not yet a neutral, meritocratic space: it struggles to transcend normative social expectations attached to structural advantage. Consequently, qualitative judgement, abstraction, and beingare not always easy to differentiate. In that unease, subjective positions that embody prejudices and hidden and not so hidden forms of social disadvantage continue to function. Clarifying what this means when the discipline is as much about critical and creative materiality as abstract criticality is not easy and depends on an iterative process of self-reflection and coordinated enhancement. In such an iterative process, those engaged need to acknowledge that fine art’s learning, teaching and research regimes are as much implicated in obstructing a socially just fine art education that is confidently self-critical as they are in supporting it. Out of these musings, the concept of attentive outrage as an aspirational principle for learning fine art in higher education fell into unavoidable place.

**What is attentive outrage?**It is an optimistically evocative, critical attitude with momentum. As such it fuses optimism and creative will so as to foster agency centered on social responsibilities through artistic contributions (Sommer, 2014). It gets expressed through visual practices that prevent the amnesia of the privileged whilst fostering socially broader, hope-filled *nows* and *futures* to whichwe nonetheless have to pay continued critical attention. It evokes social change this way. It needs to be scholarly underpinned, bravely expressed in the face of injustice, and nurtured through the explicit weaving together of sustainable creativity, relational aesthetics, exposure to critical theory, and radical doing, sometimes collectively and sometimes as individual action. It is an attitude which consistently challenges the comfort zones of exclusive advantages as they play out in communities. It has an impish sense of humour and eschews malignant pessimism. And fine art curriculum need to find ways to inspire it.

***What are the characteristics of and influences on attentive outrage?***

It is characterized by deliberate attention to injustice and the social structures that enable it, whilst at the same time recognizing our own propensity to incite violence in the face of this knowledge.  From a fine art practice perspective, it celebrates the desire to visually critique power imbalances concurrently with calling out damaging forms of personalized negating, censoring, or otherwise erasing diversity. It does not seek to justify the actions of dominant hierarchies through over simplifications of equality of responsibility or unencumbered relativism. Nor does it encourage apathetic paranoia. Rather it works fearlessly with evidence that shows when an injustice is and *is not* as structural as initially thought. It demands that we act against systematic and hierarchical forms of *Othering* without simultaneously indulging in self-protective forms of oppression that re-effect exclusion.  And it is hard work.

It is not new or particularly original but it is part of my autobiography in activism. It was conceived in the face of generalized, daily, slights in the 1980s about what we now acronym as BAME and LGBTQ+ lives. It was sub-consciously nurtured in anxieties about the safety fantasies permeating the neoliberal, late 1990s comfort zones of apparently growing public tolerance in which I found myself. During this period, reading critical theorists and scholars diverse as bell hooks, Edward Said, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Eve Sedgwick, Jack Halberstam, Georges Batailles, Andrea Dworkin, Rene Girard gave it form. And it was fertilized through the millennium to the present in a consistent sense that visual and textual academic representations and fine art were agents of a particular and barely moveable material, visually-centric, social aesthetic. This was an aesthetic bounded by limited imagination and judgements (more moralizing than reason-based) that upheld dominant norms, contradiction closed when it suited the already powerful collective, and reflected the limited existence of diversity within the fine art curriculum (Addison, 2007; Theuri, 2015).

As an idea, it has been enriched in the last decade by artists who I came to know through the GOMA exhibition, ShOUT, and more recently through the work of the photographer Ajamu and artists associated with the Transmission Gallery in Glasgow as well as Queer and Transactivists, the research of social designers (Brian Massumi), academic cultural commentators (Doris Sommer, Sara Ahmed), educational researchers and practitioners (Mirza, 2009; Bhopal, 2018) and Arts groups such as *Glasgay,* *Outspoken Arts*, *Free Pride*, *Why is My Curriculum White?*, *Shades of Noir*. Finally, it has been irrigated by a growing body of students demanding to know why, despite prejudice and structural disadvantage already highlighted by scholars in the 1990s, things had clearly ‘not got better’ two decades later. Like Ben Schatz, students are asking *how did we come to forget* but with more punch and almost like a line from Kushner’s *Angels in America*: how dared we ignore these scholars? *Have we no sense of decency?*2*.* Shame on us.

***What paradoxes of fine art higher education does it seek to address?***

Two of the paradoxes that this notion of attentive outrage seeks to address have already been outlined: Firstly, that we need to mediate the capacity of visual art to manifest simultaneously subversive provocation and forgetful compliance; Secondly that, as an idea playing out within a higher education institutional setting, attentive outrage needs to manage the challenge of connecting optimistic, open-ended dissidence to current requirements from pragmatic frameworks of impact. Further to and qualifying of these, it also has to mediate:

* A contemporary cultural emphasis on the expression of identity co-existing with an emphasis on continuing to engage with and value outstanding cultural offerings that came from contexts which made some of those identities invisible in the first place;
* Current degree-level standards of originality and artistic merit co-existing with the conflicts between cultural essentialism and cultural appropriation that explicitly challenge how these standards are defined and used.
* The importance of inculcating responses to uncertainty by destabalising student assumptions about their art making at the same time as scaffolding a repertoire of relational wisdoms (and their practical manifestations) that have an apparent stability.

## **The curricular commitments for attentive outrage explained**

1. ***A commitment to understanding how visual practices play a role in constituting and intensifying* *intersectionality*.**

I accept that intersectional diversity exists within a symbolically limited (if not homogenous), lived metaphysical arena which in turn is underpinned by opaque but morally suffused assumptions about aesthetics (Lefebvre, 1991). I use the term ‘morally suffused’ to accentuate the role of shame in the social aesthetics of Art Schools. Here I refer especially to shame’s associations with both *not knowing* and *seeing differently* as determined within reciprocal encounters in the studio, seminar room, and beyond. This is not just a question of an individual’s experience of shame in relation to not knowingthe appropriate principles of aesthetics that exist within the cultural and socio-capital systems in Art Schools or a student’s orientations towards intersectional registers that appear not to easily fit within the canon to which they are exposed. It is also one of social action (Geertz, 1973; Reskin, 2003). In simple terms, it is about how our learning communities avoid their own shame of exclusivity through silences which embolden Othering because certain norms appear to sanction such silence (Douglas, 1966, 1992; Reskin, 2003). Shame avoidance in these terms is one location of what Atkinson refers to as privileged recognition (Atkinson, 2002, 86).

When it comes to our disciplines, their ‘ways of thinking, seeing, and visualising meta-narratives’ are where moralizing tropes both positive and negative circulate. If this is the case, the interlink between the reciprocal and structural realms of advantage and disadvantage is possibly closest for students within disciplinary cultures. In short, the intersectionally limiting, visually suffused disciplinary cultures students encounter in fine art education intensify the affects of difference through a process of Othering. How the tensions fuelled in Othering get expressed is not static either in wider society or within the Art School context (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Gillborn, 2008; Ng, Lee & Pak, 2007; Jacobs, 2006). This presents both studio and history-critical studies lecturers with the need to remain vigilant and responsive to homogenizing and stereotyping tendencies in themselves, in their disciplinary content, and in their student body concerning areas of visible minority tension. Such an approach is not easily ‘fixed’ through one or other discipline-specific tip or trick. Having to navigate these intersections is a dangerous highway of heightened exposure and is clearly more dangerous for some than others.

1. ***An obligation to comprehend the power of white, ablest, matter (and why it matters, Atkinson, 2017) through the curriculum, where such matter is almost ubiquitous and recognized as neither random nor trivial.***

Firstly, it is not random because it emerged out of the visual and regulatory (textual) mainstreaming of a particular type of entitled, increasingly emboldened community of aspirational sameness. The fine art produced in this process is not meritless, but how we understand the place of its merit and worth for a diverse student population needs to be more fundamentally tackled. Secondly, it is not trivial because in the process of visual mainstreaming, the aesthetic networks derived from the process of upholding the initial rules of inclusion are now so complicated that it is sometimes hard to know which network to unpick first. Some of the networks are also such sufficient simulacra of their original forefathers that we complacently assume the same forms of artistic resolution apply. This is not necessarily the case. *White, ablest matter* then refers to a metaphor for living, visually represented, systems of exclusivity and the presences of their progenitors which are re-appropriated by new generations. In this sense, white ablest matter can be viewed as a hybrid aesthetic which continues to establish similar codes and patterns of privileged recognition (Atkinson, 2002, 86). It takes for granted certain aspects of content, form, and function and encodes what counts as of value in Fine Art practice. It consequently influences what is favoured in evaluative judgements made within fine art educative situations. In these renewed visual forms, we encounter subtle adaptations in social mechanisms of control which veil the tenacity of certain categories of intersectional inequality. These renewed forms obscure how the outcomes of the original systems are maintained (and thus which elites still benefit the most). The educational challenge is how to differentiate between creative originality, artistic merit, and socially unjust, entitled bias in such a context and build a curriculum that enables this differentiation.

1. ***A promise to strategically re-member and dismember the cultural presences that underpin such matter whilst recognizing that how students make relevance is not necessarily resolved by adding alternative visual presences.***

The various configurations of history of fine art and critical, contextual studies have an especial role to play in cooperative leadership here. To do this though there needs to be an exploration of how certain visuals, content, and methodologies have emerged to take precedence within the quasi-canon of the sub-disciplines that make up these studies as much as in the European models of studio-enculturation fine art has continued to depend on despite considerable shifts in the student demography (Hatton, 2015). As Jenny Rintoul has noted, art theory is as emergent and generative as art practice (Rintoul, 2017). Yet in the face of perceived threat, especially those associated with oppositional politics or strategic essentialism within the student body, it can incline towards concretization of the visual-cultural and critical theorizing canon. Such concretization has two outcomes, one related to teaching, the other to learning.

With regards to how we *teach*, it enables universalizing cultural presences to continue to actively dominate the fine art curriculum with the bodies and narratives of seeming exclusivity. This manifests via conversations of relative value in terms of pre-existing curricular content and its relation to contemporary visual culture our students bring into studio (Freedman, 2015: 17). In the intensity of change’s demands as reflected in the critical, procreative agenda of attentive outrage, these debates about relative value can get trapped in disciplinary essentializing. One outcome of this is the reinscription of a monolithic white, able, matter as defined above. The conversation amongst programme academics, tutors, and technicians needs to be reset in terms of what is most likely to invoke students to pursue robust criticality. This needs to both invigorate their individual creative wills and address, critique, and enable the collective evolution of history and critical studies within the practice-theory-history axis.

Equally concerning but from the perspective of how students’ *learn* rather than how we teach, however, is the observation that current debates are intensifying an erroneous conflation of *presence* and *relevance* across fine art’s undergraduates. This has perhaps emerged out of contradictions between co-existing emphasises: an emphasis on specific identities and an emphasis on continuing to engage with and value outstanding cultural offerings that came from contexts which made some of those identities invisible in the first place. What I see is a paradox: On the one hand, our UK domiciled students have potentially grown up in an environment more positively engaged with difference than was hitherto the case and are being taught in environments where freedom to act and change the social is possible (Sagan, 2008). On the other, they are experiencing a higher educational system which still values a form of cultural universalism (Mirza, 2012) predicated on fairly tenacious attachments to a one-sided, dominant sense of British culture that is actually full of purposeful gaps. This form of universalism inhabits the spaces where social capital accrues. It also sustains habits of scholarship to which the *Decolonizing the Curriculum* movement has reacted.3.

To close these contradictions, visual presence seems an adequate response, as does a change in curricular content (reading lists are a particularly favoured way of achieving this later approach, for example). Indeed, providing a visual and textual presence which represents our student body more fully is a necessary condition of an attentively outraged curriculum. In this, I do not just mean static books or multimedia presentations, I also mean people and the experiences they bring. Nevertheless, not all representations of presence are universally relevant in a given community or group - what is defined as presence in one context can still be experienced as a caricature in another. At the same time, it can also impart a monolithic quality to the sub-cultures which identity politics attempts to make visible. In so doing, intersectionality is accentuated within those sub-cultures. Intersectionality within the same community means that *what counts as relevant presence is complicated*.

Indeed, whilst presence and relevance are closely inter-composed, they do not necessarily achieve the same outcomes in learning situations. Presence forms a direct, sensate, reflection of Self. Relevance has to be made as much as received. This making is sometimes most creatively achieved when absence and relevance-making are brought together to reveal a hitherto un-materialized presence. Consider, for example, that the genesis point of some creativity is the perplexity that emerges from the normative not making sense, or in other words, what is present creates dissonance (Gunn, 2016). In *Thought in the Act*, Erin Manning and Brian Massumi note the importance of enabling constraints as those situations which appear as barriers to meaning-making, but are actually the loci of new meaning-making essential in the complex scenarios of the contemporary world (Manning & Massumi, 2014). This concept captures the undercurrent of creative learning – learning which must manage the paradox of discipline enculturation with disciplinary rejection. Here I refer to the paradoxical process by which disciplinary practical wisdoms, theoretical frameworks, daily discourses, and prioritized media co-exist with the possibility that once identifiable, articulated and stabalized, each of these categories of orientation stop providing the space of creative productivity for which fine art education is renowned.

The apparent certainties of fine art disciplines (explicit or tacit) co-exist with their constant potential to be unpicked through specialism acknowledged originality. Such unpicking is most likely in the face of nuanced meaning-making that emerges from the perplexity generated in the face of a norm that does not make sense, in effect, created by an experienced absence of Self. Ranciere’s reflection on dissensus and the enunciation of the previously invisible is a significant pedagogical tool, as noted by Atkinson (2017:151). What he recognises is the power of aesthetics as part of the experienced hidden and overt curriculum. There is a need to ensure that evoking new meaning-making is at the centre of our curricular activities, yet to do this some degree of incoherence and its rel;ated absences must remain structured-in. As such, the difference between enabling constraints factored into curriculum, which are incoherent enough to generate necessary perplexity, and structures which disempower through an opacity associated with social and intellectual capital and ultimately intersectionality, is very subtle. Our professional responsibility is to distinguish between the two. The balance of what makes sense because it is recognizable to self and the opportunities generated by a visual culture that does not ‘make sense’ to the self, needs to be far more celebrated. Otherwise, we will imprison our curricular activities in a cycle of deficit-reduction that could reinscribe hierarchical Othering.

Consequently, conflating presence and relevance as similar in higher fine art learning needs to be carefully articulated *with* students, so that the comfort from one (self-presence) is not mistaken as the focus of the other (making relevant). It is a tight-rope educational paradox. Intersectional presences must be systematically achieved, but so must the role of non-presence in creatively *making* relevance. Limited existence in a formal curriculum can be turned to an artist’s advantage when the tools to do so are fostered within the same curriculum. This requires teachers to bring together the materiality of the discipline (its socio-cultural rules, definitions of expertise, practical wisdoms and common discourses, its media, gateways of specialism in terms of how students gain access socially and intellectually) with the students’ *matter* and sense of creative will regardless of our attachment to dominating norms.

1. ***A duty to undertake constant inquiry about the relationships between visual disruptions (with their genesis points in our own and our immediate students’ creative wills), degree-level standards of originality and artistic merit, cultural essentialism, and cultural appropriation.***

Instinctively this element worries me the most. Each of these categories represents a festival of paradoxical positions, at odds within themselves and with each other. Each one is lacking in educational research about students in higher education generally and Art School specifically. From the outset, I accept degree level standards of disciplinary originality as emerging within a process containing three elements: a culture that contains symbolic rules, a student who brings novelty to the symbolic domain, and a group of tutors who recognize and validate the novelty (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997: 6). I believe disciplinary originality within fine art programmes of study is an unruly temptation or excitatory charge that emerges in the creative will of some of our students and inhabits their making (Gunn, in press). At the same time it also generates emotional disruptions because producing novelty is an activity suffused with ambiguity and power (Ingold, 2013: 69; Sennett, 2008: 175). When this ambiguity is actually culturally loaded, intersectional navigations arising in the creative will require more energy.

To address these questions, we need a far better grasp on how creative will, agency and alienation are all part of the same aspect of *being* in the inter-subjective selves of our students and that, within that *being*, the balance of enervative rather than energizing vulnerability plays out (Gunn, in press). Our educational research might have outlined how to create an inclusive campus or the headline necessary conditions for student learning (Blumenfeld *et al*, 2016; Marton, 2015). It has raised our awareness of the socialization systems at work in communities of practice and how legitimate peripheral participation is achieved by disciplinary newcomers (Wenger, 1998). It has even recognized the importance and difficulties associated with ambiguity in Art and Design learning (Vaughan et al, 2008; Orr & Shreeve, 2018). It has, however, singularly failed to define adequately and analyze effectively:

* How the intersectionally-limited, inter-subjective learning ecology operates in Art School;
* How embodied, visual and visceral it is, especially when one chafes against its limits;
* How disciplinary making, aesthetics, and critical thinking function integrally within it through disciplinary cultural manifestations;
* And why the experiences within it enable some and squash others.

To improve teaching without being patronizing or re-effecting structural disadvantage, robust educational research on Fine Art teaching and learning ecologies as cultural spaces in which exclusion is inscribed relationally is long overdue.

We also need to be far more alert to the complexities of cultural appropriation and cultural essentialism. To do this we need, with our students, to critically articulate the potential harm of both appropriation and essentialism as well as their promise of original or transformative visual practice opportunities (Matthes, 2016). How these complexities play out in the creative activity of the students we teach and our own practices of judgement as educators must be explored together, whilst at the same time challenging homogenizing, inequality-based, biases. The problem with qualitative judgements in educational environments is that rational and intuitive evaluation predates explicit criteria (Sadler, 1985; Wyatt-Smith & Klenowski, 2013). The lines between artistic merit, originality, and subjectivity are tenaciously difficult for staff and students to navigate in Arts environments in such a context (despite over a decade of educational development and quality process choreography). Hard to qualify meaningfully in criteria, these complexities become the ingredients of a power saturated, socially heightened, local body-politic that is embodied via disciplinary cultural manifestations (Orr & Shreeve, 2018: 40-56).

To demonstrate what I mean, take the following example: What do we do when a queer BAME student anchors their work through repeating white phalluses at an angle of 46 degrees on crucifixes to counter attack what they see as the absence of honesty about race, sexuality and masculinity in religion? UK legislation regarding pornography limits the degree a penis might be reproduced in a magazine to 45o. Michael Petry has undertaken work demonstrating the implications of a difference between 45 and 46o (Petry, 2013). How do we understand this disruption in terms of their creative will, its expression, and its attempt to place itself in and/or beyond the canon? What makes such representations live up to demands of artistic merit required by higher education learning outcomes? Do we dismiss it as passé pornography?

How does our student make their own sense of culture fundamentally essentialist in this and what do they unwittingly appropriate? Is all cultural appropriation inherently negative? When do we trip into moralizing and shaming because what is produced rubs against our firmly held cultural interpretations of ourselves rather than a lack of artistic merit? When do they trip into moralizing and shaming for exactly the same reason? How do we respond, for example, when we encourage this student to look at Vanessa Beecroft’s *Black Christ, 2006* (Rosen, 2015: 62) to see how others have addressed similar questions only to find they view us as upholding casual, heteronormative, culturally appropriative, racism? How do we react and what resources do we call upon when what we considered radical and challenging of normative structures is called out as heteronormative, racist, and unacceptably culturally appropriative? In sum, how is power encoded as we make judgements of the student’s work within the triadic paradigm of grades of merit used in studio-based assessments: the demonstration of significant learning over time, effective studentship, and the presentation of meaningful art work? (Orr & Bloxham, 2013). And, when in this process, do we bring shame and systematic disadvantage closer together?

1. ***A pledge to simultaneously foster both student-centred, radical willfulness (Ahmed, 2014) through evocative incoherence and community oriented pragmatic wisdoms via shamelessly structured learning encounters.***

The paradoxical tension between transgressive and therapeutic curriculum in fine art is already known in our learning and teaching research literature (Hjelde, 2015). The first, transgressive, is perhaps encapsulated by the notion of individual student radical willfulness, the second, therapeutic, by socially engaged practice. The two seem at odds, especially if socially engaged practice is viewed as being harnessed to economic impact. This manifesto demands that fine art programme designers need to revisit this paradox and in so doing consider the following:

* Developing a student’s singular practice so that radical creative willfulness is an aspect of their practice is important. To do this we need to design curriculum encounters which evoke an incoherence that destabalises students’ assumptions about their art-making (as noted above).
* Developing a student’s community based pragmatic wisdoms (from interacting with the creative economy to social and cultural change) is equally important. Radical willfulness without these pragmatic wisdoms leaves fine artists vulnerable to precarity. It also creates a vacuum in which only certain groups can continue to access creative ecologies in a sustainable way. In short, over-balancing the curriculum towards radical willfulness, reinscribes structural disadvantage.

1. ***A considered interaction with methods for demonstrating the impact of the outcomes from this approach, including engaging with governance mechanisms that are now part of the creative arts educational ecology in the UK.***

As attentive outrage is to be stimulated in an organization regulated externally for the quality of its higher education outcomes, it is an attitude that entails equal integration in interpersonal relationships, teaching regimes, and systems which evaluate the impact of learning and teaching. Accordingly, whether we already think we achieve this stimulation in our curriculum or are redesigning our teaching activity to do so, we need to find methods for illustrating its impact as shown in our students’ creativity and social influence. This impact analysis should look at what happens whilst they are on our programmes and also beyond graduation. To do so, impact in terms of local and global culture, the social, health and wellbeing, and economy require definitions created collaboratively *with* students. This needs to be done in such a way that we direct the identification of impact towards the manner and areas of resource in the creative environments into which we hope our students will progress, whilst at the same time encouraging our students not to be limited by the borders that come with regulation. Attentive outrage’s operation is to be a paradox: optimistic dissidence positively discernable even in external regulatory evaluation frameworks.

**Conclusion**

*How did we come to forget*? *Have we no decency?* These blunt questions incorporate the stark appreciation that, when given the chance, the visual determinants of exclusion ascend to recover their place in the justification of abuse. Social amnesia rather than challenge comes to dominate. In turn this reawakening confirms that although fine art (applied, conceptual, and the education that scaffolds it) is implicated in both maintaining and undermining structural disadvantage, continuation rather than destabalization is still too powerful in higher education. Of course, not everyone has had the chance to forget that contemporary equality and diversity remains partial, just ask BAME arts’ social networks or queer artists trying to be represented in exhibitions about religious art. Others of us did not forget, but rather held our collective breaths in the relief of some legal security and the hope that previously known threats would not reappear.

This manifesto proposes that attentive outrage should underpin curricular activity in fine art programmes. It defines and uses attentive outrage as a conceptual device from which to consider and design Art School learning and teaching regimes in the light of injustice and the social structures that enable it. To radically move on inequality within the cultural context of the UK, fine art education needs to look much more closely at its logics (especially metanarratives that carry social capital), aesthetics, moral codes and cultural manifestations as they play out in the studio-based learning and teaching regimes of contemporary fine art programmes. Attentive outrage provides a paradigm of necessary commitments to enable this. These core commitments have to work together consistently to provide a pedagogy focused on the possibility of the freedom of action (Grosz, 2010) as a social good within fine art. Focus on just one and the nuances of attentive outrage will get lost.

**Notes**

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*Angels in America*, part two: Perestroika, act 4, scene 8: ‘Have you no decency, sir?’, Louis asks this of his lover, Joe, on discovering that Joe works for Roy Cohen.

For the general background on the recent decolonizing movement in higher education, the following is a useful starting place: Bhambra et al (2018); For Art and Design see: the student zine from the University of the Arts London: *Decolonising the Arts Curriculum: Perspectives on Higher Education* <https://issuu.com/susanbubble/docs/final_decolonising_zine2.compressed>

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