IDEAS FACTS & FUTURES

Part 4

YOUTH & THE ARTS: ATTITUDES, PARTICIPATION & RECOMMENDED READING

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for the Arts

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PREFACE

Ideas Facts & Futures is the culmination of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project.

It represents the work of many people, including Australia Council consultants and staff.

'Youth arts' has always been a priority of the Australia Council. Various initiatives have been taken by the Council to develop and ensure the access and participation of young Australians in arts activities.

The area of 'youth and the arts' is vast and complex. The issues go well beyond consideration of increasing young people's participation in traditional arts to also include youth attitudes to 'the arts', cultural participation patterns of young people, the nature of youth cultures and the ways in which young people already significantly contribute to Australia's cultural life.

Ideas Facts & Futures maintains Council's commitment to 'youth arts' and provides an opportunity for the Council to play a greater advocacy role in this area. It aims also to promote debate and encouragement throughout all levels of the youth and arts communities.

The four parts of *Ideas Facts & Futures* are 'hole-punched' to make it easy for them to be kept in the same place for convenient reference. It is recommended that they be placed in a 'lever arch' file. This can then form the basis of a set of related documents to which past and subsequent youth and arts research, policy and advocacy documents may be added.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BACKGROUND

Ideas Facts & Futures is the culmination of Stages 1 and 2 of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project.

The information and discussion is assembled into four parts :

*   *Youth & the Arts: Discussion & Directions*

*   *Youth & the Arts: Policy Possibilities & Opportunities*

*   *Youth & the Arts: Agencies – Some Facts & Futures*

*   *Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading*

The goal was to provide a base of information to assist the development of accessible and relevant arts-based activities for young Australians.

The main aims of the Project were:

*   to evaluate government arts and cultural policy and its impact on young Australians.

*   to consider the potential for forging links among arts funding and other government agencies, arts organisations, key youth advocacy and support groups, community service groups, and business and commercial cultural industries to provide for future arts and cultural development relevant to youth.

*   to provide a platform for discussion on developing accessible and relevant arts for young people.

*   to consider opportunities for allowing young people to participate in the planning, provision and evaluation of arts for young people.

The Australia Council commissioned a variety of inputs. These ranged from detailed and extensive consultations with Federal, State and local government policy-makers, arts funding agencies and 'youth arts' workers, through to an original inquiry into youth attitudes to 'the arts'.

Stage 1 of the Project was to commission a variety of discussion papers. (See *Ideas Facts & Futures –* Part 1, *Youth & the Arts: Discussion and Directions*)

These discuss aspects of Australian youth cultures and the implications for arts policies, the way young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal youth and rural youth relate to 'the arts', the music industry, youth theatre and the significance to youth of the mass media and communications technology.

Proposals were then sought for Stage 2 – the research, consultation and evaluation phase.

This mainly examined arts activities for young people, government and private support for 'youth arts' and attitudes of young people to 'the arts'.

Two groups of consultants were engaged. Firstly, the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies in the Division of Humanities at Griffith University was commissioned to provide two briefing papers, two research reports and the final report on main findings and recommendations. Secondly, Colleen Chesterman and Jane Schwager were commissioned to write an independent briefing paper on 'youth arts' in Australia.

The key aims of publishing the various discussion papers and reports are to:

- support the development of a 'youth and the arts' policy framework to be used by the Australia Council and other arts funding agencies in defining their own youth policies;

- encourage other government agencies and departments to develop similar policy overviews in their youth and/or arts funding;

- open up community development organisations to the use of arts and more especially 'youth arts';

- recognise the nature of youth cultures in the context of 'the arts';

- develop links between 'youth arts' and other youth organisations; and

- encourage corporate sponsorship of 'youth arts'.

Ideas Facts & Futures offers a tremendous range of material, covering theoretical and practical considerations and offering new ideas and directions for the particiaption of young Australians in arts and cultural activities.

INTRODUCTION

YOUTH & THE ARTS: ATTITUDES, PARTICIPATION & RECOMMENDED READING

This part of *Ideas Facts & Futures* contains two reports *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* and *The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth: Statistical Digest* and a third section - *Recommended Reading* with suggested reading on youth, arts and culture.

Youth Attitudes to the Arts was based on a research inquiry which examined how the arts are presented by the mass media and how media products are directed at teenagers and looks at the images of the arts they provide. It then reports on a survey of small selected groups of young people and how they perceived these images.

The paper was prepared for the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies by Dr Mike Emmison, Professor John Frow and Associate Professor Graeme Turner from the University of Queensland, with research assistance from Barbara Adkins.

The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth: Statistical Digest is a compilation and analysis of statistics relating to the arts and cultural participation patterns, tastes and preferences of young Australians.

This paper was prepared by Barbara Johnstone, Research Assistant, Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, (Griffith University).

In the research report *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* the authors report that the findings of a survey they conducted with different groups of young people showed that 'questions of cultural taste and the discussion of relative value were central to the lives of the young people they interviewed' and that they were in ways which encouragingly did not recognise a rigid barrier between notions of 'high' and 'popular' arts.

They make it clear, however, as does the survey of the available statistical evidence reviewed in the report *The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth: Statistical Digest*, that it is the 'popular arts' which dominate the cultural horizons and involvement of young people.

Youth Attitudes to the Arts reveals that the young people surveyed did not exhibit any 'strong sense of being excluded from the realm of "high" culture or of having to choose between two strongly demarcated domains'.

The authors of *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* identify peer group pressure for conformity as influencing young people not to publicly associate themselves with individualising forms of art. The paper revealed, however, that many young people were engaged in individualised and private artistic activities and cautioned against viewing all young people as preferring collective forms of cultural activity.

This paper also suggests young people's artistic involvements are intensely practical in both motivation and orientation.

(The transcript of case study interviews for *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* is held by the Australia Council's Information Centre in Sydney.)

The statistical digest suggests that the formality of 'high' arts impedes or intimidates young people because they perceive an alien and exclusive atmosphere.

Published statistical data on the arts and cultural participation patterns of Australian youth was compiled for the Australia Council. This is contained in *The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth - Statistical Data*, the original is held by the Australia Council's Information Centre in Sydney.

YOUTH ATTITUDES TO THE ARTS

Prepared by

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(Research Assistance
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YOUTH ATTITUDES TO THE ARTS

Executive Summary

The study was organised in two parts. The first involved a survey of representations of the arts and of creative activities in television programs with high ratings for the target age group, and in magazines orientated to a teenage market. The second, which was based on the initial findings, involved discussions held in a number of focus groups about perceptions of and processes of everyday familiarity with arts activities.

In both stages of the study we worked with a deliberately open conception of the key categories, 'youth' and 'the arts'. We posited that the category 'youth' was strongly differentiated in terms of age, class, and gender, and much of our analysis was devoted to this internal differentiation and to its correlation with attitudinal variations. In the case of the category of 'the arts', we worked with inclusive criteria in order to get at the full range of activities which might count as in some sense aesthetic, and we paid particular attention to the presence or absence of normative aesthetic criteria: that is, we were concerned both with establishing the spectrum of activities engaged in and with the frameworks by which this spectrum was articulated and organised.

We found that questions of cultural taste and the discussion of relative value were central to the lives of the young people we interviewed, and - as we expected - that these issues played a central role in the selective formation of identity and in intra-group discrimination. There was some disconfirmation of the stereotype of youth cultural practices as being orientated to action, direct experience, and group participation.

There was a marked absence of representations of 'high' culture in the media texts we analysed, although at the same time there was an ambivalent recognition of the value of the 'elite' arts. In general the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture seems not to be systematically functional in media texts aimed at young people. This finding was confirmed in the focus group discussions: there seemed to be little rejection of traditional or 'elite' forms of music, for example; although the greater or less possession of symbolic capital marked a clear difference, we found overall no strong sense of being excluded from the realm of 'high culture', or of having to choose between two strongly demarcated domains.

A more relevant opposition, and one that cuts across the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, is perhaps that between group and individual practices. In the media texts this clearly had a good deal of normative force, and non-group activity was consistently set up as a problem to be negotiated. Our findings in the discussion groups did not bear out the problematic nature of the opposition, however. The expected dichotomy between 'elite-individual' and 'popular-collective' forms of activity was not found to be a major organising structure, although, especially in the case of working-class kids, the effect of peer pressure was partly to produce a conformity to the terms of this opposition which did not necessarily reflect the reality of practice.

We also found little evidence that 'high' culture was rejected as feminised; the major exception to this finding was in the case of boys attending a private school.

Our central finding was that it is neither possible nor fruitful to think in terms of an undifferentiated experience of the arts. In the case of the drama groups, there was a striking discrepancy between those with 'cultural capital', for whom drama activities were an important source of a sense of personal worth as well as of developed communication skills, and those dispossessed of 'cultural capital', for whom traditional dramatic forms and practices were largely irrelevant to their interests. For the latter group, a set of 'secondary' goals, which emerged from a collaborative practice of storytelling and an affiliative display of group solidarity, tended to displace the overt 'aesthetic' goals foregrounded by the artworkers. We would thus wish to emphasise the crucial role of class and cultural capital in

differentiating access to and forms of appropriation of the arts, and to warn against any attempt either to valorise 'high' culture in opposition to 'low' culture, or vice-versa; or to use popular culture as a site for the introduction of 'high' cultural values. Maximum access to a range of cultural experiences, and freedom to appropriate cultural texts and activities in ways that the participants themselves deem appropriate, seem to us the desirable criteria for the formulation of policy in this area.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF ARTS TO YOUTH AUDIENCES

Preamble

The first section of this paper collects results from a survey of the way in which the arts are represented within media products popular with audiences between the ages 13-17. For the purposes of the survey, the category of 'the arts' has been given the broadest possible definition and includes popular arts (popular music, dancing, busking) as well as more 'elite' forms (poetry, drama, opera). Where it appeared, however, that distinctions between 'elite' and 'popular' (or 'high' and 'low') arts were made or were relevant, such distinctions have been incorporated into our considerations.

The survey has been selective and can only suggest some patterns which might be more fully tested by a more comprehensive study. Television programs with top ratings for the target age group were monitored for representations of arts or arts-related activities; teenage magazines were also surveyed for their representation of arts or arts-related activities. The trends emerging from this research informs the second part of the project - a series of interviews with groups of young people dealing with their attitudes to the arts.

While media representations may tell us a great deal about the way in which media audiences see themselves and their culture, it is important to stress that media messages are not absorbed whole and straight, without modification by their audiences. This survey can tell us about the messages sent but it will not tell us about the messages received from the media products analysed.

Similarly, one needs to be aware of the way in which the category of 'the arts' itself over-determines the kinds of questions which can be asked and the kinds of discriminations it recognises. To examine youth attitudes to the arts in these bald terms is often to import terms and distinctions which are not formally constituted within the subculture one is examining - or at least not to the degree they are formally acknowledged within the subculture of those who are doing the examination. The conceptual limitations smuggled in with the category of the arts will be evident in some of the results of this project.

Locations: As Sachs, Smith and Chant (1990) reveal, it is a mistake to assume that all young people make use of all media, or use media products in similar ways. Generalisations about youth interest in the media need to be modified with considerations of class, gender and race (at least), as well as by acknowledgements of different behaviours at different points in the teenage years.

For some examples of significant considerations: boys within the target age group watch less TV than girls, but watch more video movies; girls read magazines addressed at a homogeneous age and gender audience (the teenage girl of *Dolly* or *Cleo*), while boys divide into interest groups very early, benefiting from the wide range of male-orientated special interest magazines which cover a field from sport to mechanics to computers to the soft pornography of the 'girlie' magazines. Even magazines addressing common interests – music and rock culture generally, for instance – take on gender identities: *The Edge*, for instance,

announces its masculinity through its emphasis on sex rather than romance, and through its deflection of a 'soft' interest in personalities by adopting a florid tabloid style of feature writing.

Notwithstanding these complications, one does need to start somewhere. This survey analysed a number of TV programs over a period of a month and a half – all of them top rating programs within the target age group: *Hey Hey It's Saturday, Neighbours, Home and Away, Full House, Hey Dad!, MTV*, and *Countdown Revolution*. A range of teenage magazines were also surveyed, from *Dolly* and *The Edge* to *Playboy* and the ephemeral fan magazines spun off from successful soaps like *Neighbours* or supporting major international pop stars like Madonna. The two FM radio stations with a youth following in Brisbane were also monitored for two weeks.

From this survey some quite clear patterns emerged. However, before going into these patterns, one needs to stress again that these patterns cannot be expected to replicate themselves, unmediated and without transformation, in the attitudes of youth audiences. What they provide, though, is a set of starting points where one might map points of divergence and similarity, mechanisms of modification and the reasons for such mechanisms, and a set of coordinates within which one might start to locate more precisely sets of assumptions, perceptions and ideologies about the relation between young people and the arts.

Representations of the Arts in the Media

As some of the other papers of the 'youth and the arts' project demonstrate, there is a repertoire of conventional assumptions which have motivated academic researchers' treatment of youth. It is conventional to think of young people as rebellious, but craving acceptance (the James Dean paradigm); and as victims of intense subcultural or peer pressure (the 'Leader of the Pack' paradigm), as well as parental misunderstanding (the world of John Hughes films). It has become automatic to regard young people as being at their most 'youthful' when engaged in explicitly subcultural, fashionable/popular, 'style-based' activities such as skateboarding, rap-dancing, or writing graffiti. As Angela McRobbie has suggested, the dominant British models of research into youth subcultures have conceived of youth 'almost entirely in terms of action and direct experience' (1984). This has the effect of excising the private experiences, the silent experiences, daydreams, the imagination, and so on in favour of those things we can see, photograph, count or 'objectively' describe. One can see how this would render invisible young peoples' interest in writing music or poetry, reading novels, or making solitary visits to the art gallery, the museum, the theatre or the cinema.

It has to be admitted, then, that an investigation into youth attitudes to the arts sets out expecting to find a string of gaps and silences; to find that youth attitudes to 'the arts' are almost entirely negative, that the popular arts form the bedrock of arts-orientated experience for most young people, and that highly visible forms of popular art (rock music, rap dancing) are closely integrated into the styles of youth subcultures.

To some extent, these expectations are satisfied. The 'elite' arts are almost invisible in mainstream television programs popular with the target audience. In one of the few exceptions to this observation, an image of the popular stereotype of the poet appears regularly on *Hey Hey It's Saturday*, bearing the Anglophobic name of Raymond J. Bartholomew, wearing a beret and a cape, and delivering his cryptic, comical poems in a demeanour of high seriousness. His actual function is to read out entrants in a limerick competition, but he carries all the signifiers of an arcane, comic profession - the weird poet. Within most teenage magazines there is no attention paid to 'elite' arts at all; popular music dominates, followed by television and film, and it is only in the slightly upmarket magazines such as *Cleo* that reviews deal with books at all. Within the male special interest magazines, there are no magazines aimed specifically at arts-related interests. The most comprehensive coverage of the arts within male magazines occurs, interestingly, within the 'girlie' magazines, *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. In general, for an arts story to make it into the

general interest magazines such as *Dolly* or *Edge* there has to be another more populist angle - such as Jane Rutter's semi-naked flute playing.

It is true then that there is no systematic placement of 'the arts' within most of the representational forms surveyed. It is also true that those images of 'elite' art forms which did appear were stereotyped, often comic, and depicted as at best specialised and at worst alien. Popular arts were seen to be like the 'elite' arts in that they, too, were expressive, but they were also seen to have a social role within the group or even a broader commercial/vocational role (eg. for the budding popular musician or designer). This reinforced their social value and helped to differentiate them from the more private/individualised or less commercialised 'high' art forms.

It would not be true, however, to see these attitudes as lacking ambiguity or contradictions. In one episode of *Home and Away*, for instance, two male characters were revealed to have genuine musical talent. One composed a song on the guitar and was seen as a richer and more complex individual as a result. His cleverness was not simply a skill, but a sign of something more substantial to his character. A second character revealed a skill on the piano, a skill coded as 'elite' and 'classical' but also presented very positively. The character is depicted as slightly embarrassed by what is suggested to be a slightly feminised talent, and the narrative works to reduce this embarrassment and reveal the social value of his accomplishment. In both cases, the characters are endorsed by the representational codes. However, the narrative also supplies competing positions from which their attributes might be viewed. The songwriter encourages his protégé to perform in an amateur night which is exploited largely for comedy; while her performance is to be a breakthrough in self-expression, the genre of performances which makes it possible is burlesqued. Similarly, the piano player earns admiration from the females for his skill, but at no point is the effeminacy of his accomplishment narratively defused by acknowledgement from the males.

In such examples, and there are others, one can detect contradictions within the attitudes to the role of the 'elite' arts. While they may be socially useless they are also personally necessary. They are recognised and unequivocally acknowledged as legitimate, skilful and sophisticated methods of self-expression, but self-expression is itself equivocally dealt with. It is both rewarded and punished by the narrative. In such cases, the principle of self-expression is usually supported but its practice is often not. It is clear that the accomplishment of those skilled in the 'elite' arts is valued and respected; this never results in its representation as a model of accomplishment to be emulated. Rather the idea of the artistic is deployed as a vehicle for moral lessons about self-expression, individuality, and personal integrity.

There are also contradictions within the very distinction we have so far used in an unproblematic way: that between the 'popular' and 'elite' arts. Music, in particular, is one area where the expressive and personal aspects (i.e. those most associated with 'high art') join with the social and commercial aspects (i.e. those most associated with 'popular art'). Similarly, the border between popular dance and ballet is often deliberately blurred - not only in the media representations we surveyed but systematically in mainstream movies like *Flashdance*, *Fame*, and *The Coolangatta Gold*. While this has not been empirically tested, we suspect that the distinction between 'elite' and 'popular' arts is much less clear and much less systematically functional in the media products aimed at this age group than is the case with adults.

It is possible that some of the distinctions we might code as those between 'high art' and 'popular art' are understood differently within this age group. For instance, involvement in individualised arts activities separates the individual from the group; media representations treat this as both necessary and worrying, and so the separation needs to be ameliorated or negotiated in some way. The crucial problem, in such representations, is the relation between the individual and the group - not the hierarchised perceptions of the artforms involved. In such cases, the popular/high opposition might be more properly understood in terms of individual/group oppositions (or, more negatively, alone/together)

and thus negotiated in terms of the *social effect* of the activity rather than the *expressive or personal function* of the activity. This particular construction of the choices to be made, and the assessment of the social effects of these choices, is not confined to the arts; the achievement of preeminence in sport, for instance, also requires this separation from the group and a private personal commitment - and is thus subject to highly ambiguous representations.

Preliminary Conclusions

From the evidence analysed so far, there are a number of points to be highlighted:

(a)   There are significant gender differences to consider. The representations of the arts feminised them in a significant number of cases, and consideration of the arts formed a very minor part of the male menu of media products. The discursive link between the arts, the emotional and expressive within our culture makes this unsurprising but it also suggests that any comprehensive 'youth arts' policy must recognise the need to address two different gender audiences.

(b)   From the sample, there is very little evidence of a class factor in the attitudes to the arts, but it would be surprising if this trend were not reversed in interviews. The mass media, as it is directed to a fictionalised and homogeneous audience, does play down and smooth over class differences more than most other kinds of difference.

(c)   Popular music (on radio, on TV, on disk and tape) is clearly the dominant artform within this age group; its particular function may vary, and it is by no means an homogeneous field, but it is clearly a location where the demands of social, vocational and expressive imperatives are unequivocally met. There is no other such location.

(d)   While attitudes to 'high art' generally reflect the stereotypes and prejudices of the larger community, they seem less rigidly held by this age group. There is room to believe that judgements on particular artforms are made with a greater degree of contingency in this group than within the wider culture. This does suggest that conventional community attitudes which denigrate the arts are vulnerable to modification within young people.

(e)   There is a deep and general ambivalence about the expressive, the personal, the exceptional within this group that over-determines the attitudes to 'elite' artforms, exceptional accomplishments, high intelligence and so on. Membership to groups, where it is a strongly held motivation, does militate against some of the more expressive arts - creative writing, for instance. For these activities to be more attractive, it would seem that some integration of them within group activities would be desirable.

(f)   There is much less ambivalence about the 'popular' arts, simply because they are seen as seamlessly part of everyday life, and they are that part of the cultural terrain the teenager occupies as the dominant group. To attempt to turn these 'popular' arts into training grounds for 'high' art is thus a slightly risky business, in that it is very easy for this status to be changed and thus for their function to be inverted.

(g)   Some 'popular' arts develop in response to their repression, eg. graffiti. To see such arts as the place to begin more sophisticated training – eg. to develop fine artists in this instance – might well misunderstand the appeal of the activity in the first place. Rather than attempting to colonise selected aspects of everyday life and thus develop an interest in the arts, it might be better to consider allowing everyday life to infiltrate the assumptions of arts policy makers – not as a way station in an ever ascending route to cultural sophistication, but as an end in itself.

YOUTH AND THE ARTS: ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES AND INVOLVEMENTS

Introduction

This section provides the second component of an inquiry into young people's exposure to, and attitudes and experiences of the arts and art related activities. The first part of our study consisted of an examination of the representations of 'the arts' and creative activities as found in a number of media products – primarily television shows and magazines - which were selected on the basis of their known popularity with the youth market. The present paper builds upon the findings emerging from this media research by focussing upon the ways in which arts activities impinge upon the lives of young people as evidenced by the results of a series of discussions with youth groups in the greater Brisbane area. We look not only at the groups' perceptions of 'the arts' but at the processes through, and extent to which these activities are incorporated and assimilated within their everyday experiences.

It is important to stress that the research we are reporting is both qualitative and exploratory in nature. There is no suggestion being made that our findings provide a representative over-view of the spectrum of 'youth attitudes towards the arts' – indeed, we strongly suspect that such a research goal would be almost an impossibility. Our doubts here are occasioned not simply by the sheer diversity which the categories 'youth' and 'arts' manifest, although this is an obvious and intractable problem. The difficulty also lies in a deeper methodological constraint which turns on the 'accessibility' – for want of a better term – which attitudes pose for social researchers. In essence, the issue is that of the problems which exists in any attempt to canvass attitudes, beliefs, perceptions – whatever – particularly when these concern phenomena which may well be, as in the present instance, discursively remote or inaccessible. 'Attitudes about the arts' are, in short, for most people, unlikely to exist or reside in the form of discrete and coherent bundles which can be readily handed over for inspection to interested researchers, and it would be reasonable to suggest that this situation is perhaps more extreme in the case of youth. There is nothing particularly unusual or alarming in the recognition of this fact; much the same could be said for many other social objects about which 'attitudes' are frequently elicited – class position, the environment, feminism, the economy. The danger comes in failing to recognise that the views or opinions that are obtained may be only effects of the research process rather than an embodiment of 'the content of people's heads' to use Elizabeth Fraser's apt phrase (Fraser 1988:353).

Methodological Considerations

Our primary research technique - the focus group discussion (Morgan 1988) - was accordingly adopted as the most appropriate means of data collection. Focus groups share with most forms of qualitative inquiry the minimisation of the degree of research, but at the same time they have the advantage of yielding more concrete data than normally obtained through conventional ethnographic or participant approaches. In essence they are group interviews, although not in the sense of a continual interchange between the researchers' questions and the respondents' answers. Instead, the reliance is upon the interaction which occurs within the group as the primary means of data generation, based on topics supplied by the researcher who acts more in the role of moderator. The fundamental data obtained in this way are tape recordings of the discussions which are subsequently transcribed for analysis. In addition to this basic material our observations have also been supplemented by ethnographic and observational research with a number of the youth groups who were directly involved in arts activities. The youth groups which emerged as our sample populations during the course of the research can be categorised into three broad groups, differentiated primarily on the basis of some prior or existing 'arts involvement' and, secondarily, along social class lines. Both of

these dimensions proved to be significantly related to the types of experiences and attitudes that we discovered. From the outset it was our intention to target at least one youth sample or group who currently had some 'traditional' arts involvement. The activity which proved to be most conspicuous and accessible was found to be drama, and accordingly we made contact with a variety of theatrical organisations which were known to offer specific youth programs. It soon became apparent that such organisations were of two fundamental types and dealt with clearly contrasting youth populations. On the one hand were a range of organisations whose clients were youth 'at risk': young people who had already been constituted as problematic in terms of their domestic and educational experiences and who were now in some form of official or semi-official relationship with State welfare agencies. Into this category we would place the young people who came into contact with welfare organisations such as the Brisbane Youth Service as well as those who were reached by various community arts organisations. In the research we came to focus in some depth on youth in Woodridge and Kingston, part of the Logan City area, a satellite city south west of Brisbane.

Logan is a region of low income, Housing Commission dormitory suburbs with few recreational and transport facilities. It is estimated that half the population are under eighteen; understandably with such a demographic composition there are high rates of crime, drug use and truancy among the young people. Many face a stark choice between remaining in overcrowded and/or broken families where abuse is not uncommon or leaving to be homeless, or, for some, becoming wards of the State.

A number of community arts groups are active in the Logan area, in particular Street Arts Community Theatre Company and Feral Arts, who have coordinated their resources to work on a number of plays which are written for and performed by the young people. Significantly, these are plays which deal directly with problems these young people confront in their everyday lives. The arts activities undertaken by them are therefore to be understood as being part of a wider program of experiences to which they are exposed on account of their welfare or 'at risk' situation or condition. Such arts activities were not imposed as part of a surrogate educational program, nor could they be viewed as overtly 'therapeutic'. Nevertheless, they may well have had these consequences; for example, a number of the young people had progressed from near functional illiteracy to basic reading skills, in part through their participation in these workshops. It is difficult to say precisely what the nature of the youth involvement in these activities in fact consisted of. Indeed as we examine below in more detail, the conventional categories of 'self-expression', 'individuality' and so on, which are typically associated with such theatrical or other 'elite' artforms, may well be inappropriate or insufficient as a means of encapsulating the experience of these particular young people. We shall refer to this particular youth group as the Logan sample.

The second type of youth population we identified was also currently active in theatrical and dramatic artforms, but this time not as a consequence of 'welfare' targeting. Rather, these were young people from stable middle-class backgrounds who had made a conscious decision to participate in the youth theatre programs that were offered by the established metropolitan theatre companies. Typical examples would be Contact Youth Theatre and La Byte, the youth theatre associated with La Boite Theatre in inner city Milton. Whilst the genesis of their involvement generally lay in some form of drama experience in their schools, their continued participation in the theatre workshops was purely volitional and subject to no other constraint than their own personal priorities and preferences. It was clear that the youth we spoke to in this category saw their regular theatre activities as a form of recreation: indeed, for many it was their preferred or dominant leisure pastime. Because of their central city location the youth theatres cater for young people from a diversity of suburbs, although all participants we spoke to were recognisably middle class in conventional sociological terms. We shall refer to this youth group as the La Byte sample.

Clearly these two youth populations, despite spanning the social class scale, arguably provide examples of arts experiences and activities which are not typical of all young people. For the most part youth today are neither deprived and 'at risk' nor are they significantly

committed to a particular form of 'high art' theatrical experience. Whilst we do not want to underestimate the quality of the data we have been able to obtain from these two groups, we do not want to give the impression that this data is exhaustive of the range of young persons' experience and involvement with 'the arts'. Recognising this, we sought to contact a third category of youth who occupied, so to speak, a middle ground position: youth, in other words, who displayed no obvious traditional arts involvement, regardless of whether this stemmed from personal choice or from some form of State intervention. The selection of youth within this category, in the absence of any conspicuous or accessible organisational sites through which contact could be made, was achieved on a more informal basis via local community and neighbourhood networks. The young people we approached were all school students currently between grades 9 and 11; one group was attending a fee paying boys' school and another comprised a mixed gender group of State high school students. The former school places significant emphasis on sporting activities, although arts and music were encouraged optional components of the curriculum. Since it was a private school its pupils would be conventionally recognised as having middle class backgrounds. The State high school was located within a higher status suburb, although one that was within easy travelling distance of a number of less affluent suburbs. Our particular sample was, however, a predominantly middle-class group. We refer collectively to this third group of youth as the School sample. The fact that our data is perhaps somewhat deficient, then, in its working class representation - both students and young workers - should be borne in mind during the remarks that follow. We would argue that this is one particular group which deserves special attention in any future research.

The research with the youth samples confirmed several, but not all, of the suggested relationships concerning the arts activities of this group which emerged from our media analysis. Moreover it has allowed us to view these relationships and processes with greater clarity and precision. Our discussion is organised into two broad sections. First, we present in a more straightforward descriptive sense the kinds of artistic tastes and choices which emerged from our conversations. What cultural or artistic activities did the young people we spoke with find absorbing and appealing? To what extent do they cover both the categories of 'high' or 'elite' and popular or mass culture? How are these different tastes incorporated into their individual and group identities? Each of the youth groups we spoke with had clear and firmly held preferences, particularly with regard to their position as consumers of music, television and film. There were many things that were common to the groups despite the class spectrum on which they were arrayed, and in some ways the most clear-cut differences that we noted occurred at the intra-group level. Again, it is important to stress the exploratory nature of this data; it is neither intended, nor can be taken, as a cross-sectional guide to contemporary youth cultural tastes. Perhaps the most salient observation we would make in this regard is simply that the discussion of these choices and preferences was something all the groups enjoyed, with the indication that these issues were central to their own lives. In the second place we examine a less obvious, but equally significant, dimension in youths' relation to the arts. In essence this is the manner in which arts activities are appropriated by young people, how they are incorporated within their existing experiences and frame-works, used, negotiated and made meaningful. The discussion of this topic deals primarily with the Logan and the La Byte samples, as it was during our discussions and observations of their respective theatre workshop activities that this emerged as a salient issue. The matter ultimately stems from the class-related differences between the two groups and turns upon the affinity that exists between the drama experience and the groups' possession or non-possession of 'cultural capital'. This form of arts activity appears to be selectively empowering, something that is recognisably and immediately usable as a means of individuation by the middle-class La Byte youth, but far less so with the Logan sample where the pressures and reality of their common collective existence are a continual source of tension.

Tastes and Preferences

Given that the category of 'youth' is generally held to have emerged and stabilised around some notion of common or shared consumption styles, the heterogeneity of musical tastes and preferences that was manifestly evident from our discussions is of some interest. Youth cultures may well have much in common, but the differences and distinctions that the subcultural members recognise and insist upon are equally significant. Moreover, these tastes are employed as powerful mechanisms of intra-group discrimination and selective identity formation. For example, within the high school sample the grade 11 youth spoke disparagingly about the predominantly 'heavy metal' musical preferences of the 'bevans', 'skin heads' and 'wild punks' who they felt made up many of the lower grades in the school. At the same time there was disagreement between themselves:

(High School sample)

IR: What about the local bands in Australia?

Ross: I don't really like Australian music..it's-

Ben: No..it's too bland ... it all sounds the same

Emma: It's not all that bad?

Ben: Yeah it is

IR: You said Midnight Oil?

Ben: Don't like them

IR: In what way bland ... what do you mean?

Ben: It doesn't vary ... Black Sorrows ... they all sound similar to a few of the other Melbourne bands..

IR: So it's in the style?

Ross: They don't seem to experiment that much ... they seem to have ... just ... strum the guitar, drums and base ... that's it ...they don't experiment with..

IR: Why is that?

Ross: I dunno that's just the way it is - that's just what I've noticed about them - especially the local stuff.

(IR = Interviewer)

Similar disagreements - although over different contents - were evident in the case of the 'at risk' teenagers in the Logan sample:

(Logan sample)

IR: So have kids around here got favourite bands or has everyone got their separate ones that they go for?

Colin: With me, I'm easy with any music as long as it's not classical or country and western. Those two can all be burnt as far as I'm concerned.(laughter)

IR: What's wrong with those?

Michelle: I'm the opposite I love country and western.

Colin: I hate - I hate country and western it is the most horrible sound ever made.

Natalie: I hate country and western, opera,

Colin: Opera I don't mind

Sharon: I hate opera

Colin: There's two operas I like. That's *Phantom of the Opera* and ... um *Cats*. They're the only two operas I'll ever go see. I went to see *Phantom of the Opera* and I loved it.

IR: Sharon why don't you like opera what's wrong with it.

Sharon: It's terrible music. It's terrible voices..

Colin: That's because you can't understand it ... most are in Italian

Natalie: I don't understand what opera does - opera does to you

(IR = Interviewer)

Whilst Colin's nomination of his 'favourite operas' might appear questionable from a 'high' cultural perspective, there was no doubt from his own standpoint that *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera* represented a quite 'distinct' experience, recognisably different from the more prosaic music of his subculture.

Particularly amongst the middle class school sample and La Byte young people we found there to be a general rejection of the 'popular' or 'top 40' music played on the established radio stations as well as the 'house' music of the more commercial discos. All groups, however, were regular radio listeners, citing the 'alternative' stations 4MMM 104, 4ZZZ and, somewhat less enthusiastically, B105, as their preferred choices. One thing which appeared to unite members of all of the groups was a detailed knowledge and predisposition towards the rock music groups stemming from the late sixties and seventies: Beatles, Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Jethro Tull.

(High School sample)

IR: What would your favourite groups be now.?

Ben: Pink Floyd

Ross: Yeah.. I'm sort of stuck in the 70s

Emma/Liz: Laughter

Ross: I like all these strange bands like Pink Floyd..

Michael: That's strange?

Ross: It is strange in many ways Led Zeppelin.have a lot of, you know ... most of the time they're straight out rock and roll but sometimes they sort of deviate. Jethro Tull ... they do some really strange stuff but they - they're really good musicians...

Ben: Yeah I mean Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin. They'll change ... Pink Floyd got some really ... like hard songs

Ross: They set out to do something different but these other bands aren't

IR: What musically?

Ross: Yeah musically and lyrically..

(IR = Interviewer)

For Colin and Michelle of the Logan sample these preferences were by no means unusual - they were simply what they had grown up with:

(Logan sample)

Colin: Yeah Led Zep. There's nothing better than Led Zep ... Floyd ... you know

IR: You like a lot of seventies alternative stuff?

Colin: T Rex

Michelle: Beatles

C & M: Beatles

Colin: They're really alternative music

IR: So when you go to parties and things this is the sort of thing you like to put on?

C & M: Yeah.

Michelle: Get down to the Beatles

Colin: (laughs)

IR: Does it surprise you that most of you weren't born when the Beatles made their last record?

Michelle: I grew up with all that music.

Colin: Same here I was brought up with T Rex

IR: Y' parents?

Michelle: Yeah mum and dad are real - right into sorta the Beach Boys ... and..

IR: So you're the children of - of the Beatles generation?

Michelle: Yeah virtually.

Colin: My brother - my brother- basically I could say my brother brought me up. Mum and dad didn't. Al taught me, and I grew up with his music.

(IR = Interviewer)

Whilst the passive consumption of selective types of rock music was clearly an important factor, it was not the only form that musical experience assumed in the lives of the young people. More specifically, with the exception of some of the Logan youth, we found little evidence of a conscious or overt rejection of the more traditional or 'elite' modes of musical expression. For members of both the school samples, musical production involving high and popular forms was in evidence. The range of instruments mentioned were piano, saxophone, trumpet, and clarinet, as well as guitar and harmonica. Ross from the high school sample had his 'own' band: 'We like to deviate ... do some blues some neo-jazz sort of rock jazz', but he also played and sang classical music with Emma and Michael during school. The differential influence of class effects, both parental and educational, appears crucial here as the means of exposure to these forms of musical expression:

(High school sample)

Ross: I listen to late night jazz programs ... I think they're really good and I don't mind a bit of classical now and then and as a result of doing music ... the last year y'know ... you get opened up to more classical music

IR: What it didn't really appeal to you before?

Ross: No not at all ... I didn't know any really and now I love Vivaldi and I love Bach-

Emma: Yeah ... Batch ...

Ross: Batch.

Emma: I know I can only take a certain amount of rock

Ross: But I really like a particular style of classical music. I like Baroque music ... y'know the Concerti Grossi..

IR: Well tell us how you actually came across this ... was this

Ross: This was - it was one semester in music ... we just did ... Baroque music

Emma: Started on classical..

Ross: and we did Bach ... Brandenburg Concerto..

Emma: Then we studied a lot of Vivaldi

Ross: Yeah we did 'Winter'.

Emma: The Four Seasons..

IR: What, do you play them?

Ross: I can play a bit of them

IR: Do you play them at school?

Ross: Oh in the classroom?

IR: Yes, in the classroom?

Ross: Yeah we play them

(IR = Interviewer)

This catholic diversity of musical expression amongst the high school students did not extend to opera, which was - Colin's preferences notwithstanding - the artform of least relevance to all of the samples. The two members of the fee-paying boys' school group had, in fact, only recently been to see *La Boheme*, then performing in the city arts complex. What were their reactions?

(Boys school)

Duncan: I liked that actually I-

James: Yes first opera I ever went to I-

Duncan: I thought it was going to be oh

James: Boring-

Duncan: I said 'Oh nah we got free tickets' ... we said 'Oh no I can't ... really turn em down because they're free or it'll make me look like a real scum if I do ... so I took them and-

James: Thinkin' you'd be totally-

Duncan: Totally bored but I could get by. An actually it wasn't that bad I quite enjoyed it towards the end

IR: What surprised you about the Opera. I mean what was it about it that you liked?

Duncan: I thought it was just gonna be singing and no acting ... and ... the acting was ... I enjoyed the acting

IR: Did you tell your friends you were going to see the Opera?

Duncan: Yep !

James: Yep!

IR: And what did they say?

Duncan: One of my mates said 'Oh yeah' (laughs). 'Nice one'

IR: You told them before you were going?

Duncan: Yeah and afterwards I told it uh ... yeah cos that was when I thought it was gonna be really boring and I said no. He said to me 'no don't go I can't imagine you at the Opera (laughs)

IR: And did you talk to them afterwards?

Duncan: Yeah er I said 'Oh it was pretty good'

IR: How would you rate it ... on a scale of say 1 to 10?

Duncan: Ah I don't think you really can but ... I wouldn't enjoy it as ... much as a rock concert

James: You can't - you can't rate it cos-

Duncan: Or summin like ... but um ... its just not ...

James: You can't rate it because its the first one I've seen ...

Duncan: Yeah

IR: Well rate it in ... I mean if you had the choice of say ... going to see the Opera or ... watching the Broncos at Lang Park which would you have preferred to have done?

Duncan: Toss a coin

James: Watch the Broncos

Duncan: (laughs)

IR: You would have preferred the Broncos?

Duncan: Yeah if we hadn't ever been to an Opera before I'd say take the Broncos tickets

(IR = Interviewer)

Two of the themes which emerged from our monitoring of media representations of the arts were the possible feminine associations of 'elite' or 'high' art production and consumption, and the individualised as opposed to collective nature of such practices which may render them correspondingly less appealing for some young people. We found some evidence in our discussions that these were issues that they recognised, although the value placed upon them was by no means unequivocal. Moreover we found some confirmation that the image of youth cultural practices solely in terms of action and visible participation was an inadequate stereotype. Members of all the groups we spoke to, including the 'at risk' Logan sample, claimed to spend at least part of their leisure time in some form of private arts related activity. Listed were such 'conventional' pastimes as reading, story writing, drawing and painting, art gallery attendance, as well as more specifically subcultural pursuits: the carving of a wooden fishing lure, the customised binding of a fishing rod and the decoration of a skate board. The point to be made is that, at least among the young people we spoke with, an individual/group opposition was not a significant discriminatory mechanism. A range of 'private' arts activities were enjoyed and at the same time participation in 'high' or 'elite' cultural production was not necessarily experienced as an individual activity, as our earlier extracts from the high school groups discussion of their collective musical practices demonstrates.

In making this point we certainly do not wish to underestimate the collective nature of much popular youth cultural activity. Clearly, doing things together also mattered for all the groups. Youth are almost by definition gregarious and the significance of many of their popular cultural experiences - rock concerts, stage acts and so on - cannot be understood outside the context of this collective consumption. Futhermore this appears to be one obvious reason why the necessarily collectively-produced drama and theatre workshops appear to be such viable modes of exposure to 'high' or 'elite' cultural activity with youth from all social classes (see below for further comments on this issue). In contrast, it is difficult to imagine the private composition of poetry (but perhaps not its collective consumption in reading groups) or some of the other more individualised arts activities as having quite the same resonance or social effect with, for example, the young people in the Logan area.

The question of the 'feminised' nature of the arts was raised in a particularly vivid way in the discussion with the private boys' school group where attributions of homosexuality with arts activities were raised as a possible source of disquiet amongst their peers. We think it is significant that this was the only group which took this at all seriously; for the others the stereotype of the 'camp actor' or more concretely the overt bisexuality of some of the rock bands, was something they recognised but to which they attached little importance.

(Boys school)

James: And ... I don't know but you always relate pooftahs with the arts like ... you always see pooftahs doing hairdressing' ... and-

Duncan: That's sort of an art

James: Yeah and y'know ... and it's been well known for ages that pooftahs not all are poof - not all people who do ... arts are pooftahs ... but you know ... lots of men who do arts are pooftahs more than normal

Duncan: Yeah I reckon there's about three faggots in our class ... (laughs) in our art class (laughs)

IR: D'you think that ... is that something you think other kids think as well?

James: Yeah

Duncan: Yeah definitely

James: Definitely ... its ... that's probably one of the biggest turn offs..

Duncan: Yeah ... of art ... yeah y'know it's ... faggy

IR: Is that what they say at school?

Duncan: Something like that

(IR = Interviewer)

They themselves, however, had just had the occasion to reflect more deeply on this proposition through a coincidental intersection of what they had previously regarded as opposed cultural elements:

(Boys' school)

James: I just think lots of people who ... fellows who do art ... are pooftahs but then again on the other side of the board lots of people who do art - like there was this guy who is ... erm ... who we saw playing in La Boheme when we went backstage ... he's- he used to be ... the ... one of the ... players for Bath in England ... big rugby union ... and he's a really big solid guy ... doesn't sound like a pooftah or anything...

Duncan: We thought that they'd be sort of like ... very meek people ... who-

James: (timidly) 'Oh yes I'm an opera singer'..

Duncan: (laughs) summin' like that

(IR = Interviewer)

Although there was little evidence of a direct 'elite' or individual versus a 'popular or collective' construction of artforms in currency with the youth groups, we found some signs, particularly with the 'working class' Logan sample, that the dictates of peer approval might work to produce similar effects.

(Logan sample)

IR: What other things do you like to do then? Do you like ... listening to music?

Michelle: Yeah.

IR: What sort of music?

Adriana: Music that doesn't sound disgusting

Michelle: Milli Vanilli ... (laughs) ... I'm more into the sixties and seventies..

IR: How much time a day do you spend listening to music.

Michelle: This thing's usually going all day. As soon as I walk in it goes on. As soon as I walk out it goes off.

IR: What sort of music do you like?

Justin: Classical. Like opera and all that

IR: Where do you listen to classical music, on the radio or, tape or..

Justin: Yeah tapes I've got um *Phantom of the Opera* and everything like that.

IR: Have you got a favourite classical composer?

Justin: Frank Sonata or whatever 'is name is.·

Adriana: Frank Donato.

Justin: Yeah him ... that's 'is name.

Michelle: More of Chopin..

IR: Do you think many kids like classical music?

Michelle: No.

IR: Why's that?

Adriana: You go to a um ... Blue Light Disco and you've got everything but classical. They've got Bus Stop, Milli Vanilli..

Michelle: Yeah the problem is ... like if I turn round and a whole age group of my mates and said 'Augh yeah I like listening to Chopin' they're going to think ... 'what a fuckin idiot'.

Adriana: Exactly. Yeah.

(IR = Interviewer)

As the above passage suggests, arts experiences are not embraced or assimilated by an undifferentiated youth population; the clearest indication we have of this emerges from our observations of the contrasting youth theatrical experiences to which we now turn.

The Appropriation of the Arts: The Case of Youth and Theatre.

Our discussion of the cultural tastes and choices of the youth groups has provided us with some suggestions as to where a 'youth arts' policy program might be directed, but arguably our most valuable data emerged from a component of the research about which little has so far been said: the theatre activities of the Logan and the La Byte youth groups. Given the centrality of drama and performance to conceptions of high culture or 'elite' arts then the interventions that are directed at youth in regard to this activity are of special significance. With the Logan and La Byte samples we found the most direct evidence of the linking of youth culture with the traditional arts, but at the same time it was clear that the articulation of these two elements assumed quite different class forms.

We have argued that one important reason such activities are valued by the young people is because of their necessarily group or collective nature, but a fuller analysis suggests that this simple portrayal occludes a number of more subtle dimensions and processes which are operative. We note, for example, that the youth we spoke to at La Byte were unanimous that the communality of the workshops, and the friendships that were made in the course of these activities, were a major factor in their continued participation. Indeed there was a strong suggestion that their theatre friendship experiences were almost qualitatively different from those they had with their peers at their various schools.

(La Byte sample)

Dan: Um a friend of mine who goes here,

Jenny: Her school friends ... don't even believe we exist because um I was at a group last term who'd been together for a long time and we've become extremely close knit friends in fact we were all just like - our only friends were what we had at La Byte and we became an extremely close-knit group. And we still are. And so are most of my friends I've met through La Byte. My very closest friends. And ... um her other friends at school didn't believe we existed. They refused to believe - they hated her - they said, 'augh you're lying to us Jenny. Uh these people don't exist'.

Angela: You get theatre friends - it's sort of like you get theatre friends and you get school friends and they're so different ... iand you find that your school friends ... that like have only school in their life don't know any ... other - like they don't know any other thing than friends from school. I mean it's impossible to have friends that don't go to school.

Helena: But people - like all my friends they say - augh like I try to encourage them to come here. They just don't have the time and they don't care that I'm here.

IR: What do most of them say?

Dan: Augh they - say fairly derogatory things - but that may be for other reasons (laughter).

Dan: Every time I've been here I - every sort of group in the last six years we've always developed after a term or two a really really close knit group of friends. Me and two of my other friends we've always formed a really close group of other friends attracting people from close groups. Then we'd lose that group and form another group, lose that and form another group - it's something to do with La Byte

Helena: I think it's because you act like such idiots in front of each other that you know that your worst side, your bad side and you're so open with each other. It's sort of like you could you know each other inside out because you always see every single side of a person. You don't see their good side all the time

Matthew: I've never actually seen - you're not really judged here on - like it's not like - 'augh she's a bad actor'

Helena: Or what they wear or something-

Dan: Yeah - people are accepted - you're accepted from the start. People don't - instead of going - instead of being hated from the outset they assume you to be a good person.-you're accepted. Then they discover you're a dickhead (laughter)

Angela: It's sort of like the opposite way round to school

Dan: Yeah

Angela: Like in school you have to - prove to get in - like for people to know you before they want to know you but this way they don't know who the hell you are...

Dan: There's always new people ... there's so many people that circulate through La Byte that you always find new people.

(IR = Interviewer)

At the same time, however, it was manifestly apparent to us that the theatre activities were not just an enjoyable collective experience: they were also individually empowering in the

sense of equipping each of the young people with significant social skills to add to their already high stocks of (middle class) cultural capital. Of all the groups we spoke with they were by far the most poised, self-confident and articulate; moreover there was a recognition by them that their drama experiences at La Byte had been a major influence here.

(La Byte sample)

Helena: I think it widens your options when you get older . It builds your confidence so - in whatever job you do you'll always have that ability to do it because of the confidence you get from something like this. I think it's just a really good thing to have under your belt. There's never going to be anywhere that you won't use something like this.

IR: How typical would you say you were of kids around Brisbane?

Matthew: Atypical ... I think you find that people within drama - people are pretty much the same but-

Dan: Well you do get a spread in drama, the spread that is in a drama group is probably equal to the spread that you find outside. But I think you get a larger amount of more outgoing people in drama

IR: Spread in what sense?

Dan: Well you do get - you do get the very shy people and you do get the very outgoing but I think um I mean the spread is the same distance sort of like between the most introverted and the most extroverted. I think you'll find more people on the upper end of the scale than elsewhere.

Matthew: Um like when we went to Contact (Contact Youth Theatre) last week. They were a little taken aback by us (laughter) because we were I think - La Byte because it's so - a lot of the acting is pretty informal um it's such a confidence boost - it's um when we go there I mean we're such strange people (laughter)

IR: Did you all come to it from school - Matthew you said it was from school that you first came here. What about the rest of you?

Helena: My sister

Angela: Through the paper. I just um - my mum's - I've loved acting for years and years and years but when you actually achieve ... doing something about it like actually join a group or ... something like that?

Dan: A daughter of a friend of my mother went here.

All: (laughter)

Dan: And my mother said you're a - said in a nice way to me - 'you're an emotionally weak person'. Like she didn't actually say that but I know ( ) (laughter). Six years ago I used to sit in the corner of the La Byte room and just go ... 'people don't like me here' (laughter). Now I don't care people still don't like me but I don't care ... (laughter)

(IR = Interviewer)

The workshop sessions we later observed - a range of dramatic games, movements and sequences all of which served primarily as vehicles of self-expression and individuality - convincingly underscored these claims. There was no doubt, in other words, that for this particular youth group, their involvement with the youth theatre constituted a place not only of collective cultural interaction but, equally significantly, a setting which carried significant social and vocational benefits and advantages. All trace of any 'group' versus 'individual' opposition had been effectively merged.

With the young people in the Logan sample the situation was different. We want to make it clear that the following comments should not be interpreted as criticisms of the theatre activities that the youth were engaged in. We have only praise and encouragement for the efforts of the various artsworkers we met during the course of the research. At the same time

it appeared to us that the Logan youth had an almost qualitatively opposing conception of the drama workshops from that of the La Byte sample, in that for the former they were experienced more as a site or occasion for the collective sharing of their common life stories. There was, in other words, a clear tension between what the artworkers primarily wished to accomplish through the workshop setting - in essence a 'traditional' individualised exploration of characters, roles, motives and all the other paraphernalia of dramatic performance, and the collaborative 'story telling' project of the youth. It is difficult to convey the nature of this process purely descriptively so we will resort to using extensive sections from the transcribed tape recordings of the workshops. The focus of the workshops was the reading and subsequent discussion of a section of the script from the play in which the youth were to perform, an entirely naturalistic drama dealing with the problems of accommodation and broken families. The central character is a teenager named 'Kerry', and the section of the script under discussion dealt with the conflicts leading up to Kerry's departure from home. The following section of the transcript recorded soon after the workshop was convened provides an example of this tension.

(Logan workshop)

AW1: Well we might start ... Justin are you aware of what we're doing here?

Paul: No he's got brain dama(hhh)ge (laughs)

AW1: Actually Paul I'm speaking to Justin at the moment so ... do you know what we're doing here or why we're doing or who we are or ..

(Artworker introduces newcomers to the theme of the play and the workshop and the next section of the script is read through).

AW1: Well let's just open it for general discussion. Okay well ... what's happening in the story. Paul what do you think's happening in the story

Paul: I'm not sure. I'm just listening

AW1: Well what do you think the story line is ... were you here when we were working on the script last week ..oh you weren't here.

AW2: The script?

Paul: Nah I thought it was stupid.

AW1: Why did you think it was stupid?

Paul: All the fighting an' ... the smack in the teeth all that garbage ... that was totally stupid.

AW1: What's stupid about that Paul?

Paul: 'Cos ... I don't like this because I get smacked like this all the time.

AW: Paul ... Hugh when he's writing this, like he worries that he's talking about this kind of stuff and worrying how much he might upset you kids talking about this kind of stuff but he and all of us workers are of the opinion that this stuff needs to be spoken about - that this goes on. Do you think that's something we should be doing?

Paul: Nah

AW1: Why not?

(no reply ...)

(AW = Artworker)

Over the next hour and a half the format the workshop subsequently assumed was effectively an extended 'struggle' between the personalised theatrical goals of the art workers and the collective ends of the young people. Each of the attempts to 'work through' the script initiated by the artworkers was transformed by the youth into an occasion for a round of collaborative stories which picked up in greater or lesser detail the particular event at issue in the script. What took place was a vivid illustration of the kind of affiliative display of

solidarity achieved through the telling of 'second stories' which sociological conversation analysts (eg. Sacks, Schegloff and Jeffferson 1978) have documented. In some ways we had already faced a similar difficulty in conducting the focus interview groups with this sample; their tendency for concretising their remarks by reference to their own family or community experiences had meant that more abstract sentiments in relation to the arts were not easily elicited. In the case of the theatre workshops the continual departures from the script were eventually sanctioned:

(Logan workshop)

AW1: But do you think also that maybe Kerry - although Kerry doesn't like Tony, that Kerry really does want Meg and Tony to be happy? Do you think there's an element of that as well?

Adriana: Yeah

AW1: So he might be hiding the fact that he gets bashed because he's hoping that Meg and Tony will be able to work things out?

Paul: We - we had um next door neighbours, that speak German, just like us, and we used to ou- our windows were just in the same direction all the time,? .hhh you could see through that window, they could see through ours, .hh and they had about three - two boys and one girl and they - as big as us: and they used to say swear words through the window at us, in German languages, and so they didn't like the language that we said - the kids so they trotted up the window picked up big rocks, chucked it on the roof, all the time, their mother and father didn't do nothin' about it. I thought - I thought I could do something about it. ( ) made me go out and pick up the rocks and then chuck them on the roof and as soon as the man from ( ) came out he- he I couldn't see him he was hiding round the tree when I picked up all those rocks, he grabbed me, whacked me on the bum about ten or twenty times, you know what? ( )

Natalie: (Laughter)

Paul: Dad came outside and gave me another beating and then the next door neighbour told 'him what was happening, like I was chucking rocks and everything and dad and mum grounded me for two - for two weeks in the house not allowed to go outside not allowed to go anywhere ... to friends' place....

Adriana: Put it this way we used to throw oranges over to our ... (laughter)

Paul: I thought it was so funny, some other time the samething was ( ) I took - I took eggs and chucked them - one through the window .... I used to shit-stir my neighbours all the time - everyday.

Michelle: We used to have a neighbour in Marsden. This chick was really dirty. I mean her kids she wouldn't change their nappy for about a week.

Paul: (laughter)

Adriana: That is disgusting. It is. It is.

Michelle: I turn around and I rung family services about it.

Adriana: Yeah I would've too.

Michelle: Anyway Youth and Family Services come along she knew it was me. ... and anyway she come over and she abused me, and she doesn't mow her lawn - about a month between when she mows the lawn, so I went down to a friend's place who owns a poultry farm and I got some really off eggs, and I hid them in the grass, and here she is mowing ...vroom vroom ... (laughter)

P&A: (loud laughter)

Paul: She must have had eggs all over the lawn mower.

Michelle: And 'er kids knew that I was goin' to do it I mean her kids were too scared to say anything. I mean she hit her young daughter she was about four and a half I saw her the next - heard a fight going on. I saw her the next day and she had her bloody arm in plaster, her mother used to beat them.

Adriana: Augh yeah there's a lot -

Paul: I used up eggs.. I walked down my street ( ) and I chucked an egg. It went straight through someone's car window, hit the man straight in the face. He was about your age.

M, P, A: (loud laughter)

Paul: He-he went in into the telephone - telephone pole (laughter)

Adriana: ( ) as throwing oranges though

AW2: now now- no more throwing things ..we're going to - Can we have a conversation please

(AW = Artworker)

Clearly observable in this extract are the divergent frameworks which informed the youth and artworkers' participation in the workshops. There is no uptake of the artworker's invitation to dissect the script characters' (Kerry, Meg and Tony) motives or intentions, and instead Paul's recollection of an earlier prank provides the catalyst for a round of affiliative stories all dealing directly with some minor instance of neighbourhood delinquency before the sequence is finally brought to a (temporary) halt by the second artworker.

It would be too easy, and quite mistaken, to read all this as simply indicative of working class rejection of an alien and unfamiliar cultural practice. The play was an important event for many (though perhaps not all) of the young people we talked to. Michelle in particular was hopeful that there would be important consequences for the Logan community:

(Logan sample)

Michelle: I like the idea of Feral Arts and Street Arts. One, is they put across to the - to the youth that sort of go and collect the dole 'n blow their money on dope and grog. They sort of pull them up and say well 'listen there's heaps of other things to do why don't you come and join us Thursday or Wednesday night we're doin' a lot of things' 'n then it just - it keeps them occupied? I mean one out of five wouldn't come down ... but, that other four, it just makes you feel good knowing that they're actually doing something with themselves instead of sitting at home blowing the dole on stupid things

Michelle: The attitude of a lot of parents that I know stinks. Sorta little Johnny's in bed blah blah ... when little Johnny's jumped out his bedroom window and 'e's going down 'n ripping off the shop down at the corner. The parents know about it, but they won't accept it. They won't accept that their child is ...

IR: Why's that do you think?

Michelle: I don't - it's society full stop. You've gotta change the attitude of society before you can do anything. And that's what we're trying to do with Street Arts.

IR: What are you trying to do?

Michelle: Just sorta - like through this play we want a get across to - mainly society ...like the play's about accommodation and what I'd like to see happen is - the society actually sit down and think well - wow there are a lot of kids on the streets. how can we help them?

IR: How are you going to get across to society. How are going to tell society?

Michelle: We've been trying to tell society it just doesn't want to listen. So we've just gotta sit back and devise a plan and try and get it through with this play

IR: With this play. Is that the main way to do it.

Michelle: Well I mean, it's going to be in the papers and everything so, maybe if we get our ideas, that society should change, to help us. Well maybe it might get through. I'd be happy to see one family change.

(IR = Interviewer)

Overall, we would argue that participation in the play and theatre workshops for the Logan youth is important for two reasons. At one level, the personal level, the individual young people do gain directly as a result of their involvement in the project. Several did tell us that they had 'learnt to express themselves', that they had become more confident and better able to cope with peer pressure. However, it seems clear that the main objective or purpose in participating is the benefits to be gained by the whole Logan community. By dealing with the social problems endemic to the area - juvenile delinquency, street kids, homelessness and so on through the medium of the theatre, it is hoped that community awareness of these issues will be heightened and some changes in social attitudes will result. At the time of writing, workshops and rehearsals for the play have been underway for two months and the play is scheduled for its three performances (held symbolically in a disused and partly vandalised shopping centre) in just over a weeks time. We rate this as a significant achievement of all concerned.

It seems, then, that the workshop objectives of the community artworkers - the development of individualised skills for the effective accomplishment of the theatre project - are entirely compatible with the personal aims and needs of the Logan youth. However we can detect a tension between their use of the traditional repertoire of theatrical methods and the more communal motives informing their attitude to the play. In some ways this tension between the individual and the group or communal objectives reflects in microcosm some of the problems of 'institutionalised' approaches to furthering the development of arts involvement with young people generally, but particularly with disadvantaged youth in areas such as Logan. Future arts interventions, we suggest, should be fully cognisant of such potential tensions.

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THE ARTS AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION PATTERNS OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH: STATISTICAL DIGEST

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THE ARTS AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION PATTERNS OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH: STATISTICAL DIGEST

Introduction

This report provides a summary of current statistics regarding the arts and cultural participation trends of Australian youth together with suggestions for ways that the future collection and coordination of statistical surveys may be of benefit to 'youth arts' policies.

Methodology and Sources

Research for the digest began by accessing the Heritage Australia (HERA) Data Base for all statistical data relating to youth, culture, art, leisure and recreation participation statistics. The initial search revealed several journals - such as *Youth Studies*, *The Journal for Australian Studies*, *Discourse* and *Overland*.

Each journal was searched for further references or surveys that might prove useful. Unfortunately, because most current work in the field of youth cultural studies is qualitative rather than quantitative, neither these sources nor the works contained within them provided much up-to-date statistical data. A detailed description of all sources consulted pertinent to 'youth arts' policy is contained in the accompanying bibliography.

Government indexes were then searched. Apart from the Department of Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories (DASETT) Recreation Participation Surveys, *Young Australians and Music*, *Young Australians Today* and Jane Spring's article in *Ideas for Australian Recreation*, most of the sources searched contained statistics which referred mainly to education, health and employment issues.

The 1984 *Survey of Australian Youth* conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics is a prime example of the statistical data available. It gives figures on employment, education, morbidity, housing needs and criminal offences but does not address cultural or leisure activities. Similarly, the ABS's recent publication on the Australian Cinema Industry does not give a breakdown of attendance by age or gender.

Several government reports - such as *Young Australians Today* and *Young Australians and Music* - proved useful. Apart from these, there are not many studies which. analyse participation trends and cultural preferences of Australian youth.

The resources of the Queensland Department of Recreation's library in Mary Street, Brisbane; the data base at the library of the Division of Education at the Mount Gravatt Campus of Griffith University and the reference section at the State Library, Queensland were also accessed. Once again most of the research located was of a qualitative rather than quantitative nature.

Following this several government and commercial institutions were contacted. These included all the major Australian radio and television stations, the leading market research groups, the Australian Film Commission, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, the Australian Record Association, the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, the Film and Heritage Division of DASSET, the Statistical Advisory Group of the Cultural Minister's Council, the Australia Council, the State arts ministries and State Arts Councils.

This exercise proved productive in two ways. It indicated that most of the tabulated statistical data on youth leisure/recreational consumption is produced by market research analysts for radio, television, video-arcades, and shopping malls and is therefore only available for purchase. The limitations of this report did not allow us to proceed further than simply locating potential sources of information. However, since recent surveys and their tabulations already exist in several youth orientated markets and can be purchased, then these market research data bases may, in future, prove a useful avenue for the analysis of the cultural needs of Australia's youth.

Another source of information pertaining to youth arts/cultural participation patterns can be located within the State Arts Councils' and government arts funding agencies' *Annual Reports*. Although these sources merely supply block participation figures or grant funding patterns and do not usually do so in terms of age groups, they are useful in that they indicate the relationship between the education system, public and private arts funding and 'youth arts' activities and organisations.

In the course of this stage of the research two reports were provided by the Australian Broadcasting Commission - one discussing Cinema Attendance and the other the Home Video Industry. The Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories provided *The National Culture-Leisure Statistical Framework*, and the *Australian Cultural Industry Available Data and Sources*. This material proved enlightening and is discussed below.

In summary, the major sources identified as pertinent to youth cultural participation are as follows:

A: The Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories, *Recreation Participation Survey*, October/November, 1987.

B: Radvan, Mark, *New Directions for Youth Theatre*, Queensland University of Technology, Drama Department. (Brisbane, 1990. Edited version in Part 1 *Ideas, Facts & Futures*).

C: Spectrum Research, *Cinema Going: Attitudes and Attendance Behaviour*, prepared for the Australian Film Commission, Sydney, 1990.

D: Gary Maddox and David Court, *The Home Video Industry Report*, produced in association with *Entertainment and Business Review* for the Australian Film Commission, 1989.

E: Susan Kippax, Susan Keonig and Gary Dowsett, *Potential Arts Audiences: Attitudes and Practices*, prepared for the Australia Council,1986.

F: Jane Spring, 'The Arts' in *Ideas For Australian Recreation Commentaries on the Recreation Participation Surveys*, Australian Government Printer, 1989.

G: ANOP Market Research, *Young Australians Today, a report on a study of the attitudes of young Australians*, Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism, 1984.

H: Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, *Young Australians and Music*, Sydney: ABT, 1985.

I: Australia Council, *The Arts: Some Australian Data (3rd edition)*, Sydney: Australia Council, 1989.

J: A selection of figures from various Annual Reports of State Arts Councils.

Summary of Main Findings

Ther is a large gap between existing, accessible, tabulated data and existing non-tabulated data pertaining to youth arts/cultural participation patterns. Non-tabulated data exist in two areas - the annual reports of the State Arts Councils and government arts funding agencies and data collected by various market research groups.

It is strongly argued that the tabulation of these figures is important to a fuller and more accurate understanding of arts/cultural participation trends in that they - particularly the annual reports of the State Arts Councils and government arts funding agencies - pose pertinent questions in relation to the data generated by existing studies.

With regard to the available tabulated data, it is possible to locate several consumer trends in the youth leisure/recreation market. There is a predominance of 'popular' cultural pursuits and activities amongst both male and female youth in the 14-20 year old age group.

As Jane Spring notes, in 'The Arts' *(Ideas for Australian Recreation)*, attendance at pop concerts is dominated by the 14-24 age group (70%).

Adolescent males are more likely to participate in sporting events or visit the pub in their search for self-definition. The preference for sport/sporting events is also demonstrated in the television viewing preferences of males within this age group. Whilst only 3, 2 and 1% of females (15-24 years) preferred to watch TV football and soccer coverage; 19, 21 and 25% of males (15-24 years) stated that this was their favourite type of television program. (see Table B)

With regard to 'popular' forms of cultural activities, in all three media - television, video and cinema - both males and females in the 14 to 19 year old age group display a high participation rate.

Television is by far the most popular form of indoor recreation with 96.0% of the 14-19 year old males and 96.2% of the 14-19 year old females and 95.4% of the 20-24 year old males and 96.3% of the 20-24 year old females (DASETT *Recreation Participation Survey*, 1987).

TABLE A

AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT LISTENING TO RADIO, RECORDS AND CASSETTES AND VIEWING TELEVISION PER WEEK

Time (Hours)	Radio	Record/Casette Listening	Television
	%	%	%
zero up to 10	4	17	1
up to 10	38	62	17
11 - 20	30	16	31
21 - 30	14	3	28
31 - 40	7	1	13
41 - 50	4	-	6
51 - 60	2		2
61 - 70	1	-	1
71 - 80	1	-	-
	(n = 657)	(n = 657)	(n = 657)

Source: *Young Australians and Music*, p.87

TABLE B

THE PROGRAMS YOUNG PEOPLE PREFER TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

TV PROGRAM	SEX			FEMALE			MALE		
	Total %	Female %	Male %	15-17 %	18-20 %	21-24 %	15-17 %	18-20 %	21-24 %
Serials Soap operas	37	51	23	53	55	47	28	22	21
Movies Horror movies Westerns	36	33	39	31	34	33	40	43	35
Situation Comedies M.A.S.H. Happy Days	29	25	33	22	25	28	35	36	28
Music Video Shows Countdown Sounds	10	12	8	21	10	7	9	10	6
Quiz Shows Sale of the Century Perfect Match	9	12	7	13	12	11	7	5	9
Drama,Adventure Drama Australian Drama	7	7	8	7	5	9	12	5	7
Variety Shows Mike Walsh Hey, Hey It's Saturday	7	8	6	7	7	10	4	8	6
Children Shows Cartoons Dr Who	6	5	7	7	6	4	9	7	5
News/Current Affairs 60 Minutes State Affair Willessee	34	34	33	22	32	46	20	31	45
Documentaries Educational	16	13	19	6	13	18	11	17	26
Sport Football Soccer	12	2	22	3	1	2	19	21	25
Other	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	1
No Favourites Unsure	2	2	2	4	2	2	3	-	3
Total Not Watching Television	8	6	9	7	6	6	8	10	9

Source: *Young Australians Today, a report on a study of the attitudes of young Australians,* prepared by ANOP Market Research, 1984.

The average time spent watching television each day by males and females of the 15-24 age group is four hours. However, various sectors in our youth communities have a higher

participation rate than others. For example, the ANOP Survey reveals that only 4% of young people at University or other forms of tertiary education institution spend four hours each day watching television compared with 27% of those not studying at such institutions. (See Table C)

Interestingly, a larger percentage of students listen to the radio four hours or more each day than those who watch TV (13% of TAFE students spend four hours per day watching TV compared with 21% who listen to the radio). (See Table C) The same trend is apparent in those who work full-time (13%) compared to 27% who listen to the radio at least four hours each day.

TABLE C

A PROFILE OF 'HEAVY' TV VIEWERS AND RADIO LISTENERS

	Average - All Young People	Television 4hrs + per day	Radio 4hrs + per day
		20%	20%
SEX	Female	22	19
	Male	17	21
AGE & SEX	15-17 Female	16	17
	18-20 Female	20	20
	21-24 Female	30	21
	15-17 Male	14	13
	18-20 Male	14	24
	21-24 Male	20	23
EDUCATION LEVEL REACHED	In Year 9 or 10	15	13
	In Year 11 or 12	7	11
	Tertiary Educated	11	16
	Full Secondary Educated	22	19
	Early Leavers	34	29
ASPIRATIONS	High Achievers	13	17
	Low Achievers	24	28
STUDENT STATUS	Not Studying	27	25
	At High School	10	12
	At TAFE College	13	21
	At Univ., CAE or Institute	4	10
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	Work Full-time	13	27
	Work Part-time	30	19
	Full-time Home Duties	55	28
	Full-time Students	8	11
	Unemployed	45	19
	Total Employed	33	32
	White Collar Workers	9	8
	Blue Collar Workers	24	21
Base: All Viewers & Listeners Respectively		92%	91%

Source: Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism, *Young Australians Today*, ANOP Market Research, 1984.

The ANOP survey (Table C) reveals another interesting characteristic amongst these consumer groups. The 21-24 year old females, those who work part-time, those who occupy full-time home duties, and the unemployed occupy the largest percentage of television users with those at university, or their tertiary education institution being the lowest percentage of users.

TABLE D

AVERAGE FREQUENCY OF CINEMA ATTENDANCE
(OVER SIX MONTHS)

	AGE				
	18-24 (N = 111) %	25-34 (N = 114) %	35-44 (N = 73) %	45-54 (N = 37) %	55+ (N = 29) %
Once	12	14	26	16	24
2-3 times	30	38	40	27	34
4-5 times	27	17	10	19	17
6-7 times	11	15	10	15	9
8-9 times	3	4	5	8	3
10-11 times	6	4	-	6	3
12 + times	11	6	7	9	7
Average Frequency	5.0 times	4.4 times	3.8 times	5.0 times	4.0 times

Source: *Cinema Going: Attitudes and Attendance Behaviour*, Spectrum Research, Australian Film Commission, 1990.

Both cinema and video have a strong appeal to youth within the 14-24 age group. As the table above indicates the heaviest cinema attenders are in the 18-24 age group with 27% having attended four to five times in the six months surveyed.

The recent *Home Video Industry Report* (Australian Film Commission) indicates that video is particularly influential in decreasing cinema attendance. The average video viewing time in the home is 6 hours and 16 minutes. The heaviest users are from regional and less well-off areas - with 14 -17 year olds occupying the 'heaviest' user group.

Descriptive Commentary on Statistical Reports

The findings associated with the reports discussed in this digest fall into two major categories - the affects of class /education and gender/age differences on youth participation and preference patterns. For the purposes of this report, the commentary on the findings occurs under three headings:

(i) The effects of class/education/family background on youth arts and cultural participation.

(ii) Gender differences in participation patterns.

(iii) The role of cinema and video arcades as indicators of gender and age leisure preferences.

The effects of class/education/family background on youth arts and cultural participation.

The 1986 Kippax, Koenig and the Dowsett report indicates that participation in leisure activities of both secondary and tertiary students is class and gender related. Participation education rates in the 'high' cultural arena is strongest in homes where involvement in these activities, in both active and passive roles, is encouraged.

In both attitudes to the arts and in the role of learning skills Kippax, Koenig and Dowsett locate class as the major contributory factor in determining attendance patterns. This is particularly apparent in the school system where they argue that:

> ... *In secondary students from non-private schools, attitudes to the arts were characterised by rejection, apart from those to rock, music, films, and to some extent, the theatre. (S. Kippax, S. Koenig, and G. Dowsett, 1986)*

The 'class' emphasis of Kippax, Koenig and Dowsett's findings can be supplemented also by *The Home Video Industry Report*. This suggests that the popularity of video-viewing as a leisure pursuit is related to educational, class and economic factors.

The findings of the 'video report' indicate that the heaviest video users were 14-17 year old females in the outer suburbs and less well-off areas. Economic factors are a strong influence upon user patterns as it is a cheap and easily accessible form of entertainment.

But it is not simply the cost of videos that appeals to the less-well-off. Spectrum Research's qualitative analysis of attitudes toward cinema going reveals that a further reason for this group's high use of video is convenience. The media of video and television are perceived as having the 'best overall atmosphere' which allows the viewer to 'drink and smoke' whilst watching the movie. There is also no need 'to dress up' for these forms of leisure pursuits.

The explanation for this group's preference for home-based leisure activities, whilst having a great deal to do with not being able to afford other pursuits, is also influenced by the ways in which the 'high arts' are perceived by this group. As the Kippax, Koenig and Dowsett report argues, students from non-private schools express attitudes of rejection towards the 'high arts'.

A lack of knowledge of the 'cultural codes and procedures' also affects the participation patterns both in the young and older age groups. Within the atmosphere of their own homes this participation group feels comfortable. The home provides an arena where they are not threatened because of their own non-familiarity with the 'cultural code' and procedures associated with going to the opera, theatre or visiting a museum.

Since a knowledge of the 'high' arts is needed before the individual feels comfortable enough with the medium to participate, then Kippax, Koenig and Dowsett suggest that 'skill development' should be initiated in non-private schools on the same scale as their private counterparts. (See preceding discussion in *Youth Attitudes to the Arts*).

Warren Lett (1988) also argues that arts participation patterns and values are cultivated in the schooling system. He places emphasis upon a continuity between a lack of experience and opportunity in the school's arts program and later lack of commitment to arts in private or group leisure activity.

The positive relationship between skill development at school and within the home can be seen in the arts/cultural participation preferences of members of Brisbane Youth Theatres, *La Byte* and *Contact Youth Theatre*. As demonstrated in Table E this group have already established certain cultural skills - regularly visiting the theatre (60.5% three or more times, 31.1% once or twice), and art galleries or museums (43.5% three or more times and 46.3% once or twice).

Of the sample of youth theatre members surveyed, 61% were estimated to attend private school, 15.7% of the sample surveyed had parents who were actively involved in drama activities or studies and 19.2% were introduced to youth theatre by their parents.

Not surprisingly, the group surveyed also displayed a high percentage of cinema attendance with 85.3% having attended a cinema three or more times in the last year. This group did not display a high level of interest in classical music however, with 57.9% having attended no classical concerts in the last year.

TABLE E

Other Activities
Approximately how often did you attend the following activities in the list.

14..	Theatre	Never	8.5%
		Once or Twice	31.1%
		Three or more times	60.5%
15.	Cinema	Never	2.8%
		Once or Twice	11.9%
		Three or more times	85.3%
16.	Art Gallery or Museum	Never	10.2%
		Once or Twice	46.3%
		Three or more times	43.5%
17.	Rock Concert	Never	39.4%
		Once or Twice	43.4%
		Three or more times	17.1%
18.	Classical Concert	Never	57.9%
		Once or Twice	27.4%
		Three or more times	8.0%
19.	Disco/Night Club	Never	41.6%
		Once or Twice	27.4%
		Three or more times	30.3%
20.	Major Public Sports Event (eg. Football, Cricket etc.)	Never	52.5%
		Once or Twice	27.7%
		Three or more times	19.8%

Source: Radvan, Mark. The Brisbane Youth Theatre Survey. QUT (Drama Department) 1990.

Gender differences in participation patterns

The categories of 'Socialising at the Club', 'Attending Rock Venues', watching and participating in sport display both age and gender differences. Jane Spring (1989) has discussed the gap between male and female preference for sporting activities over art/cultural activities as being the result of 'a search for self-definition'. She argues that young males focus on sport and intellectual pursuits that lead to a career; the music - pub bands and rock concerts and discos - provide them with a taste of adulthood which is different from their parents. (See preceding discussion in *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* and *Music and Young People* in Part 1 *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Discussion and Directions*).

The ANOP figures contained within the report *Young Australians Today* tend to reinforce this argument by revealing male preferences both in television and radio for sport orientated program.

The role of cinema and video arcades as indicators of gender and age leisure preferences.

Recent figures produced by Spectrum Research for the Australian Film Commission indicate a further trend which implies a difference in the attendance patterns between 14-18 year olds and their older cohorts.

Spectrum's report on cinema attendance indicates that of all the respondents interviewed who had viewed a movie within the six months surveyed, those aged 18-24 were the most frequent attenders along with the 45-54 years age group. (27% & 19% respectively had attended 4-5 times).

The use of electronic video games both within the home and away from home also exhibits a further trend which indicates a higher participation rate of young males within the 14-19 year old age group (19.4% at home, 9.8% away from home) compared with young females 14-19 years (12.4% at home, 9.7% away from home) and with males 20-24 years (9.1% at home, 7.2% away from home) and females 20-24 years (4.0% at home, 4.0% away from home), with participation rates decreasing with age.

Apart from the *Recreation Participation Survey* (DASETT, 1987), very little data is available on the exact nature of the use pattern of 14-19 year old males of either the 'video game/parlour' or computer games within the home even though available statistics indicate an 18% difference in the use pattern between males and females of this age group.

Table 10 in DASETT's *Recreation Participation Survey* demonstrates a wide gap across both age and gender in the use of video games. This is particularly apparent in the use patterns of 14-19 year old males. These trends seem to indicate differences similar to participation differences in the areas of sport, going to the club and attending rock venues discussed by Jane Spring (1989). Therefore, any research in this area would generate considerable insight into the current trends in youth cultures in Australia particularly with regard to young males in the 14-19 year old age bracket.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATISTICAL ADVISORY GROUP'S REPORT

The 1989 submission of the Statistical Advisory Group of the Cultural Minister's Council to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for a 'survey of consumers and non-consumers of Culture-Leisure industry products' underlines the scarcity and inadequacy of up-to-date statistical data relating to cultural/leisure participation patterns. It argues that a more comprehensive statistical framework needs to be implemented.

The ABS has acknowledged this deficiency and proposes to include the topic within future household survey programs. A further collection on *'time use'* will be implemented in the 1990/91 to 1992/93 *Forward Work Programme*.

This information, especially the breakdown of time use patterns, will be of value to future recreation participation figures. At present the Recreation Participation Surveys do not reveal heavy, light or medium users.

It will also be possible to locate social and demographic factors which affect attendance rates when this new system is implemented by ABS thus overcoming the necessity to supplement the Participation Survey figures with other, more extensive data.

The Statistical Advisory Group (SAG) has also suggested that a more coordinated system for collecting data from individual institutions and agencies be implemented. It has been suggested that private companies collect participation statistics to gauge market potential and therefore provide an already established and readily available source of data.

Information from these sources will be of particular benefit in identifying video/arcade time-use patterns. Information on the popularity amongst young people of visiting shopping malls as a leisure activity would also be available from market research sources.

Other possible avenues for the collection of participation statistics are theatres, museums and art galleries themselves. SAG suggests these institutions not only collect information on their visiting public but also look for the reasons why the public *do not* visit.

In conclusion, the search for up-to-date statistical data relating to the arts/cultural activities of Australian youth has revealed a lack of explanatory data pertinent to the needs of policy formulation in the 'youth arts' area. It has located a large gap between existing tabulated data and existing non-tabulated data relevant to youth arts/cultural participation patterns. Untabled data exist in two areas - the annual reports of the the State Arts Councils and government arts funding agencies and information collected by various market research groups.

It is strongly argued that the collection and tabulation of statistical data is important to a fuller and more accurate understanding of youth arts/cultural participation trends.

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Jane Spring, 'The Arts' in *Ideas For Australian Recreation: Commentaries on the Recreation Participation Surveys*, Australian Government Printer, 1989.

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RECOMMENDED READING

RECOMMENDED READING

The following information offers a range of reading material on youth, art and culture. It is a compilation of references from other parts of *Ideas Facts & Futures*. The material includes books, journals, journal articles and policy, promotional and documents covering practical activities and theoretical considerations.

The 'Literature Guide' below is adapted from a guide prepared by the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies and originally included as part of the Discussion Paper *Youth Cultures - Art Policies* contained in Part 1 – *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Discussion & Directions*.

LITERATURE GUIDE

THEORIES OF CULTURE AND THE ARTS

The most generally serviceable accounts of the concept of culture remain those offered by Raymond Williams. See, in particular, his discussion of culture and related terms in *Keywords: a vocabulary of Culture and Society*, London: Fontana, 1976, as well as the fuller analysis in *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1958. Williams' account is Marxist- based. For an alternative view of culture influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, see Ian Hunter's 'The Limits of Culture', *New Formations*, No. 4, 1988, and the fuller analysis *Culture and Government: The Emergence of Literary Education*, London: Macmillan, 1988.

For critical discussions of the category of art specifically, see Victor Burgin, *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity*, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1986, and Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1981. For feminist perspectives on the limiting effects of aesthetic conceptions of art, see Rozika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1981, and Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1988.

Recent discussions of the policy effects of aesthetic conceptions of the arts include Tim Rowse, *Arguing the Arts; The funding of the Arts in Australia*, Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1985; Gay Hawkins, 'Reading Community Arts Policy: From Nimbin to the Gay Mardi Gras', *Media Information Australia*, No. 53, August, 1989 and Peter Anderson, 'What the People Want: Recent Debates about Arts Funding in Australia', *Australian-Canadian Studies*, Vol. 7, Nos 1-2, 1989. There is also some consideration of these matters in Jean Battersby, *Cultural Policy in Australia*, Paris: UNESCO, 1980.

Youth Cultures

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University has, to date, been the major and significant source of theoretical studies on youth subcultures (post Second World War). The main texts include S Hall and T Jefferson (Eds), *Resistance Through Rituals*, London: Hutchinson, 1976, D Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London: Methuen, 1976 and P Willis *Learning, to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977. Australian work on youth subcultures includes K Pearson, *Surfing Subcultures*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978. Also 'Youth Subcultures and Their Cultural Context', *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 21, No. 2, July 1985 attempts to explain some reasons for subcultural difference.

More general Australian texts in the area of youth include P Wilson and J Arnold, *Street Kids: Australia's Alienated Youth*, Blackburn: Collins Dove, 1986, and analysis of the problems facing inner-city, homeless youth. J Walker, *Lotus and Legends*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988, is an ethnography of several different male youth subcultures at a working-class school. Some broader perspectives on youth are available in D Anderson and C Blakers, *Youth, Transition and Social Research*, Canberra: ANU Press, 1983.

Audience Studies

Video Games

Claude M J Braun and Josette Giroux in their article 'Arcade Video Games: Proxemic, Cognitive and Content Analyses' *Journal of Leisure Research*, 21:2, 1989, pp 92-105, survey the field of literature as well as report on a study in Montreal. They find that the functions required of players are extremely varied in terms of both motor coordination and cognitive processing.

VCRs

The heterogeneous re-charting of programs made possible by the VCR and associated implications for active / interactive viewing are drawn out in James G Webster, 'Audience Behaviour in the New Media Environment', *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 1986, pp 77-91.

New Approaches

Virginia Nightingale's article 'Community as Audience - Audience as Community', (*Australian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 9, No. 10, 1986, pp 31-41), sets out new approaches encouraged by youth subcultural theories, the social position of viewers and redistribution of material by audiences.

A narrative history of trends in audience research can be found in Martin Allor, 'Relocating the Site of the Audience', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 5, 1988, pp 217-233.

Shaun Moores, 'Texts, Readers and Contexts of Reading: Developments in the Study of Media Audiences', Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1990, pp 6-29, accounts for particular trends in British writing on the relationship between methods of spectatorship encouraged by the objects/programs looked at and by one's social position and training.

For the classic statement of effects, 'the annual violence index and profile of TV content and its correlates in viewers' conceptions of relevant aspects of social reality', see George Gerbner and Larry Gross, 'Living with Television: the Violence Profile' in H Newcombe (Ed), *Television: The Critical View*, Second Edition, pp 383-403, London: Oxford University Press.

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