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**An Anthropologist's Guide to the 21st Century: A Look at Online and
Offline Car Culture in Central Texas**

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**An Anthropologist's Guide to the 21st Century: A Look at Online and
Offline Car Culture in Central Texas**

by

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Dissertation

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my Family and the ACTLab.

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Mi Familia and Compadres

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An Anthropologist's Guide to the 21st Century: A look at Online and Offline Car Culture in Central Texas

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Joseph Todd Lopez, Ph D.

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Supervisor: Alluquere Sandy Stone

This dissertation looks at online and offline car culture in Central Texas. The online car culture observed is on Internet car forums and other Internet sources for car enthusiasts. Offline car culture deals with various types of car events around the central Texas area. These events include, but are not limited to, car shows, street races, and street meets. Cultural practices were observed in both types of environments and are analyzed by using hybridity theory, gender analysis and race analysis.

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Introduction: A Look at How I Roll



Picture 1 (Joey with Helmet)

For those who do not require structure:

If you're at all like me, you've probably finished reading the whole dissertation and just remembered to read the introduction. I've consumed texts in a non-linear way for as long as I can remember, but I never thought about it critically until I sat here working on my introduction. I usually read books and magazines by flipping to a random page until something visual catches my eye, whether photographically or textually, and then beginning to read from there. I would ask and hope that readers of this work consider treating it the same way.

I would like the information in this dissertation to be approached not as a source of fact but as a source of knowledge. I hope that the words, images and videos within will be consumed and interoperable by many, and jammed on in so many ways that your head begins to hurt.

In this dissertation I will look at the material culture of racing (i.e. the speed, the racing, the cars) as a vehicle, no pun intended to observe and extrapolate the social and cultural practices of the participants in order to bring further analysis into the cultural fluidity taking place in Central Texas.

My methodology draws from the my findings that the field of anthropology and online delivery are changing the way in which we think not only about online academic publishing, but the incorporation of new media formats such as digital video, photography and content management systems into our work flow.

This dissertation is presented on a content management system using Word Press, an opensource software utilizing LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP). This technological step into the 21st century allows for media rich content to be delivered in a new way that was previously not possible within the academic environment.

Even recent multi-media work, such as CD-ROM and DVD-ROM's do not carry the mass delivery ability of having my dissertation delivered using wordpress on the Internet.

Along with other pioneers of these "New Media" technologies, I hope to provide academia with new ways of thinking about the scholarship and the distribution and accreditation of work.

My writing style has been influenced beyond academia and into common and back into academia. While I make no formal declaration of sources, the reader should assume that my feeble thoughts are interpretive, not creative. I have merely taken what I have read, seen, and heard around me and organized it in my own fashion.

This approach has served me well throughout my academic career, and most of my professors and academic colleagues have grown to appreciate and understand my approach. My intention in writing this dissertation is to cause you, reader, to ask more questions, see my faults, and decide for yourself whether or not you agree with me. My job as an academic is not to declare my knowledge as definitive, it is to listen, to make observations, and to allow my reflections on what I observe to be interpreted by others.

That said, you should now leave this introduction and see if there's anything you find worth reading in this heap of text!

The Anthropological Trip To the 21st Century

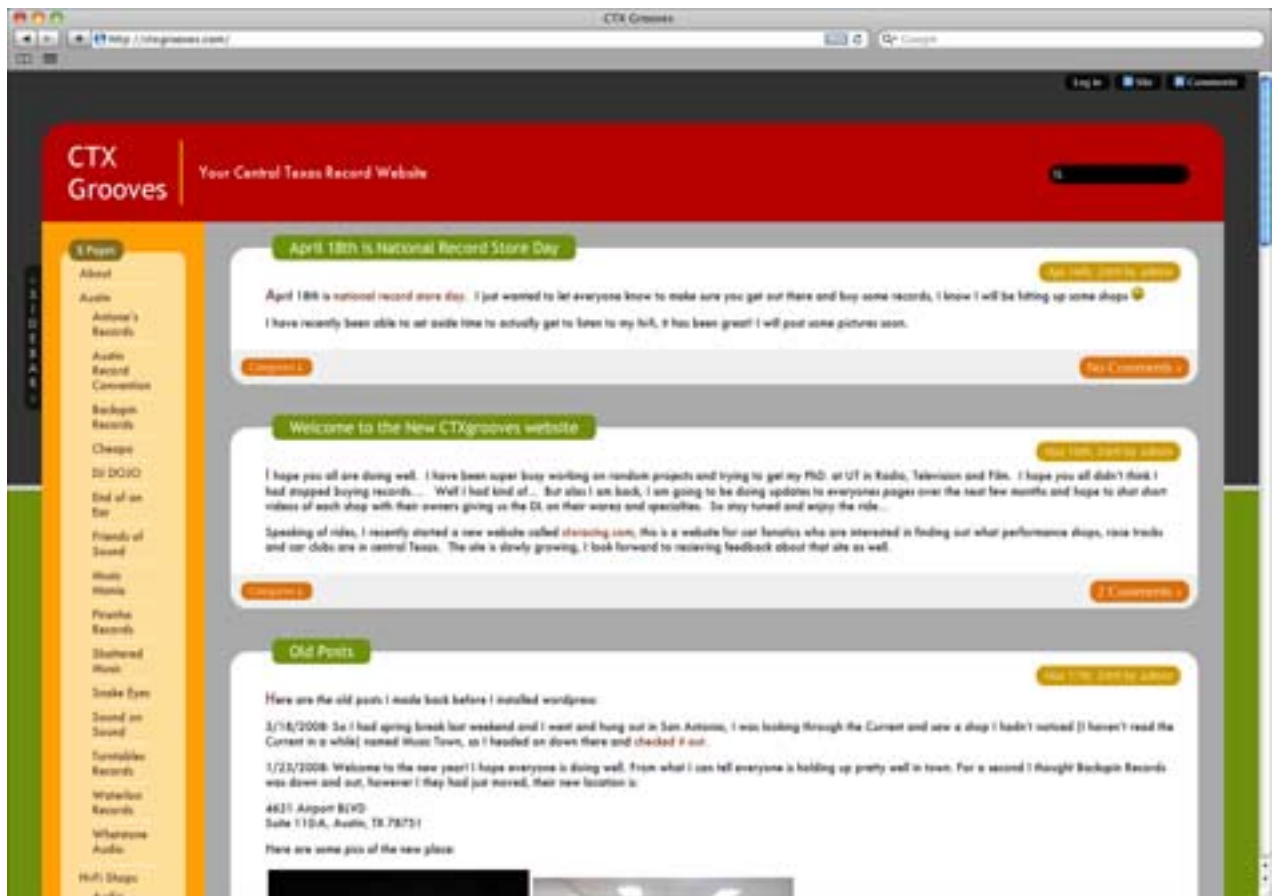
The name of my Dissertation is “The Anthropologist’s guide to the 21st century: A look at online and offline car culture in Central Texas”. When I came up with title it was a remark on how I had been trained in a traditional anthropological background. I had performed traditional ethnography throughout my graduate work in addition to taking many courses on general qualitative analysis. However I never felt fully apart of the canon. I would carry discussions with my colleagues about various ethnographic work and approaches.

Most of what would be discussed is how to file with the Internal Review Board for interview approval as well as how to interview and talk with subjects. However, my interest would always seem to stray more towards relating to the subjects and trying to understand them rather than purely retrieving “data sets” as many of my colleagues desired.

I believe a lot of my dis-connect also came from the fact that unlike many of my colleagues I was not interested in allowing my academic financial funding direct my research. Instead I believed in allowing my own financial funding direct my research. What I mean by this is that as I would work on my ethnographic projects both in and out of classes I would slowly depart from working with professors who were academically funding the initiatives and find my own way for funding such efforts.

Now I should be clear that I still was under academic guidance, however my approaches and my direction were more facilitated then dictated since I was not bound by grants and specific research results.

One such project took place in 2005 when I decided to produce a Creative Commons based album and release it both within local music stores and also online. The project developed out of three separate previous initiatives. One was my own interest in record stores in Central Texas. I was so interested in record stores I had spent a whole year going to each store and talking with the owners and photographing each store. I compiled all of the information onto a website called ctxgrooves.com. (I have since done something similar with my dissertation, creating ctxracing.com)



Picture 2 (CTXgrooves.com)

The other initiative sprouted from a former student of mine Praveen Ayagari, a student who began making music in our class and was highly successful and began producing singles.



Picture 3 (Praveen and Friend's CD insert printed on construction paper)



Picture 4 (Praveen and Friend's Playing an in store at End of an Ear, Austin, Tx)

The third initiative was an open source peer-to-peer video streaming protocol I was working on with Brandon Wiley at the Foundation For Decentralization Research. One of my duties included finding out more about Creative Common's licensing.



Picture 5 (Praveen and Brandon discussing Creative Commons Licensing.)

Now this is where I put my “anthropological hat” on and want to make something clear.

With all three of these initiatives I just mentioned, it should be noted that while I was participating in them, as with all my research I am always looking at them from a “capital” perspective, in reference to Bourdieu.

However my idea of capital transfers beyond just social and cultural and into micro capital such as technical, academic and hobby specific.

So with this framework of capital I put together the idea to perform an experimental album release of Praveen’s singles, which we would Creative Common’s license and release in record stores and online through ACTLab.tv.

This project involved us making the physical CD’s, having the tracks mastered by a producers/audio engineer, myself propositioning each local record store, as well as myself working with Praveen throughout the process to assure his artistic intent was being realized.

And last but not least, throughout the whole process I was to document each step and then offer analysis of the outcome. My main analysis and verbiage for my project came from my direct experiences. Meaning, while I had read theoretical frameworks for anthropological work, other than Bourdieu's capital, I highly disregarded such works due to the fact that I do not identify with them.

Instead I went with how I felt I could best describe my experiences and my work. I used my own words, both from the direct experiences and from my own previous experiences and built my own tools and theories.

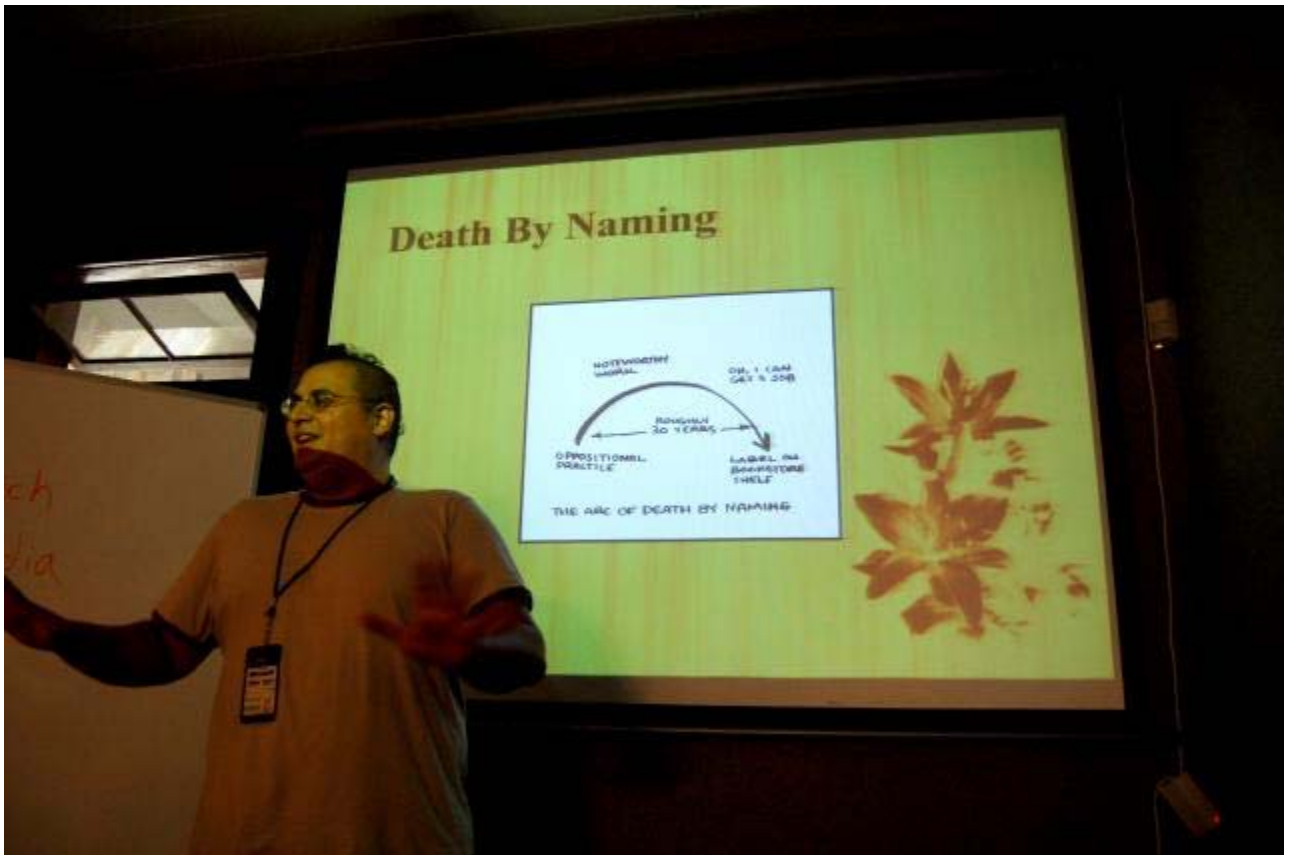
While to many this might sound arrogant and disrespectful to the academic canon set before me, I would like to propose another perspective.

If you look at my social, cultural, economic and academic background (i.e. read transformative intellectuals), you will see that I have never been fully received by academia. The way I inherently think and process my ideas have never fully functioned within the framework of western European education.

Because of this, my ideas have always been pushed into the "other" category; much like my racial background or my overweightness or my pedagogical practices. And having been told by traditional academia that I am "the other", I have actively rejected their framework.

As Edward James Olmos' character in the movie *Selena* said, "We are too white for the Mexicans and too dark for the Americans" (paraphrased). My cultural, social and academic background has trained me to depart from the mainstays of the fields I study and to look for new and interesting grounds. I have also learned that it is ok to describe

such new landscapes in my native tongue, to be proud of my approaches, but to always use them with an open ear for positive criticism and outreach.



Picture 6 (Teaching about the ACTLab)

So with this framework in mind and my technological background I set forth to create a dissertation I felt fully showcased and demonstrated new and innovative works in my own tongue that can be “code-switched” by academics to spread new ways of thinking about anthropology and other ideas explored within my work.

Taking the above into consideration, in the summer of 2007 I began to become heavily involved with car culture in central Texas through my own interests, not academically. During this time I was also exploring my options for my dissertation, I knew I could

easily throw something together about Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and New Media in general and have a good ol' academic honky dory story. However I felt I would be selling myself and the academic canon short. I knew my work would fall into an esoteric technological academic abyss where 10 years from now it would have been forgotten. However, as I developed relationships within the central Texas car scene I quickly came to realize how much potential there was for a story to be told, a timeless story. And there was room for experience, interpretation, risk and more. As I met the elders and n00b's of the car scene I quickly became enthralled with the idea how hierarchies worked and how such systems existed both online and offline.

Taking my previous methodology into consideration I dived right in. Over the next 2 years I would fully emerge myself into the various car scenes in Central Texas. Whether it was street racing, drag racing, road racing, electric cars or automotive performance shops I was there, everyday all day. Every night I would come home and write, capture my videos, download my photos and update my dissertation blog with new information.



Picture 7 (Here I am documenting Justin Ninni's 203mph GTR Run at the Texas Mile.)

Which brings me to a good point-the “blog”. Many people asked me how I decided to use a blog rather than writing a traditional paper. Almost all of my academic colleagues and peers sited the fact that it would not be widely accepted and that I would be ridiculed for doing such work.

What they did not seem to realize is that I was already being ridiculed for they way I teach, the people I work with, the way I looked and the way I wrote. So for me to take it one step further in a direction that I felt academia needed to be going at the risk of being criticized by the elders of our canon was a no brainier for me. What did I have to lose compared to what I had to gain?

Having chosen a blog I have been able to not only write, but produce videos and photos for my dissertation, all while being able to get real time feedback from all forms of

readers. Some have been academic, some have been in the automotive field and others who happen to stumble across my work while “on the internet”.

This cross pollenization of influence has created something that I believe moves beyond just being an academic text, but something that can be shared beyond the ivory tower. It is a community oriented piece of work, one which I aim to use to intrigue both lay and expert readers alike.

If you look at the main articles you will see I discuss my experiences textually, videographically, and photographically. This allows people to enter my “texts” with various levels of interest of my work and be able to come away with some type of experience as well as an ability to add their own analysis of my style of presentation.

As I have received feedback from my work it has been interesting to receive feedback from professors who state my work is just videos and photos, not realizing that it is those pieces of work that they are attracted to and that they are actually disregarding the text featured in such articles (which often include 20+ pages of text along with the photos and videos).

The older academics inability to understand that my work is academic at heart has been interesting. They often view my work as entertainment, not realizing, that while I am shooting video and photos, I am also listening to my subjects and analyzing their statements and looking for further information about their cultural and social practices.

However when I show my peers (i.e. other graduate students and undergraduates and fresh professors) they are able to quickly consume the videos, photos and text in a critical way. While wrapping up my dissertation I was asked by my department to sit on a panel about hacking the ivory tower. While being a panelist it quickly became clear to me the

dis-connect of truly new and innovative technology with traditional academia. Tenured professors made proclamation that I would never receive tenure with my work due to that fact that it was on a blog. Others stated my work efforts were a lost cause that would be barred by traditional academia.

This in-ability of my professors to consume my texts is one which I actively addressed throughout my dissertation process. Creating consumables for which they feel they have concurred and fully understand seem to help this situation. Leaving ominous interpretation and explanation seems very academic, however I feel it leaves room for interpretation. I feel the best texts are ones that lead to more questions rather than answers.

However I took that all very differently then I think they expected, I quickly saw a divide between myself, my new technology savvy peers and my elder tenured professors of the department. I quickly realized while my work must satisfy the elders for me to successfully complete my PhD program, that if I wanted to be truly successful in my own academic pursuits and ones that my peers aspired to have exist, I must also represent and push new ways of thinking about critical post modern analysis and presentation of my work.

Cars in My Life



Picture 8 (Mywelf with my MGM)

Cars have always been my passion. From a young age, I cultivated my interest in cars by learning about combustion engines, working on my parents' lawnmower, taking shop classes in school, and doing a science project on turbo versus super charged engines. Regardless of whether or not I was doing well in school, I always knew everything about the new cars on the market — their engine specs, their zero to sixties, and how they braked. I fed my obsession in a variety of ways.

When I was fourteen, my older brother got a job at Malibu Grand Prix, a place where three-quarter-scale indy cars could be driven around a track, much like autocross. While you had to be sixteen to drive these cars, they also offered a course which, if you

completed it, would allow you to drive if you were at least fourteen. I took this course and logged hundreds of laps on their track.

During this time, I learned about things like tire patch, braking, apexes — things very few of my friends were familiar with when we finally got our driver's licenses. They also had a two-seater I quickly mastered and would use to give rides to my friends. I have vivid memories from this time in my life of stepping out of a car after doing some laps and having rubber all over my legs from the tires.

A year later, I turned fifteen, and my brother taught me how to drive. We drove a 1986 Crown Vic with the HD package (HD stands for heavy duty — essentially this was the kind of car driven by cops or taxi drivers). In this car, I learned about controlling fish tales, working on stereos, and jumping cars.

When I was sixteen, my dad bought a 1996 Mercury Grand Marquis GS with the handling package. It had bigger sway bars and tires, air suspension, and dual exhaust. Right before my seventeenth birthday, however, I wrecked the car racing a friend around corner (something I did pretty often, pretty stupidly, when I was a kid). This car taught me a lot about how to drive within my capacity, both good and bad.



Picture 9 (My brother's Porsche 944)

That same year my brother bought a 1986 Porsche 944. My generous brother let me drive this car about half the time that he had it. This car also taught me a lot about driving, as well as how car maintenance. As my brother did all his own work on the car, I'd hand him wrenches and screwdrivers. He always complained I wasn't quick enough with the tools.



Picture 10 (The Datsun)

Another car to which I must pay tribute is the 1983 Datsun King Cab pickup my grandmother passed on to our family. I learned how to drive stick in this truck, and each of the boys in my family used it as a daily driver at some point (even my dad). When I sold it to some guy on the side of the Drag for a thousand dollars in cash (the guy was in a primer gray El Camino!) it had over 240,000 miles of abuse on it — that should tell you a little something about how tough that little truck was.



Picture 11 (The MGM in the Garage)

Then in 2003 my dad gave me the 96 Grand Marquis after I sold my car, a 1999 Ford Taurus my parents had helped me buy, but which had turned out to be a lemon. I not only maintained the MGM, but I also started upgrading it heavily. From improving the intake to adding a turbocharger system, the MGM served as one of the exploratory outlets for my research into automotive culture. It has been with me throughout the entire journey of my dissertation, and I consider it an embodiment of my passion for this research.

Within the automotive section of my dissertation, you will find articles that resonate with my introduction and build on my embedded experiences within the central Texas car scene. When I began my journey into automotive culture, I never could have imagined that, a year into my research, I would have met so many people, made so many connections, and have a lifetime's worth of stories to share and reflect upon. I have a

great deal of people to thank for this — far too many to list here, but you can find all of them in my acknowledgments.

For now, however, please navigate away from this page and go explore my articles.

Within them you will find more than just stories about automotive accomplishments.

You'll find life.

The Texas Mile – An Ultimate Journey

To say the least I had an action packed weekend and it is still going strong two weeks later! For the past couple of weeks I have been hanging out with Boost Logic, a local Toyota Supra shop who are known for making high horsepower street/strip cars, as well as being some of the best turbo/intake/exhaust fabricators in the world.



Picture 12 (Boost Logic's Work Space)

As I found out the weekend of the Texas Mile, their work is recognized around the world by all types of car enthusiasts. The way I became involved with Boost Logic is through Marc, their fabricator. I met him at a local Round Rock meet almost a year ago where he had just built out his 86' 300ZX with a 2JZ (Toyota Supra) motor and I believe a 67mm turbo. To say the least Marc is known around town, not only because of his cool car, but because of his friendly personality, kind instincts and enthusiasm for helping others

succeed in making their rides perform well. Here is a short video of the first time I saw Marc's 300ZX, I had no idea who he was, I just happened to be picking up some footage of the meet:

So one day I asked Marc about his job and he told me about Boost Logic and that I should come by and check it out sometime. He asked me what I did for work and I told him about my dissertation work on car culture in central Texas. He was really interested and again encouraged me to come by. So one day when I was driving around Lime Creek Rd, I ended up right next to Boost Logic and decided to stop by. Mark started showing me what he was up to and I just got out my camera and took photos.



Picture 13 (Here is Marc with his 1986 300ZX in front of Boost Logic)



Picture 14 (Marc at his work station fabricating a custom exhaust for a 911 Turbo)

Since then I have been known around Boost Logic as “the Mohawk guy with the camera”. I met the rest of the crew and they have all been very welcoming and inviting. I would go by randomly to say hi and snap shots of them at work. Each time I would go it seemed I was meeting someone I had not previously met and getting to know the people I had already met that much more. Each employee there seems to have a pretty well defined roll while also being able to fill in for someone else at a moments notice.

Whether it was giving a car a wash down or pitching in to rebuild an engine in time for an event, their synergy is something I have found to be impressive. It actually reminded me very much of my own ad-hoc groups I work with in the ACTLab.



Picture 15 (Marc and Kean working at 1am to prepare the Boost Logic Dragster for an event.)



Picture 16 (Chris of Boost Logic working on a 2JZ motor for his Lexus SC300 w/custom compound turbo kit)

One day in the spring of 2009, I was hanging out at Boost Logic watching Justin of Tuning Concepts prepare a car for the dynamometer. He mentioned that he and some other people from the shop were going to the Texas Mile in Goliad, and that I should check it out.

Through research I had already done in an online forum, I was familiar with the idea of the Texas Mile. Held every March and October, the Texas Mile is an event that brings tuners and races from around the country to the Goliad County Airport. There, one at a time, they race down the runway for one mile to see what speeds they can trap.

Boost Logic was making the trip with Sriyantha Weerasuria (known as S.W.), the owner of Elite Motor Sports. He'd had Boost prepare his 1995 Toyota Supra for the race. This car is the fastest six-speed Supra in the world (and, as I would discover, the record-holder for the Texas Mile).

I thought about Justin's suggestion and, a day or two later, asked Mark about following along. He said it would be cool, but they'd be leaving at 5:30am from Boost Logic. At four that morning I was awake and preparing to head out. I went to a 7/11 and picked up water and snacks and arrived at Boost around five; no one was there yet. I used the time until we left (which turned out to be around quarter past six) to shoot video and pictures of the preparations.



Picture 17 (S.W. preparing the trailer and his mobile home for the trip to the Texas Mile.)



Picture 18 (Chris of Boost Logic, preparing the truck and go-kart for the Texas Mile.)

Chris and Marc left Austin ahead of us to stake out a space. I followed S.W.'s mobile home. As we drove through the early morning East Texas landscape, I was reminded of

all the trips I had taken out on these roads, going to the coast or to Goliad itself. I drove and the memories flowed.

The air was damp and foggy. As we drove, I wished I could wash my car so I could take really sharp photos at the track. Before I knew it, S.W. had parked his mobile home outside a small town and joined me in my car to go pick up some washing supplies.

Evidently I wasn't the only person who wanted things to be perfectly clean!

What happened next revealed a very significant side of S.W.'s personality. As we pulled into an O'Reilly's Auto Parts, a group of school kids and an adult who held up a sign reading "CAR WASH" greeted us. S.W. commented, "We should have them wash the rig." I smirked and thought to myself that it was a great idea, but I assumed he was joking. However, after we got our supplies, S.W. asked me to drive past the children. He rolled down the window and asked them if they'd like to wash the rig. They agreed, and soon they were washing away on the rig, the race car, and my car. It was a hilarious experience for everyone involved.

While the kids were washing the vehicles, I spoke to the woman in charge of the car wash. She told me the students were raising money for a trip to Sea World in San Antonio. This reminded me of my own childhood, when going such places for the first time meant so much to me.



Picture 19 (S.W., Justin, and the washing crew clean up the mobile home and race car before going to the Texas Mile.)

Once we arrived in Goliad City, we headed to the county airport. At the airport, I was struck by how remote a location it was, and also by feelings of anticipation. I began to realize what a big experience this might turn out to be. When I drove up to the entrance gate, I was in my car alone. The person working the gate asked me why I was there, and I replied that I had come to take photos, so he just waved me along.

As we drove down the runway's taxi lane, I observed the immense number of people present at the event. I felt like I was in the opening sequence of *Grand Prix*. I watched people loading and unloading cars, and people under their cars making last-second changes. What differentiated this from any other event I had attended thus far was the sheer scale and variety of people present, everyone from guys who'd driven to the event

in the cars they planned to race to full-fledged racing trailers with a series of race cars accompanied by a mobile home.

After parking, the Boost Logic crew quickly unloaded the race car, cleaned it, and prepared it for its first run. Everyone appeared to have a job to do, and displayed feelings of both competitiveness and pride in their work and in themselves. It was pretty amazing to watch the team work.



Picture 20 (Boost Logic unloads the Supra.)



Picture 21 (A look down the taxiway at the Texas Mile.)

The crew were also quick to greet the trailer next to us, which, to my surprise, turned out to be American Racing Technology and Hennessey, world-renowned high-end high-performance shops located in Austin and Houston respectively. Hennessey is one of the first tuners I ever read about, in *Motor Trend* magazine's tuner F-Body extravaganza issue. I believe I was fourteen years old when I began to discover the lore of Hennessey, and now I discovered that Boost Logic was great friends with them. I was also surprised to learn that one of the 850rwhp Ford GTs parked in front of ART's trailer belonged to S.W.



Picture 22 (S.W.'s ART modified twin turbo Ford GT)



Picture 23 (S.W. cleaning his Supra up for the race.)

After some preparation, Marc suggested that he and I go down to the pit lane to see some of the action. We made our way down the taxiway and looked at all the various cars and people. The eclectic groups present were amazing to see. Some had just brought themselves and their car, while some had brought full motor homes and trailers for their crotch rockets, and still others were in beaten-down station wagons using them as a homebase for preparations.



Picture 24 (Marc checking out a diesel-powered Ford Mustang)



Picture 25 (We walked passed these nice rides on the way to the pit lane: a Ford GT and Lamborghini Gallardo convertible)

As we walked along, we ran into an older man working under the hood of his custom turbo Mazda Miata. Marc walked up to the man and asked him how he was doing. The man explained that he was trying to change out his spark plugs, but in one of the spark plug holes, a rubber bung was stuck. He added that he'd left his tools at home. Appearing to not even think about it, Marc asked if the man had a key ring. The man replied that he did and pulled it out of his pocket. "Oh, you only have one," Marc said, "I've got two; we can use mine." Marc then proceeded to create a makeshift hook out of the key ring, and after a couple of adjustments and some tuning he pulled the rubber bung right out. The man was amazed, and so was I.

This unspoken camaraderie was a theme that resonated throughout the day. Everyone was there for each other. As we continued to walk down the taxiway Marc stopped and talked

to various folks about their bikes or cars, asked questions, and complimented them on their setups.



Picture 26 (Marc taking a look at a turbo Suzuki Hayabusa)

As we finally made our way to the pit lanes, we saw a Bugatti EB110. Like Hennessey, this was one of the legendary machines of my childhood that I'd read about in magazines and had seen on television shows about exotic street cars. So when Marc said, "Hey, that's Tanner Foust from the Speed Channel's *Supercars Exposed*," I knew exactly who he was talking about, and we walked up to the Bugatti and checked it out. Marc began asking Tanner questions, and I pulled out my cameras to shoot some photos and video. I especially liked shooting video of the Speed Channel shooting video of us; it felt very postmodern in the midst of a very traditional setting. It was interesting to listen to Marc

and Tanner talk; there was an ease to their conversation that conveyed admiration for one another's work.



Picture 27 (Marc and Tanner chatting it up about camber settings)

Soon it was time for S.W.'s run, and his Supra came roaring into the pit lane, prepped and primed to go. Initially the track officials decided he would have to wait until after lunch to run, but then they changed their minds and allowed him to be the last car to race before the lunch break.

I readied my camera and went to work. Marc stood to the side and watched while Justin helped S.W. stage the car. Finally the car took off, captivating the attention of everyone gathered. Silence descended after the car's distance exceeded an audible range.

Then the officials announced that the car had gone 244.6mph (later corrected to 246mph). Marc jumped in the air and howled. Camera in hand, I watched through the viewfinder as everyone around us congratulated him. We quickly made our way back to the motor home where we joined the rest of the crew. I let Marc run ahead of me so I could take videos and photos of the moment:

S.W. got out of the car and Chris and Justin got to work. Chris checked the physical points such as the oil and temperatures of the car while Justin examined the data log of the run. S.W. and the rest of the Boost Logic crew were quickly surrounded by racers, tuners, and spectators, and Streetfire.net's correspondents arrived soon after to interview a very excited S.W. about the race.

I found the alacrity with which the news of S.W.'s run traveled very interesting. In the relatively short time it took him to go from the track back to the mobile home, he was already receiving congratulatory text messages. People from all over the country were contacting him to give him a virtual pat on the back. The Boost Logic crew were also sending and receiving texts.

It was a very interesting moment where the "meat" (in a Gibson way) and the "cloud" (i.e. the internet) literally pushed an event that happened in the middle of no where into the forefront within seconds of occurring. What I have yet to tell you is that the Speed Channel themselves not only neglected to record S.W.'s run, but even if they had, they had no ready way to upload such an event into the "cloud". I personally even wished at that moment I still had my 3G AT&T wireless card to upload the event to the net. The "aura" of the event while irreplaceable, is something that even over a youtube squished video gives certain viewers chills and grins.



Picture 28 (S.W. fielding calls after his big run.)



Picture 29 (Marc texting about S.W.'s run.)

After the run, S.W. and the Boost Logic crew broke for lunch. S.W. fixed up some roast beef sandwiches, and when I popped my head into the mobile home to tell them I was going to go get lunch, they invited me to stay and eat with them. I obliged and really enjoyed the roast beef sandwich which, I have to admit, was the first time I'd ever had a roast beef sandwich. As we sat together, eating, we reflected on the run and began talking about the next one and how soon we could be ready for it. Chris told me to make sure I was at the finishing line so that I could record the run from a vastly different perspective, since at the finishing line, you can see the car running at full speed.

So after lunch, Chris, Justin, and I went down to the finish line to wait. Eventually we got a phone call from up at the pit saying S.W. was up next. By this time, all the media people were ready and waiting with their cameras. I sat on the ground, almost on the grass, so as to be out of everyone's way, but also so that I could have an unobstructed view. Waiting for S.W.'s run to begin, I peered through my lens. The sun was now high in the sky, and there was a quality to the heat of the dry Texas coastal plain landscape around us seemed to burn with more than just heat. The anticipation as to whether or not S.W. would succeed in breaking the record he'd set earlier that day filled the air.

Then, through my lens, I glimpsed the Supra, just a black speck accompanied by a distant thunder. As it got closer and closer, I was reminded of a jet taking off, but somehow the car seemed to be moving even faster than that. As it approached the finish line, engine roaring, there was a sudden POP and white smoke began to billow out from the front underbody. Everyone around me gasped and someone cracked a joke about the tune since

Justin, who had tuned the car, was standing right next to me. As fast as they could, however, Chris and Justin got in the golf cart and drove to see what had gone wrong. I decided to walk back to the mobile home with a man I'd just met. As we walked, we discussed the various cars we'd seen that day as well as his car-related interests. When we were about two trailers away from the mobile home, the Supra caught up with us. S.W. drove and talked on his phone. He was followed by Marc, who sat on the front of the golf cart and propped his feet up on the back of the Supra, and finally, by Chris, who drove the golf cart. It was quite a sight.

Once everyone had arrived back at the mobile home, Chris and Justin went to work and quickly realized that one of the rods was defective and had thrown itself. In the meantime, S.W. fielded questions from spectators.



Picture 30 (S.W. Being Interviewed.)

S.W. explained that as soon as he heard the engine pop, rather than letting off the gas immediately, he stayed on it and let it off gradually, then applied the brakes and released the parachute. It was incredible to learn that, even with engine failure, he crossed the finish line at 228mph.

Once the commotion died down, I realized how late in the day it had become. I was still due back in Austin for a meet of the Porsche Texas Coastal Club of America at the Harris Hill racetrack in San Marcos early the next day. I began to pack up and prepare to leave, telling everyone goodbye. When I went to make my farewells to S.W., he asked me if I wouldn't mind taking a few pictures of his Ford GT, and I said sure. The photos ended up making S.W.'s wheel supplier, H.R.E.'s car of the month.

I left for Austin, tired in every way. On the drive home, I reflected on the day's events. It was a tremendous experience.

The Fast and the Friendly

In the spring of 2009, I was at the Monday South meet with Marc. This meet tends to be mostly Honda Civics and other, slower cars.

Near the end of the meet, Marc told me he was ready to take off. I agreed that it was time to go, so I got in my car and started her up. Marc began to get into his car as well, when two young men approached him and struck up a conversation. A friend of Marc's, who Marc was going to take home, rolled his eyes and walked over to me. He whispered that the men were missionaries telling Marc about Jesus Christ.

I shut my car off and got out. I looked around and noticed a large group of people across the parking lot. I could hear some yelling and confrontational language. A fight was about to break out between two Latinos who seemed very upset. Their friends were holding them back from one another.

Marc had his back to the situation, so I walked up to him to let him know what was going on. "Oh man," he said, "I hate it when two people I'm friends with get into a fight. I might have to go over there if things get out of hand." First, however, Marc had to extricate himself from the missionaries. He explained to them that while he respects their religious beliefs, he prefers to follow his own spirituality.

As Marc made his way over to the crowd, the argument continued to escalate. The missionaries followed, and I commented, "You know that's Marc, the fastest guy in town, right?" "*That's* Marc?" They were very surprised. I continued, "I know you all have good intentions in what you wanted to say to him, but you should really watch and

listen to what he's about to do. I think you're going to learn a lot about how helping others can happen without religion."

While I was saying all of this, Marc went over to one of the two guys and was holding him back and calming him down. The guys were still exchanging angry words, but Marc, cigarette in hand, just kept them separate and continued calmly talking them both down. The two missionaries stood there, watching, and I got the impression they weren't quite sure what to make out of the situation. Finally, the guy Marc was holding back seemed to relax, so Marc found someone else to handle him, then went over to the other guy to talk to him.

It was really interesting to watch him work. Here was a relatively small guy holding back a three-hundred pound Latino due to the fact that he's the fastest guy in town. The social and cultural capital at play in the situation was fascinating to observe.

After a while, Marc walked back to where our cars were parked and said, "Let's head out." I got in my car, he and his friend got into his, and we were off. I don't know how the situation resolved itself after we left, but the enormous influence Marc had over the social situation due to his cultural capital and what his friend described as a "Zen-like attitude" was quite a sight to see.

The BL760 Experience

When I became involved with Boost Logic, I learned about a research and development project the shop was working on. This was very early in my research; at this point, I was simply taking photographs and still getting to know the crew. However, the project involved a Porsche 911 turbo, and I had been a Porsche fan my entire life — I even drove my brother's 944 for a while. Thus, I was very interested to see how the project was going to evolve.



Picture 31 (Marc fabricating the BL760 kit)



Picture 32 (Marc showing a BL760 prototype header)

The project involved Marc creating a set of custom headers. As Marc fabricated, I learned more about the project from Kean, Chris, and Justin, all of whom were involved with the process. I learned that Kean and Chris owned Boost Logic (though they'd later sell it to Zohair), and Justin owned the Porsche involved.

When I first began spending time at Boost Logic, I was never formally introduced to Justin; we'd exchanged pleasantries once or twice, but that was the extent of our interaction. I was told he was "the tuner," but frankly, I rarely saw him around the shop at all. However, I would come to learn that "the tuner" was actually one of the best and most in-demand tuners in the industry. The reason he wasn't in the shop very often was that he was flying all over the world, tuning high-end street and race cars. As I learned more about the Porsche project, I began to appreciate just how instrumental Justin was in integrating the turbo system with the Porsche ECU.

I was fortunate to be present at Boost Logic when the fabricated kit was ready to be tested for the first time, and I was able to watch as Justin dyno-tuned the car. The car

made well over 550rwhp on pump gas. I was astonished; I had never seen a high-powered Porsche before, other than going for a short ride in a Porsche 965 (1991 911 turbo). After Justin dialed in the set-up, he drove it for a few weeks, tweaking and making adjustments. At one point he gave me a ride in it; my first ride in a heavily modified turbo-charged car blew me away.

On a trip to the track with Marc to settle a shop grudge about whether or not Marc's car could trap 140mph, Justin took his Porsche and ran an 11.7 at 135mph.

After Justin drove the car for a few weeks, he and Zohair moved into the second phase of the project, creating a refined and finalized product. At this point, my role in the project became more active. Zohair, the owner of Boost Logic, approached me and asked me to help create a promotional video about the kit. He also told me about a media campaign he was hoping to produce. I had already begun to help him manage Boost Logic's web content and, given my background in producing car videos, I was glad to lend a hand.

Zohair and I discussed the details of the video he wanted, and we decided to order a car mount. Since this virtually exhausted our non-existent budget for the shoot, we decided to shoot with my small Canon HD video camera. In addition to the car-mounted angles, we also decided to get footage of the Porsche on the dyno as Justin tuned it.

Given everyone's busy schedules, it turned out that the only day we were all available to shoot was a Friday. Coincidentally, my oldest brother, Mikey, who is a huge car nut, had mentioned he might come up from San Antonio to visit me in Austin that day. Although Mikey didn't teach me to drive (I was actually afraid to ride in the car with him as a kid), he passed on a great deal of car knowledge to me as a teenager. He shared his Bondurant

driving book with me, and took my other brother, Danny, and I to his job at Malibu Grand Prix, where he and Danny let me do laps and taught me a lot about driving. Consequently, when Mikey called me around lunchtime on Friday to say that he was thinking of coming to Austin for the day, I told him to hurry up! He arrived at Boost Logic few hours later to the sound of Justin running his car on the dyno and the sight of me shooting the pulls.

Zohair wanted a shot of the Porsche's dashboard as the car dynoed so that we could demonstrate how quickly the car accelerates. I had already shot this angle in a Lexus SC300 and figured it would be a pretty straightfoward shot. However, once I was in the Porsche, I realized this is a very difficult angle to shoot sitting anywhere other than in the driver's seat. Eventually, we solved the problem by having Justin drive the car *and* hold the camera in front of the dash, and the set-up worked reasonably well.



Picture 33 (Justin's Porsche 996 Interior)

After we wrapped shooting on the dyno, we were ready to go shoot on the road. I volunteered Mikey to drive my Honda S2000 so that I could direct the shoot and not have to worry about paying attention to driving. To say that Mikey was excited about this would be an understatement.

Next we needed to choose a shooting location. We needed a safe space that would allow us to shoot at a decent rate of speed. The road upon which we decided had light traffic and was shaded by some very photogenic oak trees.

We mounted the camera in various positions on the S2000, such as the hood and the trunk, to get trailing and following shots of the Porsche in action. Although the car mount proved to be somewhat shaky, we went ahead with the shoot anyway, reasoning that at least we'd be getting good test footage.

I really stepped into a directing role when it came to the trailing shots. I instructed Mikey to drive the S2000 at a constant rate of speed while I rode with Justin and directed him to move his Porsche either further or closer to the S2000, hoping to mimic an effect I'd seen in a video for a 1994 Porsche 993.



Picture 34 (My brother, Mikey, driving the S2000)

Riding with Justin, I was struck by how quickly the Porsche accelerated and decelerated. The way in which cars of this caliber alter your mind's ability to judge distance and speed is astonishing. Very few people will ever have this experience, however, once you have, it gives you a brand new perspective on how your brain registers its surroundings. The stopping power in cars like this will also change the way you think about breaking; the majority of people probably don't think of breaking as anything remarkable, but the stopping power in a heavily modified car is almost as revelatory as the acceleration.

Having experienced these sensations myself, I wanted to share it with my brother. After we wrapped up all the test shots, we needed one more shot to finish, and I asked Justin if it would be all right if Mikey rode along with him, and he said it would be fine.



Picture 35 (Justin's Porsche 996 on 2274)

I had never seen Mikey so excited. When he got out of the car at our final location, where we were going to shoot some still photos, he was wearing a huge grin and could not stop exclaiming his appreciation for the Porsche. Talking later with Justin about the day, Justin mentioned that Mikey smiled from the moment he got in the car to the moment he got out.

Interestingly, when I initially explained my brother's excitement to Justin, he didn't understand it. He added that he drove cars like the Porsche every day, and couldn't see how it would seem so special. I pointed out that not everyone gets to drive 600+ horsepower cars every day, or even in their lifetime, and I could see the new perspective dawn on him. I think he appreciated that he could take part in a moment like that in my brother's life.



Picture 36 (Justin and my brother Mike)

The same desire to share such a once-in-a-lifetime moment with my brother is the same desire that motivates me to share all of my experiences with others. While reading this

dissertation, I hope you begin to feel your heartbeat pound and realize that when I'm fully immersed in my work, the little kid inside me is yelling with enthusiasm while I reflect on how lucky I am to have met such kind people who share their lives' passions with me.

The Magic Car



Picture 37 (Marc and the StreetFighter)

“I will trailer your car to the track if you pay for the diesel, and we’ll see how fast your car *really* is,” Chris told Marc. Marc grinned. “Sweet! Wednesday or Friday?” he asked. “Wednesday,” Chris replied.

With that brief exchange, what had been a heated but abstract debate between the old school and the new school of drag racers suddenly became a very material proposition.

The group gathered at Boost Logic on Wednesday afternoon. As we waited to leave, people talked trash and made friendly bets. Everyone had an opinion as to how fast they thought Marc would go. Laughter as well as genial arguments broke out. The majority opinion was that Marc would trap between 135 to 140mph, with a few people saying 140 to 144mph. We left the shop around four in the afternoon and headed to the San Antonio Raceway.



Picture 38 (Chris and Marc driving to the track)

When the exhaust fumes settled, a whole crew of people went on the trip. Chris, Marc, myself, and Corina (my photographer for the night) rode in Chris' F250 turbo diesel truck

and pulled Marc's car. S.W. and Cody, of American Racing Technologies, brought their BMW M5s, and Justin brought his 2002 Porsche 911 (996) twin turbo (with a Boost Logic turbo kit). Nick, a fellow drag racer, came in his truck with some Mickey Thompson drag radials that Marc was going to borrow for his run. Nick also brought Mac, his American bulldog. It was quite a motley crew.

Chris' group arrived at the track first. We unloaded Marc's car and went to tech inspection. The inspection went surprisingly quick, given the setup Marc was running.

Here's a video of Marc explaining his car's setup:

After we finished at tech inspection, everyone else began rolling in. Marc decided to go out on a run with just his street drag radials to do a shakedown pass, while I headed to the stands and prepared to shoot. Marc's initial run came in at 11.7 seconds at 141mph. As Marc pulled up to the pit, Justin, Zohair, S.W., and Cody arrived. When they were told the initial run time, everyone cheered and was really proud.



Picture 39 (Justin celebrating with Boost Logic)

Witnessing how quickly the group had gone from trash talking and teasing Marc to being proud and excited of what he'd accomplished was inspiring. Chris began to discuss making some promotional videos about Marc's turbo kit, and everyone else speculated as to what Marc could potentially run.

In addition to Marc's incredible first run, Justin had also brought his newly modified and tuned (by himself, of course) Porsche 911 turbo to do some runs that day. His shakedown run demonstrated a speedy car with a trap speed of 126mph. Justin did his own data

logging at the track, making adjustments during his run, which was refreshing, since very few people have the skills and resources to do that.



Picture 40 (Justin running the quarter mile)

S.W. and Cody had a nice drag race too, with both of their M5s performing in the teens. It amazed me how much S.W.'s M5 sounds like a Mustang, even though it has a BMW V10 engine.



Picture 41 (Cody and SW drag racing in their M5's)

Between runs, everyone met up at the pit area and talked shop about the cars and builds. Everyone was excited and having a great time.



Picture 42 (Boost Logic looking at Marc's car)

As the afternoon wore on, people began to get hungry. It's been my experience that, as long as no one's car breaks, hunger has a lot to do with the decision to stop racing.

However, to have a day where nothing breaks on anyone's car is pretty rare, and it made the whole day that much more enjoyable, since people naturally tend to get discouraged or upset when something breaks.

Eventually it was decided that since everyone was really hungry, they'd get one or two more runs in and then we'd head out. By this point, Justin had his car dialed in pretty well and Marc had mounted Nick's drag radials and gotten in a few runs with them. Dusk had settled over the track as they headed to the lanes one last time to wait their turn.

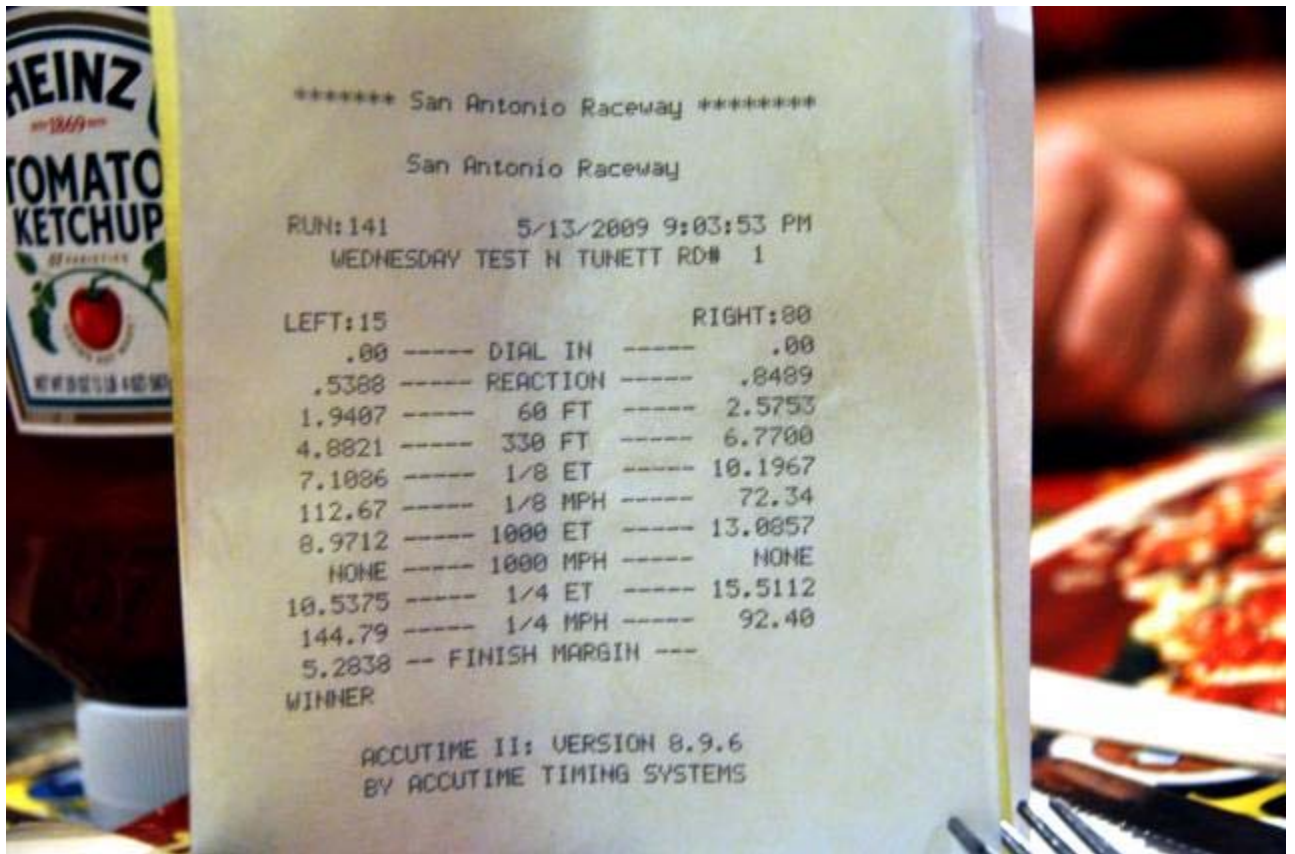
These final two runs brought the trip from fun to spectacular. Justin and Marc ran incredible times and trap speeds. Justin ran an 11.7 at 133mph, and Marc ran a 10.53 at 144.78. When they arrived back at the pit lanes, the reactions of everyone gathered were enthusiastic and congratulatory, and amid the celebrations, Chris told Marc not to worry about the diesel, which I thought was a great way to end the night.

Marc drove his car onto the trailer and, after a few more compliments were paid, everyone jumped in their cars and headed to dinner.



Picture 43 (Eating at Chili's)

We ended up at a Chili's down the road from the track. Around the table, everyone shared stories of that night and nights past. The mood was so positive; people were just glad to be in one another's company. It was a night I'll never forget.



Picture 44 (Marc's 10.5 quarter mile slip)

The 2010 Mustang Preview

One of my Mustang friends, roushracer mentioned a secret Ford-sponsored Mustang meet at Top Notch, an Austin hamburger joint, to preview the 2010 Mustang. So I hopped onto CentralTexasStangs.com (CTS) to investigate whether or not people were talking about the event and what they were saying.

As it turned out, the event was scheduled for Monday, December 22, 2008, a day when I had already planned to be in San Antonio, visiting my family. When the day came, my wife and I packed up our car for a day trip to Austin. My brother Mikey caught wind of our plans and joined us. The only wrench in our plan was the temperature – a cool 35 degrees – and the fact that we had less than three hours in which to drive from San Antonio to our apartment in Austin, change cars from my wife's Toyota Camry to my Grand Marquis (we couldn't really show up to a Mustang event in a Camry, even if it could have walked half the cars there).

When we arrived at our apartment, my very intelligent wife went inside to stay warm while I went out to the garage to check the fluids in my Grand Marquis. Everything looked all right except for the coolant, which was down by about a cup. After adding some water, I decided I wanted to wash the car. However, all my towels were dirty, since I'd recently done a three-step wax job on my Honda S2000. Time was running out, so I reluctantly got in the car and stopped at a gas station to get a drive-thru car wash.

In the custom car scene, this is a huge faux pas, given that these drive-thrus can often damage your car. Unfortunately, I didn't have any alternatives, so my brother and I were left to wait and worry and hope that everything would be intact and reasonably clean

while the laser washer finished its work. To our surprise, it did not just a decent job, but a great one, not to mention it saved us the ordeal of washing the car ourselves in the frigid weather.

The car wash was only a few blocks down the street from the meet. As we arrived, about ten minutes early, we saw that many Mustangs were already there. Pulling into the parking lot, I gave my MGM a little rev and watched as the people gathered looked around for a muscle car and then realized the sound had come from my sleeper.

When we got out of the car, I handed my brother my Nikon D50. "I want this full by the time we leave," I told him. My responsibility would be to take video.

Walking around the meet, I saw many familiar faces from the Mustang scene. I looked at all the makes and models of the Mustangs, and as I made my way, the temperature dropped and it got colder and colder. A fellow CTS member told me that he'd somehow found out the 2010 Mustangs were on their way and would be arriving soon. While I had been wandering around the meet, RoushRacer also called to say that he was en route with his car. I had managed to find a great parking spot, right up front, so when RoushRacer arrived, I offered to move my car so that he could have my spot and show off his car. He took me up on the offer right away.

The 2010 Mustangs began to arrive shortly thereafter. First to show up was a baby blue Mustang GT. I noticed that not only did the crowd gather around it, but almost everyone got out their digital cameras and/or cell phones and started taking pictures. Even my brother took out his phone to take a photo to send to his girlfriend before shooting with the Nikon.



Picture 45 (2010 Mustang with a vintage Mach 1 at Tip Top)

The car's driver held a microfiber towel and feverishly cleaned off the car every time somebody even came close to touching it. He was very blue collar and didn't wear any official Ford clothing. He seemed to enjoy how everyone's attention was drawn to the Mustang. He fielded questions and tried to answer them to the best of his knowledge. If he didn't know the answer to a question, the enthusiasts gathered around the car often chimed in, since many of them already knew about its various features and specifications. Occasionally someone gave out incorrect information, which added to the lore of the Mustang.



Picture 46 (The Shaker hood on the Mach 1)

The driver mentioned that two other Mustangs were on their way, and about twenty minutes after he showed up, a red Mustang GT convertible and a white Mustang V6 arrived. The crowd flocked to the new cars to take more pictures; the convertible was especially popular, but cameras and cell phones were snapping away around all three cars.

Shortly after my brother and I arrived at this meet, we were approached by a photographer who asked us to sign a waiver form. I declined respectfully, and he seemed shocked. I found out why later. It turned out that day Ford was shooting pictures for the new Mustang brochure. I discovered this one day in the spring when I received a phone

call from RoushRacer, who told me that my brother and I were in the brochure! I was stunned. That brochure has become a significant artifact from my participation in car culture.

Street Racing

At midnight I stood in the parking lot in front of a big box store and a friend said, “Let’s go for a ride.” Before I knew it, we were driving down the highway, the wind blowing all around the car. The only noise apart from the wind was a constant whoosh as the turbo coupe sucked in air. I looked at my friend as he drove. He said nothing. His eyes stared straight ahead, never leaving the road. I asked him a question. He didn’t respond. Few would have understand the place his mind had gone. I thought of the scene in *Ghost in the Shell* where the cyborg connects with the car and the only thing left in the cabin is her physical body.

Another car approached. We waited for a signal. Suddenly time began to bed. My mind could no longer process the information my senses were absorbing. The thrust and the forces of gravity overwhelmed me. But in a matter of seconds, it was over. We returned to just cruising down the highway, re-assimilating into the social order of the road. I looked over at my friend. “How fast do you think we just traveled?” he asked. “Fast enough,” I told him. He smiled. We didn’t talk any more.

We arrived back at the parking lot. I stepped out of the car and felt the ground. I knew I’d never forget what had just happened. The physical sensations and accompanying emotions and anxieties lingered for days. Part of me never wanted to get back in the car ever again because of those feelings. But I knew I would.

On the next ride, my body and mind were more prepared. The sensations, while still strong, weren’t overwhelming. However, the logical side of my brain still protested and wanted me to get out of the car as soon as possible. For the most part, though, I was calm

and knew I was stuck for at least a little while. My body became comfortable with the sensations and my mind began to think of roller coasters, which is interesting because roller coasters terrify me, even though I know they're not going to fall off their rails. My mind's ability to process and make sense out of situations like this fascinates me.

Nevertheless, given my personal history of anxiety and high blood pressure, the experience is still a mentally and physically draining ordeal.

I do see how the speed and rush can become addicting. I have experienced random urges to call my friend and ask about going for another ride. I have spoken to others who've ridden in his car as well, and everyone has an opinion about it. Regardless of whether or not they were seasoned street racers or novices, nearly all agreed that it was a terrifying experience that thoroughly scared them, and yet they also confessed to enjoying it. Only two people have ever told me that they loved riding in the car and felt no fear when moving at such a great speed. However, both of these people also noted their natural desire for taking risks and their enjoyment of thrill-seeking activities, which I feel goes a long way to explaining their reaction to riding in my friend's car.

A common element in the reactions of the people to whom I spoke was a tendency to worry about their safety and the safety of others. I feel this element contributes greatly to what makes cars like the one my friend drives so deceiving. The car actually exceeds normal street safety requirements; for example, it has upgraded brakes and seats, and a fire extinguisher. However, if he were to attempt to drive the car in a racing competition, it would fail the safety inspection, because a car capable of going as fast as his would require a full racing cage, fire suppression system, and a driver wearing a flame retardant suit. When I realized this, it reminded me of the very big risks many high speed street

racers take by not having such safety equipment (I've noticed that those who do have the equipment are usually people who go to the track).

Of course, even with safety equipment, there's always a high level of risk when operating a high-speed vehicle, regardless of whether it's on the street or on a strip, though many argue that risk is assumed by unsuspecting onlookers and innocent drivers in a street scenario, something my own observations have at times confirmed.

Despite these risks, however, I don't feel the high speed street racers pose as much of a risk, to themselves or others, as the ricers. In many ways, the street racers' proclivities for straight roads and non-entrance stretches of roads keeps them safe, though no one is immune from mechanical failures, environmental variables, or driver breakdowns, and these scenarios can quickly become very serious problems. While I've heard about past incidents involving those elements, both on the track and on the street, I've yet to witness one myself.

From my own observation, what separates street racers from ricers is a respect for the road that correlates to the level of risk. I have noticed this with track racers as well. If a driver is well-trained and conditioned, they will often be able to cope with diverse terrains and unexpected situations, which in turn creates a safer driving environment. A driver with the ability to recognize their own physical and mental limitations and the limitations of their car will also often drive in a safer, more mature way.

I think that some of the fear I experienced while riding with my friend in his car stemmed from the fact that, while I knew both my friend and his car were sophisticated enough to handle the high speeds at which we were driving, I was less certain of their ability to deal with the unexpected, and this lack of certainty weighed heavily on my mind.

Panther Air Intake Comparison



Picture 47 (The MZT intake)



Picture 48 (The JLT intake)

This comparison all started with a thread when a user on a panther forum asked about which intake system to use. Many users chimed in with various ideas and methods. Two that cropped up as the most used were the JLT and MZT.

This discussion is not limited to the panther platform, air intakes are a very common upgrade for almost any enthusiast. They are usually inexpensive, easy to install and have the potential to offer significant gains over a stock air intake.

After many of these intake threads taking up a lot of the forums activity, I felt enough was enough and decided to do a quantitative analysis of the popular intakes vs. the stock. In the Crown Vic/Grand Marquis platform (for which I personally own a model) I choose two particular intakes due to both intakes being constantly questioned.

JLT Cold Air Intake (\$129.99)- The JLT CIA consists of a conical filter, aluminum maf adapter and plastic box. JLT states on their website that the JLT CIA has the potential to add 6-12rwhp.

MZT- The MZT (Marauder Box/MAF 205.99, Zip Tube 46.99, Xcal2 with Tune 400.00, total= 652.98)- The MZT is a “home brew” solution by members on Crownvic.net, for more information about installation, please see dRock’s [post](#) about the MZT.

These intakes offer very different approaches and features. The JLT appears to be marketed as a low cost solution for a person looking to upgrade their intake.

The MZT is marketed as a higher-end upgrade offering a larger MAF (80mm vs. the stock 70mm), it also cost significantly more then the JLT.

The debate comes about because many believe that a cold air intake should offer more performance then a closed box solution such as the MZT or at least as much. Up to this point, no one on the crownvic.net forum has posted hard numbers of either intake, let alone a comparison, i.e. the reason for this comparison.



Picture 49 (The MGM on the dyno)

The Comparison

In order to do a comparison I needed to collect all 3 intakes (stock, JLT and MZT). I was one of the first purchasers of the JLT, so I already had that intake and I already had received an xCal2 tune by Motion Dynamics in Pflugerville, Tx, so all I needed was the Marauder Box/MAF and ziptube. JPA on crownvic.net was kind enough to send those pieces for the duration of the test, so with all the gear in hand I setup a dyno appointment with my local tuner, Motion Dynamics.

The tuner at Motion Dynamics is Brian Knesek, who has over 10 years experience tuning and was very interested in this project as soon as I told him about it. He insisted and I

agreed that we should document and log as much information as possible. Below you will see a chart with air temps, transmission pan temps, oil pan temps and much more.

So on August 22, 2008 I showed up at Dynamic Motions and met up with Brian, we got a base line run and also warmed up the car, set the tire pressure (34 psi). The ambient temperature for the test ranged from 95 degrees to 100 degrees. This is important to the test in that we intentionally chose a typical temperature in Austin, Tx to test at. In the previous tests I have viewed about the JLT looking at Intake Air Temperatures, which you can view at MercuryMarauder.net were taken in 30 degree temperatures. This type of test is great if you live in cool climates, however it made me wonder what type of results we would get testing down Austin, Tx in 100 degree weather.

So without further delay, below are the results:

Video- Below is a video that I compiled with the dyno runs including information about the test.

Chart 1 (A chart with all the HP/TQ results as well as temperatures.)

| | HP | TQ | HP (non spike) |
|--------------|--------|--------|----------------|
| | | | |
| Stock open | 164.23 | 218.88 | 159 |
| Stock closed | 165.99 | 217.66 | 159 |
| | | | |
| JLT open | 172.07 | 222.40 | 167 |
| JLT closed | 165.38 | 218.16 | 161 |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|-----|
| JLT tuned open | 177.00 | 227.98 | 172 |
| JLT tuned closed | 173.17 | 222.73 | 170 |
| | | | |
| MZT tune open | 176.78 | 227.63 | 173 |
| MZT tune closed | 176.23 | 227.10 | 172 |

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | Air Temp Start | Air Temp Finish |
| | | |
| Stock open | 100 | 102 |
| Stock closed | 110 | 112 |
| | | |
| JLT open | 106 | 104 |
| JLT closed | 120 | 130 |
| | | |
| JLT tuned open | 108 | 108 |
| JLT tuned closed | 114 | 128 |

| | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| | | |
| MZT tune open | 106 | 104 |
| MZT tune closed | 114 | 114 |

| | Oil Pan Temp | Trans Temp | Diff Temp |
|------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | |
| Stock open | 155 | 130 | 110 |
| Stock closed | 165 | 135 | 115 |
| | | | |
| JLT open | 175 | 135 | 110 |
| JLT closed | 170 | 135 | 110 |
| | | | |
| JLT tuned open | 175 | 145 | 115 |
| JLT tuned closed | 175 | 130 | 115 |
| | | | |
| MZT tune open | 180 | 140 | 120 |
| MZT tune closed | 180 | 140 | 115 |

Graphs- Below is a set of graphs documenting the HP and TQ curves of the pulls.

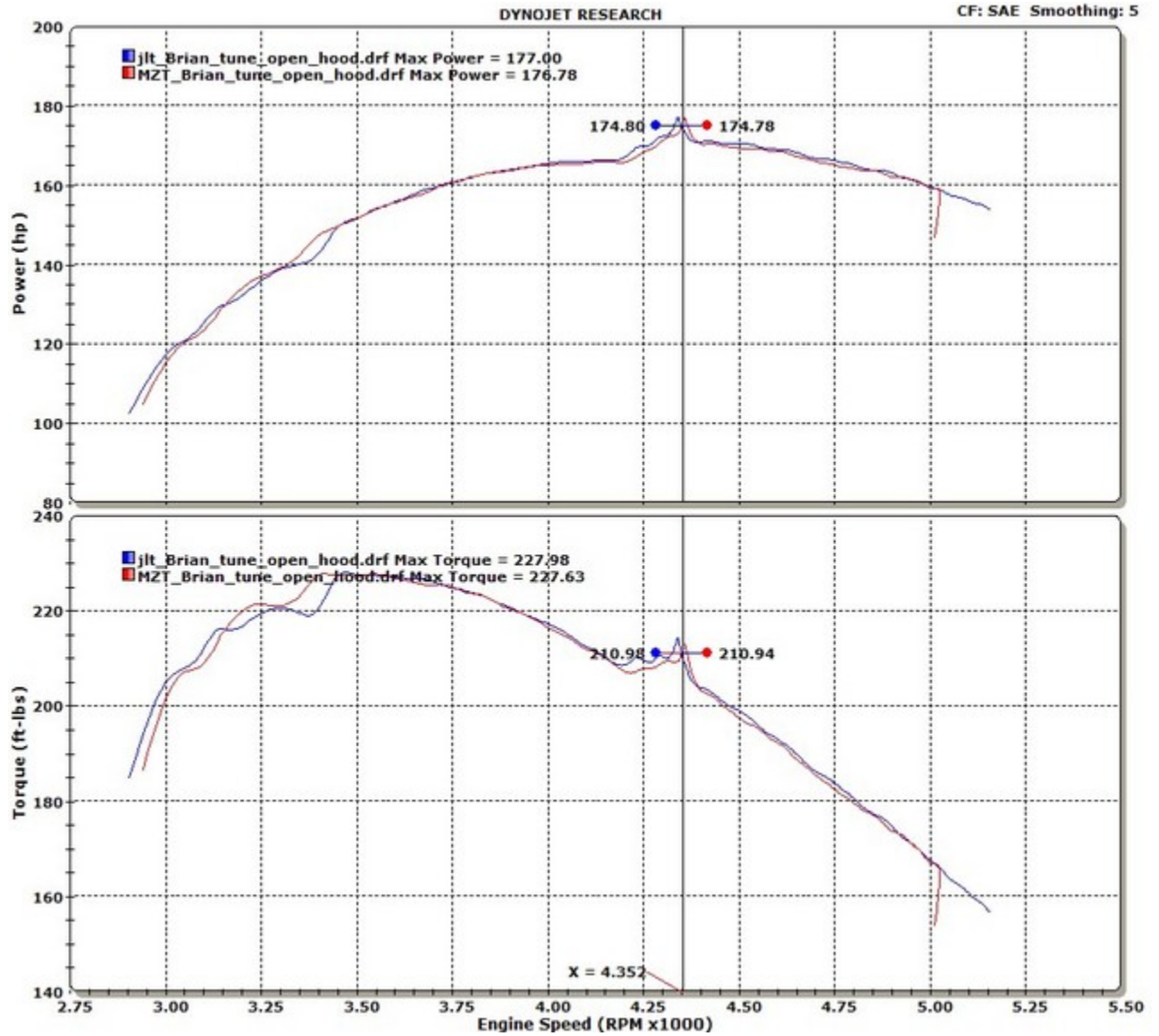


Figure 1 (Dyno Pulls comparing the MZT and JLT intake, open hood)

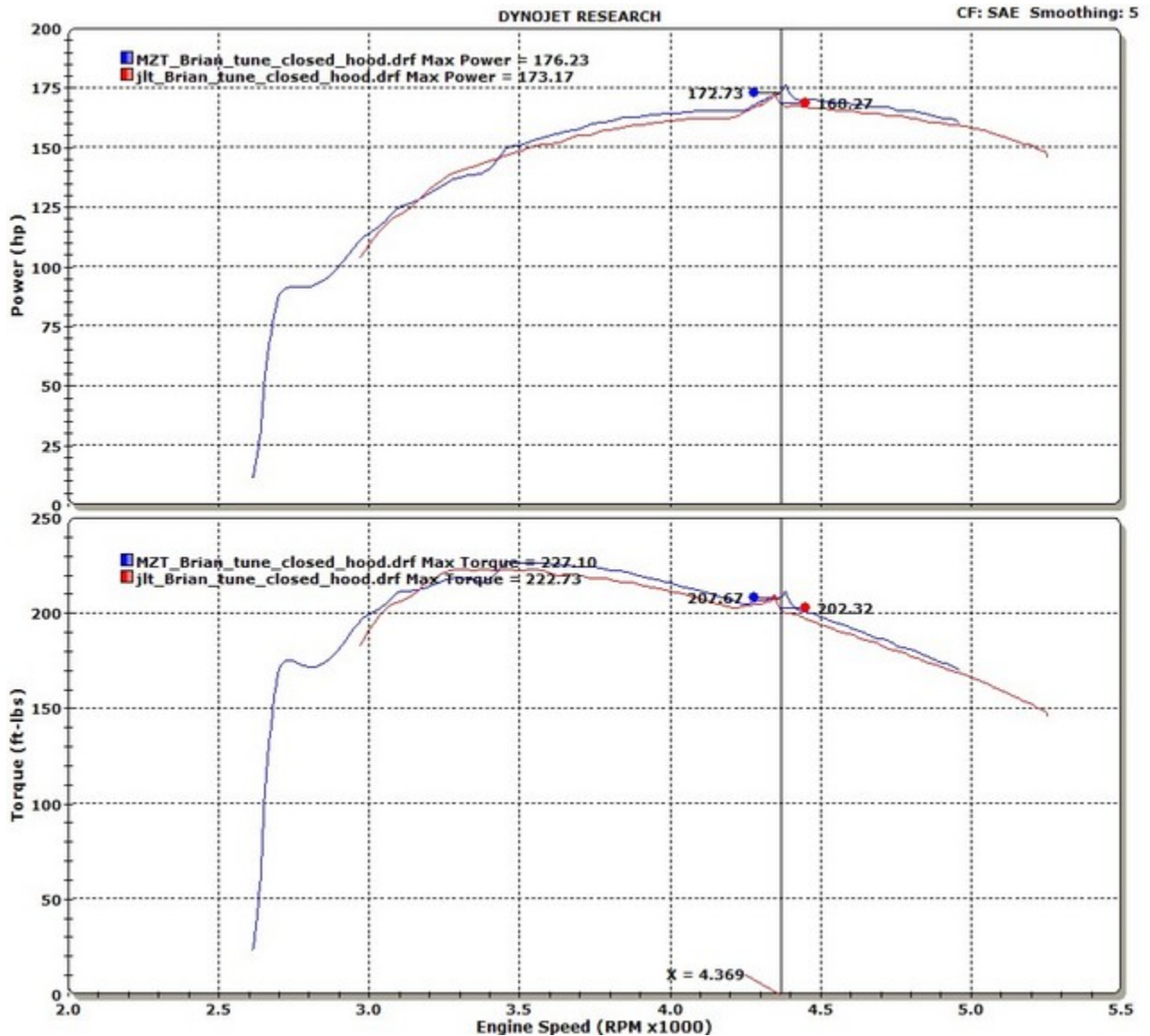


Figure 2 (Dyno Pulls comparing the MZT and JLT intake, closed hood)

Findings/Conclusion-

As you can see from the charts and graphs, the JLT does deliver it's performance claims with the hood up, however, not down. This is exactly what JLT stated would happen if we closed the hood, however, what did concern me was with the hood down how much

the IAT temps rose. But as JLT stated on crownvic.net, “Either way you do it the debate will go on. Someone will always find fault with the test.”

One of my own personal observations is that if the JLT were to draw more cool air from the front of the car, like the stock and MM do with their snorkels, the JLT would truly offer a full advantage over the MZT (and at less than a quarter of the price of an MZT setup).

With that said, I feel if you are going to be doing more to your car than just adding an air intake, I would definitely look into the MZT, along with more consistent numbers, you also get a tune, which will be invaluable throughout your upgrading process. The tuner not only gives you the ability to tune your engine, but the transmission as well and this has an added value that when used with the MZT offers nice consistent performance.

Personally, I am still building up my car at this point and I will stick with my JLT/Tune until I completely upgrade my engine (which will hopefully be sooner than later).

Overall, this has been a great little “science fair” project that hopefully will bring some insight and add to the dialogs about air intakes.

Knowing When to Stop

When do you conclude your research? How do you know?

For me, it happened on Wednesday, September 2, 2009. I was sick as a dog. I had been having respiratory issues since the previous Sunday, so I decided to go to the doctor.

However, by this point, I was also physically and mentally exhausted from the process of doing a turbo build on my Mercury Grand Marquis. Over the course of the build, I had faced more difficulties and obstacles than I ever could have expected. Friendships were strained, the shop where I was doing most of my work and research changed owners, and the fabricator helping me with the project ran into some serious personal issues that affected not just my project but the entire shop. As a result, I had somehow become a mediator between him and his boss. In other words, it was a very intense experience.

In addition to all of this, I had been constantly writing and attending street meets, which had become increasingly dangerous and attracted increasing amounts of attention from law enforcement. By the end of the summer, the street meet scene had become so big that the police actually broke up the main Saturday meet, which splintered that meet into three smaller meets. One began meeting near a Taco Cabana (coincidentally, the same location it had been when I first began attending it); this meet attracted show cars like DONKs, DUBs, and low riders. The street racers moved to a dark parking lot near a parts store; however, they had been contemplating this move for a while, even prior to the splintering caused by the police intervention, because they felt the big meet was getting out of hand. The third group stayed at the original Best Buy location, and were ricers who drove a collection of domestics and imports. I was pretty unsettled by this group. Most of them

owned slow cars but drove very aggressively. The last time I attended this meet, the driver of a V6 Mustang was doing doughnuts in the parking lot and coming very close to hitting onlookers. I realized that the onlookers and the other drivers were completely comfortable with this behavior, and I felt that from a social and cultural perspective, I had probably learned everything I could from the group and decided to leave.

One of the objectives I had in researching my dissertation was to observe culture without causing harm to others, and although I found myself in several situations I could have never predicted, I'm glad to say no one was ever harmed. Nevertheless, my memories of the mental and physical experiences I underwent while doing my research will be with me forever. The tribal-esque social structures, the lack of rules, and the necessary maleability of multiple truths have taught me so much about human nature and, in unexpected ways, have been significantly reflected in my own work within academia.

A street racer's goal is to be the fastest driver in the fastest car within a set of rules and boundaries. However, these boundaries and legalities are always changing, and this lack of stability, this constant emphasis on situationality, is what finally got to me. As I drove home from the doctor's office, where I had just been told my blood pressure was 160/100 and been advised that I needed to relax and take some time off, I began to cruise. I was so relieved to have confirmation that I wasn't crazy, that the past few months really had taken a toll on me, to the point that a doctor had ordered me to stop and try to lower the amount of stress I was under.

However, as I drove that afternoon, my instinctive tendencies, normalized over the course of my research, lingered. I revved up my S2000 and took it all the way to 8000RPMs. I noticed a Lexus IS300 flying up behind me going about 100mph, so I decided to quickly

move out of its way. Before I knew it, I had hit a high speed; as soon as I realized how fast I was going, I slowed down and let the Lexus pass. After I changed lanes, I saw a motorcycle behind me, red and blue lights flashing. The officer pointed at me, then pointed ahead, and drove off to pull over the Lexus.

I pulled over immediately and sat there for a moment, collecting my thoughts. I realized the officer had wanted me to meet up with him, so I got back on the highway to search for him. As I drove, I thought, “Most of the car guys you know would have just exited and played dumb, as if they’d never been motioned to pull over.” And that was my *ah-ha!* moment, when I realized just how distorted my reality had become.

Driving up to the officer, I realized I knew exactly what to do because of all the stories I’d heard from car people about how to act and what to say. The officer thanked me for not running away and actually stopping. He mentioned he had put an APB out on me anyway. At the time, this didn’t surprise me, but it probably should have. He explained that he could arrest me and impound my car on account of the speed at which he’d clocked me, but then continued that since I’d slowed down before I’d even seen him, he was just going to write me a basic speeding ticket. He asked me whether or not I was street racing the Lexus, and I told him no, I was just getting out of its way, which was true. “Well,” he said, “I’m going to go ahead and write you your ticket first since you actually stopped, and that other guy can just wait.”

I drove off after he wrote the ticket, feeling numb but relieved. I had never gotten a speeding ticket before, but from the beginning of my research, I knew the likelihood that I would get one was much higher. I called my oldest brother to tell him about the rite of passage I’d just undergone, and also called my dissertation chair. I realized the extent to

which I'd become invested in the culture and the extent to which I had departed from my normal behavioral tendencies.

As a postscript, I should note that in the weeks following this incident, two of my friends went to jail for street racing, and their cars were both impounded. The car scene has since moved to multiple locations.

Transformative Intellectuals: Teaching Oppositional Practices in Academia

Introduction

This section explores how the current pedagogical practices employed within academic institutions have not only increased the difficulty of teaching oppositional practices, but have stifled their very existence. It examines some of the causes, explains what is being done to counter this trend, and suggests ways to merge two diverging pedagogies (traditional vs. transformative) so that they can work in harmony.

I believe ascribing a personal self to your work is necessary in order for readers to better understand the words you write and the meaning you are trying to convey. For this reason, I will briefly explain the background of my personal learning experiences.

Survival of the Fittest

I have attended public schools for my entire life. I am friends with people who went to expensive private schools (up to \$13,000 per year); however, my socioeconomic background placed me in public schools. From when I was very young, my mom made me very aware of this fact — she attended a private school all the way through to the twelfth grade. Because the public high school where we lived was known to have problems with gangs, drugs, and poor academic performance, my oldest brother went to a private all-boys school, Central Catholic.

I remember being in a car once with his friends from private school and driving by my sister's middle school (which I later attended), and his friends remarked, "Look, it's the

people who'll be pumping our gas." Hearing them say that made me feel weird, especially because they must have known that people in our family attended that school. I think that moment was very revealing of the class system in San Antonio.

Because of some financial issues, my brothers, sister, and I ended up attending the drug-ridden, gang-banging, poor-performing Holmes High School. However, my own personal perception of Holmes was far from all those things. Because all of my siblings attended before me, by the time I arrived, I knew all about activities like academic decathlon, computer club, band, and tennis. While I didn't pursue all of these activities, knowing they were available changed my perceptions.

I must admit, my academic efforts were rarely rewarded. I was not an Honors student. While all my friends were in Honors programs, taking special field trips and working on intellectually challenging projects, I was enrolled in the regular classes where kids sat in the back and smoked (I'm not kidding!). However, this gave me advantages that only became clear later in my academic journey, when I realized that while my friends were being coddled, I was learning to be an anthropologist, deep in the trenches of research. I learned to talk to the students around me and ask them about their lives. One student in my English class came in and told me stories about the latest stereos he'd jacked from cars. I asked him why he did it and he said that he loved the rush. I found it odd that he shared things like that with me, but I suppose, in a strange way, we were friends. Was I hanging out with criminals? I guess I was.

Occasionally I'd make it into an Advanced Placement (AP) course, where I'd associate with geniuses and they'd look at me like I was a weirdo because of my small vocabulary. However, they were intrigued by my observations of my surroundings.

Once I had a Spanish teacher from the west side of San Antonio who asked me to stay after class. We'd discuss class and race and what it meant to be Latino. At the time, I viewed these conversations as disagreements. He drove a low rider, a '60s Impala, and wore guayaberas shirts, while I wore whatever name brands I could find at Ross and drove an '83 Datsun truck. Later, however, I realized that our informal conversations served as early training in rethinking issues of culture, race, and identity.

Nevertheless, most of my core subject teachers (English, history, math) told me I was not "college material." In my senior year, my guidance counselor told me I was good with my hands, and I should look into vocational school. I was fortunate that my brothers and sisters served as role models, and that my father thought I needed to be an engineer. He made sure that I went to UT's summer engineering camps, where I worked with minority students from around the state, learning hands-on tools and work on projects with professors. Here I developed personal relationships with professors, who would later write me recommendation letters for their program. Furthermore, I gained confidence from my computer science teacher. So when I applied to UT, in spite of the conflicting messages I'd received, I did have a strong foundation from which to draw.



Picture 50 (A basketball shooting catapult my friends and I built (I'm on the right))

The Beginning of Oppositional Practices

I arrived at UT orientation excited and ready to experience all that the great and mighty university I'd heard so much about had to offer. However, during the mechanical engineering orientation, it became quickly clear that I didn't realize what I'd gotten myself into. The doors closed and the professor leading the orientation began to speak. "These next four years will not be fun. You are here to compete with one another." At that very moment, I got up out of my chair and walked out, straight to the RTF orientation. Though I did not know much about the program, I had made a high school

prom video, and I was just hoping for a better experience. I arrived as the orientation was just beginning. The professor in charge greeted me. “Welcome to the RTF department! We’re going to have a great time! I hope you’re having fun seeing the campus! We look forward to seeing you in our classes!”

I decided to sign up for all of the department’s introductory courses. There were more than 3,500 students in my high school, which I felt was pretty large; however, when I arrived to classes with more than four hundred students, I felt overwhelmed. In retrospect, the experience was like a cattle corral, and we were all brought together to be branded and punched. I remember my government professor holding up an issue of *The New York Times* in class and stating, “This is fact.” Sitting all the way in the back row, I raised my hand. The professor walked over and handed me the microphone. “What about the ads next to the articles?” I asked. “Do they alter the facts?” This was the first time I felt my oppositional tendencies surface in an academic setting.

It was the way I took this oppositional attitude toward ‘traditional’ academia that made academics wonder about me. They saw my potential, but would constantly remind that I could not write and was lacking in academic refinement. Nevertheless, they’d hire me to work with them. When this happened, I mostly argued with them and tried to offer alternative perspectives. It became a balancing act that I never really enjoyed, but assumed was par for the course.

Learning Through Facilitation Not Dictation

I didn’t really begin to learn about how to think about academia until I met Sandy Stone. She runs a program called the ACTLab, where the pedagogy focuses on the facilitation of

theory and practice simultaneously. The goal is for students to “make stuff,” with an emphasis on irony and media.

I began to learn about alternative teaching techniques in these courses. By taking traditional courses and ACTLab courses at the same time, I was able to see the contrast between the two, and that I was oppositional in traditional courses, but cooperative in ACTLab courses. In my traditional courses, I was taught to follow a line, learn the line, and recite the line. The line was fact. If I veered from this way of thinking about the line, I was no longer objective or academic.

Two other professors, Joseph Straubhaar and Charles Ramirez-Berg, also influenced the way I learned about alternative teaching techniques. However, they maintained a traditional focus on learning through writing papers. However, like Sandy Stone, they facilitated learning by asking students to ascribe personal meaning to academic work, which drew me to them. I loved how they encouraged me to take my ideas and academic theory to create new work, even if it was just to further my understanding of a topic.

Bringing Facilitation into the Classroom

When it became time for me to teach for the first time, I took my opposition to traditional teaching into the classroom with me. The first class I taught was a multimedia lab where I showed students how to use various programs such as photoshop, premiere and dreamweaver. The normal way to do this is by giving students tutorials. As the teacher, you sit at a computer station that projects onto a screen at the front of the room, and they sit at their computers and wait to be told what to do. While this technique standardizes the teaching of this kind of material, it often results in lost and confused students waiting

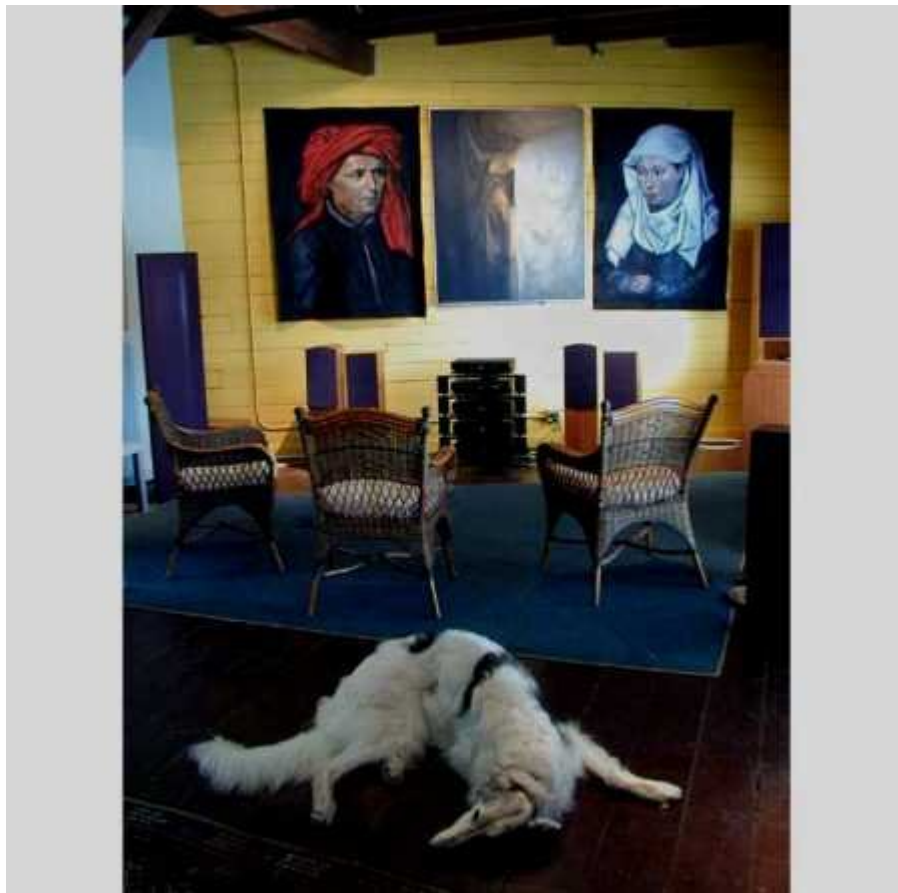
for the instructor to come by and help them, while others simply shut down or already know the software and get bored. I knew this because I had taken similar multimedia courses in high school and observed all these things.

I decided to teach a little differently. I began each class by seating my students around a circular table. We'd talk about our day and address any specific questions they had about the day's learning objective. My goal in doing this was getting the students to have a personal stake in the class so they'd value the day's lesson. Beginning the class this way was crucial to creating a positive classroom experience while maintaining a steady pace of learning. I discussed with the students how I have used the software we were learning in my own work. I also mentioned alternative methods of doing the same work without using the software in order to break down objections to being forced to use the software. Sometimes I'd allow the students to choose which software they wanted to use for a project. We'd explore what would be required to learn the program, I'd do a demonstration, and then they'd go to their computers and begin working.

I firmly believe that everyone learns at a different pace, and that not everyone learns best with the same teaching method. By giving a general demonstration and then allowing them to work, I could work with each student individually, putting a personal touch on their learning process. This was sometimes difficult, since it required a great deal of attention to the social, cultural, and academic cues coming from each student. I'd listen to the inflections in their voices, the way they'd hold their bodies, and the things they'd convey in the opening conversation to decide how best to interact with them.

Breaking Down Objections and Creeping Socialism

I was fifteen years old when I was introduced to the world of hi-fi. Hi-fi can best be described as a way of life. It combines the love of music, the love of gear, and the love of culture. The first hi-fi store I went to was Concert Sound which, as it turns out, is one of the last true hi-fi stores left in the world. At Concert Sound, I learned various methods of assembling a good stereo system as well as other tools I could employ in the quest for the ultimate home musical experience. However, what was truly unique about Concert Sound was the way they facilitated education.



Picture 51 (Concert Sound, 2001)

The first time I visited Concert Sound, Mark Heaston was working. When my friend and I walked in, he greeted us and sat us down to talk about what type of hi-fi we currently

had and what we were interested in listening to. I told him that we'd simply found the store in a phone book and decided to drop by. Mark spent the next hour showing us various systems, ranging in price from \$500 to \$25,000, without a hint of hesitation. My friend and I were blown away. I won't ever forget the sensation of the hair on the back of my neck raising when Mark played Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" on the 'big' system.

I went back to the shop many more times before I bought anything, and they'd even lend me gear to "check out" so that I could get an idea of what I would be purchasing. I'd never experienced anything like that before. I was sixteen years old and my friends laughed me out the door when I told them about the way I was being treated.

Then, sometime during my freshman year at UT, I visited my parents in San Antonio and dropped by the shop. Until that point, I had never really met Mark's business partner, except when he'd occasionally yell at me for playing something too loud. I knew his name was Creston Funk, and I knew that he always seemed to be very busy, but that was the extent of our relationship. When I went to the shop this time, however, he was there, and I began to talk to him about how I had recently developed a website for a local hi-fi store in Austin. He got really excited and practically begged me to sketch him a website right then and there. Since I'd been working with Sandy Stone in the ACTLab for a semester, I had the HTML skills required to design Creston a website in three days. What I didn't know then was that doing so would change my life. Creston took me under his wing and taught me everything he knew about the hi-fi industry, as well as about modern art, photography, and other creative fields. But it was what he taught me about how to sell hi-fi that is of greatest relevance to this article.



Picture 52 (Creston and a customer listen to the hi-fi)

Creston taught me to read social cues, to be patient, to allow the customer to feel comfortable and to truly understand what they were purchasing. He was not interested in the quick sale. He wanted everyone who walked out with a hi-fi to understand what they'd just bought, even if that meant postponing the sale for months (even \$10,000 sales). For example, we once had a customer come in and consider buying a full system. We showed him the store, and he was very impressed. He seemed very eager to make a purchase, but Creston told him to take his time and put some thought into his decision. We didn't see the customer again for a few months, and then one day he walked in and said, "I'll take it," and he wrote a check for the entire system.

Two of the most significant techniques Creston taught me were creeping socialism and how to break down objections. Creeping socialism sounds political, but it's not. It's about treating people with such care that a truly trusting relationship forms between you.

Creston used this term when we worked with customers over a long period of time, letting them learn about the way we do business and sell hi-fi, so that they'd feel more comfortable. I've adapted this idea to the classroom. I create personal connections with my students and work with them gradually, so that they feel comfortable with the new ways of learning I present, and so that they feel they can be active participants in their educational journeys.

Breaking down objections is just as important a technique as creeping socialism in my classroom. Breaking down objections involves giving students the tools and confidence they need to be successful, instead of letting them feel awkward and out of place. While this probably sounds straightforward, it actually requires quite a bit of skill and craft. I adapted this technique to the ACTLab along with Brandon Wiley, another graduate student. Our first step was to transform our classroom into a safe space where the students felt truly comfortable. To accomplish this, we'd set out expectations for our students' work and constantly remind them that they should take risks, remember that failure was perfectly all right, and that what we wanted from them was real effort toward expanding their integration of theory and practice.

Office Hours as Creative Space and Party

As an undergraduate, I was terrified to go to the office hours for any of my courses. They made me feel like a total failure, and my insecurities were confirmed when I'd go and the

TAs/professors would inform me that I was a bad student (they'd use academic language, but the intent was clear) and that I needed to learn how to write. They'd often say that I was beyond their ability to help and would recommend me to the undergraduate writing center. I experienced this even as a graduate student.

So when it was my turn to hold office hours, Brandon and I vowed to try our hardest to work against the negative reputation we felt office hours carry. We decided the way to do this was to declare our office hours a space of *making*. In class, we stressed our willingness and abilities to help our students with any issues they might be having, whether this meant discussing postmodernism or showing someone how to sew. We wanted to be there for our students so that we could break down their objections to a learning method that required them to “make stuff.”



Picture 53 (Brandon shows a student how to sew.)

The end result was essentially a making party. People came in with their projects and sat at the tables and worked. They talked to each other and collaborated. Some just came in to hang out. Others came with the latest underground videos and played them on the projector screen for everyone's amusement. You could practically smell the creativity in the air. Students from other classes came in and began asking questions and the next thing we knew they signed up for our classes the following semester.

Another trend that was very difficult to explain to my colleagues was the presence of graduated students who still came to office hours to help other students with their work. I'd often look around the lab and see four or five students who had already graduated, there simply because they want to see current students succeed.



Picture 54 (Graduated student Saturday (top left) comes to office hours and shows students how to circuit bend)

The combination of art, science, and theory in ACTLab courses created a space where professionals, amateurs, learners, and a motley assortment of others came together to share ideas and stories and bend theory in ways that furthered everyone's respective fields of study. One undergraduate loved our approach so much that, without ever officially enrolling in a class, she began to hold public ACTLab courses at Monkey Wrench Books, a local co-op bookstore. She called the courses "Learn Something Awesome," and they've since been highlighted in the *Austin Chronicle's* "favorite activity picks."

In an effort to facilitate creativity and encourage public discourse, our classes are open to participation from the general public. At an art show once, I met a scientist and invited him to come to our class. Two years later, he was still attending our classes to give demonstrations, help students with projects, and demonstrate an invaluable enthusiasm for wanting others to succeed. When students see such a dynamic group of people, they almost can't help but dive passionately into their projects.



Picture 55 (Local scientist Jerry gives a demonstration of an open-source video editor to students)

Making Waves Forever

In short, this pedagogy has taught me to hold multiple discourses in productive tension, leaving room for interpretation, experimentation, and the interweaving of new meanings. Learning this pedagogy taught me to create and promote transformative intellectuals by using oppositional practices within academia. Academia and its accepted norms of tests, quantitative results, institutionalized responsibilities, and the desire for structure and order are the traditions I fight against. When I consider the founders of communication theory to whom I was introduced in my classes, people like Walter Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Sandy Stone, I know that none of them were ever fully accepted by academia; in fact, they were heavily criticized and even ostracized. But their oppositional practices brought innovation to their fields. I am prepared to bear that same cross because, as my journey through educational institutions has indicated, diversity of thought yields fruits few can imagine.

I'd like to conclude this section by noting that while the ACTLab has provoked an enormous international response, the reaction within our own department at the University of Texas has been less than supportive. We are often accused of lacking a coherent discourse, when the reality is that we pride ourselves on holding multiple discourses in productive tension. If I could be granted one wish, it would be that the other faculty within our department would come to our classes and see the work we do. Perhaps one day, student feedback forms that read, "This department should offer more courses like those in the ACTLab, courses that support active participation and increase productivity. VIVA ACTLAB!" will be acknowledged.

Anthropology and Pedagogy in the 21st Century- Just the beginning



Picture 56 (Marc Evans Looks at his Fabrication)

When I began my dissertation, I was certain that I wanted to include a section that would explicate my teaching and learning techniques, with the goal of indicating how my approaches to teach and learning influenced the way I conduct research.

As discussed in the section, *Transformative Intellectuals: Teaching Opposition Practices in Academia*, I have worked hard to develop my ability to combine my professional, personal, and academic experiences in order to positively affect their respective spaces.

In this section, I will explore how I took my pedagogical approaches and techniques out of the classroom and into the world to learn about cars and the car culture of my central Texan surroundings; how I taught my protégé to do so as well; and how I re-integrated

what I learned from those experiences back into a classroom setting at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas.

Learning Through Doing, Making, and Listening

I have been interested in the automotive world since I was very young. However, I was drawn to it as an object of study for my dissertation by Rohit, a friend of mine who taught me a lot about bargaining and how to be thrifty.

Before I met Rohit, when I needed something done on my car, I always took it either to the dealer or to a chain car shop. However, Rohit began to show me how to bargain, which was socially and culturally very new to me. I thought not paying the asked price for something was risking offending someone, and while it was acceptable to shop around for the best price, a given price was never negotiable.

However, the more time I spent with Rohit, the more he began to show me about how to distinguish sincere businesses from crooked ones. He explained how to read online reviews, and encouraged me to ask people who'd personally dealt with a business about their experiences.

All of this happened very informally. For example, I learned that sales made over the internet weren't subject to sales tax and often had free shipping when I upgraded my computer. I put my new knowledge into practice when I needed to have my car fixed.

The first shop I went to wanted \$1,500 to fix it and confidently asked me, "So, should we get started?" Through the example Rohit had set for me, I knew to pick up my keys and go elsewhere.

However, I soon began to find that I was able to take the knowledge and skills Rohit had given me one step further. While Rohit had a definite knack for bargaining, I found that deciphering a person's intentions and determining whether or not they were sincere came very easily to me. I suppose I may have developed this ability over years of watching my dad and my family conduct business.

After walking out of the shop that day, I called Rohit's mechanic, who told me he didn't work on domestic cars. But persistence was another thing Rohit had taught me, so I pushed the shop owner to recommend another shop I could take my car to. He finally suggested a shop called KC Automotive, which was owned by Ly, a Vietnamese immigrant who turned out to be one of the best mechanics I've ever met, even including the famous all-star mechanics I've met through my research. Beyond Ly's ability as a good mechanic (i.e. his ability to not only fix your car reliably but also to take responsibility when a repair he's made fails), he also had a firm business and family ethic.



Picture 57 (Ly of K&C Automotive working on my MGM)

Through Rohit's introduction to the social and cultural skills required to bargain, I realized I was becoming a new kind of consumer. Consumption is a basic part of the American identity. The American economy is capitalist. Consumption is a rule in the American game, and while there are ways of playing the game in your favor, it's important to remember that it's a game. I often remind my students of this to enable them to begin to cope with their desires to be free-spirited artists in a capitalist, consumerist reality. I'll typically dedicate at least one full class day to this discussion.

While processing these realizations (which took place around 2001 to 2003), I started to integrate my passion for cars with my newfound abilities to get them repaired. I began to be less concerned with having a new car than I was with having a car that ran well and that I enjoyed.

However, I still maintained my very traditional passion for automobiles. As I've explained elsewhere, this passion was driven through magazines, through road racing as a

youth, and through my older brothers' shared enthusiasm for cars. My father's purchase of a 1996 Mercury Grand Marquis was also a turning point in both my automotive passion and my family's efforts to achieve financial success.



Picture 58 (My dad's 1996 Mercury Grand Marquis)

As I've mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, I wrecked that car the year after we bought it, right around my seventeenth birthday. The car came back to me in 2004, when my dad decided he wanted a new car. Since I had recently sold my own car, I seized the opportunity to take it off his hands.

However, the car had 121,000 miles on it and I knew I'd need to maintain it. But the mechanical and bargaining experience I'd gained from Rohit prepared me well. My relationship to the car began to change. I used it for class projects, to cope with personal issues and emotions, and as a way of explaining my identity. A Christine, some might say. (Of course, unlike Christine, my car never tried to kill my wife.) As I drove the car to school every day, I reveled in my relationship to it.

As I made repairs to the car over the years, the idea for my dissertation began to come into fruition. In order to make the repairs, I had to learn about what had broken in order to fix it. I not only needed to research the problem at hand, but also needed to learn about preventative maintenance and performance upgrades. Initially I talked to family and friends about the repairs, but then I discovered online car forums, and they gradually became the primary source of my knowledge. I found forums dedicated to my specific model, with fully documented articles and photos about common repairs and performance upgrades. I read these forums from top to bottom, devouring the information and sometimes even printing it out because I wanted to keep it readily available to me. I later learned that rapidly acquiring information in this way is how geniuses tend to function. As I developed my ability to gather, organize, and analyze information about projects, events, and cultural practices both on- and offline, I came to both enjoy and be passionate about doing so.

I combined this passion with the learning style discussed in *Transformative Intellectuals* to create an approach I call “community to ivory tower and back.” In this approach, I function as a translator between the different bodies of information through which I navigate. For example, I helped my professor find a mechanic and explained to her what to say when she met with him for the first time, and helped my mechanic’s daughter successfully apply to the University of Texas. In both of these instances, I positioned myself as a code switcher between two sets of discourse.

I don’t think any of the groups through which I navigated ever fully understood my intentions, both in terms of what I sought to learn from them and in terms of the things I found myself teaching them. I think they simply perceived me as a passionate person who

wanted to do great things, though they might not have known exactly what those great things were. I suspect everyone thought I was a little odd.

When I began to teach, I took the odd looks I received into consideration. I actively thought about how students with differing socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds perceived me, and I crafted my interactions with them to reflect this. I rejected a traditional student-teacher relationship in favor of a communal learning environment in which the personal historical experiences of each student were neither foregrounded nor foreclosed.

This may seem quite elementary, so let me emphasize that my approach in the classroom was not to encourage some sixties free love bacchanal, nor did I impose a militaristic rite of passage on my students.



Picture 59 (ACTLab Students Collaborating/Co-Working/Relaxing)

This new teaching approach was truly different, but let me come back to that. Because there is a missing component that I yet to allude to.

This was actually the social and cultural impact of my researching street racing and high-performance automotive efforts. The impact this research has had on me academically, personally, emotionally and financially has changed my reality forever.

As talked about in my street racing article and my experience with Boost Logic, you can quickly see the social and cultural transformations I went through being someone who came into the scene as a “big fat Mexican dude with a Mohawk with a slow car”.

Working through this cultural baggage was something I had to make an effort to do.

Especially in the beginning of my research when I was working with the Mustang groups here in Central Texas, as well as some of the street racing groups and online. As tensions were high with immigration throughout my dissertation work (2007-2010), being a “Mexican” had certain baggage with various social groups in the car scene. What was interesting about my specific situation was that while I am a “big fat Mexican dude with a Mohawk”, however I do not speak Spanish and my English is very “white” as I often have a hard time saying even simple words like Queso with a Mexican accent.

However, as Gloria and other race theorist often talk about, I was in a borderland. Like Edward James Olmos said in the movie *Selena*, “We are too Mexican for the Americans and too American for the Mexicans.” (paraphrased)

EJO had a point and in the car scene I ran into this as the white people around me openingly called other Mexicans and latinos in general *spics*, *wet backs* and other derogatory terms. I would often just stand and listen, much like a traditional

anthropologist. If I was in the position of friendship with the street racers I would sometimes remind them I am Latino and they would say “yeah but you are not like THEM”.

As I would go through this though, sometimes I was just sized up as a Mexician. I quickly found out that the way you gained respect in the social circles was by having a fast car. And while my car was fast to me, it was not fast in their eyes (and as I would later learn, it just wasn’t fast in terms of drag racing).

So in order to offset this problem, I would make my way into higher social groups by using my “refined” academic stature, telling them how I was a PhD student at UT and talk about my research and how I was just here to listen and learn. This turned out to work well, in that I came across as a non-threatening entity, but as someone who was educated and had good intentions.

This process is something that I would later translate into academic speak, something I would use in the classroom in order to create a deeper relationship with my students. It is honest and sincere, it creates a personal relationship while also keeping a professional distance until both parties feel comfortable.

Throughout my research I would make many friends this way and in turn they would introduce me to their friends and I would quickly become known as the “cool big fat Mexican with a Mohawk”. By the end of my research I could show up to meets and know nobody and start talking to people and they would know who I am already and about my car. This social credibility is something I often related to the idea of being published and known within academia, but with a personal interest that I felt went beyond just papers, but into a quasi personal interest.



Picture 60 (Here I am with some car friends I made during my research (Marc and Nick))

This interest and sincerity is what I have also taken from my research and used within my relationship with my students, peers, colleagues and “superiors”.

The ability for myself to create a good lines of communication sincerely and with honest intent is something that has been an over riding theme throughout my life. A lot of it might stem from me being a an Eagle Scout. But a lot of it I believe is through my need to have a “true” social identity.

These characteristics also have helped me identify like minded individuals and groups, both within academia and my research.

One such group has been my colleagues in the BarCamp scene. The BarCamp scene is an informal scene that has informal conferences called NameofTopic Camp’s, I have helped host, StartUp Camp, Product Camp, Cloud Camp (as in computing) and many others.



Picture 61 (ProductCamp Attendee's Signing up for Sessions)



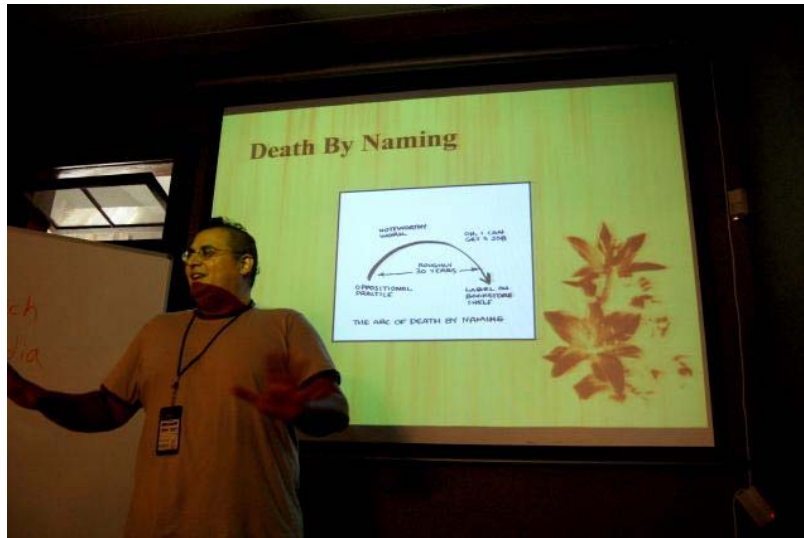
Picture 62 (A ProductCamp Session)

These camps play off the idea that the creative class (as in Michael Florida's definition) often share knowledge amongst each other in order to stay up to date. This differs from traditional closed corporate culture in how peoples willingness to interact and share information encourage innovation of the field, rather than treating such information as a corporate secret/intellectual property. The effect is that people who participate begin to work at a higher level of knowledge due to knowledge sharing.

This approach resonated with my previous ACTLab experiences discussed in Transformative Intellectuals. So once I had began to attend and help produce these community style conferences I quickly began to adapt both the BarCamps and my classes.

I would talk to the BarCamp participants about how the ACTLab works and then I would go back to the ACTLab and talk about the BarCamps. One of the themes that occur in both spaces is the idea that communal dialog is encourage and while the presenters are clearly identified, the audiences feedback and participation is just as significant.

The practice of creating a space where leaders of information share their information with a creative group in order to further the communities general understanding of the field of work is something I believe has value within academia and while such practices have often been seen as useful to the learner, such as graduate and undergraduate research groups and round tables. I believe this practice serves a greater purpose among the "established academic" community. I believe through their recognition of new and innovative ideas coming from not only the "supremely informed", but from the freshly creative often brings about "new" ideas and possibilities.



Picture 63 (Myself giving a presentation at San Antonio BarCamp)

Often then the courses I teach new meaning, ideas and theories about our topics are discovered when an “informed” PhD explains to a graduate student why they are wrong because of the understood/established structures, only to find out they are in fact wrong, because of the same structures restricting their ability to see new forms of thinking about such issues.

And to bring this full circle, this type of learning is exactly the type of learning system I experienced in when doing my research in the automotive industry, specifically the high performance car industry.

The experience I am specifically referring to is when I began my participatory embedded ethnographic research with Boost Logic in north Austin in the early spring of 2009.

I became acquainted with the group after meeting their fabricator Marc Evans at a local street meet.

Marc had a 1986 300ZX with a 2JZ (A Toyota supra motor) that made roughly 600rwhp at the time. He had fabricated the whole setup, making custom engine mounts, a dash, wiring harnesses and much more. I began asking him questions about the setup and he was very friendly, I told him about my research and he said I should really come by the shop he works at and check it out.

So I showed up one day with my Nikon D50 and talked to him and then just began taking photos while he worked. Next thing I knew I was being asked to go to lunch with he and his co-workers and over multiple visits I became friends with everyone there. I would come by at least once a week and just sit around and take photos and sometimes shoot video of them at work.



Picture 64 (This is one of the first photos I took of Marc working, I gave him a 16"X20" print a few weeks after taking it.)

And as my *Texas Mile* and *The Magic Car* article illustrate I quickly became embedded within the group. I was going to track events and taking photos and videos, making youtube posts, but also just hanging out with them and talking about cars. And by late

April Marc and I had become good friends. I had posted the *Texas Mile* and *The Magic Car* articles on my blog (mygeekylife.com) and they had created quite some interest on the internet. I had car enthusiasts, wordpress site developers and academics all contacting me with interest in how I as developing such a site and also about my writing style of including not only text, but images and video that fully supported the pieces.

I have to admit, when I made the Texas Mile article, I knew I was having a “new” moment. I looked at the footage I was creating with my camera and photography and the text I had written and quickly saw I had created a new way of consuming academic information.

This new found system is something I quickly began to think about in terms of how my students, peers and colleagues could understand what I was doing, not at just a journalistic level, but at an anthropological one. I was taking traditional anthropological ethnographic approaches and fusing photo and video documentary in with it and presenting the pieces of media not just as artifacts, but as crucial parts of understanding the narrative as a whole.

So I set forth and began showing various people my work, such as my committee and what interested me as stated in other articles was that my elders were not used to consuming such media rich long texts online, but my peers seemed to be able to fully consume it.

This is a lesson I have taken with me into the classroom. I remind my students to think about their audiences, but not just their current audiences, but their future audiences. Specifically, I had this revelation while speaking on a panel about “hacking the ivory tower” where I had elders of the department questioning my work, but my peers fully

understanding my intent. This revelation led me to think through my goals for my work and was something that has changed the way I think about academia, hierarchy and field progression for ever.

But coming back to being in the shop and learning from their practices, the way in which innovation occurred within Boost Logic was a very individualistic/parallel play situation. They would all work on independent tasks and then come together to complete builds.

This is not to say they were not trained in each others fields, as all of them could do any of the others job, however they had definite “experts” for each part of their business.

Whether it was sales, fabrication, mechanical repair, engine building or electrical, there were leaders, but also everyone had a standard level of understanding.

And this reflected heavily on the weekends when they would all show up to the shop to work on their own cars. They would help each other out, giving advice and direction, but for the most part having to do their own work.

This system of work is something I found to be very analogous in the ACTLab where I was concurrently teaching.

In the ACTLab we encourage parallel play, i.e. the idea of people working side by side but not together unless agreed upon and tasks are then individualized. I believe having people work in groups unless fully agreed upon by all members often defeats the purpose of harnessing each others abilities due to the loss in productivity through social and cultural differences.

At Boost Logic, this practice led to many new innovations being taken place in parallel.

In the spring of 2009 they had developed two gasoline engine compound turbo automobiles, which after researching has proven to be one of the few examples in the

world. Through their innovative system of research and development they have become a leader in their industry and pave new paths for development of new systems into other platforms, such as developing custom turbo kits for the Nissan GTR and Porsche 911.



Picture 65 (Boost Logic/Tuning Concepts 996 Twin Turbo in Development)

And throughout this whole embedded participatory adventure I was slowly making way with my own build. When I would go eat lunch with the Boost Logic folks they would often ask me to drive. Having my MGM which at this point had a full suspension setup, I would offer to drive them around since I could fit 4 of them with me.

On one of our first lunch outings S.W., the owner of Elite Motorsports, a very high-end exotic car dealership, ended up jumping in my car with everyone else. As soon as we started driving he said “who’s car is this and why are we in it?” I responded it was mine and that it has a full suspension upgrade. As we drove I would lean in the corners a bit to give them an idea of the capabilities. A week later I showed up to Boost Logic and S.W. had a Crown Victoria just like mine. It was quite a compliment and humbling experience.

I will never know if he enjoyed his CV as much as I have enjoyed mine, but what caught my attention was not his taste for such a fine automobile (ok, who are we kidding), but his agility to think outside the box and try new things.

This agility to not always have to have the “best”, but to know sometimes it is the understated that can an experience in and of itself was a value that resonated with me.



Picture 66 (The Boost Logic Crew having dinner after a night at the Drag Strip)

The Boost Logic Crew having dinner after a night at the Drag Strip

Another thing about these lunches that was interesting was hearing about everyone’s car builds. These discussions were usually where ideas and sharing of tips took place heavily. Which reminded me of the relaxed dialog we use in the ACTLab in order to keep creativity brewing. One such example is the chair in our ACTLab office, it is a nice fluffy white chair that we have kept through out multiple re-arrangements. Whenever we work in the office one person is always relegated to the “white chair” where they usually either sleep, play video games or just jam on ideas. This causal position within our work space

is a reminder that many times ideas come not from your work, but your play and relaxed moments.



Picture 67 (Keef in the Fluffy White Chair)

One such idea that took place in such a moment with Boost Logic was when I went to lunch with Marc and some friends in my MGM and Marc suggested that we should put a turbo charger system in my car. I laughed, but Marc was serious. When we arrived at my house we popped the hood and he was confident it would be an easy build, two weeks tops.

However as I would come to learn unlike my academic pursuits where I usually write a paper, write code, publish media or do some type of white collar work, the effort of

implementing a turbo build project turned out to be much more of an under taking then I ever thought possible.

I began in my traditional fashion of beginning a project by making a list of required parts, people who would be involved. I contacted all my resources, scouring forums and made calls to suppliers. I came up with a time line and budget.

However, nothing would prepare me for so many in tangibles during this project. While I had worked with many different types of people, I had never worked with such a physically oriented group in terms of building a project. I quickly ran into problems with sourcing parts, arranging times for us to work on the project. Among many of the things that popped up was the fact that right when I began the turbo build of my car, Boost Logic the company was sold to the lead sales manager and the two original owners left. This change of arms created a new social and cultural hierarchy for which I would have to adapt. As it turned out, the change was not as bad as I thought it would be and I actually was recruited by the new owner to help them with their media campaigns and website.

However as the project marched on, the days we could work on the car kept becoming further and further apart and Marc began to have his own personal issues that would push the whole project into the late summer and early fall. By the end of the project though I had the whole Boost Logic group helping me build my car.

Now I would like to emphasize here that when Marc ran into personal issues, it truly amazed me how supportive and helpful everyone became at the shop. Their wiliness to help me is one of the major cultural and social points of tribal practices in the automotive

performance sector that amazed me and showed me how pure will can often overcome some of the toughest times.

Just like when working on their cars until 12am at night, there they were on a Saturday evening running late into the night supporting my turbo build and all of us coming together to build it.

This commodore reminded me of some of the lasting relationships I had created in the ACTLab, but not of any I had ever created in regular academia. It is something I have to come introduce into my teaching style in an effort to help bring a certain awareness to helping each other out with passion and respect in order to help each “make stuff”, “take risks” and “be awesome”, which is exactly what Boost Logic taught me.

And this is where the T factor came into play. Now the T factor is part of my research and learning that took me and my work into a direction I did not see coming.

The T Factor is Kuro Tawil. He is a young man I met while working on my Turbo Build at Boost Logic in August of 2009. He had come to the shop with a friend who was having his car tuned. He approached me after one of the workers at Boost Logic told him I knew about ford modular motors. We began talking about his mustang and my car, but soon he told me about how he was a sophomore attending Texas State where he was studying communications. I told him about my dissertation and he seemed sincerely interested. I gave him the URL to my website where my live draft was being hosted and figured I would never hear from him again.

However the following Saturday I ran into him at the street meet. I figured he would barely remember me, however I was totally wrong. He came up to me and stated how he had read all of my website and was thoroughly impressed.

I wasn't sure if I believed him, but then he talked to me about parts I had written and I could really tell he had. I told him if he was interested in finding out about my work more I would be more than happy to show him around and that maybe he could help me with my research.

This was around the same time I was offered a job by the University of Incarnate Word in San Antonio to teach Audio Production once a week.

So I decided to ask Kuro if he would like to go to San Antonio with me to see visit some automotive shops and see how I conduct my research, as well as go to UIW with me to meet with their faculty. He agreed and next thing I knew we were heading to San Antonio in my Honda S2000.

As we drove I talked to him about my research and I also asked him about how he got interested in cars and studying communications. Kuro had a significant understanding of communication theory and car culture. As we would visit automotive shops he was surprised at the various levels of professionalism some of the shops represented. Some shops were literally a guy in a very messy office with parts sprawled all over and a small garage in the back with a TV blaring. Others were full buildings with floors you could eat off of and personal that were friendly and would give shop tours.

When we visited UIW, it quickly became apparent Kuro's solid understanding of video production, as well as his talent to talk to others effectively in an academic environment. His ability to recognize that it was not important to "know everything", but rather to ask questions and listen impressed me.

After our trip, Kuro and I would end up hanging out quite a bit, his girl friend and my wife referred to our relationship as a "Bromance", which was quite entertaining.

And in a way, Kuro and I's relationship reminded me of many of the other intense friendships I had throughout my academic career, such as when I worked on peer to peer software development with Brandon Wiley or working with Aimy Steadman on social activism in the technology/geek sector and of course with many of my students such as Praveen Ayagari, who I helped produce a album with and Stephenie Appell a graduate student who helped me with my dissertation and alternative teaching methods.



Picture 68 (Brandon and I at Bittorrent in San Francisco doing some consulting.)

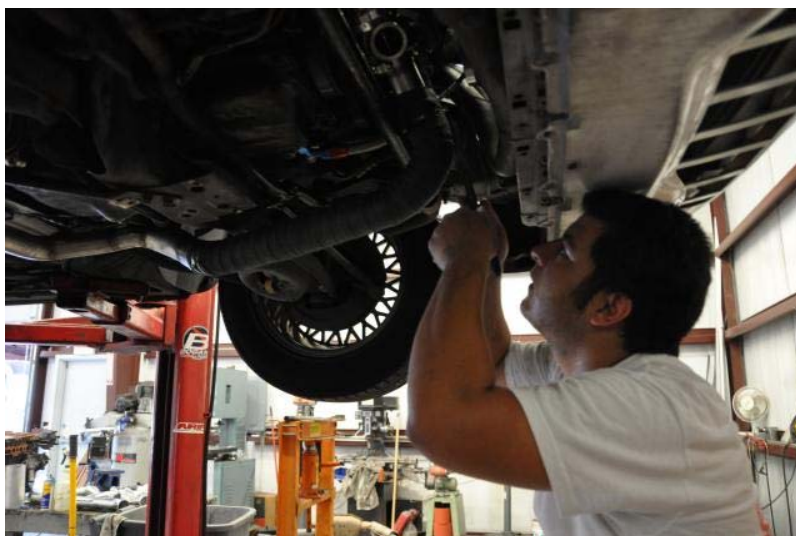


Picture 69 (Aimy and I giving a presentation at DorkBot Austin 2007)

These relationships all became great friendships and ones that I will remember forever.

What has been unique with Kuro though took place through our age difference and his ability to understand how to use that to our advantage. Kuro and I had much to learn from each other.

One such experience took place at Boost Logic when Marc had personal issues arise during my turbo build and I was left on my own to build my kit. Kuro showed up with me that week and helped me through the build along with Justin Ninni of Tuning Concepts.

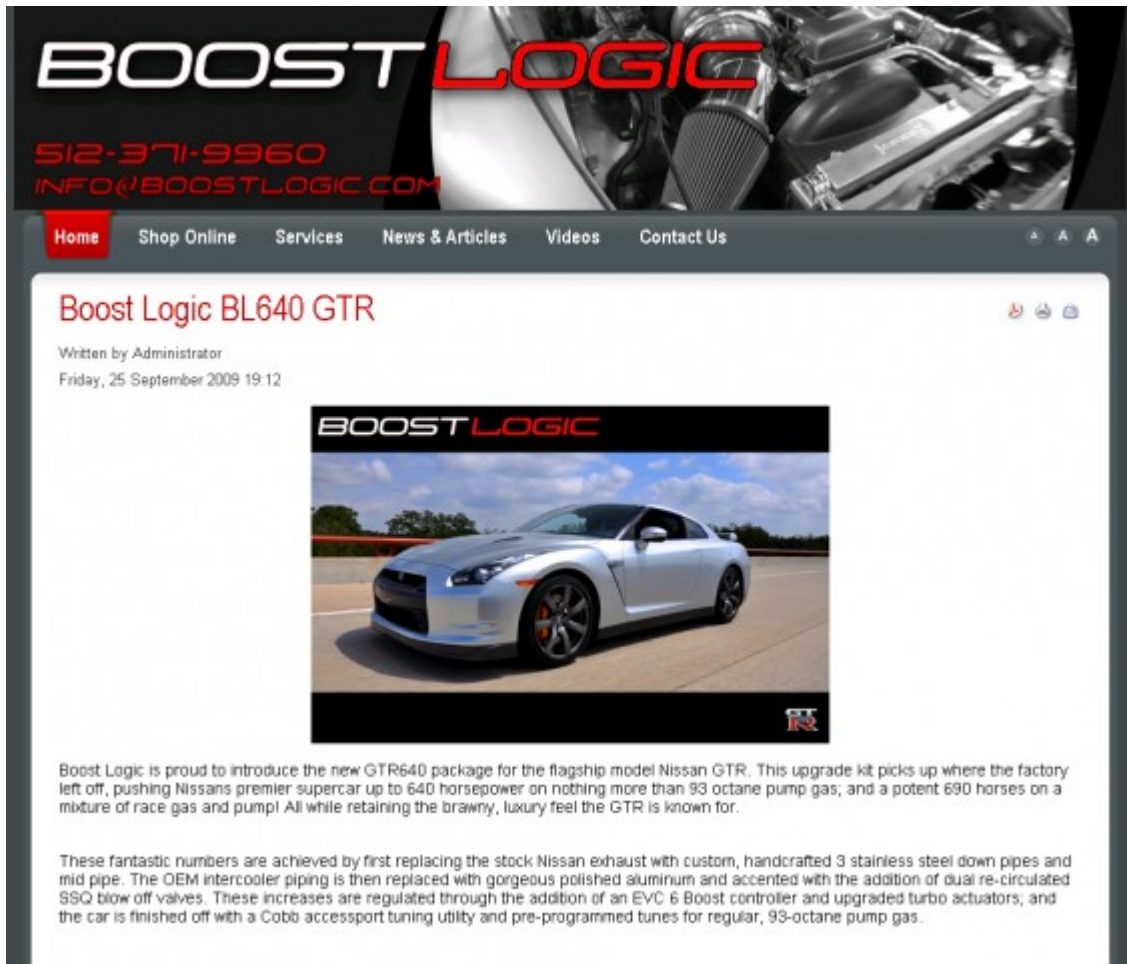


Picture 70 (Kuro helping me finish up the MGM Build)

To say the least it was a bonding moment for Kuro and I to learn from Justin Ninni how to put a turbo system on my car. Kuro and I both learned about header wrap and the fiberglass included in such jobs as we itched away and my sensitive skin and respiratory system caused me to get sick. Kuro stuck in there and helped me through the rest of the build and when Marc came back Kuro was still there helping side by side.

I ended up having to go to the doctor because of the respiratory issues and my blood pressure was 160/100, my doctor told me if I didn't lay off the turbo build and my research in general I would only get worse. With information in hand, I asked Kuro if he could help me make sure my build got done in a timely fashion.

And while my build was going on, Boost Logic's new owner had asked me to help produce some promotional videos. I asked Kuro if he would be interested in such work and next thing I knew we were working together, in a parallel play setting where we were both leading the project, he and I would both shoot video and photos, both edit photos and video and work together on creating press releases for new Boost Logic releases.



Picture 71 (A Boost Logic Press Release done by Kuro and I)

Through this experience, both Kuro and I were learning quickly from each other. I would drive through San Marcos and visit Kuro at Texas State every week on my way to teach at UIW.

He and I would jam on ideas non-stop, this type of relationship is something I emphasize with my students. The way I tend to describe it as:

Your connection with your Student +
Your passion for the subject +
Your students passion for the subject

= a truly reciprocal relationship that allows a fluidity in teaching and learning that lends itself to be able to quickly build new ways of thinking through a mutual respect and understanding of each others passion to both learn and teach each other as well as innovate through the passion for the material.

This formula is one that I use in the classroom in order to create a relationship with my students where we can establish what is at stake both in terms of academic practice and their aspirations in general.

Through Kuro and I's venture we quickly went from a traditional student/teacher relationship to a peer to peer relationship where we worked together and came up with ideas and implemented them. One such idea was to begin a joint venture called T&L Media, a small new media group that consults with business's about their media needs. Kuro and I researched how to start a small business and also researched various market segments.



Picture 72 (Kuro and I doing our first paid photo shoot)

Much like the startup work I had done with Brandon Wiley, Kuro and I quickly became engaged with both academic and professional pursuit of knowledge. This pursuit lead me to bring many of my “war” stories to my students in the classroom.

However, what made these stories truly unique was Kuro and I’s open grass roots approached mixed with our young age. My students confidence quickly grew and discussions of what the students want to do when they graduate and how to go about making themselves financially viable upon graduate began to crop up.

Such discussions surprised and impressed me due to that fact that higher education tends to ignore the harsh realities of graduation for liberal arts/communication students.

Through my visits to many regional universities as well as other departments within UT as well as my own experiences I have found very few programs that integrate life skills of an intellectual into their teaching curriculum.

By Life Skills I mean more then just professional training, such as professional edicate or job specific training, but more how to be entrepreneurial, how to take your passion and find financial stability in order to pursue it.

Through this concept I have integrated such concepts into my curriculum for all my courses, whether it is audio production or trans border violations, I talk with my students how to they will sustain their passion for their art and work throughout their lives.

I believe by having such a relationship with the students you are giving them confidence and practical planning skills for when they are faced with the challenges of moving past the classroom and into the real world and in many of my students cases, code switching between the two environments.

The day my turbo'ed MGM started at Boost Logic everyone involved were fully engaged and our relationships, both as teachers and learners and our passion for this project were evident as captured through this video:

Such aha moments occur in the ACTLab as well, even with the same type of pack/cub play, as illustrated when Drake a community member of the ACTLab helped students build a 555 timer on a bread board.

(put 555 timer video up)

As my research grew to a close my work has stayed consistent, both within the car culture realm, but also in the classroom. I am always learning new ways of bringing my students closer to their work and themselves. Below are just a few short techniques/talks I have integrated into my work since having performed my automotive research and alternative pedagogical research:

1. Learning how to be a genius.

To many a genius is someone with a natural ability to have quick cognitive skills. Much like a person with a natural physical talent as well.

And I have found these generalization to hold true, however I believe there is a large component that many over look when it comes to geniuses and that is their ability to ask questions and look for solutions with a passion and pursuit that often reveal at.

This inherently points to the fact that geniuses recognize that it is not the fact that they know the answer to problems as much as have an ability to ask questions and try to answer them.

The ability to ask questions and have the confidence to pursue the answers is a key element of being a genius and this is a point I bring to my students.

I tell them never to worry about asking questions when pursuing answers about their passion and work. I emphasize that mistakes are part of learning and it is the ability to listen to and hear others that will take their abilities that much further, much like any genius.

And when I am working with “geniuses” I tend to emphasize the ability to verbalize their social and cultural questions in order to better understand not only academic solutions but interpersonal interaction.

Through using this approach you can bring together differing social and cultural backgrounds and initiate a creative safe space for which students feel open and willing to share information and help each other through their passions.

2. Underwear Syndrome and how to avoid it:

Now this syndrome deals with the “new student”, aka the techno centric generation. I began to notice this syndrome in the past 4 years as our new students came from a generation of internet users for life. Meaning they were born with the internet “there” and always “on”. Even talk of dial-up modems often alienate/date myself.

With this new found comfort with technology and the drop in prices so that most college bound students are now familiar with video editing, photo manipulation and other skills that were once high-level of entry fields are being done in the comfort of their own home, while sitting on the couch and you guessed it, probably in their underwear.

Now this new found comfort has pro's and con's which directly interact with the Genius talk. Because they are so socially comfortable working at home, the ability to ask questions beyond the internet and the four walls of their apartment begins to hinder their work. They no longer come into the lab to work on the 10,000 dollar computer systems that are being monitored by proctors and TA's who are ready to help them with their work.

This break down is something I tend to address early on in my courses, I emphasize the need to come to the lab if they are running into problems and need to look for high-end solutions. If they are having problems formulating ideas they need to contact us and let us know of their problems. Again we emphasize that having such issues are ok, as long as their openingly addressed in a timely manner. Which brings us to point three.

3. The Professional Procrastinator:

This talk is pretty straight forward, but goes a long way with my students. One thing as an academic and a professional media specialist that I have learned is that while I am one to be organized and pace out my work, many others do not. They tend to work best under the "crack of a whip". While some may find this to be a student issue, I find I run into it in the professional/academic realm just as much if not more.

So my way of dealing with it in the classroom is to make it clear that I do not condone procrastination, that I understand it is just how some people work. That being said I then

add that I do condone failure to produce when procrastinating, meaning if you procrastinate, do not ask for help in a timely fashion and fail to produce your work we will proceed to break down your points of failure and grade accordingly.

All too often students work suffer not through their inability to have talent or resources, but due to their inability to manage their time. Having students understand time management and work through such issues is something I have found to be rewarding and helpful to producing a creative environment where people with various working styles can come together and share their experiences.

4. The Journey

The Journey talk is something I give my students at the very beginning of the course. With so many liberal/fine art courses emphasizing tests, quiz's, end product specific projects and memorization of text, often times the students have the potential to get into a zone where their work for our classes become secondary due to the fact that our projects are open ended and facilitative rather than dictative.

So in order to create a "path" for which they can follow, I have created the idea of "the journey", where I emphasize that our course is not purely about the projects, but the journey for which you take to create yours.

In addition to documenting the process of their project through image, video and text on their website, I ask that they do so thinking about where they started and where they ended; to have a reflexivity with their approach to their work. To think about the journey they are taking with their project, what it means to them and what they think it might mean to an audience.

I often also refer to thinking about their journey when presenting their project to their audience, taking the social and cultural practices of their audience into consideration in order to create an involving experience both for themselves and the audience.

These are just some of the techniques I have come to implement when teaching my courses about new media topics. However I found them to be useful in the professional realm when working with co-workers, teaching interns and developing business relationships.

It has been amazing to be able to perform such a reflexive dissertation. The ability to cross implement my research experience, teaching and professional work with a fluidity has been amazing. From having made friends with street racers that have certain social and cultural values to working with tenured professors developing new media curriculum, I have found that being able to “code switch” and truly listen and also be heard is something I will cherish for life.

A Critical Academic Analysis in the 21st Century

As I've stated elsewhere in this dissertation, the goal of my research was to explore the material culture of racing — the speed, the races, the cars — as a vehicle to observe and analyze the social and cultural practices of the participants in order to generate insights into the cultural fluidity of central Texas. Over the course of my research, I immersed myself entirely in the culture, learning not only how one gains entry into the field as a participant, but also experiencing how issues like race, social class, and gender influence participation and growth within the scene.

My approach to the analysis of my data sets stems from two facets of my experiences: First, it is influenced by my formal training in ethnography, the study of social and cultural practices. Second, it is informed by my own personal research methodology, which relies not only on field notes, but also on video and photographic documentation, as well as participatory (i.e. first hand) experience in the field. As I began to interpret the enormous amount of data I accumulated, I consciously approached the task using multiple discourses simultaneously; I acted as an ethnographer, a documentarian, a practitioner of alternative pedagogy, and as myself, a large Latino with a mohawk. That said, I assert the following about my research:

Hybridity Theory

Hybridity is a concept in cultural studies that describes a phenomenon in which a community combines its cultural practices with the practices of cultures outside the community. My initial introduction into Hybridity theory comes from reading

“Hybridity: or the cultural logic of globalization” by Kraidy and a course I took with Joseph Straubhaar, the scholar who proposed the idea of Cultural Proximity. Through this intense training of thinking about the exchange of cultural and social practices in a multifaceted, multi modal way I have begun to think about and theorize my findings has in immense new ways.

For example, Japanese-style drifting is increasingly popular in the American drifting scene. American automotive cultural practices, such as driving domestic cars or using V8 engines, fuse with Japanese practices, like driving Japanese cars (which are referred to in the US as JDM) and using smaller motors and turbos. This hybridity merges two different groups of motor sport enthusiasts to create a new space in which two cultures and their practices are respected and compete on the same tracks. The products of such a space reflect this hybridity. For example, I once saw a Toyota Scion TC coupe, a front-wheel drive car, modified to be a rear-wheel drive vehicle so that it could compete in the D1 drifting series. The car’s elements integrated the American fascination with rear-wheel drive sports cars with the Japanese tradition of affordable front-wheel drive sport coupes. I also observed the marrying of multiple car cultures at Boost Logic. Their approach toward American, Japanese, and European automotive platforms was extremely demonstrative of the principles of hybridity. For example, they have a deep understanding of the Toyota Supra, a car introduced in the 1990s. After it was featured in the 2001 film, *The Fast and the Furious*, the Supra gained a worldwide cult following. Boost Logic’s Supra customers reflect this international popularity, ranging from local Austinites to Panamanian, Saudi Arabian, and British owners. The Supra itself embodies hybridity theory. Its engine’s short block (the pistons and crank shaft) is built by Toyota,

its head (where the valves and cam shafts are located) is built by Yamaha, and its transmission is built by Getrag, a German company. Such hybridized mode of production is the consequence of the automotive industry's practice of outsourcing in order to use the 'best' parts for a product.

Over the past fifteen years, the internet has increasingly become a key medium for the dissemination of cultural hybridity throughout the realm of car culture. It has enabled the transfer of large numbers of geographically specific cultural events quickly and broadly to other parts of the world, affecting practices even within the smallest towns.

Online Forums

During my research process, I went with my wife to visit her family in Crystal City, which is in southwestern Texas. While visiting with one of her uncles who is a drag racing enthusiast, I became aware of the drag racing scene at the local Zavala county airport. I discovered that the scene was aware of and recognized the importance of import tuners and their ability to produce fast cars (import cars are typically not as prevalent in rural drag racing scenes due to a tradition of Domestic manufacturers having subsidized dealerships in small towns.). However, the internet has facilitated the creation of several spaces that have enabled a collective cultural consciousness. Chief among these spaces are:

- Public forums
- Private forums
- User-generated video websites

Each of these spaces has its own unique methods for transporting information. In the course of my research, I frequented many of the forums. I began visiting forums as a teenager, when I used them to learn about high-end audio. I found they often contained a wealth of knowledge, due in part to the inherent narrowcasting that occurs in such specifically interest-targeted spaces. The main website I began frequenting was Audio Asylum, a classic Bulletin Board that consisted of audiophiles who would share their experiences with various high-end audio equipment. I learned about internet lingo, such as SO (significant other), nt (No Text, used when just leaving a subject line message) and YMMV (Your Mileage May Vary, meaning your experience may be different than mine). I also learned about hierarchy trees within forums, both technically and socially. Hierarchy trees are how threads are maintained. For example, there may be an audio forum and under that forum, it might have an amplifier section and a speaker section. These hierarchies allow for information to flow into specific spaces while being filtered in a very “natural” internet way. Social Hierarchies on forums are then dependent on a couple of things, such as (in no particular order): number of posts, quality of posts, background experience and administration level (on forums, often a user can become an administrator of a specific forum giving the power to moderate content). These various hierarchical styles create a social space that allow for cultural and social exchange over the internet in ways that break down traditional geographical boundaries. While researching my dissertation, some of the forums — both public and private — that I frequented included: crownvic.net, s2ki.com, s2kca.com, 6speedonline.com, mercurymarauder.net, and texasracers.com. Each forum typically contains common subforums, such as a forum for model-specific enthusiasts, a technical/body of

knowledge forum, a variety of geographically specific forums, a multimedia forum, and an off-topic/hobby forum. Some forums also have subforums for racing topics, like drag, road, and street racing.

The type of discussion and the level of sophistication vary and, in many ways, reflect the socioeconomic status of the vehicle owners represented on each forum. In forums for more expensive models, popular topics in the hobby subforums include wine, wristwatches, and cigars. In forums for cheaper domestic models, the hobby subforums focus on guns and conservative politics. However, there are some shared topics between these forums. For example, nearly every hobby forum contains a photography section that focuses not only on car photos, but also includes discussions of photography gear and skills. Technology, and the discussion of computers and related issues, are another shared interest.

Forum users tend to be predominantly male, though it's important to note that women who do participate are often received warmly and widely appreciated. Male users tend to interact with them in a very mature way. However, many of the private forums contain special subforums where users are highly sexist, posting images of nude women, pornographic videos, and other similar cultural artifacts.

Private forums differ from public forums in several other ways. They're accessible only by registered users, and often contain sections reserved for special members within those registered users. The special sections of street racing forums often document illegal races that take place on highways and back roads.

The third online venue for automotive culture and social interaction are user-generated video websites, such as [YouTube](#) and [StreetFire.net](#). YouTube is a widely known “whole

tail” provider; they serve “short tail” content, such as MTV, ABC, NBC, and other networks, as well as “long tail” content, like vlogging, home videos, and other user-generated content. Through the use of metadata, analytics, and other strategies, YouTube has become a videotainment space that enables the sorting and sharing of content and has ultimately revolutionized and democratized content distribution.

The YouTube revolution has greatly impacted car culture. Prior to YouTube, the distribution of footage of races and amateur enthusiasts was heavily restricted by geography, and limited primarily to small media companies that published compilation tapes and, later, DVDs. However, during my research, I regularly watched participants in car culture show one another YouTube videos on their iPhones in parking lot meets, at race tracks, or in cars on the way to events. It was fairly common for them to upload videos of their cars while at the track or on the street.

Many of the videos I have hosted here and used to complement the text of this dissertation have, in turn, been absorbed into the culture that produced them. One such video is Marc Evans’ “Compound Turbo Explanation” video, which I created for him in the spring and summer of 2009. In the video, Marc explains his compound turbo set-up and how the system makes power. The video has been viewed thousands of times. Marc and I heard from a fellow car culture participant that it was used at an automotive tuning school to demonstrate the cutting edge of high-performance work. This video is a testament to the democratizing effect of user-generated video websites on media distribution.

While conducting research on YouTube and StreetFire, I discovered videos on a plethora of subjects, from low-rider shows, personal promotional clips of owners showing off their

rides, footage of the Texas Mile, road races, and street races. I found the videos of street races particularly intriguing, given that many of them document what are essentially illegal races. The first street racing videos I watched originated in California; I was flabbergasted at the speed of the cars and the sounds they produced. While the footage was typically very shaky, I believe the sounds and the aura of speed are what most viewers crave.

I believe the internet has facilitated the hybridization and the adaptation of the social and cultural practices of automotive enthusiasts around the world. If I were to perform further research into hybridity and automotive culture, I would choose to explore the interplay between the automotive industry and user-generated content, and the effect this content has on automotive marketing and the industry as a whole. As I wrapped up my research this specific research became a natural step as began making professional promotional videos for Boost Logic. One such video is Boost Logic's Drag Car video from the Supra Meet 2010:

As of April 11th 2010, this video has garnered over 16,000 views on youtube.com. Within the first day of launching we had over 2,000 views and YouTube emailed our account to request an advertising partnership where they would pay per click to display a lower 3rd advertisement as our video played. This type of direct consumer/distribution relationship is something I look forward to researching.

Maintaining Cultural Hierarchies Through the Lexicon

As I became increasingly embedded in the street racing scene, I was introduced to many acronyms and abbreviations. Participants in the scene use acronyms and abbreviations for

everything from engine types, like B16s (a Honda 1.6 liter 4 cylinder) and 2JZs (a Supra 3.0 liter inline 6), to car models, like a Z31 (a Nissan 300ZX made from 1983 to 1989) or a 993 (a Porsche 911 made from 1994 to 1997). I realized that these acronyms and abbreviations form an elite lexicon that creates a barrier to entry into the culture. However, the different elements of the lexicon will have different cultural capital depending on the social situation. For example, if you're talking to a Honda enthusiast and you tell them you have an SR20 (a six cylinder Nissan motor made for an RWD platform) in your Honda Civic, they'll probably look at you funny and ask how you swapped a Nissan SR20 engine into your Honda (not to mention wonder how you converted your SR20 into a FWD), calling into question both your knowledge of your car and of automotive culture in general. Thus, the more a participant in the scene understands its lexicon and can use it accurately, the higher a claim they can make on the scale of cultural hierarchy.

As an academic, I have been trained to observe culturally specific vocabulary and to integrate it into my work. I must admit, however, that the meaning of one acronym, DSM, eluded me until I finally broke down and asked someone about it. Marc explained to me that DSM stood for Diamond-Star Motors, but added that when people say DSM, what they are most commonly referring to are the Mitsubishi Eclipse, the Plymouth Laser, and the Eagle Talon platforms. As soon as Marc explained that, I knew exactly what he was referring to, because these cars were a significant part of the performance scene when I was a teenager. Each of these cars were platform-based, and although they were marketed by three different car companies, they used the same underpinning, were manufactured side-by-side, and represented fairly affordable entries into a relatively

exotic platform. The top-of-the-line models offered a turbocharged inline 4 in addition to all-wheel drive (AWD). Their street performance was remarkable in terms of handling and acceleration, though the AWD did weigh them down a bit. The DSM have remained a favorite for import street racers and car show and drag race enthusiasts.

Armed with my knowledge, I attended street meets with automotive cultural capital that proved invaluable. I used the lexicon to forge new relationships and access new venues for research.

Race in Racing



Picture 73 (Kenneth is half African American and Korean, he calls himself Blasian.)

The construct of race for the purpose of this dissertation is based off the traditional idea of race in American, which focuses on Latino, African American, Anglo, as well as Asian and Middle Eastern positionality within the social and cultural context considered to be “normal” American life. This construct is also highly influenced by my own experiences

of race and racial discrimination within academia. Being a Latino myself, I have faced much racial discrimination as a student for my writing, the language I use and often the way I physically look, especially since I am quite large male and have a mohawk. These tendencies to be discriminated against and see other minorities be discriminated against translated into my Automotive research.

While I was conducting my research, one of the things that very quickly became apparent was that race mattered in central Texas car culture. Wherever I traveled, everyone I observed took race into consideration, whether implicitly or explicitly. Furthermore, given that my research was participatory, my race directly influenced the way in which the various groups I researched perceived me. For example, in the Mustang group, I was a minority, since the group was dominated by blue-collar white males. They often used derogatory terms toward minorities, especially Latinos and African Americans. On a number of occasions they discussed immigrant workers who didn't learn English and described how these workers were "taking over" their neighborhoods.

This mentality of viewing Latinos and African Americans as secondary citizens also generally carried over to the street racing scene at large. This was somewhat surprising, as the street racing scene does not solely consist of whites, but also includes many Asians and Middle Easterners. Their ability to maintain such discriminatory attitudes often seemed to be rooted in their understandings and experiences of caste systems and/or European cultural imperialism.

Racial discrimination seemed symptomatic of the crude and uncouth nature of the scene's participants in general. Based on my research, I would say that many street racers are inherently risk seekers and are typically not sophisticated or accepting in their cultural

understandings of racial issues. These tendencies are independent of economic or social status, and can be observed at a variety of hierarchical levels within the group.

However, the boundary of race was often overcome by means of the assimilation of cultural practices, a fact I took full advantage of in order to gain entry into the street racing social scene. The specific practices that will supersede race to enable entry into this scene are having a very fast car or having an attitude that de-emphasizes race. I employed both to allow me to participate and conduct further research. In the beginning when I would arrive to street meets I would often just observe, not just as an anthropologist, but as a participant in order to understand peoples backgrounds so I could interact with them in an efficient manner as to break down social and cultural barriers.

An example of such a situation was when I went to a street meet and there were some Mexican Immigrants there listening to Conjunto music in their low rider and a group of street racers were making fun of them. I then asked the street racers about their cars and their setups, using the knowledge I had obtained while observing. After talking with them a bit I would go and talk to the Mexican Immigrants about their audio setups and when I would come back to the street racers they would look at me kind of funny for talking to them, I would explain what the Mexican Immigrants were up to and the street racers would often be surprised and then relate it to their past experiences, both good and bad in terms of understanding other races social and cultural practices.

Participants also discriminated against one another based on the types of cars they drove; for example, whether someone drove an import versus a domestic car, or had a V6 versus a V8 engine. Heavy language, territorial parking, and generally aggressive behavior are all ways participants expressed this kind of discrimination



Picture 74 (Import's parking separately from the Domestics.)

These cultural practices were not maintained in other central Texas automotive cultures. For example, the road racing scene differed tremendously. Road racing is a much more expensive sport, and reflects an entirely different set of values. Road racers treat each other much differently than street racers. While a wealthy street racer may be highly discriminatory within the scene, a wealthy road racer will typically not publicize such opinions if he has them. I also observed that participants in each scene frequently transcended the bounds of their scene to participate in other scenes. In such cases, social class and cultural circumstances tended to dictate their behavior. I believe much of this behavior was due to that fact that road racing participants in general had higher educations and from more conservative social and cultural backgrounds in terms of deviant behavior.

>I assert that the concept of having different ways to deal with race in different situations is a cultural phenomenon that takes advantage of cultural fluidity and the notion of code

switching in a way that creates false impressions of sincerity. Observing this phenomenon allowed me to gain a greater understanding of how social spaces as a whole are negotiated.

I hope to further explore racial identity within the street racing scene, and perhaps attempt to create a visual representation of the social spaces through which each participant navigates. Such visual representations would include Venn diagram style illustrations of the various automotive scenes, the races involved and how they relate.

Gender and Car Culture

Having taken and taught courses cross listed in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, my familiarity with gender in terms of social and cultural practices has been greatly heightened. Having read theorists such as bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldua and working under Sandy Stone, one of the core founders of Trans gender theory, my approach to looking at gender stems from the deep rooted discrimination and male dominance in western European society, while also assessing spaces of power and empowerment.

When I began my research, I realized almost immediately that I wasn't interacting with very many women in the car scene. Other than my very supportive wife, who joined me from time to time, I didn't notice many women who were clearly invested in the culture I was observing. I gradually realized, however, that many of the women who *were* present were wives and girlfriends, there to support their husbands and boyfriends. These relationships seemed to fall into quite conservative gender archetypes. Behaviors

reflected these gender divisions as well; for example, wives/girlfriends often split off into groups to talk with one another while men stayed by their cars and talk.

Not every woman in the scene fit neatly into this role. In the fall of 2008, I met one such woman at a parking lot meet in San Antonio. She arrived in a yellow low rider, and its custom paint job and etchings immediately caught my attention. As she stood next to her car, she answered questions from onlookers about it. I asked if I could take her picture, and she was more than happy to oblige. She told me that she had been featured in magazines before, and she had a thick Texan accent. As she stood next to her car, her body language expressed pride and confidence. She told me about the custom etchings she had created on the entire car, and I found the intricate work deeply moving. I could see the love and care she had put into her show car, but I also found her comportment interesting; I felt it reflected a certain concession to the norms of the male-dominated scene while still retaining elements of her own identity.



Picture 75 (A local San Antonio low-rider enthusiast shows off her ride.)



Picture 76 (A custom rose etched bumper)

To facilitate my participation in the Hill Country drive culture in which many high-end car clubs participate, I purchased a 2006 Honda S2000. Through the S2000 Club of America, I met Sondra, the club's local director, who organizes driver education events at local race tracks in addition to participating in the Hill Country drives. Sondra was very enthusiastic, and both her driving and her teaching abilities were interesting to observe. She carried herself in a stately manner, and had a knack for group dynamics. Through the S2K Club, I also met Kristine, a positive and friendly woman interested in both bikes and cars, who often participated in the drives as well.

I also met many women who often complained about their husbands'/boyfriends' deep involvement with the scene; during discussions with men, I often heard stories about wives/girlfriends lost to their cars. A common practice in the scene is for men to refer to their cars as "chick magnets," meaning they feel their cars radiate sexual auras that attract women. I met several women who admitted their attraction to certain types of cars and engine sounds, which surprised me.

Finally, my wife also took on a participatory role in my research. She is also an anthropologist, and has a personal interest in car culture. Like many historical female anthropologists, she accompanied her anthropologist husband in the field. Her participation in my research was crucial in traditional ways, such as the creative and financial support she offered me. And, as a woman, she could sometimes participate in social interactions with other women in ways I could not, and she contributed wonderful insights based on her own perception of the culture we observed. The value of her perspective is immeasurable.

However, as her attention was increasingly drawn to her own research interests, her desire to attend late night street meets and to talk about cars for hours on end did eventually wane. Many people tend to experience a similar loss of interest when they attempt to immerse themselves into a culturally specific milieu that does not fully engage them. I believe her eventual disinterest stemmed from how quickly conversations revolved around technical specifics, and how, as a result, discussions became exclusionary rather than inclusive.



Picture 77 (Corina helping capture footage)



Picture 78 (Corina and Steph at San Antonio Race Way)

Lauren, Russell Walker's girlfriend, is similarly supportive. Her encouragement of his aspirations to become a professional drifter entails deep commitment, since he travels frequently; but she tries to attend every event, and her support seems unconditional. She often visits Boost Logic to have lunch with him or bring him cupcakes, and these visits seem to brighten up the shop and, I believe, contribute to a more welcoming aura for the space overall.



Picture 79(Lauren, Russell, Myself, Marc)

All of these experiences and interactions were unusual — the exceptions, not the rule. Over the course of my research, the vast majority of women I met, whether at street meets, car shows, or SEMA, were highly sexualized and intended to pursue careers as professional actresses or models. They were extremely driven and ambitious women who were being paid or hoping to eventually be paid to be a model and/or an actress in the entertainment industry.

While following Russell Walker, I met a few models who were selling signed photographs of themselves, and were also inviting passersby to take photographs with them. I found this situation awkward, but was also intrigued by how accustomed to this I became after a few such interactions.



Picture 80 (Hot Import Nights models)

At SEMA, talking to models, getting their autographs, and having pictures taken with them were all strongly encouraged. I found this very stressful. I believe myself to be a feminist who opposes the exploitation of women for the sake of the perpetuation of patriarchal norms; but, in this environment, I was surrounded by exactly that. I was unprepared for models to ask me to take pictures with them, but realized this was a sales tactic designed to draw the conference attendees to the particular booth that sponsored each model. On several occasions I accepted their offers in order to experience the practice firsthand, and found it quite strange. Standing between two models who pressed up against me, I began to re-evaluate the way people in the scene interacted with and touched me in general.



Picture 81 (Posing with models at SEMA)

I realized the extent to which enacting these conservative gender roles made me uncomfortable, but I also recognized and personally witnessed the power of sex as a selling tool. I have yet to reconcile this experience. Two questions I want to continue to attempt to answer are:

1. Given that the entertainment industry is so highly sexualized, and that car culture is part of a masculine rite of passage into American-ness, how can we dismantle patriarchy in ways that encourage more female involvement in car culture?
2. At what age does the behavioral division according to gender occur in the car scene, and how can we change this? Given that both boys and girls play with some kind of cars as children, whether they're Hot Rods or Barbie Escalades, at what age do girls become less interested in driving as either a sport or a hobby?

I hope to conduct further research into these and other questions, but I also hope my work to date has provided some insight into the roles of women in car culture and the ways in which they are involved in the scene.

As a final observation, I'd like to note that my dissertation committee chair, Professor Sandy Stone, primarily observed my research from a distance; but eventually I was able to convince her to accompany me to Drive Way Austin, a local road racing academy.

Once there, Joe, one of the academy's top instructors, took her for a ride in my turbocharged Mercury Grand Marquis. After a few high-G laps, she could only say that she wished we could drive longer and faster.



Picture 82 (Sandy and Joe at DriveWay Austin after taking my MGM for a ride.)

Vita

Joseph Lopez attended Oliver Wendell Holmes High School, In 1999 he entered the University of Texas at Austin in Austin, Tx. He completed his Bachelor of Science in Radio, Television and Film in the spring of 2003. In the fall of 2003 he entered the University of Texas at Austin's Master of Art's program in Radio, Television and Film. In the spring of 2006 he graduated from the program and in the fall of 2006 entered the Doctorate of Philosophy program at the University of Texas at Austin in the Radio, Television and Film department.

Concurrently Joseph Lopez has made a name for himself as a self employed technologist and has consulted with many technology start-ups, as well as run his own small business internet company.

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This manuscript was typed by the author.