Network Reading

Part One

Everything and everyone is connected in some way or another. In both “Six Degrees of Interconnection” by Duncan Watts and “Six Degrees of Separation” by Albert-Lazslo Barabasi, the articles concluded that one person can be connected to any other through approximately six other people. The article by Duncan Watts brought up how the popular culture icon, Kevin Bacon, is often said to be connected to every other person by six degrees also. This got me thinking that if Milgram’s theory is correct then any other person can be connected to any actor in the same way. Using this as my basis, I decided to do a similar web project in which I will connect various random figures from popular culture to Steve Buscemi.

Duncan Watts’ article speaks about how the internet has created a series of networks that makes it incredibly easy for people to become connected in one way or another. Because of this, people are able to communicate in a way that facilitates greater advances in research since people are able to share their information through these networks. This shows how the internet can bring many people together in ways that affect the world positively. However networks also can create meaningless connections. By being able to see connections between people that are 6 degrees away, they eventually have no meaning. Barabasi alludes to this in his article by saying that eventually a friend of a friend of a friend of a friend really means nothing to the primary
person. However, this does not stop the limited amount of connections that connect one person to
any other from becoming somewhat fascinating. Because of this, I decided to create a page in
which it becomes a sort of game to get from one person to Steve Buscemi in a succession of
clicks.

Part Two

The birth of the internet has changed the course of the creation of art. Roland Barthes
essay “The Death of the Author” and “The Image Object Post-Internet” by Artie Vierkant both
speak about how art has evolved because the author or creator of works leave it up to the viewer
for interpretation. The author does not give the answers to the text but instead lets the work speak
for itself. This is especially important today concerning contemporary artwork because much of
it is conceptual. Artists put the work into public spaces and by doing that they release it into the
hands of the viewers and they are no longer in control of it. This is what Barthes means by the
death of the author and the birth of the viewer.

The internet allows there to be a greater discussion on artworks and gives the viewer a
place in which they are able to share their own ideas. By being able to place artworks online they
are able to reach more people and therefore the art is able to transcend beyond the artist. Because
of the internet, art is able to reach more people and therefore it becomes the viewers property
because it is now in their hands to decipher it and analyze it in any way they choose. In order for
the artwork to continue to be analyzed the creator of it must release it to the public and the
internet becomes a network in which the artwork can reach many people.