INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

TEXT, DISCOURSE, DECONSTRUCTION
AND AN EXPLORATION OF SELF:
A DISRUPTIVE ~~MODEL~~
FOR POSTMODERN ART EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Jane S. Gooding Brown, M.Art Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1997

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Sydney Walker, Co-Adviser

Professor Michael Parsons, Co-Adviser

Professor Terry Barrett

Professor Stephen Melville

Approved by

Co-Advisers

Department of Art Education

UMI Number: 9801696

Copyright 1997 by
Gooding Brown, Jane Susan

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9801696
Copyright 1997, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Copyright by
Jane S. Gooding Brown
1997

ABSTRACT

With the development of disciplined based art education we need to have a way to unpack and 'repack', through techniques of postmodern critical activity, interpretations of meanings in art texts in such a way as to understand and expand upon concepts of self and difference. In this study, I have investigated the problem of a postmodern perspective for interrogating interpretations of meanings in art texts. Such a perspective uses poststructuralist approaches to interpretation and meaning in order to disrupt modernist assumptions of fixed meaning in art texts. I believe that the consequences of such a perspective ultimately lead to an understanding of how interpretations (of meanings) have been socially and historically constructed by discursive practices and how the experience of interpretation contributes to an exploration of self and identity.

This study has been framed by the different theoretical positions of the French poststructuralists, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. As the concept of discursive positioning in constituting interpretation is important in this study, Foucault's understanding of discourses and the self has been examined. As deconstruction as critical activity is also important, Derrida's writing has been examined in order to develop strategies of text deconstruction. The resulting poststructuralist perspectives have been used in the methodology of the research problem. They have also been used to develop a postmodern disruptive ~~model~~ which allows for the interpretations of

meanings in art texts to be understood as discursive practices. In understanding that discursive practices and positions constitute interpretations, students may be led, self reflexively, to an exploration of self and difference through those interpretations. The ~~model~~ may also be developed as a different 'genre' of art writing, the visual verbal. The word 'model' is ~~struck through~~ to indicate its inappropriateness as a concept but its convenience as a word.

In understanding discursive practices, students may see their own shifting positions in discourses and understand how those positionalities constitute and condition their interpretations of the world. This has important implications for multicultural concepts in art education. The empowering of students by the personal construction and understanding of aesthetic knowledge and knowledge of self allows for greater expansion of interpretations, critical thinking, multicultural thinking and innovative 'risk taking' in their everyday experiences.

The implications of subjectivity and understanding of self for critical art theory and critical thinking at the senior school level are significant. If students are able to understand and recognize their own and other's positioning in particular and different discourses they can examine their own interpretations through their relationship with the discourses embedded in art texts. By deconstructing the discourses in art texts and positioning themselves in those discourses, students can begin to see their selves in the world as social beings and see how they link with others. Their interpretations of meanings in all art texts and of the world become richer and more numerous. Students, in understanding how different positionalities in different discourses interconnect and interact, may also critically think about programs in art education such as multiculturalism which could become as a whole irrelevant in their postmodern worldview.

To my mother
Sheila Teresa Hoskin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have offered me uncompromised intellectual and emotional support while I wrote this dissertation. My sincere thanks go to my committee, Sydney Walker, Michael Parsons, Stephen Melville and Terry Barrett, for their encouragement of my ideas and my writing. In particular, Sydney Walker has given me constant assistance and encouragement from the moment that I first arrived at OSU. She has steered my thinking along interesting and diverse paths, played the devil's advocate with difficult conceptual questions and has always had time to read and re-read my work even when her own commitments were pressing. These people have made my journey from one particular time and space to another place, scary, exciting, fulfilling and possible.

I will always be grateful to my Australian friends for their support and care packages. My thanks to Graeme Sullivan for the question--and answer, "Well, what about OSU?". The long and stimulating conversations with my fellow graduate students at OSU have been invaluable. Everyone in the Art Education Departmental office has made my life, so far from home, easier.

While so far from home, my family, particularly my mother, has given me tremendous emotional support and have never stopped believing in me. They helped smooth difficult patches and allowed me to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

VITA

October 25, 1943.....	Born - Sydney, Australia
1965.....	Art Teaching Certificate, Sydney Teachers College, University of Sydney.
1982.....	B.Art Education, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.
1988.....	Diploma of Professional Art Studies, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.
1992.....	M.Art Education, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.
1966-1995.....	Visual Arts Teacher, N.S.W. Department of Education & SCECGS Redlands, Sydney.

PUBLICATIONS

Gooding Brown, J. (forthcoming). Text, discourse and deconstruction in a postmodern art education. *Zurmuehlen Conference Papers* . NAEA.

FIELD OF STUDY

Major field: Art Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Vita.....	vi
Chapters:	
1. Introduction.....	1
My Worldview.....	2
A Problem for Art Education.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Issues of Significance.....	5
Text.....	6
The Role of the Art Text.....	6
Interpretation.....	7
Discourse and the Self.....	7
Deconstruction.....	9
Methodology.....	10
Feminist Qualitative Research.....	10
A Case Study.....	11
Text Deconstruction.....	11
A Disruptive Model.....	12
The Visual Verbal.....	13
Limitations of the Study.....	14
Purpose and Significance of the Study.....	15

2. Postmodernism	
Introduction.....	17
Postmodern Issues.....	17
A Decentering of Modernism.....	21
Difference.....	27
Postmodernism as Resistance.....	27
Self reflection as Postmodern Self Reflexivity.....	29
Postmodern Temporality.....	32
Intertextuality.....	32
The Postmodern Text.....	33
3. Poststructuralism, Discourses and Deconstruction	
Introduction.....	38
Poststructuralism's Concern with Language.....	38
Poststructuralist Displacement of Self.....	39
Agency in the Poststructuralist Self.....	42
Foucault and Derrida.....	44
Terms of Self.....	45
Restoration of Self and Agency.....	46
Agency and Resistance.....	49
Resistance and Interpretation.....	51
Discourses.....	52
Power.....	53
Major and Minor Discourses.....	55
Dominant and Marginalized Practices.....	56
Unity of Discourses.....	57
Deconstructing the Unity of Discourses.....	57
Discursive Positioning.....	60
Deconstruction as Critical Activity.....	62
Oppositions.....	64
Disrupting the Center.....	65
Close Reading of the Marginal and Ambiguous.....	65
Intertextuality.....	66
My Standpoint.....	67
Strategies of Deconstruction.....	67
Strategies Concerning Oppositions.....	68

Strategies to Interrogate Dominant Interpretations.....	69
Strategies for Unpacking the Marginal and Ambiguous.....	70
Strategies Involving Intertextuality.....	72
Conclusion.....	73
 4. Research Methodology	
Methodology.....	74
Restating the Problem.....	74
Overview of Feminist Qualitative Research.....	74
Personal Methods of Research.....	75
Theoretical Framework.....	76
The Case Study	
Overview of Case Study Method.....	76
The Case Study in the Project.....	77
Research Questions.....	79
Research Data	
Art Criticism Classes.....	79
Critical Writing about the Art of Sandy Skoglund.....	81
Methods of Data Interpretation	
Text Deconstruction.....	82
Initial Analysis of Student Responses.....	82
Categories for Text Deconstruction of Student Responses.....	83
Explanation of Categories.....	84
The Disruptive Model as part of Methodology.....	85
 5. Data Analysis	
Introduction.....	86
Identifying the Authoritative Interpretation.....	88
The Critic's Writing.....	88
The Artist's Statements.....	90
The Researcher's Notes.....	91
Summary.....	93
Analysis of Student Responses.....	93
Explanation of Analysis.....	93

North Sydney Boys' High School	
Lesson 1.....	94
Summary.....	105
Lesson 2.....	106
Summary.....	112
Lesson 3.....	112
Summary	116
North Sydney Girls' High School	
Lesson 1.....	116
Summary.....	121
Lesson 2.....	122
Summary.....	126
Lesson 3.....	126
Summary.....	129
My Teaching Strategies.....	130
Conclusion.....	135
 6. The Disruptive Model and Implications for Art Education	
Introduction.....	136
The Disruptive Model in an Educational Setting.....	136
The Disruptive Model.....	137
Teaching Strategies.....	143
Conclusion.....	143
Disruption in Educational Practice.....	144
Postmodern Writing Genres and the Visual Verbal.....	149
Implication for a Postmodern Art Education.....	151
 Appendix	
Figure 1. Spirituality in the Flesh.....	155
Figure 2. Body Limits.....	156
Figure 3. The Cocktail Party.....	157
Figure 4. Atomic Love.....	158
 Postscript.....	159
References.....	164

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study.

There is a need to reposition visual arts education away from the modernist approaches which have dominated this discipline for more than 50 years and move it into the particular postmodern way of thinking which is characterizing much of the cultural life of the late 20th century. In recent developments in American art education there has been the recognition of the necessary inclusion and intermeshing of the disciplines of art history, art criticism and aesthetics with studio practice. This means a more informed, polysemic, different world view via the visual arts can be included in the curriculum. The development of postmodern approaches and strategies in this expanded field of art education must reflect the continuing recognition and significance of difference, a vital postmodern issue, now occurring in our society.

In the State controlled secondary (Year 7-12) education system of New South Wales, Australia in which this study is located, the interrelationship of the disciplines of studio practice, art history, art criticism and aesthetics has been the basis of the State mandated Visual Arts syllabus for a number of years. The disciplines incorporate the processes of practitioners in the field of the visual arts with artists, art historians and art critics as models for inquiry. Visual Arts is a subject area which students elect in Year 8 (aged 14)

and, like other electives, extends through to Year 12 where it involves examination in the Higher School Certificate, a high school exit and a university entrance examination similar to the British General Certificate of Education or the International Baccalaureate. Students electing Visual Arts therefore have a number of years of in depth study in the disciplines of art education. Recently (1994), in a revision of the Visual Arts syllabus, there has been a realignment of the disciplines to recognize that aesthetic theory permeates all disciplines of art education and therefore aesthetics has been 'excluded' as a discrete study. As part of this revision there has been the inclusion, into the syllabus, of a postmodern framework, along with cultural, subjective and expressive frameworks, through which students and teachers can approach art practice, criticism and history. This is a timely acknowledgement of a postmodern plurality. Although I situate my study against an Australian background, there are significant implications for visual arts education, and for education in general, for a world wide perspective.

My Worldview

Since the Second World War there has been a 'rethinking' about how we understand the world. We have tended to call this thinking, postmodern. When I rethink the world as postmodern I understand that it can no longer be seen as an overarching monoculture or as dominant patriarchal discourses (white and Eurocentric) with 'outsider' marginalized subcultures and ex-centric groups, existing on the fringes. The promotion and the inclusion, into the dominant discourses, of these previously marginalized voices, is necessary for the continued functioning of society in general. If we believe that the 'grand' narratives of modernism have lost their credibility (Lyotard, 1984) under critical interrogation, and have had to give up their claims to Truth. In some ways they appear to have been displaced by "the contingent, messy, boundless, infinitely particular, and endlessly still to be explained" (Murdoch in Lather, 1991, p.6) narrative. Likewise, the subject, having been decentered by modernist and structuralist practices is now "refashioned as a site of disarray and conflict inscribed by multiple contestatory

discourses” (Lather, 1991, p.5). The notion of multiple interpretations and inscriptions, of cultures and of self, emphasizes and privileges the concept of difference. Ricoeur (in Foster, 1983) observes:

When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly. . . we are threatened with the destruction of our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just *others*, that we ourselves are an ‘other’ among others (p.57).

It is therefore in this postmodern ‘condition’ that I no longer see my world in terms of ‘right’ answers or single meaning when the notion of difference brings with it different interpretations of self and identity and the world. The particular ways I interpret experiences and meanings of self and identity in the world are socially and historically constituted by all discourses or discursive practices. Further I am particularly constituted by those in which I am more dominantly positioned, woman, white, middle class, heterosexual, mother, teacher, student, post colonial. However, all discursive practices constitute who I am. Moreover, the particular interpretations of others in the world, constituted by discursive practices, also contribute to my concept of self. The experience of interpretation and the interpretation of experience adds to my own concept of self and identity. It is, therefore, my belief is that everyone makes interpretations of meanings or ‘sees’ their world differently, and constructs identities, through, and because of, their positionalities in the practices of all discourses.

Visual arts education, situated in a postmodern framework, is uniquely positioned to examine those different interpretations and identities. An acknowledgement of postmodern difference also means the inclusion of art genres which were previously marginalized by being called ‘craft’; or by being the traditional art of ethnic or racial groups; or by being the art texts produced by new or non ‘traditional’ technology; or art texts identified as

particularly women's or homosexual's or children's. Equally important for inclusion here are the art texts¹ of our own students.

A Problem for Art Education

One project for research in art education, particularly in art criticism, should be the investigation of a postmodern perspective for interrogating interpretations of meanings in art texts. Such a perspective involves taking poststructuralist approaches to interpretation and meaning in order to disrupt modernist assumptions of fixed meaning in art texts. The consequences of such a perspective ultimately lead to an understanding of how interpretations (of meanings) have been socially and historically constructed by discursive practices and how the experience of interpretation contributes to an exploration of self and identity. We need to have a way to unpack and 'repack', through techniques of postmodern critical activity, those rich, dense interpretations of meanings in art texts in such a way as to understand and expand upon concepts of self and identity and difference. The visual arts have been involved this century in the exploration of the artist's self and identity. In this postmodern condition the viewer of art is also involved in an exploration of self and identity.

Theoretical Framework

In this study the French theorists, Jacques Derrida (1976, 1978) and Michel Foucault (1972, 1973, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1986) offer the primary sources for an understanding of poststructuralist theory. These theorists afford me opportunities to disrupt art texts. Foucault gives me opportunities to examine discourses and practices of the self. Derrida's deconstructive play with language directs me to possible strategies of writing interpretation and the strategies of deconstruction give me 'disruptive' methods of entering art texts.

For further discussion of both postmodern and poststructuralist issues I looked to Roland Barthes, (1975, 1977), Bernauer and Rasmussen (1988), Jonathan Culler (1982).

¹Throughout this project I use the word 'text' to refer to all art works and art writing.

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), Linda Hutcheon (1988), Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984), Brenda Marshall (1992), Stephen Melville (1986), Readings and Schaber (1993), Paul Smith (1988) and Robert Young (1981). I have examined such writers as Terry Eagleton (1987) and Robert Scholes (1985) from postmodern literary theory; Lois McNay (1992), Jana Sawicki (1991) and Chris Weedon (1987) from feminist theory; Cleo Cherryholmes (1988), Henry Giroux (1989a) and Patti Lather (1991) from educational theory and Kenneth Gergen (1991) from psychology. I am also informed by my readings of critical theory, art criticism, 'new' art history and aesthetics.

Postmodern poststructuralist research and writing initiated in art education is limited. Efland, Freedman & Stuhr (1996) have published an overview of postmodern strategies for curriculum development. Roger Clark (1996) has written on postmodern pedagogy. Graeme Sullivan (1993) has examined the postmodern phenomena in art education. Debates centered around the concept of disciplines in relation to the Getty funded research into Discipline Based Art Education have not taken this theoretical path. A number of art educators have examined the nature of interpretation of meanings in art texts. Terry Barrett's (1994) work in art criticism examines the use of postmodernist theory by art critics and elucidates postmodernist critical strategies for interpretation. Elizabeth Garber (1989) examines feminist art criticism in relation to art education. Anne Wolcott (1991) uses Danto's theory of the artworld as a foundation for interpreting art works. Michael Parsons (1992) has looked at interpretation as cognition and emphasizes the importance and role of language but without privileging either speech or writing.

Issues of Significance

Issues which inform and which are examined in this study involve the concept of text, interpretation, discourse, and the poststructural activities of deconstruction and disruption. Although these issues are addressed fully in other chapters it is necessary to briefly explain them in this introductory chapter.

Text

I believe that “A text can be considered as [any] system of signification – pictural (*sic*), [oneiric], filmic, as well as literary -- whose devices of meaning go beyond the linguistics of the sign.” (Ropars in Mowitt, 1992, p.167) and “Text in general is any system of marks, traces, referrals. . .” (Bennington in Papadakis et al, 1989, p.84). In using the word ‘text’ I am tentatively referring to the broad postmodern view of ‘text’ as that which can be ‘written’, ‘produced’ or ‘read’, that allows the viewer to enter at any point, and is ‘overpopulated’ with the practices of discourses. In substituting the word ‘text’ for ‘work’, I acknowledge Barthes’s distinction that the ‘work’ is a closed structure already permeated with meaning waiting to be deciphered, while text is “irreducibly plural, an endless play of signifiers which can never be finally nailed down to a single centre, essence or meaning” (Eagleton 1987, p.138).

This idea of text is important to postmodern practice of discourses. Postmodern texts combine two important drifts; they are part of Foucauldian discursive practices, and they contain the Derridean network of traces which enables them to be deconstructed and reconstructed in “a seamless weave of codes and fragments of codes. . .”(Eagleton, 1983, p.138). Lather’s (1991) statement is significant in the relationship between text and discourses in this study. She notes that “we cannot exhaust the meanings of the text, . . . a text can participate in multiple meanings without being reduced to any one, and . . . *our different positionalities* affect our reading of it.” (my emphasis, Lather, 1991, p.145).

The role of the art text

I understand in this postmodern condition that the emphasis in looking at the art text is not to see it as a vehicle for individual genius. Nor do I see the art text as a direct expression of the artist’s personality, or that it is an expression of an eternal Truth untainted by issues of the social world (Rees and Borzello, 1986). Without pushing the art text to the other extreme articulated by some new art historians, in looking only at the art text as a illustration of social issues, I use art as a text intentionally created by an artist

constituted in discursive practices, which is acted upon by all other texts in the world. The art text represents within it, the embeddedness of social, historical discourses, yet maintains a quality which makes it art and not something else, an issue I will not pursue in this study. In focusing on the art text in this study, it is not to know the text as aesthetic object but to understand it as a site through which to look at self, an opening for opportunities regarding self and identity.

Interpretation

Interpretation is understood to be the major task of critical inquiry where the art text is made to reveal or give up meanings. Those meanings or what the art text is 'about' may be revealed or given up to the viewer in a number of ways. In my study, interpretation turns towards, not what a particular text means as art, but how the discursive practices embedded in the art text's meanings can be unpacked and situated in the social world. Interpretation acts as interpreter or translator of meanings into discursive practices. The viewer, in positioning herself in these discursive practices, positions herself in the art text. An awareness of complex positioning within the discursive practices of the art text's interpretation, within the discursive practices of the art world itself and within the discursive practices of interpretation, allows the viewer to interact with the art text both as an experience of aesthetic object and of social construction thus reconnecting the link between the aesthetic and the social world. Interpretation also acts here as a technique of the self (Foucault 1986). In realizing that one's own interpretations are constructed by one's variable positioning in discourses, an understanding of the constructedness of self and of the world may lead one to an awareness of the potential for choice or change.

Discourse and the Self

My study involves in part the recognition of the world as a web or network of interconnecting social discourses and in choosing to use the word 'discourse' I am fully aware of its difficulty as a concept because of its many conflicting and overlapping

definitions. Using Foucault, I define discourse as a way of constituting knowledge about an object, via a system of discursive practices. Foucault (1972) recognizes discourses “as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs: but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things” (p.49). To this definition I would add Martin Jay’s (1993) characterization of discourse as a loose shifting system of practices; statements, associations and metaphors, which form the objects of discourse. I use the words ‘discourses’ and ‘discursive practices’ interchangeably throughout this study.

Coupled with this understanding of the constitution of objects by discursive practices is an analysis, articulated in Foucault’s last writings, of how the individual comes to know her/himself as a subject. Foucault calls the process by which the individual reaches such an understanding, techniques or practices of the self. I will maintain in this study that interpretation is a practice of the self. My understanding of discourses is elaborated in Chapter 3 of this study.

For this study I assume ‘subject’, ‘subjectivity’ and ‘self’ as terms applying to an individual in society constituted by discursive practices and brought into being by self reflexive activity. I understand identity as the experience of self. Throughout the study I will use the terms ‘self’ and ‘discursive positions’ (in preference to and explanation of ‘subject’ and ‘subjectivity’). The term ‘discursive position’ refers to that position in particular discourses either marginal or dominant which the subject assumes in particular contexts. The terms ‘agency’ and ‘agents’ will be used to explain actions and individuals who can potentially make critical decisions and actions for the purpose of resistance leading to some form of transformation or emancipatory change.

The most relevant understanding of self for my study comes out of feminist theory with the concept of a multiple, shifting and often contradictory identity, being contradictory because of its being representative of many discourses. My belief therefore, is that our selves are positioned differently, that they are unstable and shift about within discourses. One’s interpretations of meanings are constituted by the discursive practices in

which one is positioned either dominantly or marginally. It is the differing discursive practices ranging from the material ordering of one's day to day experiences to the spiritual significance that one attaches to one's activities that Foucault understands as the ways in which individuals give meaning to their activities and seek to interpret their experiences. Commenting on Foucault's understanding of self, McNay (1992) states that any individual's life is determined by multiple discursive practices which overlap, conflict, interlink with each other producing differing effects. It is against this 'background' of discursive practices that individuals act upon themselves and order their own lives in numerous ways (Foucault's practices of the self). In understanding the discursive constructedness of self I also understand the autonomy and agency that I can exercise in the practices of my life. For instance, I see myself positioned in the different discourses of woman, which intersect and interlink with other discourses to enable experiences of what it is for me to be a woman; to produce a recognition of my own selves. An exploration of self and agency in adopting positionalities and making interpretations is made in Chapter 3.

Deconstruction

Deconstruction is the name given to the textual critical activity which can decenter authoritative centers or undermine those hierarchical oppositions. Derridean deconstruction as critical activity according to Harari (1979) upsets the epistemological foundation going beyond the central concept of structuralism, the sign, by seeing the possibility "of separating the order of the signified from the order of the signifier in the functioning of the sign". (p.29). He describes deconstruction as "the tracing of a path among textual strata in order to stir up and expose forgotten and dormant sediments of meaning which have accumulated and settled into the text's fabric... deconstruction is really more of a technique of *de-sedimentation*. . . a technique of de-sedimenting the text in order to allow what was *always already* inscribed in its texture to resurface." (p.37) This accords with my own understanding of deconstruction as a metaphor of constant unraveling or disrupting, undisturbed and forgotten layers and weaves of text, allowing

further or different meaning, which is always already embedded in the text, to be revealed. Culler (1982) writes about deconstructive criticism as the pursuit of differences which can never reach final conclusions.

Methodology

Feminist Qualitative Research

The methodology for research in this study is conditioned by the way I learn about and understand the world. My belief about knowledge is articulated by the feminist writer, Dale Spender (in Reinhartz, 1992): that “at the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge” (p.7). My method therefore is to use and integrate a number of data gathering strategies which provide me with a dense network, an excess, of information. With this network I can separate, add to, multiply, sift through, repeat, transform, deconstruct and reconstruct this information. Lather’s (1991) statement that the methodological task has become one of “generating and refining more interactive, contextualized methods in the search for . . . meaning[s] rather than prediction and control” (p.72) fits with the research strategies, particularly text deconstruction in this study.

As a feminist researcher I state my position in the major discourses of woman and education in relation to this research. I acknowledge conflicts in my experiences within those discourses, for example, experiences as a mother may conflict with experiences as an educator. I also articulate how my experiences as a feminist within those discourses may influence the research project and the data. By stating this I am avoiding an objectivist stance where the researcher is invisible. In other words, my “beliefs and behaviors. . .are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of research” (Harding, 1987, P.9). To do feminist research is to acknowledge gender as a particular relationship in all discursive practices in our lives.

A Case Study

A case study methodology allows me to incorporate a number of data gathering strategies. These strategies look at student's conversations in a number of art criticism classes which use particular contemporary art texts for discussion. They look at visual verbals² as writings of these same students, the writings of professional art critics and art educators who have used the same art texts for interpretation and interviews with the artist. My own journal, in which I recorded my interpretations of experiences during the research study, is also examined. The artist whose work I use in this study is the contemporary installation artist and a photographer, Sandy Skoglund.

The students chosen for this study were Year 11 art students, preparing for their final university entrance examination in Year 12. These students attend schools for gifted students in Sydney, Australia, schools which have reputations for 'excellence' in the visual arts. The use of the conversation and writing of 'gifted' students allows for an 'expert student' viewpoint and focuses on students who are 'unusual' thus allowing for the collection of information which is rich and dense (purposeful sampling, Patton 1980).

Text Deconstruction

The methodology is informed by my understanding of Foucault (1972, 1973) and Derrida (1976, 1978). From Foucault, an understanding of the concepts of discourses allows me to illuminate discursive practices in art texts. The concepts located in the writings of Derrida are used to (post)'structure' or conceptualize a 'loose system' of textual analysis or textual deconstruction of the conversations and writing of these secondary school students, of the artist, of writings of the selected professional art critics and art educators and my own reflective journal writing.

² The term 'visual verbal' came out of support documents associated with the Visual Arts Syllabus, Board of Studies, N.S.W., Australia, in the 1980's. These documents were written by a committee of art educators employed by the Board of Studies.

A Disruptive Model

From the research data gathered out of the case study, I propose a disruptive ~~model~~ of interpretation for art criticism. This model may be used as a self reflexive model which allows students to look at themselves as social constructions, for who they are and how they might have become who they are. My aim is to enhance student understanding of the construction of discursive practices in the world, and, particularly of the social construction of self.

My belief, supported by Bowers and Lather (in Lather, 1991), is that reflexivity and critique are two essential skills that we want our students to develop. Students in modernist structures of educational practices rarely find themselves with access to knowledge and skills, strategies, which they need to be self reflexive. So I am looking beyond the practices of structuralism, in developing a model which uses postmodern art educational practices, to give students strategies to be reflexive about the constructedness of the world.

The ~~model~~ developed in my study is a disruptive one in that it proposes to critically dismantle practices that surround and involve the interpretations of meaning in art texts. My reason for choosing to strike through the word 'model', is that I consider that the word is inadequate, but necessary. The word 'model' is often used in structuralist theory and its connotations of structure, pattern, system, would be inappropriate in this poststructuralist project without some modifications. By ~~striking through~~ the word and printing it, I am both allowing and rejecting these connotations of 'model'. In using 'disruptive' I refer to the Derridean use of that which seems to occur in a structure when it is subjected to close reading or critical dismantling. Close reading or the critical dismantling of a text implies scrupulous attention to that within the text which appears resistant to reading. Culler (1982) notes that close readings seem "to depend on the investigation of possibilities that would be neglected or eliminated by other readings and that are neglected precisely because they would disrupt the focus or continuity of readings which their elimination makes possible" (p. 246). I examine the concept of 'disruption' in educational practices as an

implication of this study in Chapter 6.

The 'disruptive' ~~model~~ will be used for interrogation of interpretation of meaning as discursive practice. It becomes self reflexive conversation as students explore their positions in discursive practices revealed in art texts and reflect on the constructed nature of those practices. Students come to see that not only their own interpretations of meanings in art texts are constructed from discursive practices but also that the experience of interpretation is constructed out of and constructs their concepts of self. When I talk of deconstructive art critical practice I am inventing a critical practice out of pieces of my interpretation of Derridean and Foucauldian strategies of thinking and writing. The 'disruptive' ~~model~~ will vary each time it is used and there will probably be no 'answers', but I would hope that there would be critical and reflexive thought about one's self in the world.

I propose to develop the 'disruptive' ~~model~~ further as a postmodern 'writing' genre for use by students when interpreting art texts. The student becomes another producer of text, traced through other texts and discourses. It will be developed as a 'palimpsestic'³ project, an alternative process to traditional interpretive art 'writing'. Students, through deconstructive and reconstructive strategies can continue to interrogate their palimpsestic texts to understand further from where their own interpretations are coming.

The Visual Verbal⁴.

As I see the 'disruptive' ~~model~~ having an optional visual verbal or postmodern 'writing' genre in which to further explore positioning in discursive practices, what is important is an examination of writing and imaging. The concept of the visual verbal as a means of writing about interpretation is one I have used over a number of years and which has a

³Palimpsestic : from 'palimpsest', the concept of reading one text through another or one text doubling for another or extracting a new text from an old one.

⁴ See footnote on Page 11 for an explanation of the 'origins' of this term.

history in visual arts education in N.S.W., Australia. From my own experience, there have been various ways by which art teachers and students have approached the visual verbal depending on the art text itself but it is the use of collage and montage which is important. It is the appropriative quality, the palimpsestic nature, of the visual verbal which particularly characterizes it as postmodern.

It is particularly important to understand and exploit the possibilities of the manipulation of word and image in making meanings in this ~~model~~. Students need to be able to see 'writing' about art texts as a number of writing and art genres moving between image and word. They need to understand that this writing genre is fluid and flexible, not bound by anachronistic limitations and demarcations. What this 'genre' does is to move from the dominant practices of critical writing to the marginalized practices of 'writing' in order to explore and expand polysemic interpretations of words, images and spaces. The creating of other texts through which to interpret meanings in art texts may give students a better method to understand their positions in discourses. The distancing or spacing of art texts from the student allows a non threatening forum for exploration of positionality and interpretation of meanings.

Limitations of This Study

Although I assume and acknowledge other systems of interpretation and art criticism and recognize that they inform my work, I do not examine them in relation to this study. The modernist framework has influenced my teaching in art criticism for many years and its incompatibility with my own ideology of interpretation has formed the catalyst for change. I make the assumption that interpretations of meanings in art texts are not 'found' by looking but that we actively engage with the text's discursive practices in order to find meaning that explains self, identity and difference. The art text and the viewer can act together to extend meaning into the social world.

While acknowledging the significance of the postmodern and poststructuralism as theoretical frameworks, I have limited my examination of these to areas which are most

relevant to this study. For instance, in my examination of deconstruction as critical activity, I extracted from the writing of Derrida (1976, 1978), only those strategies which are most useful for my study. I assume the importance of the postmodern and poststructuralism and although I make some comparisons with modernism, I have not examined these contrasting assumptions in any depth. From Foucault's (1972) writing on discourse, I have extracted a particular personal understanding of discourse which fits with the way I want to use interpretation and the concept of positioning in this study.

The issues are explored in a limited case study of two high school art classes in Sydney, Australia. The postmodern case study defies the traditional convention of looking for generalizations and instead looks for specificity or even exceptions. The data from this case study of a specific site and specific participants has heuristic value—while it will not be generalizable it will suggest different directions for the development of a disruptive model in the practice of art criticism.

Purpose and Significance of the Study.

This study proposes to develop a postmodern disruptive ~~model~~ for the interpretations of meanings in art texts leading to an exploration of self and self reflexivity through those interpretations. The ~~model~~ may also be developed into a different 'genre' of art writing, the visual verbal. In understanding the social practices of discourses, students could come to see their own shifting positions in discourses and understand how those positionalities constitute and condition their interpretations of the world. This has important implications for multicultural concepts in art education. The empowering of students by the personal construction and understanding of aesthetic knowledge and knowledge of self allows for greater expansion of interpretations, critical thinking, multicultural thinking and innovative 'risk taking' in their everyday experiences.

Postmodern poststructuralist concepts bring with them disruptive, contradictory, ambiguous, disparate ways of understanding the world. Students need to see that these are rich and dense areas for interpreting and making meanings. With the development of

disciplined based art education and multiculturalism we need to have, in visual arts education, a way to unpack and 'repack', through techniques of postmodern critical activity, those rich, dense polysemic interpretations of meanings in art texts in such a way as to understand and expand upon concepts of self and difference.

The implications of subjectivity and understanding of self for critical art theory and critical thinking at the senior school level are significant. If students are able to understand and recognize their own and other's positioning in particular and different discourses they can examine their own interpretations through their relationship with the discourses embedded in art texts. By deconstructing the discourses in art texts for polysemic interpretations students can begin to see their selves in the world as social beings and see how they link with others. Their interpretations of meanings in all art texts and of the world become richer and more numerous. Students, in understanding how different positionalities in different discourses interconnect and interact may also critically think about programs in art education such as multiculturalism which could become as a whole irrelevant in their postmodern worldview.

CHAPTER 2

POSTMODERNISM

Introduction

In this chapter I propose to give a view of postmodernism as cultural phenomena and examine the issues and explanations of postmodernism from selected theorists and writers whose work has relevance to my study. There are many theorists, writers, critics, architects and artists who have made major contributions to the debate on postmodernism and there continues to be many attempts to pin down a succinct definition of postmodernism which reins in all of its loose ends and threads. One does not find total agreement among writers and there are often areas of repetition and overlapping among these definitions. The desire for definition and closure is a strong modernist impulse. I want to resist this desire because I believe that any attempt at definition, as Lather (1991) points out, “domesticates, analytically fixes and mobilizes pro and contra positions” (p.5). Therefore I propose to use the terms ‘postmodern issues’ and ‘postmodern explanations’ in this study rather than ‘postmodern definitions’. Postmodernism appears in writing variously as ‘the postmodern’ or ‘the postmodern moment’ or ‘event’. I will endeavor to use the terms ‘the postmodern’, ‘postmodernism’ and ‘postmodernist’ throughout this study.

Postmodern Issues

Although the prefix 'post' ('after') seems to defer to a modernist concept of time, postmodernism doesn't appear as a chronological moment even when apparent instances of postmodernism spring up in literature and art throughout the time lines of Western history (Readings and Schaber 1993). In this study, I prefer to acknowledge the ambiguity of the prefix 'post' which as well as indicating 'after' or 'following' can also indicate 'behind' or 'in pursuit'. (Oxford Dictionary of Current English 1992). This ambiguity has led Eco (in Jencks 1992) to speculate on postmodernism as another form of metahistory cutting through all periods and types of history in much the way that mannerism recurs at different intervals. Jencks (1992) sees postmodernist art and architecture as a chronological continuation of modernism moving from absolute aesthetic purity to an acknowledgement of aesthetic involvement in the wider cultural and ideological world.

Linda Hutcheon (1988) argues for the postmodern as a "contradictory phenomenon" (p.3), a cultural activity which can be discerned in "many currents of thought today" (p.4) but which cannot be used as a synonym for the contemporary. These contradictions are evident in her explanations of postmodernism's relation to history as "the presence of the past" (p.4). She understands this not to be a nostalgic but a critical return and a reworking of past cultural practice to create an "ironic dialogue with the past" in the present (p.4). Hutcheon offers a Derridean poststructuralist process of decentering or disrupting the totalizing concepts of modernism by questioning the very central authority of those concepts in their relation to postmodern experience.

Since the 1950's and 1960's the foundations of modernist social practices and modernist systems of thought in all cultural areas have been challenged. These foundations have been challenged by a resistance to, or what Lyotard (1984) has called, "an incredulity towards metanarratives" (p. xxiv). By metanarratives he is referring to those totalizing truths or 'fictions' by which Western culture has organized knowledge in the last two hundred years. The resistance to these truths comes in the wake of events like Auschwitz and the Paris riots of 1968 (Lyotard 1984). These foundations of modernist

practice have also been shaken by various silenced marginalized groups and their insistence on being heard.

The controversies about what is happening culturally in the late 20th century can be explained by the crisis of modernism's failure to survive these challenges and the consequences which flow from this; and by the growing critical awareness of layers of thought within modernism which are not modernist, but which can be called postmodernist. Postmodernism exists behind and in between, as shadow, as 'other' and has emerged in response to these challenges to the rational sense and authority of modernism as a desire for the particular, the different and the localized.

Self reflection, which is already present in modernist thinking takes on a much more crucial role in postmodernism. Modernist self reflection maintained itself as a watchful scientific eye on modernist practices in their search for objective or 'essential truths'. However, as a consequence of postmodernist rethinking and questioning of modernist structures and concepts, especially such concepts as an objective account of truth and the notion of a unified and autonomous self, self reflection become reflexive, that is, more conscious of an awareness of looking and questioning, and takes on a more doubting role. Kenneth Gergen (1991) believes that as we move from modernist essentialist reality to a postmodernist construction of realities we move into a focus of reflective doubt--a doubt of all authority and of all truths (p.134). This self reflection is also acknowledged by Hutcheon (1988) as a necessary concept in understanding strategies of irony, parody, pastiche or appropriation involved in the paradoxes of postmodernism.

For Brenda Marshall (1992) postmodernism demands "an awareness of being-within a way of thinking" (p.2). An 'awareness of being-within a way of thinking' is a self reflective process. This self reflection indicates that we are in a paradigm of thought even when we cannot say how that paradigm works (p. 3). She posits two particular concerns of postmodernism coming from this self reflection and her reading of Derrida and Foucault: one is a concern about language, its control of meaning and its constitution of self; and the other is an emphasis on difference and power.

Postmodernism is also seen as a temporal gap in the modernist thinking of time as successive and progressive. The words 'postmodern event' appear frequently as do 'postmodern moment' in relation to modernism indicating an ambiguity towards time conceived by many writers. The temporal gap is explained by Lyotard (in Readings & Schaber, 1993) as the the time of "the event" (p.11), the "event" being the occurrence after which nothing will ever be the same again. "History will never be the same after the French Revolution. The revolution can only be understood elsewhere, in another history, for which it is no longer an event." (p.11). This temporal gap, a 'play' of time, allows postmodern artists and writers to double back into the past, to parody and appropriate and 're-present ' the past in the present. The temporal gap also interferes with and brings into question the notion of 'original'. Baudrillard (1988), commenting on the notion of the 'original', what is reality and what is representation, in a age of information technology, claims that the boundaries between what is original, what is real and what is simulation have imploded and that what we experience of these concepts is now the 'simulated but real', the postmodern simulacrum which now becomes another category of reality. He is in fact elaborating on the challenges to the Western logocentric tradition in which 'presence' is privileged over re-presentation. Speech in this tradition is privileged over writing because speech is closer to self consciousness, self presence. The challenges to this tradition by theorists like Derrida, Foucault and Barthes underscore all postmodern explanations of text.

The concepts of 'text' and 'work' developed by Roland Barthes have important implications for postmodernism. The move away from a modernist structuralist model of analysis to a poststructuralist critique allows text much more complex interpretation. Structuralist analysis understands that meaning is already in place in that which is being analyzed and by the use of a model of analysis produced from the system of rules underlying any signifying practices, meaning will be revealed or extracted. Barthes, in developing a linguistic model of analysis for a number of narratives, uncovered inherent contradictions which undermined the concepts of structuralism. In his writings from the

mid 1960's he critiques the premises of structuralism, as do theorists Derrida and Foucault. This very critiquing of structuralism is what we understand to be poststructuralism. Poststructuralism questions the structuralist model of analysis as a closed system, questions the concept of meaning being intrinsic to that (text) being analyzed, questions the ahistoricism of structuralism.

These issues and explanations of challenge and resistance to modernist concepts do not fully describe the complex ambiguity of postmodernism. In the remaining sections of this chapter I will examine the issues of decentering, of self reflection, of temporality, of resistance and the text in their relation to postmodernism for their relevance to my study.

A Decentering of Modernism

Such modernist structures or concepts as universality, the unity of the subject, rationality, objectivity, autonomy, closure, uniqueness, homogeneity, origin and temporality, have worked to keep their authority and integrity, avoiding any critical examination or self reflection by concentrating on the 'truth' or 'presence' or transcendental signified of these concepts. This truth or presence represents the center of the structure. The authoritative language of centers has been the dominant language. All other language and meaning, deemed irrelevant or inappropriate, has been relegated to the margins of the structure. Therefore the absolute prohibition of questioning the center, questioning its 'unquestionable' authority, has prevented the 'opening up' of this marginalized or suppressed language and meaning.

The concept of structure is as least as old as Western philosophy. Structures have always avoided any undermining of their integrity by having a center whose function, apart from orienting and organizing the structure, is to limit any movement or play away from the center, the 'truth', within the structure. The center is where all changes, substitutions and permutations stop. The center is 'origin' of the structure. Derrida notes (1978) that names for the center have been foundational beliefs and have been accorded an

unthinkable⁵ 'presence' - names like 'Origin', 'Consciousness', Idea, 'God', 'Essence', 'Subject', 'Man'.

Derrida's theoretical concept of the position and function of the center or central authority in a structure has important implications in any postmodernist study and particularly in my own study. Through his critique of structure, the questioning of the very structure of structure, Derrida disrupts or decenters the authority of the center through the free play of sign signifiers, to allow in other 'truths' from the margins. He does this in order to allow the structure to realize its unlimited and alternative meanings. It is relevant here, to ask why postmodernism through poststructuralism finds it necessary to revive knowledge previously relegated to the margins. 'Marginal' has meant 'excluded', 'forgotten', 'naïve' and in a modernist system has often been 'blamed' for disorderly, disruptive thought. However postmodernists see 'the marginal' as a resistant yet liberating concept. Feminists write about the peculiar advantages of being marginalized, in being distanced from the centers of power, thus allowing a freedom of position from which to critique the structures in which one is situated.

Foucault (1980) calls this marginalized knowledge "subjugated knowledges" (p.82) or forms of knowledge that have been "disqualified as inadequate to their task, . . . naïve knowledge, located low down in the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (p.82). This knowledge comes out of oppression, having lost its authority because of the dominance of a modernist and scientific search for objective truth. He posits as a poststructuralist alternative to traditional or modernist opposition that it is through this marginalized knowledge that resistance or criticism does its work. "It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept, rest. . . . In these circumstances, criticism . . . is absolutely indispensable for any transformation" (in Sawicki 1991.p.123). Thus reviving and interrogating marginalized knowledge serves a postmodern disruptive and critical function of promoting and defining difference as sites of

⁵ Derrida uses the word 'think' as 'think about' or 'question'. Therefore 'unthinkable' is unquestionable.

resistance to modernist universality.

Foucault's introduces a genealogical critique of structure as a method of restoring marginalized knowledge to the 'center' of the structure itself. However Derrida's poststructuralist approach decenters the authority of structure itself by putting under interrogation the very structure that forms structure. Derrida (1978) has argued that 'center' plays contradictory roles in a structure. He is not questioning its existence, as he sees the notion of structure without a center as untenable; but questions the center's contradictory positions in relation to the structure. Firstly, the center is the center of the totality of the structure but, secondly, it is also *of*, or not part of, the structure. So it is the authoritative foundational center which functions as control within the structure but it is also the overarching 'presence' of the structure *outside* the structure.

It is this contradiction of 'center is within' and 'center is outside' and the questions which follow which allow Derrida to continue to unravel the structure. He questions the 'presence', the foundation of the center concluding that the 'presence' is 'absent' because 'presence' is represented by a sign substitute. But the sign substitute which represents the 'presence' of the center cannot exist as substitute since nothing had conceivably existed before 'presence' which allows this substitution. Therefore the center is maintained by an ideological desire for a center and in fact there is no center which functions as central authority, no foundational 'origin' or belief. Derrida maintains that the 'center' functions therefore, not as a totalizing authority but as an area which allows a number of sign substitutions to come into play (p.280). Derrida (1978) argues that the closure or limiting of play is not desirable and not even possible and uses language in strategies of deconstruction to indicate this. He states: "[T]his was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of center or origin, everything became discourse, . . . a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences" (p.280).

It is this system of differences which allows the displacement or decentering of

structure to occur which in turn allows the play of signification. Derrida traces the critique of structure to a Nietzschean critique of metaphysics, a Freudian critique of self presence and a Heideggerean determination of Being as presence (p.280). In continuing to trace the contradictions uncovered when the central or transcendental signified is decentered and understanding how the play of signification is allowed, Derrida notes that the concept and word 'sign' must be rejected, which, contradictorily, cannot be done. 'Sign' has always been understood as 'sign of', a signifier referring to a signified, signifier different from signified. We cannot give up the concept of 'sign' because we cannot give up the concept of 'different from' or 'difference between' as a way of articulating meaning. . The way out of this dilemma for Derrida is to interrogate the system of difference between the signifier and the signified. Derrida introduces the notion of 'différance' where he plays with the identical sound in French, of the verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer'. Therefore both 'differ' and 'defer' can be heard and read in the space between the signifier and the signified. Therefore meaning is the product of difference or meaning is always deferred thus changing or even multiplying the meaning of the signified. However when we do this the signified loses its fixed meaning in relation to the signifier and becomes another signifier thus continuing the play of signification in a never ending process.

However postmodernism and poststructuralism do not decenter the authority of these structures in order that the margins become a new central authority, but that the margins and the center engage in 'play', that is, in a play of signification which allows continual pursuit and reflection upon new and different possibilities of meaning. It is the acknowledgement of difference that is a crucial factor in understanding postmodernism. Hutcheon (1988) believes that what is important in understanding the postmodern as a contradictory phenomenon "is the interrogating of the notion of consensus. Whatever narratives or systems that once allowed us to think we could unproblematically and universally define public agreement have now been questioned by the acknowledgment of differences" (p.7).

When centers are displaced we begin to see that their 'coherence' was really held

together by an ideological desire for coherence and order. The desire for a center, for unity and order, generates hierarchical oppositions. In decentering structures we put under interrogation not only the system of difference by which we make meaning but we also question the hierarchical nature of difference or oppositions which privileges the first part of the 'difference' over the other. In this structuralist sign system, the 'either/or' difference, the oppositional way of making meaning is a traditional philosophical concept Derrida most importantly challenges. He (1978) looks at the texts of Levi-Strauss's to expose as example, the contradictions in the opposition between nature and culture, an opposition "even older than Plato" (p.282). Levi-Strauss in his writing on kinship used this opposition in examining the incest prohibition but also found contradictions which he, as a structuralist, explained by calling "a scandal" (p.283). "The incest prohibition is universal; in this sense one would call it natural. But it is also a prohibition, a system of norms and interdicts; in this sense one could call it cultural: . . ." (p.283). Thus Levi-Strauss understood that nature and culture were not in opposition but in fact appeared to derive one from the other, more in the logic of *both* nature *and* culture. Derrida makes the point that there is no scandal if the difference between nature and culture was nonexistent. It is again the 'difference between', *either* nature *or* culture, that needs to be thought and Derrida notes that in fact Levi-Strauss abandons the 'truth' of the concepts of nature and culture as opposite but uses them, in the manner of a 'bricoleur'⁶, as methodological tools in their own critique of language. Derrida, almost in the style of bricoleur, continues his own examination of 'difference between' preferring to articulate differences not as either/or but as both/and which is a major challenge to traditional and modernist philosophy and epistemology.

Within the postmodern discourse of feminist theory, for example, it is the decentering of one dominant 'voice'-this time 'feminist'-which attempts to speak for the multiplicity of differences among women. This has led to a fragmentation in the feminist movement,

⁶The bricoleur, as used by Levi-Strauss (1966), is someone who uses whatever means are to hand to critically examine language. The noun 'bricolage' "could 'be applied almost word for word' to criticism, . . ." (Derrida, 1978 p. 285).

typical of postmodernism, which appears to lead far away from the 'original' site of resistance, that of equality and equity for women, towards "a site of disarray and conflict" (Lather 1991). Some poststructuralist feminists (Alcoff 1988) see this fragmentation leading to a complete loss of authority of gender as a criteria of self and further to charges of nominalism. The same charge of nominalism may be leveled at other decentered structures where the floating play of signifiers within structures constantly shift and fragment substituted 'centers'. This move towards the individual as the site of difference has caused poststructuralists like Foucault (1980, 1986) and others (Alcoff 1993, Lather 1991, Gergen 1993) to rethink the position of self and the individual in the cultural context.

If we use the decentering process, in questioning, for example, the 'androcentrism' of the universal subject/self, 'Man', (the modernist paradigm is male), the very hierarchical oppositions which have appeared to keep our world ordered and coherent are put under threat. For instance, modernist consensus has one hegemonic group speaking for many disparate groups. This dominant 'voice' has been challenged since the 1960's by women and people of color as inappropriate when we acknowledge the diversity of groups which make up our world. In a Derridean thinking of 'either/or', that is man as the dominant voice, the contradiction of not hearing disparate and silenced groups becomes apparent. The contradiction of the irrationality of this situation in the midst of supposedly rational modernism is also apparent.

We can also understand therefore how the totalizing universal subject/self begins, through the process of decentering, its own fragmentation into the postmodern plurality of subjects/selves who think in terms sensitive to difference, a difference which no longer thinks in modernist hierarchies of 'either/or but more of Derridean 'both/and and 'other' and multiplicity. Lather (1991, p.5) sees "... the subject as an autonomous individual capable of full consciousness and endowed with a stable 'self' constituted by a set of static characteristics such as sex, class, race, sexual orientation" as being unsustainable. (p. 5.) This modernist stable 'self' in relation to a postmodern multiplicity of selves, is a key issue

for this study. The decentering of the modernist subject/self not only moves towards the fragmentation of self but it is also experienced as a shedding of a commitment to a knowable, objective and 'true' world.

Difference

It is relevant at this point to explicate two notions of difference which are significant to my study. I have begun to develop the notion of *différance* as proposed by Derrida which involves the poststructuralist deconstruction of traditional structures which require centers and oppositions by which we constitute meaning. As difference is important in the development of a disruptive ~~model~~ in this study it will be explored in relation to poststructuralism. Difference results from the process of decentering the totalizing authority of modernist structures. The structures have had as center a dominant 'voice', for example, universality, which has spoken for all, while disparate or different voices within the structures have been silenced or considered inappropriate. As Derrida shows, the authority of the center or dominant 'voice' is without authority, thus allowing the limitless play of difference or marginalized language to be drawn towards the 'center' of the structure. Difference is what has been excluded from the modernist center in the reductive search for objective truth. Difference, as a concept of ex-centric, disparate, incommensurable, dissimilar and multiple, is disruptive to a sense of order and unity. Postmodernists encourage "incommensurability, difference, and fragmentation as the antidotes to repressive modern[ist] modes of theory and rationality." (Best & Kellner, 1991, p.38.) This is a key issue in my study. One purpose of the ~~model~~ I propose for interpretation, is to understand that in a postmodern position of critical reflection and reflexivity, one's world and one's self may be reconstituted into areas of difference rather than areas of universality.

Postmodernism as Resistance

Lyotard (1984) explains postmodernism as the practice of resistance; the challenging of metanarratives with other narratives, the questioning and exploiting of cultural codes, the

opening of closed systems to a diversity of reading, a sensitivity to difference. The resistance in this practice appears to be on critique, discontinuity, paradox, incompleteness and non closure but above all an emphasis on difference.

This postmodernism is the resistance to the modernist authority of a single hegemonic 'voice' in favor of the multiplicity of 'voices' which constitute our society. For example, in feminist art history there has been, over the last two decades, a pointing out of the modernist assumptions about women artists, a detailed look at the unchallenged ways of thinking about women and art on which modernist art historical practice with its single 'voice' has previously rested. Thus Linda Nochlin's (1973) *Why Have There been No Great Women Artists ?* introduced the questioning which is still examining the whole notion of gender and its relation to the arts. There has continued to be a decentering of modernist art historical practice allowing certain untold and suppressed histories to be brought in from the margins, for instance, those women artists 'lost' behind their fathers or husbands names or those artists whose art was relegated to an 'inferior' classification of 'domestic arts and crafts'.

Postmodernism poses a resistance to the 'grand narratives', "an incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard 1984) which are the 'fictions', stories that have organized and legitimized knowledge and order in the thinking of modernism. The credibility of such stories as 'the encyclopedia freeing man from superstition through enlightenment leading to universal knowledge' or 'Marxism will free the worker from bondage by revolution' and other narratives break down when confronted by events such as the Great Depression, Auschwitz or Paris 1968. Decentering these metanarratives by questioning their central premise of freedom leads to a recognition of power relations inherent in these narratives that are themselves able to be interrogated. 'Meta-narratives', 'grand narratives', "supreme fictions" are displaced by "the contingent, messy, boundless, infinitely particular, and endlessly still to be explained" (Murdoch in Lather, 1991, p.6) and the subject has been decentered, "refashioned as a site of disarray and conflict inscribed by multiple contestatory discourses" (Lather, 1991, p.5).

Postmodernism resists the certitude of understanding the past as a 'knowable' set of facts when we begin to recognize the past as constructed interpretation and ask questions about narratives of the past like 'for whom was this history written?' and 'what and who has been left out and for what reason?' We understand that our ability to 'know the past' rests on our own interpretations constructed via particular discursive practices and power relations. The consequences of this resistance further develop the concepts of difference and interpretation, concepts which are important in my study.

Postmodernism is a resistance to the totalizing nature of traditional genres which has maintained a set of conditions for particular genres. In fact traditional arts genres particularly in literature have never been able to contain genres within sets of conditions and in postmodernism those contradictions have been exploited. However this has resulted in ambiguity of cultural practice. For example in artistic practice, Krauss (in Perloff 1989) notes the expansion of the 'genre' sculpture to include architecture and environment.

Self Reflection as Postmodern Self Reflexivity

Modernist self reflection manifests itself in postmodernism as self consciousness or self reflexivity and self doubt. Modernist self reflection is about the constant and serious appraisal of 'contamination' by cultural and historical practices and references, in the search for a 'pure' and objective 'essence' in every area of life. Modernism, committed to the narratives of scientific progress and objective truth was self reflectively on guard against those cultural and historical practices which would interfere with these goals. It involves looking back, checking on the 'ground' one has already covered. Postmodernist practices take account of that modernist self reflection, but deliberately and self consciously use cultural and historical references (intertextuality) to integrate those practices into everyday life.

Secondly, postmodernism manipulates or abuses those references paradoxically in the form of irony or parody or appropriation or pastiche particularly in the arts and the media (Hutcheon 1988). It is this 'double' self consciousness that works to make these

paradoxes obvious. To understand how postmodern paradoxes of 'real', of contradiction and ambiguity, parody, irony and pastiche work, one must be aware that postmodern practice requires this critical self consciousness or self reflexivity. Self reflexivity is the attempt to theorize one's practice (Culler, 1982) and involves a critical consciousness of what one is thinking or doing. Kenneth Gergen (1991) cites the Woody Allen film *The Purple Rose of Cairo* as an example of self consciousness or reflexivity. In this film, the female character finds that the hero of the movie she is watching can actually step from the screen into the audience. Film 'reality' begins an infinite regression. The "audience member is . . . thrust into the endless labyrinth of self reflection" (Gergen 1991). For example, in Eco's (1983) *The Name Of the Rose*, a historical narrative is overlaid on theological treatise in a fictional detective drama. This book is fictionally self reflective yet also claims to represent historical events where the medieval past is not merely surface but given new meanings by its self reflexive incorporation into the present time of reading. As I have noted, this self reflexive playing with the boundaries of traditional genre is a characteristic of postmodern practice and stems from an critical interrogation of the authority of boundaries.

As postmodernism insists on self reflexive thinking to unpack different meaning in present and past practices, we begin to understand that these practices which constitute the realities of the world are themselves socially constructed by language and particular interests of power. This self reflexivity leads us to understand that in interrogating realities, the answers are also constructed from a particular perspective or context. In my study it is this self reflective and self reflexive thinking of socially constructed perspectives of culture and history which contributes to an understanding of difference and multiplicity particularly in relation to the self.

Brenda Marshall (1992) states that having a concern and understanding for the postmodern demands "an awareness of being-within a way of thinking" (p.2) which can only occur as self reflection. Recognition of being-within a way of thinking means that we cannot stand 'outside' to 'objectively' look at what is happening in the present. the 'now',

because we are still inside the present moment or event. This involves an self awareness of being-within both a language and a cultural and historical framework. “We know we are within a particular framework or paradigm of thought even if we cannot say with certainty how this paradigm works” (p.3). The event as Lyotard describes it (Readings and Schaber 1993) happens “in excess of the referential frame in which it might be understood. . .” (p. 8) indicating that the ‘language’ of the event cannot give us an overall idea of the event but only point to what is happening. We are aware that we cannot describe the event because we are all still ‘speaking’ from within the moment. Only from a different perspective in time (in the future) and with different language will we be able to name and describe the present. In doing so we recognize, through reflexivity, that our ‘objectivity’ is fictitious, that our interpretations and understanding of all moments and events that have come before us will be constructed through our language and our cultural and historical practice. Thus self reflexivity works in two ways. First, we understand that our own interpretations are constructed through discursive practices, particularly our positioning in discursive practices, and second, that the ‘facts’ of all histories are also interpretations constructed through language and historical and cultural practices.

It is important to understand *where* one may be positioned in an attitude of critically thinking and reflecting about the world as different and discontinuous rather than the world as rational and universal. Positionality in discourses is of significance if we take Foucault’s theory that practices of discourses constitute the object of discourse. Self reflection and self reflexivity is crucial in allowing us to look at our relationship with the practices of the discourse and in allowing us to know what our position is in relation to the object of discourse. In my study, student self reflexivity is important for understanding that different interpretations of meanings are differently constructed through positionality in discourses. In turn, students understand that these interpretations also contribute to the construction of themselves and they begin to see themselves and the world as sites of difference.

Postmodern Temporality

If, as some theorists (Readings and Schaber 1993) surmise, the postmodern can be seen as a gap in the thinking of time as succession and progress, then how we understand the present and the past becomes significant. Eco writes about postmodern thinking as being “out of season.” (Jencks 1992) Readings (Readings and Schaber 1993) proposes a postmodernist “unaccountable time”. (P.92) in order to undermine the modernist succession of time.. This “unaccountable time” links to Lyotard’s time of the event which I examined previously and into Marshall’s awareness of ‘being-within’. “That event is the time of the new, the ‘it happens’ that cannot be accounted for by the universal present moment” (p.95). Only from a different temporal space can we describe the present which has become the past. This temporal “aporia” or ambiguous gap calls for different questions in the interpretation of history and art and literature. Being aware of the temporal space of our interpretations in a self reflective way allows postmodern artists and writers to slip into the past, play with, appropriate and remake the past in the present. So architect Michael Graves can ‘play’ with, appropriate and reconnect the history of the decorative past in his contemporary buildings through pastiche and Cindy Sherman can parody the ‘historical portrait’ in her own image.

Intertextuality

The traditional notion of originality becomes a parody of itself when the postmodern desire for the radically ‘new’ becomes pastiche, quotation, irony, appropriation or the re-found object. Here the term ‘intertextuality’ can be used, meaning the recognition of references from the past with an awareness of how those references, themselves constructed through other references, have been used. As defined by Barthes (1977) intertextuality displaces an author/text relationship with a reader or viewer/text relationship in which the text is plural, that is “citations, reference, echoes, cultural language. . .which cut across it through and through. . . . The intertextual . . . being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin” (p.160). The modernist concept of originality can be

challenged with the notion of intertextuality—that all cultural and historical activity is a part of previous discourses which themselves can be traced to other discourses. As Hutcheon (1988) says if a work was original it would have no meaning for the viewer or reader who need those references and traces of discourses to situate the work and make meaning for themselves.

Jean Baudrillard (1988) in examining the question of the original, intertextuality and the 'real', claims that the boundary between image and simulation and reality has imploded and the very experience of the 'real' has disappeared into 'hyperreality'. He maintains that it is not merely that the signifier has replaced the signified but that the very space of sign and meaning has disappeared. In the concept of hyperreality and the mass media, for example, the simulation became the determinant for the real. This has consequences in the art classroom firstly with the student understanding the inescapable intertextuality of their own work and the concept of 'originality' and in critically looking at the work of the postmodern artist.

As the information technology age speeds up and past time and present reality overlap we begin to put under investigation that which happened today. As Hutcheon (1988) states it would be hard not to acknowledge that these challenges to the concepts of ordered time and reality come together with a recognition that our life today is fragmentary and chaotic and lived at break neck speed.

The Postmodern Text

Bennington (in Papadakis 1989) states that text is in general any system of marks, traces or referrals. Ropars extends this to any system of signification -- pictorial, oneiric, filmic, literary, "whose devices go beyond the linguistics of the sign" (in Mowitt 1992). The broad postmodern and poststructuralist view of text is that which can be 'written', 'produced' or 'read'; which allows the viewer or reader to enter at any point; and is overpopulated with discursive practices. Throughout my study I use the word 'text' and 'texts' to indicate both images and words. Art, that is, artistic images and objects, are also

texts in that they are involved with a network of discursive practices.

Much of the concept of reading and producing postmodern text comes from Roland Barthes's questioning of the closed nature of structuralism as the model of communication. This model involves revealing recurrent elements and their patterns so that meaning in the text results from an autonomous relationship of interdependent, interconnecting parts. Structuralism does not see all texts in their differences. Its models of analysis are imposed upon texts. Structuralism assumes that all texts are alike, thus ignoring the intertextuality and the textuality of the text. Its models close off continuation of meanings. Barthes (in Young, 1981) acknowledged that the structural linguistic model was inadequate: "The sign is a sealed unit, whose closure arrests meaning" and "the analysis (model) of productivity of meaning cannot be reduced to a linguistic description; we must-or at least we can-add to it *other paths of analysis*. . ." (my italics) (p.33/37). He includes such paths as contradiction and psychoanalysis.

In explaining the difference between 'work' and 'text', Barthes sees the 'work' as a closed entity from which the critic interprets a definite meaning. The 'text' however is "irreducibly plural, an endless play of signifiers which can never be finally nailed down to a single centre, essence or meaning" (Eagleton 1983, p 138). Text then becomes a 'method' of production which can be experienced between reader and text - textuality - and for which 'network' or 'web' becomes the metaphor emphasizing both interrelationships and instability (in Wallis 1984). Barthes (in Young 1981) describes this:

In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled* nothing deciphered; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level, but there is nothing underneath: the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced; writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. (p.18).

In refusing the structuralist linguistic model of signifier and signified because of its closed nature, Barthes explains "I refused the idea of a model transcendent to several texts . . . (to every text) in order to postulate, . . . that each text is in some sort its own model. . ." (Barthes in Heath, Ed., 1971, p.44). Barthes promoted instead a number of operating tactics in the model which would be mobile or flexible enough in application to the text to avoid the trap of closing off meaning. One such tactic in a model is to refuse to accept the unity of the text, instead breaking it into fragments of analysis. Barthes was opening up the model as closed system to extend or broaden the possible productions of meanings. He envisaged a model of analysis as being an open system which could include parts marginalized in the text or brought in from outside of the text but specific to the text. This destroys the structuralist concept of 'model' because each text now being different, sets the 'conditions' of its own analysis and as such, is its own model. Therefore the text must be treated "in its difference, 'difference' being understood there precisely in a Nietzschean or Derridean sense" (p.44).

Barthes's poststructuralist concept of 'model' disrupts the unity of the sign. It divides the signified from the signifier because it calls into question the closed concept of the signified as the repository of the one 'true' meaning. It reverses the roles of signifier/signified and the signifier becomes producer of meanings. The signified is the signifier which itself is seen as unstable, no longer having a relationship with the signified. "That is the pleasure of the text: value shifted to the sumptuous rank of the signifier. . . the signifier belongs to everyone" (Barthes in Young, 1981, p 31/ 37). Therefore in poststructuralism there is a move from Saussure's notion of difference of signifier/signified to a Derridean notion of difference, both the differing of, and the deferring of, meaning. The text becomes a free space in which readers or viewers can move. Structural analysis becomes 'textual' analysis which produces "a mobile structuration of the text", (p.37) an unfolding or unraveling of text because "everything signifies *ceaselessly and several times* , but without being delegated . . . to an ultimate structure" (Barthes in Harari, 1979, p. 39). Textual analysis becomes another text

produced between reader and the text of analysis. “Productivity (of meaning) is triggered off, . . . the text comes about, as soon as, . . . the reader begins to play with the signifier, . . . (Young, 1981, p.37). Barthes uses the word “signifiante” which expresses the “without-end-ness of the possible operations in a given field of language” (p.38), the continual process of signifying.

As I have stated earlier, Derrida continues the emphasis on the free play between signifier and the signified, free play to articulate the space or difference between the two. The signified becomes another signifier. For instance, the signifier ‘woman’ will vary in meaning according to the discursive context in which it is located. ‘Woman’, whatever meaning it may have—virgin, mother, god, witch—will itself become another signifier. Its meaning occurs at the moment of its discursive context (where it is in relation to other discourses). Thus meaning is always open to rereading and reinterpretation depending on discursive context. It is in this postmodern poststructuralist context that Barthes makes a distinction between ‘work’ and ‘text’.

Derrida (in Young, 1981) says, “A ‘text’ is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces” (p. 29). This intertextuality keeps the text open to different readings and productions of meaning. Eagleton (1983) also adds that the postmodern poststructuralist text becomes a interweave of codes and fragments of codes. Lather (1991) states that we cannot exhaust the meanings in a text, that a text can have multiple meanings and that our different positions in discursive practices affect our reading of a text.

As a method of production between reader/viewer and text, Ulmer (in Brunette and Wills 1994) notes that ‘texting’ is a deconstructive practice, text being invented, reconstructed. Crimp and Owens (in Wallis 1984) argue that art works operate as texts in that they “facilitate(s) the active participation of the viewer. . . . The viewer must fill in, add to, build up suggestive elements in the text supplying extraneous historical, personal and social references” (p. xvii). In my study the student becomes a producer of text,

traced through other texts and discourses. Students will be encouraged to understand their writing about, and their making of art, as palimpsests, that is the reading of one text through another or having texts double for others or extracting new texts from old texts.

Postmodern texts combine two important tendencies in poststructuralist theory often deemed incompatible (Hutcheon 1988). They are part of Foucauldian discourses in that they are discursive practices which Michel Foucault maintains constitute the object of discourse. They contain and articulate discursive practices. But they also contain Derridean networks of traces, those self reflective references of past references, "citations, reference, echoes, cultural language. . .which cut across it through and through. . . being the text-between of another text". (Barthes 1977 p.160) As these two tendencies are of particular importance in my study they will be explored more fully in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 3

POSTSTRUCTURALISM, DISCOURSES AND DECONSTRUCTION

Introduction

The theoretical positions developed out of the writing of Derrida (1976, 1978) and Foucault (1972, 1980, 1986, 1988) inform this study and I concur with others in calling these positions, poststructural. Poststructuralism appears as an interrogating of structuralism's methods and assumptions. Like postmodernism and modernism, poststructuralism seems to situate itself in the shadow of structuralism. In some areas poststructuralism mirrors postmodernism; the denial of origins, the displacement of authoritative centers, the reemergence of the marginal, an interrogation of self and subject, the opening up of interpretation and meaning to a multiplicity of interpretations and meanings. In this chapter, I examine poststructuralism to see how I might use its theoretical strategies in this study and I use the term 'postmodernist' together with 'poststructuralist' where there appears to be a mirroring of concepts.

Poststructuralism's Concern with Language

I consider that poststructuralism significantly differs from postmodernism in that its primary concern is language, language as play of meaning with Derrida and to a lesser extent, Barthes, and language as discursive practice with Foucault. Poststructuralist theorists have questioned the 'scientific' status of structuralism by questioning the

objectivity of any model of language analysis, particularly the Saussurean model of analysis. An understanding of Saussure's (in Taylor 1986) theory of the sign is important for poststructuralism which critiques his argument that "in language there are only differences, *without positive terms*" (p.167). As I understand Saussure's system of difference, the signifier and the signified, when considered separately, are differential and arbitrary but when combined as sign, the sign, they become a totality, the relationship between the arbitrary signifier and arbitrary signified fixed into a stable contract by social convention. I agree with the poststructuralist questioning of this system, arguing that signifiers do not have such fixed signifieds and that attempts to find the meaning of a word inevitably end up with more signifiers.

Therefore I argue that the sign is not stable, that meaning is open to 'slippage' between the signifier and the signified and that being so, all meanings are relativized and unstable. Structuralism's adherence to signifieds as centers of authority to give that metaphoric form to structures within the world, can be subjected to the same critique of meaning and found to have the same problems of slippage and instability. This interrogation of the closed structure becomes the decentering of signified and the recognition of the plurality of meaning in the signifier, two important characteristics of poststructuralism.

In my interpretation of Foucault (1972, 1980), I understand that he perceives language as discourses which form the object of which they speak. These discourses are made up of signs, which Foucault understands as practices which are articulated within a wider field, which includes power relations and different theoretical frameworks. Meaning comes not from within language as such but from the ways in which language is *used* in different discursive practices.

Poststructuralist Displacement of Self

Poststructuralism has continued structuralism's marginalization of the subject as an effect of language. However, a postmodern poststructuralist decentering of modernism's centers of authority, particularly of the authority of the autonomous, rational, essentialist

self, has important implications for this study in which I understand the self as multiple, shifting and often contradictory. Postmodernist decentering or displacing of the modernist self refuses to understand 'man' as a universal concept, able to speak for all people. Interrogating the signified 'man' has allowed us to bring from the margins those, whose voices have been excluded by the hegemony of white Eurocentric and male, without forming all those groups into another center. 'Man' cannot speak for all people as, for instance, the feminist movement has demonstrated. Secondly, in decentering 'man' as the authoritative voice, the concept of a unified self is also brought under interrogation when we consider that we are constituted in discourses of ethnicity, nationality, gender, race, class and so on.

I perceive myself not as one, autonomous, unified self in the world but as a 'set' of fragmented selves constructed from many discursive practices. In particular contexts I am Australian, woman, white, mother, daughter, student, teacher and so on. I speak as a multiplicity of selves from particular discursive positions. When we begin to identify ourselves in specific groups or discourses, as particular women or men or black or middle class or Marxist or homosexual, we realize that we are an interconnecting set of selves which is part of a wider set of relations. As we reflect on who we are in the world we come to see the how language in the practices of discourses, construct our various selves. My particular understanding of discourses from my reading of Foucault (1972, 1980) informs much of this study and will be examined later in this chapter.

We can also question the concept of 'origin' of essentialist self--essential implying a foundation or originary source--from which the 'true' character of the individual develops. This questioning leads not to foundations and origins but to an endless substitution of signifiers. The undermining of origins gives us another strategy for decentering the modernist rational self and understanding how the self can be constituted in the practices of discourses. Derrida (1978) maintains that a center or origin--and we could see the self as a center--functions not as authority but as an absent 'center' which allows a number of sign substitutions to come into play. It is into this absence of center or origin that language

invades and where everything becomes language. The absent center forecloses on a foundational base for meaning and is never really present outside a system of differences. It would appear therefore that the self is never absolutely outside of language and it is language which allows the modernist unified self to become the postmodern poststructuralist multiplicity of selves.

The postmodern critique of metanarratives of modernism, especially the belief in objective truth, has also contributed to the loss of an autonomous self. Is it possible to believe in a single objective truth where many truths may be found relative to particular discursive contexts ? This also throws into question the basis of psychological and scientific investigations which claim through personality and intelligence testing to reveal human character which can be then fitted and categorized. The 'recentering' of marginalized groups and their voices particularly of the feminists have enabled individuals to understand that 'scientific' categories can no longer be relied upon in the definition of such things as gender or sexuality and truth. These discourses have been important determinants of self and identity and as they lose the certainty to do this , other categories of self identification also come under interrogation and begin to lose credibility. As the modernist authority of objectivity gives way so does the concept of an individual having a true, autonomous and unified self. Claims of truth and 'right' become constructions of discourses. The essentialist self (as object) becomes the changing fragmented self (as process).

This narrative of autonomous, unified, essentialist self also cannot be sustained in the light of a change of thinking about time and space. Thinking the postmodern as a gap in the modernist narrative of time as succession and progress, makes the notion of an essential unified self acting consistently in all contexts questionable. It is technological changes in reorganizing time and space that disrupts a sense of continuity, sameness and coherence which once allowed me as a modernist, to believe in one true identity, and to reflect on what that identity was and how it could be revealed to myself.

Agency in the Poststructuralist Self

The decentering of the self highlights an important characteristic of poststructuralism regarding the text and the authority of the author/artist. The concept of the 'death' or repositioning of the author as the authority in and of the text as articulated by Barthes (1977) means that the author or the artist, along with the viewer/reader becomes another debater, another speaker or translator for the text. To give a text an author (as originator of meaning) is to actually inhibit the text's meaning to that meaning which we as readers 'suppose' the author (as traditional authority in the text) to have meant. But meaning, however 'positioned' by the author or artist, becomes *another* meaning in the multiplicity of meanings that the text contains. This shift in the way we think about the status of the author's or artist's intent of meaning has allowed for a repositioning of the self, the reader/viewer, to become another interpreter of meaning in the reading/viewing of the text. However, this repositioned self, the reader/viewer, is still the decentered and fragmented selves of poststructuralist theory who apparently appear to be more marginalized by being fragmented and multiple. In poststructural activity particularly deconstructive activity, it would appear that it is the text itself which determines meaning and the fragmented self shows little agency in deciding what interpretations of meaning the text will produce.

The point I am making here is that the fragmented, multiple self may appear limited in the ability to act regarding interpretation, particularly in any resistant manner because of the complexity of one's positioning in discourses, in the context of reading or viewing of the text. There appears no room for action, negotiation or even reflection by the fragmented subject of the constitution and interpretation of meaning.

Derrida (in Smith, 1988) expresses his lack of agency in deconstructive critical activity, noting that he does not select interpretations from a text, that the interpretations select themselves thereby confirming the displacement of the self as agent. Derrida continues, "Meaning is determined by a system of forces which is not personal. It does not depend on the subjective identity but on the field of different forces . . . No one is free to read as he or she wants" (p.47). Derrida's 'field of different forces' are the discursive practices

which constitute the text. Derrida appears to confirm the displacement of the self and the hegemony of language in deconstructive strategies. The 'subjective identity' is required to relinquish agency to allow the text to give meaning. It is in the strategies of poststructuralism, for instance, deconstruction's interrogation of a dominant reading or its attention to the marginal visual or grammatical detail that can unlock meaning as the product of language. Meaning appears no longer unpacked in the experience of the viewer/reader, nor the intentions of an author or even the determination of social practices, but meaning is in the language of the text as property of the text. Derrida (1978) is seemingly cynical in elucidating on interpretation by the self: "... the name of man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics . . . throughout his entire history, has dreamed of full presence, of reassuring foundation, of the origin and the end of play. . ." (p. 292-293) in his preference for the affirmation of the text's free play of meaning. Derrida sees interpretation by self and that by the text, as "irreconcilable even if we live them simultaneously and reconcile them in an obscure economy" (p.293). However he paradoxically goes on to say that these different interpretations must acknowledge their differences and their irreducibility.

If Derrida removes the self from interpretation because of the perceived impossibility of reconciliation of as self and text in interpretation, I see a contradiction in his non acknowledgment of his own apparent agency in his writing. The text cannot read itself or have self knowledge. If one agrees that multiple interpretations of text can be made, how are choices and decisions between interpretations of meaning achieved? Who makes the decisions to accept or reject the text's interpretations? How can we critique the text as interpreter of meaning? If we are constituted in language as discursive practice how is it possible to resist or stand apart from those practices?

As a tentative answer to some of those questions, I could assume an understanding of the self as a text. Therefore, as a part of and articulating the language of discursive practices, the self is able to both facilitate meaning and produce meaning. The self as text can be thought in Eagleton's (1983) terms; "irreducibly plural, an endless play of signifiers

which can never be finally nailed down to a single centre, essence or meaning” (p 138). In assuming the self as text, discursive practices appear in the self as textual and intertextual traces. Self as text then becomes a ‘method’ of production which can be experienced between oneself and another text. In thinking the self as text, some agency can be restored to the self when making interpretations from other texts and particularly for my study, from art texts.

Foucault and Derrida

Poststructuralist theorists have critiqued the unitary subject/self. Derrida’s anti-logocentric exclusion of the active subject/self results in a totalizing emphasis on the construction of the self as passive. Foucault analyzes the relation between power, knowledge and body as subject. He seems to offer more help in this study by coming closest to readmitting the self as active agent in advocating the transgressive nature of language as potential site of resistance by individuals.

This is a major difference between Derrida and Foucault. Derrida (1978) sees the transgressive nature of language uncovered by deconstructive strategies as a way for the text to release meaning “beyond man and humanism” (p.292), whereas Foucault sees the transgressive nature of language in social and political terms as discursive practices which allow sites of resistance and emancipation for ‘man’. Foucault understands that conflict and disruption are always in our world and rather than the futile attempt to eliminate these they should be constantly analyzed and questioned as discursive practices, to create different sites or spaces for resistance and challenge. Foucault’s emphasis on the body and power allows, in later writing (1986,1988), a development of a notion of the self, what he calls the technologies or techniques of the self. He (1985, 1986, 1989) defines techniques of the self as those practices by which individuals actively manipulate their identities with implications of returning to the self a degree of choice or agency. These technologies or techniques allow the self to escape some negative effects of power through this assertion of choice or agency. As sites of power, dominant discourses can be resisted if one

understands that power relations themselves are the result of ongoing resistance. Power cannot be power without the possibility of resistance. This dialectic may provide the opportunity needed to critique the concept of passive self.

Terms of Self

In modernist Saussurean linguistics, the subject, the individual in society, is relegated to the margins. Saussure excluded considerations of construction of the subject--the subject was 'exiled' to 'parole', the individual act of language--in preference for 'langue', the system (codes, rules) of language which give meaning. Thus, as Young notes (1981), Saussure produced an abstract, idealist system that is not grounded in social contexts or discursive practices.

Variations of the terms 'self', 'subjectivity' and 'subject' as used by postmodern poststructuralist writers complicate an understanding of these terms. Foucault in his later writings and interviews on the self (1984, 1988) does not define the 'self' or the 'subject' but it appears to me that the 'self' is a neutral term in the way of generally referring to individuals and that the 'subject' is an active term referring to a "process of interiorization" (Poster in Hoy, Ed. 1986). I agree with Deleuze (in Cook 1992), in his interpretation of Foucault, when he considers subjectivity to be that self reflexivity that one engages in with oneself.

For this study I assume 'subject', 'subjectivity' and 'self' as terms applying to an individual in society constituted by discursive practices and brought into being by self reflexive activity. Self reflexive thought is that immediate critical consciousness of what one is thinking and doing. Self is constituted by personal experience and an individual history which are products of discursive practices. I understand also the self to be an interiorized reference to the fragmented subject which itself is in constant flux as a set of relations with others and I understand identity as the experience of self. The most relevant understanding of a self for my study comes out of feminist poststructural theory with the concept of a multiple, shifting and often contradictory identity, being contradictory because

of its being representative of many discourses.

Throughout the study I will use the terms 'self' and 'discursive positions' (in preference to, and explanation of, 'subject' and 'subjectivity'). The term 'discursive position' refers to that position in particular discourses either marginal or dominant which the self assumes in particular contexts. Smith (1988) makes reference to "subject-positions. . . in which a person is momentarily called by the discourses and the world he/she inhabits" (p.xxxv). I presume he is using the term 'call' as Althusserian appellation. The terms 'agency' and 'agents' will be used to explain actions and individuals who can potentially choose to make critical decisions and actions for the purpose of resistance leading to some form of transformation or emancipatory change.

Restoration of Self and Agency

It is my inability to accept poststructuralism's exclusion of the self as active responsive agent that leads me to find a workable and achievable outcome to the problem of self and agency for this study. The notion of the postmodern poststructural self as site of multiple and even contradictory selves is a liberating one but can we act from these multiple sites of selves without being pathologized into a schizophrenic state ? How can I restore the self in poststructuralism as active agent capable of intervening, deciding and transforming a social world if the self is deconstructed from unified self into fragmented discursive positions with very limited agency ? If, as Foucault (1984) argues, an individual recognizes that identity is inextricably linked with the world as discursive practices, that recognition defines how well the individual connects with the world. It is on the basis that the self may become transformative. Where does this fit with my study of the interrogation of interpretations of meaning in art texts or art criticism in general ?

I perceive that a modernist concept of one unified 'true' self is limiting and, although the postmodern/ poststructural concept of multiple selves is liberating and coherent to me, the ability for those selves to function coherently would seem impossible. Gergen (1991) makes an appropriate analogy when he states that we emerge from modernism as the

possessors of many voices, singing different melodies, different verses and with different rhythms. These voices do not often harmonize (p.83). In the fragmentation of self, one holds particular positions in all discourses and often these discursive positions are contradictory or conflicting positions. The major question for me is, acting from these multiple sites, assuming particular discursive positions, how one can potentially make critical decisions and actions for the purpose of resistance leading to transformation or emancipatory change? I believe students should have this kind of agency in understanding interpretations of meaning in art texts.

The 'compromise' here may be to fix or hold a discursive position temporarily, from which to act interpretively while being aware of a sense of self as a set of relations with others. This sense of self appears as constantly shifting and is context oriented. A sense of self is brought into being by self reflexive activity, comes from such things as the physical fact of being a tangible body in the world, the specific experience of an identity and the layering of historical relationships where past discursive positions may determine present ones (Moore 1994). I understand the self to be an interiorized reference to the fragmented selves which themselves are in constant flux as a set of relations with others. While temporarily holding or fixing a discursive position we must be aware that other discursive practices will leave traces or references or even mediate the present position. If we consider the self as text, these traces are the intertextuality of the self/text.

How does one temporarily fix a 'self' or assume a particular discursive position from which to act ? What motivates one to take particular discursive positions? How do people take up one position rather than another if discourses at any time are competing and contradictory? Within feminist poststructuralist theory, experiencing positions as contradictory and problematic has been seen as an important area to gain an understanding of gender. Wendy Hollway (in Henriques et al, 1984) makes an interesting point when she looks at the investment one may have in assuming positions. She suggests that investment brings with it the concept of rewards. Therefore assuming a particular discursive position in particular contexts may be done in response to one's desire to be

associated with the practices of particular discourses and indicates self reflective activity, that is, looking back over one's actions and thoughts. Association with particular discourses may be pleasurable or exciting or familiar and comfortable. In my experience with a group of American senior high school students interpreting the art of Sandy Skoglund (discussed further in this chapter), it appeared that positioning in certain problematic discourses was marginalized as students reflected upon and then preferred to make interpretations from dominant and more comfortable positions in familiar discourses. I understand that the students chose to position themselves dominantly in the discourses of environmental issues and the discourses of surrealism and fantasy. These students appeared to understand that their reluctance to acknowledge particular discourses in this art text stemmed from their desire to avoid taking dominant positions in those problematic discourses. At the same time these students were taking a particular action, resisting acknowledgment of particular discourses in the text. Later in the lesson, a space was created in the form of the visual verbal, for this resistance to be explored which allowed more possibilities for change.

Gergen (1991) sees that in assuming a dominant position in a particular discourse, we 'try out' "public characterizations of self" and that it is the ones found most "effective in meeting the challenges of a complex social world" (p.145) that we prefer. At a party of undergraduates I actively try to assume a marginal position in the discourse of mother in preference to assuming a dominant position in the discourse of the university and education because this appears for me 'most effective' in dealing with the 'challenges' of the group. My relations with the others confirm or deny that position. At a gathering of expatriate Australian friends I assume a dominant position in the discourse of nationality to get a sense of belonging in the 'complex social world'. However, one does not often select, in such a self reflective, or even calculating, manner, one's discursive positions. Often, because of current dominant discursive practices, only certain positions are so unproblematically assumable. However being reflexive about one's position in dominant discursive practices, or having strategies for interrogating dominant discursive practices,

allows for a new awareness about positioning and choices.

Agency and Resistance

Both Jana Sawicki and Judith Butler make relevant statements about agency for this study. Jana Sawicki (in Gutting 1994) states that critics of a poststructuralist self are wrong to conclude that because the self is so discursively constituted, the possibility of agency is precluded or at least limited. Judith Butler (in Gutting 1994) writes :
“Construction is not opposed to agency, it is the necessary scene of agency” (p.298). She elaborates on what she sees as mistakenly equating construction with determinism : “ . . . they have been caught in the binary logic of Western thought in which the idea of free will presupposes a form of agency that escapes the world in which it must negotiate its identity” (p.299). Butler uses the Foucauldian notion of the self in describing identities as self-representations, ‘fictions’ which are not fixed or stable. The self is not a thing in itself but rather a process of language within a set of discursive possibilities. Discursive practices, discourses, which form selves are themselves ‘structured’ by rules which both limit and enable self representation. The sociologist Louis Zurcher (in Gergen, 1991) in explaining his concept of the mutable self, sees that accelerated social change, such as that happening at the end of this century, demands a new understanding of self from stable self (as object) to changing self (as process). The self as process is always being constituted by discursive practices. However here I agree with Alcoff (1988) when she states that one’s self is constituted not just by discursive practices alone, but by one’s position in the discourse. This is mediated by the self, actively contributing to discursive practices, by being the product of one’s interpretation of one’s history, one’s traces and references. Self is therefore not the passive recipient of an identity formed by discursive practices. What I object to in poststructuralist critique of the self, and what Butler (in Gutting, 1994) objects to, is the tendency to assume that an identity must first be in place in order for the self to speak or act. We “. . . need not assume that there is a ‘doer behind the deed’ but rather that ‘the doer’ is variably constructed in and through the deed” (p.298). In the case of art

criticism interpretation is the 'deed' in and through which the 'doer', the self, is constructed.

If we are reflexively conscious of construction of self in discursive practices we can begin to understand and then to question and doubt, the constructedness of all things. As Gergen states, when we move from "reality to constructions of reality we cross the threshold into a virtual vertigo of self reflexive doubt" (p.134). Doubt as a concept is manifest as self reflexivity, interrogation, critique and displacement. This interrogation and self reflexivity by the self, of its constitution, leads to an awareness of the limited agency allowed by discursive practices, but it also leads to an awareness of the potential for transgression and resistance. Being aware of limited agency does not mean that agency and resistance should not be attempted in an effort to make a localized space for the possibility of change or emancipation. Resistance can come about in the very choices of positions, dominant or marginal, one wants to take within discourses. The adoption of a particular discursive position is probably only a conscious choice when one is faced with multiple or contestatory positions from which to choose in a particular context. Specific contexts may necessitate choosing to be marginalized in certain discourses as I did in the example of the undergraduate party or which the Dublin students did with particular discourses in the Skoglund text.

In deciding to temporarily adopt or 'fix' discursive positions we are often not conscious of any decision-making in opting to assume particular positions. Do we, as Gergen states, adopt dominant positions in discourses found most "effective in meeting the challenges of a complex social world" (p 145)? 'Effective' may mean most comfortable, familiar or less stressful--or most resistant. Hollway's (in Henriques et al, 1984) assertion is that we make choices of particular discursive positions because of pleasurable rewards. Henrietta Moore (1994) states that investment in particular positions is not just about emotional satisfaction but material, social or economic rewards which may be bound up with issues of power. She argues that to be positioned within discourses is always to be positioned in relation to others and that this also determines what particular positions one adopts. I

believe that fixing or adopting particular discursive positions could be considered to be a part of the techniques of self which Foucault (1988) articulates as being those practices which allow “. . . individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a numbers of operations on their bodies, souls, thoughts and way of being so as to transform themselves to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom,. . . perfection. . . .” (p.18), or emancipation .

Resistance and Interpretation

How does an examination of a multiplicity of selves and agency fit with my investigation of a perspective that enables students to interrogate interpretations in art texts ultimately for a sense of self? I perceive that this perspective leads to an understanding of how interpretations are socially and historically constructed in discursive practices. Students, through this perspective, may come to an understanding of how the experience of interpretation as discourse contributes to an exploration of one’s self and identity. What is needed to precipitate this understanding by students, is some sort of understanding of discursive practices. If I maintain that we speak and interpret from different discursive positions, then our interpretations of meanings are constituted by the positions we may consciously or unconsciously take in discourses. In looking at art, I maintain that our particular positions in discourses which are embedded in an art text and revealed through interpretation, will constitute our own interpretations of that art text. Understanding this, a question to be looked at in my research is how interpretations are affected or changed by the student’s understanding that their interpretations are constituted by the discursive practices in art texts, in which they are dominantly or marginally positioned? Foucault (1988) maintains that by bringing to our awareness the practices which make us what we are, we can get a sense of what we must do in order if we want to resist or free ourselves from them. However he (in Sawicki, 1991) states, “freedom does not basically lie in discovering or being able to determine who we are, but in rebelling against those ways in which we are already defined, categorized and classified” (p.27). Knowing what makes

us who we are, allows us to choose to act in particular ways regarding interpretation and our positioning in discourses.

Therefore fixing or adopting a discursive position may enable one to act with some agency, to make, in particular contexts, choices about who we are. It also may enable one to resist or disrupt those positions, allowing to surface opportunities for different relations or different meanings. In art criticism, one can unpack dominant discursive practices embedded in art texts by the poststructuralist strategies of deconstruction and then disrupt or resist those practices. This may allow students to see that in their own lives, these strategies may be used when fixing or challenging or resisting discursive positions. I agree with Foucault (in Sawicki 1991) when he states that:

A critique is . . . a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices we accept, rest. . . . Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self evident as one believed, . . . criticism is absolutely indispensable for any transformation (p.124, n. 6).

Discourses

This study involves my recognition of the world as a web or network of interconnecting social discourses coupled with shifting relations of power. In choosing to use the word 'discourse' I am fully aware of its difficulty as a concept because of its many conflicting and overlapping definitions. My definition of discourse is loosely situated in social and feminist theory and the work of the French poststructuralist, Michel Foucault. I define discourse as a way of constituting areas of knowledge about some thing or object, via a system of discursive practices. Foucault (1972) recognizes discourses "as (discursive) practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p.49, *my addition in parenthesis*). The thing or object of discourse does not exist in itself. It exists only as it is constituted by a system or a set of practices. Discourse brings objects into being by creating them in language. To this definition I would add Martin Jay's (1993)

characterization and use of discourse as a loose shifting system of practices; statements, associations and metaphors, which form the objects of discourse:

Discourse in this usage is explicitly derived from the Latin *discurrere*, which means running around in all directions . . . : an often unsystematic, sometimes internally contradictory texture of statements, associations and metaphors that never fully cohere in a rigorous way. No single figure expresses all of its dimensions. . .
(p.16)

Discourse as a way of constituting knowledge has no autonomous or originary source of practices but is historically and materially constituted in that its constitution is always already conditioned by other existing discursive practices. In looking at discourses, one seeks to know the conditions of their existence, what allows them to exist, and the fields in which they are used. I use the words 'discourses', 'practices of discourses' and 'discursive practices' interchangeably throughout this study.

Power

Power as a set of relations allows, conditions and permeates all discourses. At the same time, as Foucault (1972) explains, power relations cannot themselves be implemented without the production and functioning of a discourse. (p. 93). "We should admit rather that power produces knowledge. . . that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute. . . power relations. (Foucault in McNay 1992 p. 148). Thus Foucault emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between power and knowledge. Foucault (1972) stresses in his writing that the concept of power must be understood in this relational way. Power does not exist as such, as an entity on its own but exists only when in action with other actions, as relational. Power comes into being as an action upon other actions. Power is not located

anywhere and has no boundaries “ . . . is everywhere and nowhere at the same time” (Megill, 1985, p. 240). Power is not a metaphysical notion, not a superstructure, not a foundational truth. Nor is power exercised only by a centralized source or is necessarily only repressive. There is an entire network of localized power relations the “invests the body, sexuality, family, kinship, knowledge, technology. . .” (Foucault in Sawicki, 1991, p. 22). However as I read Foucault we are never trapped by power and in understanding its ‘construction’ in discourses it is always possible to modify its control at a localized level. It is at this level of localized power relations invested in the body and so on in contrast to the larger global relations of power that Foucault sees most potential for resistance. As discussed previously I see the concept of resistance as necessary in order to create spaces for the choice of change and emancipation. Resistance to power relations by the critique of current or dominant discursive practices opens up the the areas where disqualified, subjugated or popular knowledge can be resurrected.

Foucault (1980) does not only view power in purely negative or repressive terms but also sees power as a positive occurrence which produces positive effects in discursive practices. Foucault (1978) has revealed particular practices of disciplinary power which he associates with the rise of the human sciences in the nineteenth century. In contemporary society disciplinary power has spread through certain major discourses of the human sciences such as medicine, psychology and sociology and through certain educational and legal practices.

To be positioned in discourses often does not allow one to be aware of the multiplicity of power relation in those discourses. Power is ‘always already there’. We may ask how power relationships begin to condition a discourse such as the major discourse of woman? In her writings the French theorist Luce Irigaray (1985) makes specific reference to patriarchal power relations where women’s interests are subordinated to men. She pessimistically maintains that women’s social inferiority “is reinforced and complicated by the fact that woman does not have access to language, except through recourse to “masculine” systems of representation which disappropriate her from her relation to herself

and to other women.” (p.85). Jana Sawicki suggests that in the discourses of feminism, one may see the current state of women in the world as the result of a multiplicity of localized power relations interwoven with discursive practices between anti and non feminists as well as feminists. One can also see resistance to those relations, for instance, in the discourse of mother. The dominant practices of pregnancy and childbirth in this century have been those of medical science. However moments of resistance like those created by doctors themselves in the dominant discourse of obstetrics, in criticizing the lack of recognition of women’s subjective experience of childbirth, have opened up possibilities for resistance. This has succeeded in changing some of those practices over the years thus creating new power relations.

However woman’s language is man’s, creating a disempowering situation of being unable to speak as a woman. The discourse of woman is permeated by and articulated by the power relations of a gendered language system. When I read Foucault I am aware that he appears to speak to men first and I adjust my reading to read against the ‘he’ and the powerful use of ‘he’ and ‘his’. Gender and power appear inextricably linked. Gender like power also pervades all areas of discourses. Gender and power pervade this study as I attempt to position myself in the discourse of research as a feminist qualitative researcher.

Major and Minor Discourses.

What I propose to state from my readings of the literature is that discourses construct such key but indiscriminate social understandings as science, politics, medicine, woman, man, etc. These are comprehensive and generalized overarching major discourses which can be analyzed and categorized for particular minor discourses within them. I maintain that the major discourses are too large, amorphous, (the discursive practices are almost too anonymous or generalized) with too many individual ideas and concepts buried within them to be able to readily isolate, articulate and interpret their meanings and relations properly and adequately. These major discourses need to be broken up, unraveled, unpeeled, unpacked for their separate, specific systems of knowledge. The postmodernist

desire for the particular, the different, the numerous; and a distancing from the modernist myth of the universal generic, presents an argument for breaking down the major discourses into specific minor discourses which unfold into further statements and practices. For example, in subjecting the vast unity that is the major discourse of woman, to a postmodern decentering of 'woman', numerous minor discourses emerge. These minor discourses are constituted by the different practices of woman: feminist, mother (including the physicality and sexuality of pregnancy), magic woman or shaman or witch, goddess, black woman, grandmother, daughter, lesbian, madonna, older woman, and so on. There are too many differences of woman for just one overarching discourse to speak for this multiplicity. We need to unravel or unpack all these particular and different discourses to fully analyze the whole discourse of woman.

Dominant and Marginalized Practices.

All discourses, permeated and conditioned as they are by power relations, separate themselves into those practices which dominate and those which are marginalized. As well, practices of discourses move between being dominant and marginal as power relations shift. The dominant practices are those which are centrally positioned within the discourse and are seen to be currently socially appropriate, 'accepted' at a particular time. For instance, we could say that the dominant practices which are currently constituting and forming the major discourse of woman derive from the minor discourse of feminism, the political, economic, social and sexual equality of women in a patriarchal system. However the discourse of feminism is fragmented further by a postmodern decentering of an authoritative voice which cannot speak for all feminists. This continues the fragmentation and unraveling of discourses which could lead to charges of nominalism--that each individual is her/his own discourse.

Within discourses we find discontinuities, gaps, breaks and details that do not fit with the dominant practices. Here we can find what Foucault (1980) calls "subjugated knowledges" (p.82), what Deleuze calls "minor knowledges" (p.85), what Hutcheon

(1988) calls “ex-centric” (p 12) and what I call marginalized practices. These are practices which are either historical knowledges “present but disguised” (Foucault, 1980, p. 82) by the dominant practices or, they are sets of knowledges that have been “disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, . . .”(p.82). If dominant practices are situated at the center, then marginalized practices are positioned excentrically, on the margins, edges and boundaries of the discourse. Marginalized practices are limited and inhibited by the dominant practices as to what can be said and done and by whom it can be said. For instance, in the discourse of woman the practices of witch and witchcraft are marginalized because the current dominant practices of woman find them inappropriate, inadequate or problematic (“naive knowledges”) and therefore have no place for them at this time.

Unity of Discourses

If we understand that the perceived unity of discourses resides in all the current dominant practices which constitute the discourse then we also understand that these dominant practices are located at the center of the discourse. The current practices at the center are those which are socially acceptable and appropriate now. They are practices which define what can be said, who can speak and act with authority, practices which constitute the subject in the discourse, practices which establish the current values and beliefs expressed in the discourse. The implicit relations of power maintain these current dominant practices at the center. For instance, the structure of the discourse of Mother begins with the current dominant and centered practices of pregnancy, a set of practices controlled not by mothers or midwives but by the discourse of medicine.

Deconstructing the Unity of the Discourse.

How could, or do we decenter or deconstruct the perceived unity of the discourse and why should we disrupt that unity? What benefits or disadvantages will result? One strategy of deconstructing is to move the center, the dominant practices, off center and to

bring in from the margins and edges, the disruptions, the discontinuities, the gaps, the breaks and the details that do not fit. The marginalized practices, “subjugated knowledges” are practices which are either “present but disguised” for some reason or have been “disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated:” These are “naive knowledges, . . .” (Foucault 1980). Foucault maintains that it is through the appearance of these marginalized knowledges, these practices, that “criticism does its work.” (p.80). In other words we recenter or create new centers for marginalized practices and thus we bring back into play, back into the ‘mainstream’, knowledges and practices that have been neglected, ‘disqualified’, in order for those knowledges and practices to be reused and reinterpreted for creating areas of resistance, change and for critical thinking.

As an example, in disrupting the perceived unity of mother by decentering the current dominant practices, I need to look for the knowledges and practices that exist at the margins of this discourse of mother. What are these practices? What is considered inadequate or is disqualified as current practice, or is disguised or hidden or just ignored at the margins? One example used previously concerned an influential obstetrician creating resistant spaces by centering the marginalized subjective experience of childbirth for women in his discursive practices of obstetrics. Cited below are three examples, in the discourses of midwife, religion and medicine, of what I find when I stir up the infinite waters of the discourse of mother and bring into my consciousness subjugated practices of mother in relation to practices of other discourses. As I make interpretations here I must acknowledge the ‘I’ from which I speak is socially constructed by the practices of the discourses in which I am positioned (such as woman, mother, feminist, Australian, teacher).

The practices of midwife (of the specific network of other women in childbirth) are presently marginalized in the discourse of mother. They no longer appear as the dominant practices they were in previous centuries. As an example of this exclusion from the center, we can look to the discourses of art at the influential ‘Family of Man’ exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1955. Childbirth was depicted in that exhibition by Wayne

Miller's modernist photograph, "Birth" and "imaged as the masked doctor-magician triumphantly pulling a male child out of a pile of sheets like a rabbit out of a hat" (Allara, 1994, p.15). The photographer "pictured the delivery of childbirth into the hands of institutionalized medicine" (p.15) and away from a specific practice of women when even the mother is concealed in this photograph.

If we look at the traditional midwifery practices of other women, Native American women or Aboriginal women for instance, and examine their interaction with the marginalized practices of tribal or folk medicine, we may be able to look more critically at the authority of dominant practices of childbirth in our society. Some Australian Aboriginal practices of preserving the umbilical cord as part of sacred art objects can be contrasted in other countries with the sale of placentas (unbeknownst to the mother), to cosmetic laboratories. In revealing marginalized knowledge--marginalized by being part of a marginalized culture (if I write from a Western cultural perspective) or marginalized by time--I am calling into question current dominant practices and opening up areas which can add to current interpretations of what it means to be in the discourse of mother..

In the 17th century of the artist, Johannes Vermeer, the discourse of mother was a major factor informing the discourse of woman and was largely formed by the discursive practices of religion. But who actually spoke (with authority?) for pregnant women? Midwives and other mothers, in fact it would seem, only other women. What was said and practiced operated in a closed but communal atmosphere--discreet and 'hidden'. However the dominant practices of mother were informed by the discourse of religion and thus this could be seen to be a discontinuity in the discourse of mother. This put artists into a paradoxical situation in both revealing and concealing the representation of pregnancy in their art. Artists could depict pregnant women as acceptable allegory or metaphor. Very few women were represented as ordinary pregnant women. Perhaps three of Vermeer's paintings show women apparently pregnant (two definitely so, *Woman holding a balance*⁷ and *Woman reading a letter*). The interesting thing here (as previously

⁷ This Vermeer text, *Woman holding a balance*. is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

stated) is the lack of direct acknowledgment of this fact of pregnancy in all of the art historical commentaries and scholarly writings on Vermeer with the exception of one historian who drew attention to the pregnancy of the women in the Vermeer texts (Bal in Brunette & Wills 1994). The acknowledgment of pregnancy here changes one's interpretation of this text because it 'recenters' the discourse of woman to include the physicality of pregnancy as another discourse. It allows one to interact with another discourse and explore one's own interconnection with that discourse through the text.

Discourses are always added to and practices repositioned. Discourses are never complete, never have an end and can always be traced and retraced through other discourses. All discourses interweave and interconnect with one another. They cannot stand in isolation from one another as autonomous or originary practices. All discourses are 'unfinished' in that interconnections and relationships between discourses will constantly expand the practices of discourses.

Discursive Positioning

I understand that the poststructuralist decentering of the self allows for the concept of multiple selves and those selves are brought into being by multiple discursive practices which overlap, conflict, interlink with each other producing differing effects. It is against this 'background' of discursive practices that individuals act upon themselves and order their own lives in numerous ways.

In understanding the discursive constructedness of self, I see myself dominantly positioned in the different discourses and power relations of woman, intersecting and interlinking with all other discourses--of student, Australian, white, and so on--in order to interpret experiences of what it is for me to be a woman. Being positioned in discourses means both creating a space for oneself in relation to the practices of the discourse and participating in those practices. In this study, through the interrogation and exploration of interpretations of discursive practices in art texts, I hope to develop a ~~model~~ that enables students to explore their different selves through their particular interpretations, constructed

from their positionality in these discourses.

I see this exploration as the beginning of reflective and reflexive thinking leading to self knowledge. Self knowledge in turn allows for the potential for change. For instance, in recognizing the pregnancy of the woman in the Vermeer text *Woman Holding a Balance*, the position of the viewer in the various discourses of mother will significantly effect their interpretation of meanings. The viewer who is situated primarily in the discourses of medicine or father will make different interpretations of meanings of the woman's actions than the viewer situated in the discourse of costume/fashion or the viewer situated primarily in the discourses of mother or grandmother or daughter. The students in the art room, marginally situated in the discourse of art history, will make different interpretations than their teacher. Their differing positions in these discourses will constitute differing interpretations. At the same time the viewer is acted upon by the art text's articulation of particular discursive practices. In the Vermeer text, the distance between the woman and the table, made necessary by the fullness of the pregnancy, is highlighted by the light and in the way that the fingertips just rest on edge of the table. This space and the woman's stance reveal particular practices of pregnancy which are 'known' and understood by women. This may explain why no art historians (mainly positioned in the dominant practices of white male in the major discourse of Man) acknowledged the woman's pregnancy until a female art historian in the 1970's was able and historically allowed to interpret the signs of mother in the Vermeer art text and expand upon them. (Bal in Brunette & Wills, 1994, n16, p.54). The emphasis in prior interpretations of meanings in this art text, on allegory, metaphor and religion indicates that these were the discourses identified as significant by previous art historians who were authoritative 'centers' in the discourse of art history. It shows how the discourses of art history and mother were inhibited by their dominant practices in determining what was 'authorized' to be said about this text. In focusing on the art text in this study, it is not to know the text as object but to understand it as a site to look through, an opening for opportunities regarding self and identity.

The viewer adopts particular positions in the discourses embedded in art texts from which to construct interpretations. In my experience with the art text, *The Revenge of the Goldfish* by the contemporary installation artist Sandy Skoglund, and a group of American senior high school students, it appeared certain psychological interpretations were ignored or excluded as students preferred to make interpretations from positions in more familiar and comfortable discourses. Students marginalized their positions in the discourse of psychoanalysis in making interpretations because I presume the practices of this discourse were more uncomfortable, dangerous and unfamiliar. They chose to position themselves dominantly in the discourses of environmental issues and to a lesser extent, discourses of surrealism and fantasy. These students did understand that their reluctance to acknowledge particular discourses in this art text stemmed from their positions in those discourses. Here revelations of self and self knowledge becomes problematic. By adopting other strategies such as the alternative writing of visual verbals, this allowed them to feel more comfortable in 'confronting their discomfort'. However if the visual verbals had been able to be interrogated instead of being regarded as 'complete', they may have been able to disrupt the dominant readings and create spaces for denser and more complex understanding of their interpretations. The recognition and understanding of one's positionality in discourses is vital and of significance to one's own responses and interpretations and the responses and interpretation of others in a postmodern understanding of difference, change and resistance.

Deconstruction as Critical Activity

Derridean deconstruction has been discussed as a philosophical position, an intellectual pursuit in search of meaning and a way of reading texts. For this study I consider deconstruction to be a critical activity of close reading or viewing in which texts of any kind can be read in a disruptive way of reading/viewing, in particular, reading against the dominant discursive practices of the text. Having introduced deconstruction to disrupt the unity of discourses it is necessary to look more closely at how deconstruction

may appear as strategies to disrupt discursive practices in art texts. To decenter the dominant discursive practices and reveal marginalized, oppositional or ambiguous practices in order to see possibilities about different positioning or repositioning oneself in relation to interpretation, opens up areas for self reflexive thought.

For most visual art teachers raised on modernist theory, the comfortable concept of specific meaning intentionally positioned by the artist in the art work waiting to be uncovered by teacher questioning and student response, is a notion difficult to relinquish. It appeals to the desire in modernist interpretation for finding a 'tidy' closure or origin, of meaning. To give up such a modernist position in favor of a postmodern indeterminate, disruptive and often contradictory disentangling of layers of meanings in art texts is insecure and threatening. So why give up the comfortable assumption that art texts and artists mean what they say they mean? Spivak (in Derrida 1976) postulates that assuming that art texts and artists mean what they say, will not give us the mastery we desire to have over them. Nor will that assumption allow the freedom of interpretation which is also what we desire because it closes off interpretation. I maintain also that that assumption will not break down the modernist barrier between postmodern viewer and art text and allow the viewer to fully engage with the text' discursive practices, which may be what Derrida understands as 'mastery'.

Derrida acknowledges that deconstruction "seems to offer a way out of the modernist desire for the closure of knowledge" (in Derrida 1976, p. lxxvii). But deconstruction is also "a desire to reappropriate the text,. . . to show the text what it 'does not know'" (p.lxxvii). The contradiction is that while desiring some form of control by looking for origins or foundations of meaning we also desire the indefinite, "the abyss as freedom" (p.lxxvii). In the following pages I have looked at some of the things deconstruction concerns itself with, particularly oppositions, decentering the sign, the marginal and ambiguous and intertextuality.

Oppositions

Traditional epistemology or theories of knowledge depend on original or foundational principles on which a pyramid of meanings may be constructed. First principles such as causality are deeply rooted in our history as the foundation for all knowledge. We take as given that causes produce effects. First principles are also defined by what they exclude or by what they are not - this is the notion of binary oppositions or oppositional hierarchies, speech/writing, nature/culture, man/woman, good/evil, and so on. The logic of oppositions asserts that the first contrasted term be the privileged one, however in using this term it will be evident that a contradictory logic is occurring. That contradiction is that the second or marginal term enables or empowers the first term, that the first term cannot exist without the second which surely changes the status of both terms. Deconstruction uses strategies which can undermine those binary and hierarchical oppositions by revealing ways to invert them or collapse them into themselves. Deconstruction questions binary oppositions in the very notion of the word, that is, it is not a matter of 'construction' or 'deconstruction' but it is both 'construction' and 'deconstruction'. In looking at the opposition between speech and writing where speech has been traditionally privileged because of its closeness to the presence of thought, we find that if we preserve speech as in a tape recording it becomes a series of signifiers just as writing is and therefore just as open to interpretation and slippage of meaning through the differential 'play' of signifiers.

In Chapter 2 the example of incest prohibition in the anthropological writing of Levi Strauss allows Derrida (1978) to undo the primary position of nature to culture. Levi-Strauss in his writing on kinship used this opposition in examining the incest prohibition but also found contradictions which he, as a structuralist, was scandalized by. "The incest prohibition is universal; in this sense one would call it natural. But it is also a prohibition, a system of norms and interdicts; in this sense one could call it cultural: . . ." (p.283). Through Levi-Strauss's example we can understand how nature and culture need not be in opposition but in fact derive one from the other, more in the logic of both nature and culture. Thus one term of the opposition can be made to slip across into the other and this

also transforms the notion of hierarchy itself. I understand deconstruction in terms of Norris's (1991) deconstructive reply to critical accusations about deconstruction's apparent lack of scholarly rigor, as an activity of mind concerning the close readings of texts by which meanings in the text are not either undone or preserved but both undone and preserved. "Deconstruction is . . . an activity of thought which cannot be consistently acted upon . . . but which yet possesses an inescapable rigour of its own" (p.xi).

Disrupting the Center

Deconstruction also upsets epistemological foundations by going beyond the central concept of structuralism which is the sign, and seeing the (im)possibility "of separating the order of the signified from the order of the signifier in the functioning of the sign". (p.29). The sign is shown to be unstable and under poststructuralist interrogation meaning shifts about in the endless chain of signification. Searching for one meaning in a text may no longer be possible or desirable when one accepts that a text is a weave of interconnecting references and differences, where "meaning, if you like, is scattered or dispersed along along the whole chain of signifiers" (p.128). Roland Barthes (in Young 1981) describes it:

In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled* nothing deciphered; the structure can be followed, 'run' (like the thread of a stocking) at every point and at every level, but there is nothing underneath: the space of writing is to be ranged over, not pierced; writing ceaselessly posits meaning ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. (p. 18).

Close Reading of the Marginal and Ambiguous

Deconstruction also involves giving attention, through close reading, to what is marginal, or ambiguous. Attention is given to what has been ignored or excluded in the text that enables the text to resist the dominant reading or escape the identity that the text creates for itself. A dominant reading or interpretation is one which privileges certain

‘true’ information informed by the dominant practices of discourses. These are readings or interpretations that the text has encouraged us and the critic to make either because of apparently unambiguous descriptive narratives or because presuppositions brought to the text by the viewer will be reinforced by the text.

Thus Bal (in Brunette & Wills 1994), was able to disrupt the dominant interpretations in the Vermeer text, *Woman Holding a Balance*, by deconstructive strategies that she found in using the word ‘dissemination’; intertextuality, polysemy and the wavering location of meaning, which allowed her to attend to the details in the text which did not fit or which had been ignored and excluded. Bal took these marginalized and ambiguous details and teased them out to reveal a number of discourses present and important in the text, but which had not been part of the dominant interpretations. Bal opened this Vermeer text up to interpretations of discursive practices previously denied by ‘traditional’ art historical readings by the use of strategies ignored by or not available to ‘traditional’ art historians. Derrida in his reading of Rousseau picks away at words in the text like ‘supplement’ where there seems to be a contradictory use, to uncover different interpretations of the text.

Intertextuality

Close reading or close attention to the text also uncovers the dependence or debt the text owes to other texts, its intertextuality. This is the acknowledgement of a text’s constitution in other texts, that the text uses text from all cultural sources. Derrida (1976) recognizes this debt in his use of the word ‘trace’. He refers to palimpsests and the metaphors of X ray pictures when describing the relationship between the text and other/prior texts,

“Reading then resembles those X ray pictures which discover, under the epidermis of the last painting, another hidden picture: of the same painter or another painter, . . . who would himself, for want of materials, or for a new effect, use the substance of an ancient canvas or conserve the fragment of a first sketch” (p.lxxvi).

Bal (in Brunette & Wills, 1994) maintains intertextuality in the visual arts is distinguished from other borrowings by such concepts as changed meanings which contain a trace of its other from one text to another, appropriation of images with reference to earlier images, or the construction of new texts from the framework of others.

My Standpoint

My understanding of deconstruction as critical activity hinges on these poststructuralist shifts in thought; the undermining of the logic of binary and hierarchical oppositions; the decentering of authoritative signifieds and the consequent emphasis on the marginal, ambiguous and the contradictory; and the notion of intertextuality, the acknowledgement of other text in the construction of texts. All of this requires close attention to the text and the discursive practices which have produced it.

Deconstruction as a critical activity is closely tied to the individual texts which it is investigating and as such may present an advantage in that it cannot be made into a self contained model or system that could apply without modification to all texts. The significance of the concept of model and text is discussed elsewhere in this study. To deconstruct a text is not to “. . . search for its ‘meaning’, but to follow the paths by which writing both sets up and transgresses its own terms, producing an asemantic ‘drift’ (dérive) of difference.” (Young, 1981, p.18). Deconstruction is not about finding ‘the’ meaning in a text. One can never come to an ultimate, fixed, single meaning in a word or image when meaning is always deferred or suspended, modified by other words or images. Meaning is always unraveling through traces of other meanings. Derrida (in Young, 1981) confirms this in stating how a text is never a finished body of writing but is a differential network, a weave of traces endlessly referring to something other than itself and to other traces and references.

Strategies of Deconstruction

Deconstructing these poststructuralist shifts in thought uncovers a number of critical

strategies for flexible and diverse use in using interpretation in art texts. In isolating a set of strategies from deconstruction for critical activity, I find that the concept of a 'set' disturbs my poststructuralist thinking. The emphasis must be on the looseness and flexibility of such a grouping including the repetition of strategies and the constant critique of strategies. These strategies could provide the means of (de) (c) entering art texts to reveal and interrogate dominant or marginal discourses in interpretations of the text. In my study I see deconstructive strategies being used in undermining dominant interpretations of discourses of art texts to reveal the constructedness of these interpretations and discourses, and of student's own interpretations of art texts. All deconstructive strategies will produce different effects with different texts and open different spaces in which students can engage with the art text.

These strategies loosely become, in the broadest sense, bricolage and the deconstructive strategist becomes a bricoleur. Levi-Strauss (in Derrida 1978) employs the term 'bricoleur' as someone who uses the means available, anything to hand "... the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there. . ." (p 285) which may not be intended for such use but which can be adapted and changed for critical activity. Deconstruction can be seen as the activity of a bricoleur; a collector of strategies which may come in handy, for undoing and redoing, things which can be useful, in case of, to be adapted for, undermining and subverting the status of discursive meaning. In all these strategies and devices there appear degrees of repetition and overlapping in their use for deconstruction.

Strategies concerning Oppositions

Derrida (in Culler, 1982), describing a strategy of deconstruction concerning oppositions states,

(I)n a traditional philosophical opposition we have not a peaceful coexistence of facing terms but a violent hierarchy. One of the terms dominates the other. . .

occupies the commanding position. To deconstruct the opposition is above all, at a particular moment, to reverse the hierarchy” (p.85).

He states that deconstruction must reverse the classical opposition and at the same time, displace the general system of oppositions that apparently supports our theories of knowledge. As stated in an earlier discussion the ‘either/or’ situation set up by classical oppositions cannot be sustained. The situation changes, to a concept of ‘both’ which further acknowledges the dependency of one term on another. We come to acknowledge further that the space between ~~oppositional~~ terms, such as the space between good and evil, moves about depending on contextual situations. In a previously used example from Levi-Strauss, nature and culture were collapsed as terms in opposition as both terms were implicated in the understanding of the incest prohibition found in all cultures. The incest prohibition is seen as both natural and cultural in ‘origin’.

Thus in deconstructing oppositions we first establish them and their relationship to and within the text. The strategy here is to undermine the privileged term by questioning its relation to the other and to reverse the opposition in its relation with the text thus giving us more opportunity to question discursive practices.

Strategies to Interrogate Dominant Interpretations

When we look at the Vermeer text or the Skoglund text we are presented with our own interpretations and those from informed critical and historical sources. These are interpretations that the text has encouraged us and the critic to make either because of apparently unambiguous descriptive narratives or because presuppositions brought to the text by the viewer will be reinforced by the text. They are interpretations of some thing, discourses, embedded in the text. In the case of the Vermeer text, many art historians have made closed contextual interpretations from positions of authority which presupposed particular discursive practices of women. My high school art history textbook (Gardner 1959) told me that this was a painting about the vanity or greed of women, that

interpretation constituted by the particular positions taken in the discourses of art history and women by the historian author.

Whatever arguments and citations to be found in the interpretation may be questioned in a number of ways. We could disrupt these dominant interpretations by decentering what the interpretation is about, that is , a discourse. We could ask for descriptions of the practices of the discourse, ask how we recognize them, who makes these discursive statements and for what reason, who and what is excluded in these practices, what are the contradictory and ambiguous details, and thereby begin to displace the dominant practices in the interpretation. Derrida (1976) tells us that interpretations involve the representation of the text within the experiences of the viewer but that the text far exceeds the resources of the viewer, that “. . . the text constantly goes beyond this representation by the entire system of its resources and its own rules” (p.101). At the same time we must acknowledge that our own limits of discursive practices, constitute the questions and ‘censor’ the answers we accept when deconstructing interpretations. We must particularly question the presuppositions that we bring to the text by using the images and concepts from the text itself to displace or subvert those presuppositions. Thus interpretation is never closed off, the text constantly carrying within it those devices which will make explanation or clarification of meaning ceaseless.

Strategies for Unpacking the Marginal and Ambiguous

The presumption in this critical activity is towards a deliberate disruption of prescribed or dominant ways of thinking critically in order to understand different interpretations of discursive meaning. Finding ambiguity (as a rich source of meaning) in the form of contradiction, enigmas, details which do not seem to fit in the art text is a strategy of deconstruction. Ambiguity may be found in all areas of the text. Nothing can be excluded when unpacking meaning as discursive practices in art texts, everything is to be read or viewed--in the discursive constructedness of text, there is nothing ‘outside’ the text. So, in interpreting any text, we must acknowledge that intertextuality and textuality will weave

this text into the network of all discursive practices. Derrida uses a “shifting battery of terms” (Norris, 1991, p.32) as bricoleur’s tools to unpick difference or ambiguity. Words such as *différance*, *hymen*, *supplement*, *trace*, *parergon*, *spacing*, *dissemination*, each of which cannot be reduced to a single self identical meaning and therefore cannot reduce textual meanings to an ultimate meaning (or ‘truth’) are used by Derrida as ‘positive levers’ in prizing open a text for new seams of discursive practices. An important point is that these ‘bricolage’ words are not used consistently on/in the text but are constantly “on the move. He (Derrida) does not relinquish a term altogether. He simply changes it to the lower case of a common noun, where each context establishes its provisional definition yet once again” (Spivak in Derrida 1976, p.lxxi) For instance, *différance* as a concept is always slipping between the two French verbs ‘to differ’ and ‘to defer’, setting up instabilities created by the spelling and sound of these two words. ‘Differ’ and ‘defer’ can blend into one another: meaning being discernible, dissimilar, distinct, separate; or meaning being deferred, delayed, detoured or interrupted. ‘Supplement’ as a concept is both a surplus and a necessary addition. We could use these words and others as bricoleur’s tools to undermine the ambiguity of language, images found in art texts.

Bal (in Brunette & Wills 1991) uses the word ‘dissemination’ which she ‘splits’ into three parts, intertextuality, polysemy and the wavering location of meaning, when deconstructing the Vermeer text. ‘Dissemination’ can be played with etymologically (intertextuality), ‘semen’ (seeds) not inseminating but disseminating, being scattered into a proliferation of differing deferred (seeds), meanings (polysemy and the wavering location of meaning). She weaves these devices around the obvious framing strategy of the sunlight and the not so obvious but ambiguous detail, the small nail and the hole in the wall. Such free play with language is what deconstruction offers to interpretation. Bal notes that most Derridean concepts, nicknames, ‘bricoleur’s tools’, “are embedded within the same opposition against classical semiotics; . . . deconstruction itself tend(s) to converge in the one major project of undermining from within the status of meaning in traditional Saussurean semiotics” (p.49).

The deconstructive bricoleur may develop word play or strategies to dismantle metaphors (revealing the irreducibility and inescapability of metaphor), to 'misunderstand' or misread all or part of the text, to make chance connections between words or sounds or to examine the physicality of the art text particularly where it finds itself and in what form.

Strategies Involving Intertextuality

"We know now that a text is. . . a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes 1977. p.146). Barthes was describing the dependence or debt which the text owes to other texts, the intertext of a text. The text is constituted by the discursive practices of the texts of previous and other cultures and is seen firstly in the meaning of a word or what persons usually mean by a word, in that the meaning is the result of a past consensus of usage. I previously referred to the etymological trace used by Bal in her double use of 'dissemination'. Secondly, this trace can be expanded to include all language, that is a consensus of previous communicative acts or events.

Intertextuality also involves an understanding of the palimpsestic nature of a text. The palimpsest is the text which is created out of past texts, or texts appropriating text, or texts dependent on other texts for meaning. Therefore we need strategies which force us to acknowledge the precedent of the other. In looking at the Vermeer text, Bal acknowledges one precedent, that of prior realism in paintings, when examining the extreme realism of the hole and nail hole illuminated by the framing device of the sunlight. The woman in the text is compared to all the discursive practices of Mary, mother of God, and we cannot ignore other texts and discursive practices that the represented Last Judgment on the wall brings into the painting.

Intertextuality is not merely about finding 'influences' on the text but more about how texts develop meaning almost parasitically from other texts. If we understand the sedimented nature of textuality, being aware of and looking out for the evidence of other texts, this becomes part of a strategy for tracing or referencing within texts.

Conclusion

These strategies of cracking apart the 'surface' of the text can occur at any point in the text. In writing of 'surface' and 'opening the text' I assume the text to have a structure. This structure is part of the textuality, the meaning of the text. Structure can indicate how to proceed, from the 'beginning' to the 'end'. However we can decide to enter the text at any point as a strategy of displacement or disruption. Derrida (1976) states that we must, in interpreting meaning, also begin "wherever we are; in a text where we already believe ourselves to be" (p.162).

These strategies of deconstruction will change. New ones will develop as new texts are unpacked for meaning of discourses particularly the new writing of students in interrogating their own interpretations as understanding of self. Some strategies will be left behind and resuscitated, or excluded. But it is to be remembered that no meaning, no discourses, can be fixed or decided, that everything is a matter of difference. However the desire for closure leads us to temporarily fix positions and interpretations even when we know there is only interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Restating the problem

One project for research in art education, particularly in art criticism, should be the investigation of a postmodern perspective for interrogating interpretations of meanings in art texts⁸. Such a perspective involves taking poststructuralist approaches to interpretation and meaning in order to contradict modernist assumptions of fixed meaning in art texts. The consequences of such a perspective ultimately lead to an understanding of how interpretations (of meanings) have been socially and historically constructed and how the experience of interpretation contributes to reflection of, and an exploration of, self and identity . This problem and its explication is the focus of the study.

Overview of Postmodern Feminist Qualitative Research

The present moment in postmodern qualitative research is one in which no one theory or method has a claim to authoritative knowledge. The qualitative research act can no longer be viewed from within a neutral or objective perspective. We acknowledge that

⁸ Throughout this project I use the word 'text' to refer to all art text and art writing.

gender, class, race and ethnicity are just some of the factors which now shape the process of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Grumet (in Eisner & Peshkin, Eds. 1990) states that we cannot detach ourselves from the world we study, that we are a part of what we study. This attachment to the world must be continually recognized in all research.

The methodology for research in this project is conditioned by my own belief about knowledge articulated by Dale Spender (in Reinhartz, 1992), "at the core of feminist ideas is the crucial insight that there is no one truth, no one authority, no one objective method which leads to the production of pure knowledge" (p. 7). Any discussions of a possible distinctive postmodernist feminist research note that knowledge/evidence gathering strategies and theory and analysis have been intertwined in postmodern and feminist forums (Harding, Ed. 1987).

For this research project, the strategies by which I collected data were based on my own postmodern/feminist belief about how I learn and the way I process knowledge. I saw postmodern/feminist methodologies generating and refining more interactive, contextualized methods in the search for pattern and meaning rather than prediction and control (Lather, 1991). The use of my own voice and the recognition of my involvement was necessary in analyzing and interpreting research text in this study.

Personal Methods of Research

My research method used and integrated a number of evidence gathering strategies via a case study which provided me with a dense network, an excess of information. With this base I separated, added to, multiplied, sifted through, repeated, transformed, deconstructed and reconstructed that information. I went beyond what I needed to know in order to create an intimacy with that whole field the study. Therefore I designed research methodology that drew in a rich, dense and excessive body of information. From this body of information, a 'sifting' process occurred, rather like trolling for fish, netting everything, examining and remembering everything but also letting some things go. I used the results to design a disruptive model of interpretation.

Theoretical Framework

The methodology is also framed by my understanding of the writing of Foucault and Derrida. From Foucault, an understanding of the concepts of discourses allows me to illuminate embedded discourses in art texts. Maintaining that discourses or discursive practices constitute interpretations of meanings, understandings of positions in discourses is crucial to this project. Through examination and analysis of the work of Derrida, I have searched for concepts and strategies with which he and I disrupt, decenter and deconstruct texts. The strategies and tactics located in these writers are used to (post)'structure' or conceptualize a 'loose system' for deconstructing the text from my case study

The Case Study

Overview of case study method

Postmodern qualitative researchers who use case study method, understand that this method does not imply any particular forms or techniques of collecting research texts. It is characterized by the "use of multiple sources of evidence--converging on the same set of issues" (Yin, 1993. p.32). Case study methods include many of the methods common to all qualitative research - observation, interview, conversation, discussion, listening, but as Stake (in Denzin & Lincoln 1994) states, a case study is defined by an interest in the case, not in the methods used (p.236). A case study incorporates both the *process* of finding out about the case and the *product* of our finding out. From my standpoint, it is the flexibility of method that allows for the possibility of change which is valuable in using the case study. It is in this regard that Stake (in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and others (Kemmis in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) see the terms 'case' and 'study' debatable and ambiguous. For some researchers a case study, "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context" (Yin, 1993. p 59). Yin (1993) maintains that the distinctive characteristic of the case study is the inclusion of the context as an integral part. The case study is most used in situations where the boundary between phenomenon and context are blurred although he concludes that the main use of case study as a research method is to conduct exploratory

inquiries.

Like Yin, Stake (1995) maintains that a case study studies the particularity and complexity of a case, understanding its activity in individual and specific circumstances. The results present something unique which is conditioned by the nature of the case, the history of the case, the context of the case including the physical setting, and the participants/researcher relationship.

The case study in this project

This case study looks at two art criticism classes (each having three lessons each) conducted by me as teacher/researcher in two high schools. The selection of the case in this study hinged on a number of aspects. For this research project, my own postmodern/feminist belief about knowledge and the way I learn, influenced the selection. I felt that this selection would give me an excess of information. As a teacher I wanted to use, for the study, secondary schools where the students had a sophisticated knowledge of the arts, particularly a familiarity with the practices of art criticism. I also needed data about the art texts used and in this case, I used the writings from a number of sources; critics, artist, educators and researcher.

As an Australian, my main professional and personal experience is of the centralized state education system of New South Wales⁹ , Australia. Art education is considered a significant area of study in N.S.W. secondary schools and the disciplines of art history, art criticism and art production are built into the state mandated Visual Arts syllabi. Recently the revised N.S.W. Visual Arts syllabi for Years 7-10 (1994) and Years 11-12 (1996 draft) included four, "Frames...different systems of belief which are relevant to the theory and practice of the Visual arts in the twentieth century" (1994, p. 29). The frames "provide different orientations for addressing art critical and historical questions. . . and a basis for understanding the layers of meaning an art work can sustain" (1995 draft, p. 29). One of the four frames is the Postmodern frame. Using the postmodern frame, "encourages

⁹ Herein identified as N.S.W.

students to question critical and historical practices within generally accepted classifications of artists, artworks, movements, styles and to identify inconsistencies in what is written. . . revealing disjunctions and differences in meaning and examine(ing) the significance of irony, parody, quotation and appropriation in visual arts practice” (1996 draft, p. 30). I surmised therefore that senior art students in secondary schools would have had some background and understanding of postmodernism and the practices of art criticism which would be relevant to my project.

As I was to be in Australia for seven weeks I used art criticism classes in two high schools for gifted students in Sydney, Australia. The schools, North Sydney Girls’ High School and North Sydney Boys’ High School ¹⁰ are both schools for academically gifted students and are situated only blocks apart in the same inner city neighborhood. Both were established late last century and have long and ‘distinguished’ reputations for excellence in education. Both have strong art departments and consistently achieve high grades in the state exit examination, the Higher School Certificate, which compares with other examinations in the world such as the British General Certificate of Education and the International Baccalaureate. Both schools have experienced art teachers although the teachers of these classes have different approaches to the teaching of art critical and historical studies. The use of the conversation and writing of ‘gifted’ students from these schools allowed for an ‘expert student’ viewpoint and focused on students who were ‘unusual’ thus collecting information which was rich and dense (purposeful sampling). (Patton 1980). These schools were also chosen because of my professional involvement as former head teacher in one school and a close professional association with the teachers at the other. Therefore I had an intimate knowledge of the schools.

The artist Sandy Skoglund was selected because I was acquainted with her art—I had used her art in previous art criticism lessons—and I had access to informal information such as personal interviews. Skoglund is an contemporary American artist, whose art begins as installation and ‘becomes’ photography. I used Skoglund’s installations/photographs from

¹⁰ Identified in this study as NSBHS and NSGHS.

the 1990's for use with the students in this study. These installations/photographs use everyday foodstuffs such as hamburger meat (*Spirituality in the Flesh* , 1992) (Figure 1), bacon (*Body Limits* , 1992) (Figure 2), cheese doodles (*The Cocktail Party* , 1994) (Figure 3), marmalade and jam (*The Wedding* , 1994), raisins (*Atomic Love* , 1992) (Figure 4) and French fries (*At the Shore* , 1995).

Research questions

This particular case study was conducted to provide some insight into the issues of students' understanding of interpretation of meanings in art texts and their understanding of that role in the construction of self. From a small pilot study done with American high school students I isolated types of questions related to the constructed nature of interpretation, the concept of discourses and positioning, or students' understanding of construction of self, which were all central issues to the research problem. These types of questions informed the preparation of the research. In understanding this particular case I decided to forgo emphasis on any one question as a focus point preferring to use a flexible set of questions, to restate questions depending on context, and to take opportunities to change the direction of questions when the unexpected occurred. Stake (1995) notes that researchers differ on how much they want to have their research questions identified in advance as sometimes the case study 'fieldwork' takes the research in unexpected directions (p.28). He confirmed what I found, that is, it was impossible to become thoroughly acquainted with the case before the design of the study (p.29).

Research Data

Art criticism classes

Primary sources of research data for this case study were secondary students' critical responses to the art of one contemporary artist, Sandy Skoglund. Available time limits made the use of only one artist's work feasible. The text was collected by audio and video tape from three art criticism lessons which I conducted in the two selected schools (six

lessons in all). The classes were comprised of 28 Year 11 (aged approximately 16 years) art students from North Sydney Boys' High School and 21 Year 11 art students (aged approximately 16 years) from North Sydney Girls' High School. The lessons varied in length from 58 minutes to 30 minutes.

The organization of the three lessons was as follows;

Lesson 1: My explanation of and discussion about terms (interpretation, discourses, positioning), and introduction to Skoglund's texts via a slide presentation with emphasis on the art text *Atomic Love*. Two homework tasks were given, a) the students were to ask a member of their family to interpret briefly the art text *Atomic Love* (via a postcard) and, b) the students were to create a visual verbal using a color photocopy, which expanded their own interpretation of the art text. Visual verbals are a method of interpreting by creating art texts out of other art texts. I have used this method of interpretation with art students for some years. Visual verbals are discussed in in Chapter 1 and 6.

Lesson 2: Students explanation of family member's interpretation of art text, and explanation of their visual verbals.

Lesson 3: The class, divided into groups of five, interpreted different Skoglund text (*Body Limits, Spirituality in the Flesh, The Cocktail Party*) and presented the interpretation to the class.

The sequencing of the introduction of new concepts to the class was different at each school. The concepts were introduced at different times where I deemed it appropriate to the discussion, however each class discussed the same concepts, interpretation, discourse and positioning. I allowed, as much as possible, for the discussion to take various paths without rigidly staying within particular boundaries. The audio and video tapes were transcribed verbatim into written text and this transcript was for the analysis of responses.

I audio taped interviews with two students and two teachers. These students were chosen at random from the two classes involved. The teachers were the classroom teachers both of whom sat in on the criticism lessons. The interviews were conducted to give some indication of how the lessons were perceived. I asked these questions to the

students, “What concepts or ideas do you remember most from the three lessons?”, “ How did you like Skoglund’s work?”, “What do you think she is expressing in her work?”, “Does it matter that we know what the artist says about her work?” and “What do you think was the purpose of these lessons?” The only question I asked of the teachers was, “What do you think was the purpose of these lessons?” I used these responses as a form of validity check.

Critical writing about the art of Sandy Skoglund.

The Critics

Although there is considerable writing about the art of Sandy Skoglund only two critics, Jude Schwendenwien (1992) and Arlene Raven (1992) appeared to write about the particular foodstuff installations used in the study. Schwendenwien’s critical writing is from a review of food sculptures in the journal, *Sculpture*. Raven’s essay is from the catalogue for an exhibition of Skoglund’s art, *In the Last Hour*.

The Art Educator

One art educator, Sydney Walker (1995 unpublished) had considerable experience with the artist and her writing was available to me.

The Artist

I included the artist’s statements from a two hour interview conducted with Sandy Skoglund by two art educators and an art education graduate student (Walker, S., Krug, D. & Burkhart, 1995)

The Researcher

I have included the documentation of the preparation and conduct of this research from a personal journal, kept in order to maintain my own voice and provide an additional framework in which readers may position themselves.

Method of Data Interpretation

Text Deconstruction

Analysis is a search for meaning which often takes the form of looking for patterns and tendencies. Working from the text of the lessons I used poststructural categories to interpret patterns and tendencies of what occurred in the art criticism classes. In seeking a term to explain particular poststructural categories as a research method to look at text, there seems to be no consensus on terminology. Sociologists refer to 'content analysis' or 'discourse analysis', historians refer to 'archival research' and literature students use 'text analysis'. All these terms refer to methods of 'close reading' of texts from particular theoretical standpoints. I intend to examine the text in a disruptive way using strategies which I developed out of my understanding of deconstruction. I chose to use the term 'text deconstruction' because it best describes deconstructive strategies I formed into categories which allow me to 'close read' the text of the lessons.

Initial Analysis of Student Responses

In the initial analysis of the text, I looked for evidence that students understood and even used postmodern concepts of interpretation and positioning in discourses which would indicate some understanding of these concepts. As the teacher of these art criticism lessons and also the researcher in this project, I must recognize that these relationships with the students have shaped all their responses. In reading the transcript of the introductory art criticism lessons at NSBHS and NSGHS, I found that there were a significant number of responses which indicated that the students were taking positions in the discourse of modernism which made references to the artist's interpretation as the authoritative interpretation. In my preparation for the lessons, I explicated an authoritative interpretation from the critical writing, which I consciously took into the lessons as part of my prior knowledge of the art text. An explanation of this authoritative interpretation is in Chapter 5.

There were also a significant number of responses which indicated that the students

were thinking outside a modernist discourse, that is, shifting to a more dominant position in the discourses of the postmodern. These responses were about ambiguity in the text which involved questioning oppositions and making references to seemingly unrelated discursive practices from other text. These responses indicated to me that these students were sliding between modernist and postmodernist positions in thinking about the world.

Categories for Text Deconstruction of Student Responses

As the focus of this study involves using modernist and postmodern poststructural approaches to interpretation and discourses in art texts, these terms, modernist, postmodernist, interpretation and discourse were considered major areas for investigation of responses. In constructing categories for analyzing student's responses I considered the shifting positioning of students responses (noted above) around modernist and postmodernist practices. Therefore I isolated the modernist from postmodern responses. I used two major areas headings under which to situate both modernist and postmodern student responses. These were interpretation and discourse.

However as I considered the student responses about discourse and the combined discourse/interpretation throughout the text to be postmodern, only interpretation was considered a category for modernist responses. Under the category of modernist interpretation I considered only those responses which were about an authoritative interpretation. Under the categories of postmodernist interpretation and discourse I considered responses suggested by the initial analysis of the text which concerned decentering the authoritative interpretation, engaging opposition/ ambiguity /contradiction, exploring intertextuality and an understanding of discourses and positioning in interpretation.

I analyzed student's responses under these broad headings:

Modernist--Interpretation

References to an authoritative interpretation categorized a response as modernist.

Postmodernist--Interpretation/Discourses

References to decentering of alienation (as authoritative interpretation), to ambiguous or contradictory details from the text or the responses and references to the intertextuality of the text in the responses were considered postmodern. References to discourses and positioning in discourses as constitutive of one's interpretation were considered postmodern.

Explanation of Categories

Under the modernist interpretation category, I consider that an authoritative interpretation is one which privileges a particular interpretation as the true or 'right' interpretation of an art text. From my art teaching experience, students consider that this particular interpretation comes from the artist, as maker of that art. Other sources like critics, historians, and art teachers are also considered to generate authoritative interpretations of art. Therefore I used this category to examine modernist responses. I explain in the Chapter 5, how I explicated an authoritative interpretation from the critical writing.

Under the postmodernist category, the deconstructive strategy of decentering or disrupting the authoritative interpretation of the text involves questioning the discursive practices which inform this interpretation. Using oppositional, ambiguous and contradictory details and statements within and concerning the text, to misread or deconstruct the text, is another strategy of deconstruction which I use to analyze responses. Interrogating or unpacking such details can reveal other layers of meanings marginalized by the authoritative interpretation. By ambiguity I mean, not just confusion or vagueness about various parts of the text, or between alternative meanings, but confusion between two attitudes or even differences towards meanings. In looking at oppositional statements we acknowledge the general system of binary and hierarchical oppositions that supports theories of knowledge. Undermining oppositions by questioning the enabling paradox, we find that the privileged term can be displaced thus challenging general theories of how we know and understand the world.

Another strategy for text deconstruction is acknowledging the discursive practices of other texts and cultures which constitute the text as intertextuality. In deconstructing student responses under this category, I note their references and traces to other discursive practices of the social world which they perceive as situated in the text. I considered any response that used the concept of positioning in discourses or understood interpretation as constitutive of discursive positioning to be postmodern.

The disruptive ~~model~~ as part of methodology.

Returning to the problem which underpins this methodology, that of investigating a postmodern perspective for interrogating interpretation of meaning, as stated, I intend for that postmodern perspective to become a disruptive ~~model~~ of interpretation. This ~~model~~ will be developed out of the text deconstruction of the research data and will take into account, any significant findings from that deconstruction. Understanding what knowledge students may have about interpretation and discourses or how they interpret these concepts, will allow me to design a disruptive ~~model~~ for use in art criticism which points towards an entirely different use of interpretation in the understanding of self and difference.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with two areas of the research project. Firstly, as the case study centered around art criticism lessons, I needed to have an informed understanding of the particular Skoglund texts used in the lessons. In the preparation for these lessons, I used the strategies of text deconstruction to explicate an interpretation from critical writing of Skoglund's food installations which I call authoritative. As the organization of lessons in Chapter 4 shows, it was not my intention to use an authoritative interpretation nevertheless I took this interpretation into the classroom situation. As the initial analysis of student responses indicated, this interpretation became important. Students centered their own interpretations around the modernist concept of authoritative interpretation, in this case the interpretation of the texts as being about the discourse of alienation. In responding to the flow of the discussion in the classrooms, I allowed the students to take up this interpretation and therefore, in developing categories for the responses, I could not ignore this tendency. In the lessons this authoritative interpretation became a 'center' against which both teachers and students could work. Therefore it was necessary to document, in the first part of this chapter, the way I identified an authoritative interpretation.

Secondly, the student's responses from the art criticism classes were examined via a number of categories which identified them as examples of modernist or postmodern

thinking. However, before proceeding with the student responses, I need to discuss significant changes which had an impact on the study. I agree with Stake (1995) when he notes that case study work is often “progressively focused” (p. 133), that is, the organizing concepts change as the study progresses. Firstly, the emotional difficulty I would have in returning to a school, NSBHS¹¹, where I had made a major contribution to visual arts education over 17 years and which had also featured significantly in my personal life, was not fully appreciated until my first research visit. I had not anticipated that a new and unfamiliar role, that of doctoral student/researcher, would place me in a somewhat powerless position in relation to the teachers/friends in the visual arts departments of both schools. Secondly, the teachers did not understand the importance of these lessons to my project, equating them instead with my having a casual talk with students. For instance, the teachers at both schools are often involved in organizing preservice students from the University of New South Wales, and they were inclined to see my research in that light. Both head teachers wanted all Year 11 classes to be involved and although I explained that I thought 30 students was too difficult to have a discussion with, they assumed otherwise. During my first visit to arrange times and classes, I was introduced to both classes as some kind of expert with my reputation and past status given prominence. I felt this would negatively influence the way the students related to me. In the first lesson at NSBHS three teachers sat at the back of the room when I had asked for only one teacher to be present which made me even more nervous than I already felt.

As I could not alter these attitudes and changes, I decided to deal with them in the lessons. However looking at the videotapes, these factors did impact on what happened in the lessons. The larger class sizes had an impact on the atmosphere of the classes. The informal conversational atmosphere necessary for effective discussion (Barrett 1993) was altered by my nervous concern for the students’ ability to participate satisfactorily in the cramped space of the art rooms. My authoritative attitude in the first lesson at NSBHS was in response to that nervousness, and the teachers’ attitude to me. Other changes

¹¹ The initials NSBHS and NSGHS are used to indicate the schools, North Sydney Boys’ High School and North Sydney Girls’ High School.

which affected the study happened when lesson times were lengthened or shortened without my prior knowledge. The shortened time periods affected the study in that concepts discussed in early lessons were not able to be explored thoroughly in later lessons. I noted in my analysis what I considered to be the consequences or disadvantages of these changes.

Identifying the Authoritative Interpretation

The Critic's Writing

In reading the data collected from critics, the educator, the artist and myself as authoritative/ trustworthy sources, I could see certain mutual concepts concerning oppositions emerge from key words or phrases. Therefore I looked at the use of oppositional statements in establishing and reduced the interpretation to one general meaning, thus placing an authoritative interpretation in a modernist framework.

From the critical writing by Jude Schwendenwien (1992), Arlene Raven (1992) and Sydney Walker (1995), an interview by three art educators with the artist (Walker, S., 1995a, Walker, S., Krug, D. & Burkhart, A., 1995b), the artist's statements from these interviews and my own reflective journal writing of Skoglund's food installations, a number of key words and phrases were revealed which I used to establish a authoritative interpretation. While other interpretations exist on the margins in these writing, there is a definite, shared interpretation made obvious by the repetition of key words and phrases and the location and context of these words and phrases.

In a review of food sculpture which included Skoglund's hamburger piece, *Spirituality in the Flesh* (1992), Jude Schwendenwien (1992) notes that the packaging of food allows consumers to be completely alienated from the animals that were killed to provide it. Along with this, he states, goes the irony of overabundance of food in the face of millions of starving people in the world and the revelations of the psychiatric disorders of under eating and over eating, anorexia and bulimia. From these traditional oppositional relationships, the key terms he engages throughout his writing to establish a authoritative

interpretation for his readers, are *obsession* and *compulsion* with food. This translates into *excess* as opposed to *all things in moderation* (p.48, my italics). Schwendenwien interprets Skoglund's excessive use of ground meat negatively thereby privileging the term, *moderation*. He also interprets Skoglund's installation as a statement about our estrangement from the animal world, "the scary absurdity of mankind's estrangement from the animal kingdom, which has always been more honest about the terms of survival" (p.48). This is an interpretation of *alienation* from the natural world—the culture/nature opposition which Skoglund herself alludes to in discussion of her earlier installations with animals.

Schwendenwien uses oppositional relationships of *moderation/excess* and *intimacy/alienation* to construct an authoritative interpretation. In reducing his interpretation to the conflict between oppositions, his interpretation is derived from a modernist framework. I add that I am colluding in this modernist way of thinking by reducing his interpretation to a concept of key words.

Raven (1992), discussing the hamburger piece, *Spirituality in the Flesh*, also exposes traditional oppositions but uses a poststructural paradox in interpreting this piece as both living and dead, "Never ready for death, we are even less prepared to see the living dead". She dwells on the material and how its decomposition can emphasize both the transience and the spirituality of life, "... in this very material, ... so quick to decay and remind us of the short life of the body, rests its spiritual value" (no pagination). Although Raven is willing to undermine the oppositional terms of *living* and *dead*, she builds her interpretation on oppositional foundations, *spirit*, *flesh*. The displacement of oppositions, *living/dead* and *spirit/flesh* point towards a poststructural interpretation of Skoglund's art.

Walker (1995a) also sees Skoglund's work as an exploration of oppositions. Throughout her writing she references oppositional statements, for instance, "Skoglund excels in constructing oppositions. ... her combinations of the real and the unreal, the humorous and the haunting, the rational and the irrational, and the ordinary and the extraordinary. ..." (p.6). She further indicates that the division between these

oppositional terms does not always remain unambiguous, that meaning can shift across the division depending on time and place and discursive positioning. Walker is writing about all of Skoglund's installations and not just the later food installation. Walker's interpretation relates to the broad issues of humans and their relationship with the world. Generally she reduces the interpretation of all Skoglund's art to a foundational opposition of nature and culture. However, Walker specifically interprets Skoglund's art as an unmasking of the apparently 'normal' inculturation of nature which we call suburbia, thus pointing towards an interpretation which views contemporary society as constructed on a postmodern ambiguity and doubt about the natural world.

Schwendenwien, Raven and Walker all use oppositional statements to expound on how they interpret Skoglund's art as the intersection of natural objects (food) and humans, with a cultural context. I consider that these three interpretations understand Skoglund's art as part of the discursive practices of alienation of culture and the natural world and understand this to be an authoritative interpretation.

The Artist's Statements

Through interviews (Walker, Krug & Burkhart 1995b, Schwendenwien 1993), Sandy Skoglund has given various interpretations of her food installations. Skoglund's explanation of her involvement with the foodstuff reveals that for her, the relationships between the food and our society is a concept to be explored. Her explanation as stated in an interview, (Walker, Krug & Burkhart 1995b) is:

I'm becoming . . . more interested in the physicality of substances and the kind of relationships that are set up between sort of stuff, substances and what we're supposed to do with it; how it looks and behaves in the world. And how it kind of reflects the human being at work in the world so to speak.

The repetition of references to her interest into the way humans and objects interact in the world (two instances in this quote) leads me to understand that her own interpretation of

her work revolves around this concept. In the food series, Skoglund's admitted desire to "have people stuck in stuff" (Walker, Krug & Burkhart 1995b) is another type of relationship with objects that have a very intimate relationship with ourselves, namely food stuff. The hamburger meat of *Spirituality in the Flesh* is a mutating, decaying substance which we eat and which for Skoglund is "a way of talking about dead animals and people" (Walker, Krug & Burkhart 1995b).

Throughout the interview she makes reference to the problem (as she sees it) of our alienation and isolation from nature particularly from animals, and the problems that that alienation and isolation presents, "... We've alienated ourselves from animals. We think we're different from them and we set ourselves off. . .". and "I feel . . . that the separation that humans feel between ourselves and the animal kingdom is a false separation only perceived by us." (in interview with Schwendenwien 1993). This oppositional explanation of her art continues, throughout the Walker/Krug/Burkhart interview, to be expressed in this way, "... I mean its not a conscious . . . comment about excess. . . its about its never enough."; "There's a lot of tragedy in that and again almost absurdity. . ."; "... the perfect way to communicate and yet. . . its, of course, very depressed and limited. . .". These comments reinforce Skoglund's interpretation, which is that our relationship with nature is one of an 'either them or us' tension in opposition to the necessity for intimacy and closeness with nature for our survival and well being.

The Researcher's Notes

In my own journal notes this tension between alienation and intimacy, between our isolation of and yet closeness to, natural objects informed my interpretations of her art. These interpretations grew out of the readings of critical writing of Skoglund's art, talking with others about her art and my own exploration of her work with previous classes. In the food installations I felt that her need to exaggerate the foodstuff so that it overwhelmed the 'set', reinforced this interpretation of alienation from, but intimacy with, food. For example, the ground meat in *Spirituality in the Flesh* is distasteful in its exaggeration, its

‘going too far’ yet we cannot escape that this material (food) is necessary for survival. Words like ‘distasteful’ and ‘rammed down one’s throat’ compete with memories of spaghetti bolognese and meatloaf in the journal, indicating my own relationship with ground steak.

The contrast between the human figures and the mannequins in her art, especially in *Atomic Love*, disturbed me. I used words like “uneasy with one another” and “he looks like a jerk” to describe the action taking place between the two human figures implying that he was not being cooperative or sociable. The contrast between the humans and the mannequins was highlighted for me by the whiteness of the humans—they have no raisins on their skin—and by the apparent smallness of the male figure. The mannequins appeared like androids or robots (aliens) particularly the large figure on the left whose pose and general look introduced and highlighted an air of menace into the work. These figures recalled the BBC science fiction series *Dr Who*, which brought further references and traces. The woman mannequin was particularly disturbing because she appeared to be drab, middle aged, inconspicuous and yet controlling. I called her in my journal a “maiden aunt” type and in notes in the margin, I ask “how an alien can be like a maiden aunt ?” My notes are frequented by these ambiguities. The ambiguity of the work is also apparent for me in such things as the cup lying on the floor, the size of the child, the non interaction between the human figures and the mannequins and the odd perspective of the photograph.

In the visual verbal I did of this artwork in my journal, I removed the two humans to position them outside the frame of the photograph and repositioned the large male mannequin, also replicating its shape. The word ‘alien’ was used as image/text. I described my appropriation as a film set for an alien movie. I needed the oppositional concept of ‘them’ and ‘us’ for my interpretation of this work as an expression of the insidious and hostile division between ourselves and our natural world. The concern with ambiguities and the paradoxical shift between oppositional statements positions me in a postmodern way of thinking. However my willingness to situate my interpretation with those of the critics, educator and artist leads me to think that my positionality within the

discourses involved in Skoglund's art--middle class, suburbia, teacher, woman and so on--is similar to those of the writers. It was these interpretations that I took into the art criticism classes and which contributed to the interpretations of the students.

Summary

I believe, from my deconstruction of all the critical writing, that one authoritative interpretation of Skoglund's food installations was constituted through the juxtaposition or displacement of the opposition of nature and culture and the ambiguities this created. This interpretation centered around the particular practices of cultural alienation and isolation from the natural world, that is, the way that humans have alienated, fragmented and isolated themselves from their environment. Therefore I used the terms *alienation*, *fragmentation* and *isolation* in my explication of this authoritative interpretation in the lessons. There were other interpretations which could be explicated from these writings concerning the materiality of the food used or the particular surrealism associated with the materials and the context of the art. However I preferred to use a broader interpretation to allow myself and students more flexibility in looking at Skoglund's texts.

Analysis of Student Responses

Explanation of Analysis

I analyzed the lessons individually according to the sequence in which they were given, that is, Lesson 1, 2, 3 at North Sydney Boys' High School and Lesson 1, 2, 3 at North Sydney Girls' High School. Not all responses were used. Only responses which showed modernist and postmodernist ways of thinking about interpretation and discourses were considered for analysis. I indicated those responses I consider modernist or postmodernist and explained why I made this interpretation in relation to interpretation and discourse after each response or set of responses or in the summary of lessons. In the conclusion I discuss the teaching strategies that I consider prompted particular modernist or postmodern responses.

All student responses are in **bold type**. All responses are verbatim from the transcript and all responses are from different students except where indicated. Pauses are indicated by three periods. Some responses are in reply to direct questions while other responses are student interjections in the class. All are labeled **SR**; for **student response**. Where there is a student's question directed at me I labeled **SQ**; for **student question**. My responses and questions are indicated as RR and RQ. The responses follow the sequence of the lessons. At the end of each lesson, I summarize my interpretations of responses and the teaching strategies which led to particular responses.

As stated in Chapter 4, I analyzed student's responses under these broad headings:

Modernist--Interpretation

Reference to an authoritative interpretation categorized a response as modernist.

Postmodernist--Interpretation/Discourses

References to decentering of alienation (as authoritative interpretation), to ambiguous or contradictory details from the text or the responses and references to the intertextuality of the text in the responses were considered postmodern. References to discourses and positioning in discourses as constitutive of one's interpretation were considered postmodern.

North Sydney Boys' High School

Lesson 1

The lesson opened with my general questions about the students' current art project which were collages of interpretations of power and war. My general attitude was authoritarian and inflexible, a reaction to my nervousness and concern for the reputation of 'expertise' which had been promoted to the students by the other teachers. I then introduced the concept of different interpretation and, through this discussion, led into an simple explanation of discourses and positioning in discourses. Before viewing the slides of the Skoglund texts, I opened a discussion on what and why an authoritative interpretation might be, in order to gain some insight into how the students were thinking

about this issue. In looking at the Skoglund text of *Atomic Love*, I allowed the students to make interpretations of the text. However, in my comments, I used words like *alienation* which were part of the authoritative interpretation I had explicated from critical writing of Skoglund's texts. Towards the end of the discussion and interpretation of the art text I announced that the authoritative interpretation was about *alienation* and *fragmentation* with which all students agreed. At the close of the lesson students were given homework tasks regarding the interpretation of *Atomic Love*.

I had a general idea of the questions I wanted to ask but preferred to allow these to grow out of the discussion. Through my questions I hoped to gain a 'feel' for the way these students were understanding the concept of interpretation and discourses.

Student responses

I began by asking the students to describe the collages about power and war they were currently working on. I then asked the class how these texts would be different if their mother had done them. I consider these responses to interpretation and discourse to be postmodernist responses.

RQ; "What do you think it would be like if your mother had done this? How would it be different?"

SR; "(It would be different) because of different events that happened in her time because that would influence her decisions",

SR; "Well, because the events that happened in her time are different to what's happening now"

RQ; "Would she have put images together in the same way?"

SR; "Probably not in the same way just because of different teaching styles as well...a different feeling".

RQ; "How do you think it would be different if she did it? Do you think you could tell me?"

R; "No, because we don't know what she's interpreting"

RQ; "You don't know how she would interpret?"

SR; **"You can only think with your own brain"**

SR; **"Because everyone's individual response is different depending on what...Well, interpretations of any issue...So an individual response or an individual interpretation of something is different to everyone else's because we're all individuals"**

SR; **"Because everyone has different experiences of life...that influence their opinions"**

RQ; "Can you think of where some issue has been influenced by how you think...and who you are?"

SR; **"Well, politics and background...for example another country. So you may experience different things. Your lifestyle and culture are going to be different so..."**

SQ; **"Maybe a culture makes different things important?"**

Student's responses indicated postmodern thinking by their tentative acknowledgement that interpretation is individual and constituted by the experience of discursive practices.

It was at this point I introduced the notion of discourse as overlapping and intermeshing sets of practices that we are all involved in and gave the example of myself as being in the discourses of Australian, woman, mother, teacher, student, white each of which has practices which make the discourse. Even though this was a hard concept to explain I wanted students to discuss the issue. I considered all these responses to be postmodernist responses because the students began to assume difference and the concept of discourses constituting who one is.

RQ; "How do you understand 'I am in the discourse of...?'"

SR; **"Um...it's in general it's something that is personal to you like it's the defining feature of you which may affect your opinion on a matter because it has some influence on you"**

At this point I talked about whether one was situated in discourses in a dominant or

marginal way. The responses indicated they had trouble understanding this concept. Some of my questioning here caused more confusion.

SQ; “Is it the class you fit into?”

RR; “it’s networks of practices that define who we are...If I’m dominant in the discourse of mother, where would you be in the discourse of mother?”

SR; “The discourse of son?”

This response showed an attempt at understanding discursive practices in that he recognized himself positioned in the discourse of son. I continued to explain by using the example of the Korean student in the class and how the practices of the discourse of Korean would allow him to value different things when interpreting an art text. The interjection here from an Australian student showed some understanding of the concept but I feel that he may have been confused with the notion of stereotype.

SR; “There are discourses within Australian and discourses within Korean so you just can’t generalize someone into...”

Here, I introduced the notion of authoritative interpretation by asking the class why they accepted an art critic’s or art historian interpretation of art texts discussed in class. It was here that some students preferred to use modernist thinking to interpretation. However some students tried to continue with the postmodernist approach by disagreeing, as illustrated in this exchange;

RQ; “What authority is given this person to decide...(a dominant interpretation)?”

SR; “But what if it’s the artist who said that?”

SR; “It doesn’t matter. Actually it doesn’t matter who said it ...maybe the artist intended it for a purpose that doesn’t really matter. If you can’t understand it naturally then it’s not relevant.”

The first response clearly indicated that the student considered the artist’s interpretation as the authoritative one which I consider to be modernist thinking . The second response indicated two things, that the student was decentering the authoritative interpretation and also considering the concept of layers or levels of interpretation depending on context

which is postmodern thinking.

Here I tried to link interpretation with discourse by asking;

RQ; "If you pick up on what the artist said and you happen to agree with him...why do you think this would be so?"

SR; "You might be in similar discourses"

This response showed a naive but reflective understanding of discourse and positioning which is postmodern thinking. There could be other explanations as to why one would agree with an artist's interpretation but these do not concern this study. My interpretation is informed by the context of the lesson and the discussion of discourses from which this response came.

The following responses attempted to grasp postmodern multiple interpretation of a text yet show deference to a modernist authoritative interpretation.

RQ; "We understand we can't have one meaning for an art work...Why is that so?"

SR; "Because everyone's open to their different interpretations"

RQ; " Why can't we just accept 28 interpretations and say everyone is valid?"

SR; "We can. It's not the easiest way but it's the right way"

SR; "(I think) it's the majority interpretation"

SR; "You have to be able to relate it (interpretation) back to the art work itself right? Draw specific examples from it ...explain how you came to it...to justify the valid interpretation... (otherwise) you could say whatever you liked"

These responses indicated that a number of modernist and postmodern ideas were being argued through the responses. The first responses showed an attempt to understand postmodern multiple interpretations of texts. The last response showed the influence of previous teaching about art critical writing, evident here in the need felt by this student to justify his interpretation from the art text itself. I considered that this was a modernist response.

I returned to the issue of the authoritative interpretation to see if there was any change in

their thinking and began with the question;

RQ; “when you read in a textbook about any art work and you...um...lets say you read that ...this is the meaning of this art work. What are you going to say?”

SR; What’s the reason?”

SR; Keep it in mind...keep it in mind but not...accept it. It would be there. It would influence how you saw or read something...you’d keep thinking that this is what I’m looking for... so then you would maybe make something which is necessarily...meant that but you would make it mean that because you’ve been told that’s what you think.”

RQ; “would you be swayed by that sort of authority (critic or historian)?”

SR; It’s hard not to be...like it would be there. You just can’t discard what someone said once you’ve heard it.”

SR; “Allow yourself to take that into consideration but always look for your own meanings.”

The students began to resolve the perceived dilemma of postmodern multiple interpretation with modernist authority by arguing for both interpretations. The last response summed up the student’s compromise of accepting both the authoritative interpretation and one’s own interpretation.

Next, the students looked at slides of Sandy Skoglund herself and the food installations. I described Skoglund’s installations and the way many of the installations now exist as photographs. I asked for other artists whose art changes from sculpture to something else and got the response, “**Christo**” from most students which I consider postmodern. I gave the students the title of the art text *Atomic Love* and asked them to think about the the words. I interpreted the two responses here as establishing an interpretation of alienation which I later confirmed as the authoritative interpretation.

SR; “Well...the figures in there have got all these dots all over their bodies.”

SR; “Everything’s covered with this...mess.”

Both these exploratory responses tried to match the concept of atoms as suggested by the title but there was also the intertext of surrealism, science and science fiction particularly in the last response. I then told the class that these dots were raisins and that Skoglund had spent a lot of time researching and testing raisins for their durability. She had covered every thing in the room with raisins. I asked the students to consider walking into the installation.

RQ; “what’s your first reaction...when you walk in there? How do you feel walking all over those fat raisins?”

SR; “What out for the raisins.”

SR; “Stepping on raisins.”

RQ; “Well, what does that mean...stepping on raisins?”

SR; “they’re squashy, juicy”

SR; “Delicious...succulent”

SR; “You’re going to be overpowered by raisins”

SR; “You’re going to wreck the work”

SR; “You’re going to be uncomfortable”

This sequence of responses are interesting because they moved from thinking about the raisins as raisins or food, to thinking themselves in the installation and the consequences of being part of the text. I considered this sequence to be postmodern because of the ambiguity and contradiction that occurs from first response to the last as the students think themselves into the art.. Again there was the intertextuality of surrealism and science fiction in the concept of being overpowered by raisins.

The discussion moved to an examination of the figures in the installation and particularly the human figures of the the man and woman. It was this exchange that established *alienation* as an interpretation.

RQ; “What about the the people who are real...what are they doing?”

SR; “They’re like...it looks like one of those movie scenes where the man is like cold...”

SR; “ (He’s) coming onto her...”

SR; “To reconcile her”

SR; “He might be trying to overpower her”

SR; “She might not want to...raisins”

RR: “All of you are saying that there is a slight alienation between the two people, isn’t there? How does that fit with the raisins?”

SR; “Raisins alienate you as those two are alienated themselves...”

SR; “You can’t relate to the raisins.”

RQ: “Why can’t you relate to the raisins?...in this work?”

SR; “They’re in there covered with raisins and you’re not...”

SR; “(There are) too many.”

SR; “Well, seeing as like they are covering everything they don’t have their own identity...the raisins...they’re just like they’re a part of everything”

RR: “So the raisins don’t have their own identity? This is Fred Raisin and this is Dorothy Raisin and...”

Same SR; “No...that’s stupid...they’re part of everything just like one color. They are the work!”

In analyzing these responses, the authoritative interpretation of ‘alienation’ was hinted at in the discussion of the perceived sexual harassment of the woman which I believe, developed from their knowledge of this behavior from the media. The words ‘cold’ and ‘overpower’ suggested to me that they saw the situation as alienating and I encouraged this interpretation with my response. This interpretation of ‘alienation’ developed into a concern for the integrity of the material, the raisins, which they felt was lost (‘they don’t have their own identity’). Whatever the ‘raisinness’ of raisins might be, the students felt that it was not maintained and yet there was an ambiguity in understanding that the raisins constituted the art text. I interpreted the concern for integrity of materials to be a modernist concern however the eventual acceptance of the ambiguity of the raisins as an art material

moved them towards a more postmodern attitude. I noted now that my flippant comment about identity, while eliciting an exasperated response, could have been pursued to further explicate this concern for the raisin's identity as raisins.

At this point, another student interjected with the response about atoms which continued into a discussion of a more literal interpretation of the text through the title where the student tried to link this to the artist's intention.

SR; "They're not raisins...they're atoms. You told us they are raisins so we are forced into thinking they are raisins...so...we are forced to interpret them the way you are telling us..."

SR; "They might be raisins."

RR; "They are raisins, in fact"

SR; "They are in reality raisins but that's not ...the artist...not what he's trying to represent them as...he's trying to represent dots and atoms...that's my interpretation. I interpret it differently to the others but I see dots and atoms and everything is made up of atoms."

RQ; "She's using the raisins to represent atoms?"

Same SR; "Yes. Well, maybe she's trying to break us down into our basic structures and forms...yeh"

I considered these responses to be modernist firstly because of the student ignored the ambiguity and significance of the raisins and saw only an expedient use of them by the artist (whom the student called 'he' when he had seen a slide of 'her'). Secondly the student was trying to unpack the artist's intention in the text as an authoritative interpretation.

However I considered the next two responses to be postmodern responses.

SQ; "When the two people (the human figures) come out, do they put dummies in their place?"

RR; "No"

SR; "It's a different art work"

Here both student's responses indicated that they were aware that the removal of the human figures would make the text become another art text which I believe to be an example of postmodern thinking.

At this stage I asked about ambiguity in the art text. The class had concentrated on the two human figures and had not commented on other things in the text. So my comments and question here tried to move the students away from these figures. The response from a student indicated the concern that the whole class had about the two human figures.

RR; "There are some really strange things going on in this work...really ambiguous things...we can't explain the weird things that are going on...have a look. There are other things in the work that just don't seem to fit."

SR; "I think the two real people look like they're not even there...they look like ghosts or something. Like the other people are simply going around doing whatever and...um...as if they are not even there so that's sort of weird."

Again the student could not leave the human figures. The student moved between understanding the human figures and the mannequins as separate beings to understanding all the figures as human in this response. At the same time the student was recognizing the underlying alienation between the figures.

It was at this point that I told the class about one authoritative interpretation.

RQ; "Do you want to hear what the artist herself...and some critics said about this? She thinks it's about alienation and fragmentation."

SR; "I agree"

The students assumed the authoritative interpretation because they had been moved towards this interpretation in the discussion and they had indicated their acknowledgement of an artist's interpretation as the authority. So they absorbed it into their own interpretations and referred to it in subsequent responses. They did what they stated earlier, that is, they kept the authoritative interpretation in mind while they interpreted the text, which may indicate a modernist/postmodern compromise.

SR; “ Are they loud speakers?”

RR; “ No, they are actually lights. What else is going on?”

SR; “ (It’s a) family...mother, father, son and daughter and there are four figures in the work and if you’re talking about ...and there’s a distance between the figures...and what the artist says can be used in an interpretation and she’s talking about alienation and fragmentation then maybe there’s a problem with the love of the family members.”

This response reintroduced the concept of *love* from the title. The oppositional nature of *love* and *alienation* continued to be explored in various ways throughout the rest of the lessons. Meanwhile the students used references from other discourses to explore the text among themselves.

SR; “What’s the raisin woman doing?”

SR; “Its a microphone”

SR; “It looks like a champagne bottle”

SR; “It’s fallen off the fan”

SR; “They’re like propellers. Yes, there’s five propellers.”

In these interjections, I could see various references to discourses like science fiction and movies. I believe the students used this reference frequently because of the connotations of *alien* and the ambiguity of using an ordinary food like raisins on such a monumental scale (‘everything’s covered with raisins’) in the ‘style’ of science fiction and disaster movies. Although I did not categorize these responses specifically as modernist or postmodern, I felt that they moved towards postmodern thinking because of the willingness to see and use references from their own life in their attempts to unpack ambiguities.

The lesson ended with instructions about two homework tasks. One was a visual verbal in which they were to expand their (student’s) interpretation using the color photocopy of *Atomic Love*. With a postcard of *Atomic Love*, they were to ask for an interpretation of this text by interviewing a family member or a friend and to talk about this

interpretation in the next lesson.

Summary of Lesson 1

I believe that the student's responses indicated that they shifted between modernist and postmodern thinking. Some of the exchanges between themselves were arguments about modernist and postmodern issues. Wherever the discussion touched on issues with which they were familiar like describing or interpreting an art text, or, on their understanding of art materials, they preferred to think of these as modernist practices. Modernist thinking about interpretation was shown in their adherence to the authority of the artist and their belief in the authoritative interpretation which I gave in class. My questioning here attempted to move them beyond this but they generally returned to the authoritative interpretation. Modernist thinking about the integrity of the materials was evident in the discussion about the raisins even when I used flippant and humorous questions to redirect their thinking. At the same time they accepted the postmodern ambiguity of raisins as legitimate art material.

Their postmodern thinking revolved around unfamiliar issues such as discourses and positioning and the role of interpretation. Interesting postmodern responses occurred when I asked questions which encouraged students to abandon predictable and familiar strategies of interpretation which decenter the student and recentered themselves significantly with and in the text. My comments and questions assumed intertextuality of *Atomic Love* when I used words like 'alienated' 'fat', 'plump', 'weird' and 'love' in describing the art text. These words were also contradictory, for instance, in relation to the dried raisins. Intertextuality, the debt that the text owes to other texts but which reads that debt as a trace (and as something else), appeared in the students responses as references to surrealism, science fiction, movies and to the concept of family love. The 'love' reference which reoccurs in the lessons also appeared as an oppositional statement and because of time limits, I did not pursue this reference. Therefore I believe that students moved or alternated between both modernist and postmodern thinking in this lesson.

Lesson 2

This lesson began with an explanation and discussion by students of the the homework task, interpretations of Atomic Love by family or friends. I was more relaxed during this lesson and the class was smaller as some students were attending the school's art camp. I asked about the relation between the authoritative interpretation of *alienation*, and these interpretations, and recorded words and phrases associated with *aliention* on the white board. Here I highlighted the response, *love* by drawing a heart around it. My question about this word as contradictory drew the response about "different love" which indicated that students were starting to read against the interpretation. I also recorded words on the white board which the students considered oppositional or contrasting to *alienation*. Questions here asked whether these oppositional words existed in the art text which led into a discussion of the raisins and the student's contradictory attitude about them. The visual verbals were then discussed, with students describing particular methods of their reorganization of the text. From this, an in depth discussion of the concept of 'appropriation' and 'original' developed. While the discussion of 'appropriation' and 'original' was not 'intended', I allowed this to continue because it gave me some insight into student's understanding of these issues. I concluded the lesson by returning to questions about interpretation, discourses and positioning and a request for the students to think about the issues and concepts discussed in the last two lessons and particularly the issue of interpretation and what constructs our interpretations

Student responses

The interpretations of Atomic Love by family members or friends centered around science fiction concepts of disease, disaster or war. For example,

SR; "my mum said that the raisins were taking over the world and that the man was too cowardly so he was hiding behind the woman..."

RR; "Do you think anything in her background would have helped her say that?"

SR; "Well I suppose being a woman"

Here the student presumed that his mother was taking a feminist stance and he emphasized the apparent antagonism between men and women which is supposed to characterize Australian society. The following exchange illustrated that students had thought about the discussions on discourses and positioning. One student was Chinese Australian and the other European Australian.

SR; “I asked my dad. He said the people who were covered with raisins and all the things like...they all got wiped out by some bomb or something and the two people in the middle, they survived because of their love.”

SR; “That’s what my mum said. She said that exactly.”

RQ; Why do I find it intriguing that his mother and his father are coming to the same interpretation?”

SR; “Because they are obviously from different discourses”

The student response here indicated that they had some understanding of the postmodern concept of positioning in discourses.

Other responses regarding interpretations of of Atomic Love were,

SR; “(My sister) She said it was like...um...a disease that had spread over everything and...those were the only two people who weren’t affected or completely infected yet”

SR; “I asked my mum...she thought a disease as well. She looked at the baby on the floor also she thought there was a lack of family support for the whole family.”

SR; “ My sister ...thought it was diseased like the color and the idea of the raisins all over everything and the two people who didn’t have raisins weren’t quite infected yet.”

RQ; “So what interpretation is coming through most strongly?”

SR; “the idea of disease.”

SR; “Alienation from everyone else and struggling against overwhelming odds.”

Here I wrote the word *alienation* and *disease* on the white board from the discussion and asked for more words to add the the interpretation.

SR; “Isolation.”

SR; “Adversity.”

SR; “Love.”

RQ: “This is a contradictory thing here, isn’t it?”

Same SR; “Not necessarily. You could come across different love.”

This response was a significant one in that I feel that it showed a crack in the authoritative interpretation. This could have been exploited, allowing the authoritative interpretation to be disrupted or decentered. I considered this a postmodern response.

Next, I asked for oppositional or contrasting words to alienation.

SR; “Togetherness.”

SR; “Community.”

SR; “Family.”

SR; “Strength.”

I asked whether these concepts existed in the art text and prompted them to think of the raisins as ‘health’ food. The responses showed that their opinions of the raisins as healthy was contradicted by the appearance.

SR; “They might be healthy but they’re not the most succulent and most divine looking.”

SR; “They’re all shriveled and brown...brown’s not a nice color”

RQ: “What if she had made the yellow (background) a different color? If it was pink or blue what would that do to it?”

SR; “ Well if it’s a nice lively color and it’s got bits like it’s corrupted by raisins...”

I interpreted the first responses as examples of using oppositional concepts of healthy/unhealthy emphasized by the word “but”. In the last response the use of an ambiguous term like “corrupted by raisins” could have provided an opening to explore or

disrupt the authoritative interpretation. Time constraints meant that I did not follow this path in the discussion.

I moved back to the concept of interpretation and discourse and ambiguity.

RQ; "Last week I talked about discourses and I wonder how you understand the word?"

SR; "Your past I guess. The influences that affected your life...who you are...everything about your life that influences you"

RQ; "what sort of discourses...where do think you are?"

SR; "Um...a student...a son..."

These responses show a less naive understanding of my concept of discourses which I consider to be postmodern.

Here I asked specific students to describe what they had done in their visual verbals.

Most students had cut up the color photocopy when constructing their interpretation.

SR; "I just isolated the people. I just cut out part of the picture like the rectangle around them. I was having a barrier between them and everyone else"

SR; " I swapped the heads around with the real people...and I put that thing, the cup or whatever it is on the ground, back on the table. It changed it a hell of a lot with the real people like the man being in the woman's place and the woman being in the man's place."

SR; "Basically all I did was make notes on it...tear it down the middle...separated. I was going to use scissors but I thought that would be too definite while the separation was ambiguous."

RQ; "So you tore it to give it that jagged quality?"

Same SR; "ambiguous (quality)"

This student had written 'alienation' all over the text'

RQ; " Do you think raisins mean alienation?"

Same SR; "I think it implies alienation"

SR; "I guess I reraised the raisin work"

RQ; :What do you mean?"

SR; " Well I used the raisin picture to make another sort of raisin picture dotted around everywhere."

All these responses indicated that they played around with the authoritative interpretation in ways that appeared to try to find or create ambiguities and contradictions in the appropriated image. The word 'appropriation' was used by a student in relation to the visual verbals as it was a concept they understood from their own art making. An argument developed between students about 'appropriation' and 'original' to which I contributed by challenging their notion of 'origin'. I finally suggested that what we see as original may be concepts and ideas constantly reinterpreted and that the interpretation may be the 'original'. Out of this argument came an exchange which I understood to be examples of the student's postmodern thinking.

SR; "... I was thinking appropriation"

SR; "Isn't it...someone else's work?"

RQ; "But it's always someone else's work?"

SR; "A child's art when they're three or something...a child's painting...they're not copying off anyone..."

RQ; "But they're interpreting their world in a way..."

SR; "They're interpreting what they see with their own eyes but they're been influenced by someone. But no one else can be influenced the same so it's still original...but it's not an original idea."

SR; "They're all original...every single one of them" (pointing to students painting exercises on the wall)

RQ; "Every single one up there is different?"

Same SR; "They may have the components but they're all original"

RQ; "There's some aboriginal motifs in there ...there's Kandinsky like motifs in there..." (referring to painting exercises)

Same SR; "But the actual specific parts they borrowed from an artist may

not be original but...put them together in that way, it's original"

RQ; "See, we are back to interpretation again..."

Same SR; "No, but if we see it, it's how we see it not how anyone else sees it so it's original. I know what you are saying... interpretation is original but the ideas can't (be)."

RQ; "What book are you reading in English at the moment?"

SR; "Wilds Swans"

RQ; "You're going to find you're all reading certain parts of it differently. Why?"

Same SR; "Because you are more interested in different parts that relate to you...relate to you more closely."

RQ; "What sort of a word..."

Same SR; "Discourse"

RQ; "What does that mean?"

Same SR; "The different discourses that you belong to will influence your views of the book...and you read differently in the ways that you read."

Again the student, in a more sophisticated way, was understanding how discourses constitute interpretation. The students used the word 'influence' often and I believe that they use this word to mean 'to form' or 'to construct'. The use of the words 'read differently' by the student was a significant move towards understanding interpretation as discursive practice. At this point I closed the lesson with a request to think about the issues and concepts discussed in the last two lessons. One student stated that his religion influenced his interpretations of the world. The last responses gave me an indication that some students were thinking about positioning in discourses constructing interpretation. RQ; "the discourse of religion that Jason (student) is in...would that have affected his thinking about that (the authoritative interpretation)?"

SR; "Very possibly depending on how Christian you were...if you were hard core then..."

SR; "Could be you just believe in God but not take it so seriously or...you

go full on Christianity.”

These responses began to look at where one is positioned in the discursive practices of religion and were evidence of postmodern thinking.

Summary of Lesson 2

In this lesson, there was evidence that students used the modernist authoritative interpretation of *alienation* but sought to explore more marginalized practices of ‘alienation’ especially in the visual verbals. They appeared to play with images and words which created ambiguities and contradictions already inherent in the use of raisins as art materials. Their understanding of how I used discourses and positioning in relation to interpretation, became more sophisticated as indicated by the way they applied these ideas in their responses.

Lesson 3

At the beginning of this last lesson, I again asked students for their understanding of discourses and positioning. The class was then divided into five groups and each group was given a Skoglund text (*Spirituality in the Flesh*, *Body Limits*, *The Cocktail Party*). They were asked to make an interpretation as a group and document the process of working through ideas and words to their interpretation. The groups were sent to various spaces in the visual arts department for ten minutes and then reassembled in the art room. One student from each group spoke to the class about how they reached their particular interpretation. I collected the notes and the Skoglund texts.

At this time I chose to give out to the students, Jude Schwendenwien’s review of food art, in which Skoglund’s *Spirituality in the Flesh* appeared, to read and then keep in their visual arts process diaries where most had done their visual verbals. I closed the lesson with a series of questions about interpretation.

Student Responses

I began by asking about discourses in order to see if they remembered the discussion from the previous lesson. I made the presumption that they would understand about dominant or marginal positioning.

RQ; "Where are you in the discourses of education?"

SR; "Student"

RQ; "Where would you fit...in the dominant practices or the marginal practices?"

SR; "Probably more marginal I guess"

SR; "I disagree...dominant"

RQ; "Where would I fit in the discourse of mother?"

SR; "I'm not sure if you've got kids?"

SR; "Depends"

RQ; "I am a mother"

SR; "Dominant then"

SR; "Not necessarily...you could be a bad mother. You could put your kids up for adoption"

RQ; "So I'd be marginalized?"

Same SR; "Yeh...I deny saying (that)"

These responses indicate that some students were beginning to understand the postmodern concept of positioning in discourses.

The class was divided into groups and each group was given a Skoglund text to interpret with instructions for documenting the process of interpretation. After ten minutes the groups reassembled to talk about their interpretations. Three groups had interpreted *The Cocktail Party*. Each group appeared to have different interpretations but they all allied themselves to the authoritative interpretation of *Atomic Love*, 'alienation'. They appeared to understand this to be the interpretation of all Skoglund's art. One group spent the ten minutes arguing about the type of snack food used in the installation. They made strong connections to the artificiality of snack food but appeared to have no real knowledge of

practices of a cocktail party. One group were repulsed by the snack food used comparing it to maggots and noting the interpretation of 'alienation'.

SR; "The meaning was that it was basically another one of her isolation works...the humans they're like isolated from each other and from the rest of the mob. A real contrasting alienating atmosphere"

This group understood all Skoglund's art as a series about 'isolation'. The last group with *The Cocktail Party* elected to interpret everything with sexual overtones seeing the snack food as a phallic symbol and the purple color as the color of sexual frustration. In response to my comment about what discourse this group may be dominantly positioned in seeing these particular connotations in the text, one of the group answered:

SR; "Teenage males."

This indicated to me that they were aware, albeit naively, that their interpretation was constituted by particular positioning in discourses. They also allied themselves to the authoritative interpretation.

SR; "We picked up on the separation between the real people and the cheetos (cheese doodles) people. We thought that it was dealing with parties and how they...and alcohol parties and how people put on like a fake act...and also the cheetos are like easily crumbled and really...not very strong...they are representative of the lack of essence and sincerity of people when they are under the influence of alcohol. We probably took it too far."

These three interpretations looked at the practices of alienation in relation to the student's understanding of cocktail parties. However I believe that the discourses in which the students were dominantly positioned constituted the interpretations of alienation that they made. For instance, the group which argued about the snack food, appeared to have no experience of this type of party and might be considered to be marginalized in the discursive practices of parties. The group which saw sexual connotations in the objects in the art text, were the 'street wise' students who were familiar with practices of parties.

They acknowledged this position in the comments made about their being in the discourse of “teenage males”. Student’s reinterpretations of the authoritative interpretation point towards naive to sophisticated understanding of my explanation of discourses and positioning and construction of interpretations and indicate postmodern thinking. The interpretations that some students made of this art text enabled them to see that they had adopted particular positions in discourses that were significant to them at this moment of their lives--adolescent female or male, art education, race and so on. I believe that they positioned themselves in one of the discourses of the art texts (*alienation*) in relation to their own positions in their significant discourses. Some students were also aware that these positions constituted their interpretations of the art texts. The setting of a cocktail party had more or less significance for them in terms of where the cocktail party fitted in the practices of alienation, adolescent females and males, education, art, middle class, Australian, Korean, Chinese and so on.

The other interpretations, of *Spirituality of the Flesh* and *Body Limits*, also used the authoritative interpretation of alienation but appeared to add it to their own interpretation in a rather contrived way as shown in these responses.

SR; “...The lack of identity and personality is backed up by the fact that the image of the flesh blends in with the background and we looked at isolation and alienation.”

SR; “...bacon’s nice but in this situation it’s sickening...it’s too much...its probably commenting on the fat society we have today that too many people are too fat.”

In the final moments of the lesson I asked about interpretation. Students responded that their interpretations came from their own experiences, parents, school, friends, teachers, books, libraries. I asked what they would do when their teacher gave them a critic’s interpretation of an artist’s work.

SR; “Well, take his views but don’t take it as gospel truth until you’ve actually seen the work yourself and formed your own opinion of it.”

Summary of Lesson 3

The interpretations from the Skoglund texts indicated that students were still using the authoritative interpretation developed out of Lesson 1. They tried to fit their interpretations with this interpretation as worked out in the compromise illustrated in the last response. However they also developed interesting spaces by looking at marginal areas of the discourse of 'alienation' in their interpretations such as disease and drunken behavior. I concluded that in deferring to the authoritative interpretation and yet trying to work around the edges of the discursive practices of the interpretation, students moved between modernist and postmodern thinking.

North Sydney Girls' High School

Lesson 1

All lessons were much shorter than that at the boys school. As this was the fourth lesson in the sequence, I was more relaxed. Also I found that the girls were more prepared to interrupt me with questions which made me feel more at ease. I began the lesson by asking the students about their current art project which involved spending time in the local supermarket using the food shelves as subjects for their drawing. I asked them to think about what they had chosen to draw and then to think of themselves as the manager or the bag boy and imagine what these people would have chosen to draw. I moved on to show the slides of Skoglund's work, particularly *Atomic Love* which I described in detail, and asked them to consider what were the major themes in the text. Most of the lesson was taken up with their own interpretations. Students seemed to feel that the main activity of the lesson was to explicate the artist's intent or interpretation in the text. A lot of discussion centered around the point of allowing any other interpretation of the text (other than the artist's) as valid. Towards the end of the lesson I introduced the authoritative interpretation. The lesson concluded with the same homework tasks given at the boys' school.

Student responses

I began with questions about their current art project and asked them to think about their choice of subject if they were the supermarket manager or bag boy. With these questions I hoped to have students understand that who we are conditions our choice of activity.

RQ; "What do you think he would have chosen to draw?"

SR; "Something that would get money like his shop"

RQ; "What would he (bag boy) have chosen?"

SR; "Not the counter"

SR; "Not the bags"

SR; "I was going to say he might choose to do the bags because he could make a really strong statement about how he feels."

Students appeared to understand the intention behind these questions. I moved on to the slides of Skoglund herself and her food installations, giving them a detailed description of *Atomic Love*. I asked the class what they considered to be one of the major themes in this work.

SR; "The relationship of the people and...why she decided to use raisins in her work"

RQ; "What is the significance of the food?"

SR; "Quite sticky"

SR; "Decay. Well, in fact humans decay when they're dying and she used food incorporated into her work...looks like you're not always alive."

SR; "With the raisins they're dried and along with the decaying thing the people are all different ages...a range of ages from very young to old."

RQ; "What sort of relationship were you thinking of?"

SR; "Why she included the contrast between the dummies and the real people"

SR; "It could be a kind of questioning of the nuclear family structure...is that looking too far into it? Atomic Love like she's American isn't she?"

Often like little kids...they eat raisins cookies and stuff and it makes a little statement of how we've moved away from the whole family concept...and the raisins just kind of add the idea of the family as apart...from what is really the family. It might be taking it too far."

RQ; "Can we go too far away from the work?"

Same SR; "Yes"

The texts of another culture are seen in this last response where in Australia, 'cookies' is a typically American word. The girls were very vocal and eager to speak about the art text. Their responses showed that they made interesting connections between their knowledge of raisins, and human relationships, and the figures in the text. However most responses hinted at the interpretation of *alienation* concentrating on the ambiguous poses of the human figures in relation to the mannequins. These responses leant towards a modernist way of thinking about interpretation in that the concept of 'going to far' in interpreting the art text was perceived as irrational. The responses to the question about the relationship of the two human figures moved them into a particular discourse of women.

SR; "He's threatening her...he's threatening her"

SR; "He's dominating...He's threatening her."

The responses about the raisins corresponded with the boy's comments about the loss of identity of the raisins however the girl's saw this loss of identity as decay and becoming part of the environment. Examples of this were,

SR; "They've become covered with raisins themselves and just decay and become part of the environment themselves"

SR; "You feel like...the little dust...isolation...and like it's really cold and you're actually drawn into it...you become part of the structure of the environment."

SR; Everything's covered with raisins and completely still...makes it really surreal and it's completely strange because it should be familiar...except it's not because they're all covered in raisins...it makes them really almost

subhuman.”

The texts of environment, surrealism and science fiction could also be unpacked in these responses. To my question about being in the installation, the one response indicated that one would ruin the installation if one walked in it.

SR; “You’d ruin it because you’d squash the raisins.”

It was at this point that the issue of the artist’s interpretation was raised by one of the students as an interjection and the following exchange between students indicated concepts of modernist and postmodern thinking were being argued. I identified one student here as C because she was most passionate and persistent in trying to understand concepts. C’s questions and responses became a pivot around which other students responded.

SR (C); “But if you are going to be able to interpret the work you defeat the purpose of what the artist is trying to tell you...so what’s the point of going...I could say, oh my gosh, this could be about a beach or something like that? So what if like you just say I did this...so what’s the artist’s purpose in doing the art work if you completely change it yourself?”

SR; I think she hasn’t done the art work to express herself...what she wanted to say...if you’re interpreting it differently then her statement wasn’t very strong”

SR; “Doesn’t it cease to be her own personal work as soon as she offers it to other people? Other people are going to interpret how they choose.”

RQ; “What are they going to say about her (the artist) interpretation?”

SR; “ Obviously they are going to take that into consideration because she did the art work.”

SR(C); “ If you totally override the artist you could say anything even something ridiculous like it’s about the beach...see what I mean? You can draw it out too far. It leaves too much scope for saying silly things. I think you can justify any interpretation you make as long as you have evidence to support why you feel that.”

SR; “ If you have enough things to say I think it’s a beach because the raisins represent sand grains and the yellow color represents the beach then they have to accept your...ummm...interpretation.”

There was confusion between C who held strong but confused modernist ideas of the authority of the artist and the notion of justification in interpretation, and those students who took a more postmodern approach to the ‘death of the artist’. In response to my question about accepting the beach interpretation, the student was confused in her explanation however there was a distancing by other students of this idea.

RQ; “Why shouldn’t we accept that one?

SR(C); “The idea of interpretation isn’t ‘why can’t’. The artist’s intention is trying to make you think about it like have your own interpretation or reaction rather than say some critic said it was an interpretation of a modern family or something...the whole idea of this kind of art is for the artist...is perhaps be able to see what people think of it and see their reactions to it and to see your own personal reactions to it...”

There were some interesting and confused issues here. The response generally indicated a modernist way of thinking about art as artist intention yet also as illustrative of social issues.

At this point I introduced the authoritative interpretation of *alienation*.

RQ; “ Sandy Skoglund said she is interested in depicting the way that we have become isolated from our world...so it’s about *isolation* and *alienation* from our world.”

The students tended to ignore this interpretation by making no comments, even though it corresponded generally with their own interpretations. Perhaps the previous issue of interpretation was perceived as being incomplete because the student continued to press her point in trying to understand why I would accept the ‘beach’ interpretation as valid.

SR (C); “...the beach...um...I mean are you accepting that interpretation just for the sake of accepting of an interpretation which is like completely...ridiculous? Can we go too far in an interpretation? Are you

accepting it because it suits your argument?”

RQ; “We are the ones who decide what’s too far, don’t you think?”

SR (C): “I agree...but I mean sometimes people say something just on the spur of the moment just for the sake of having an argument.”

RQ; “Just to be disruptive?”

SR (C); “Yes”

There was general laughter, both of relief and amusement, which indicated to me that the class felt the issues raised so passionately by this student had been in part, resolved.

Maybe it was my own relief at this apparent ‘resolution’. Before closing this lesson I explained about the homework tasks. C, who had been so passionate, was still trying to come to grips with the idea of multiple interpretation.

SR (C); “ Like there’s no right or wrong about interpretation, could you say there’s a more correct one? Is she trying to educate us like she’s commenting on society and stuff like that?...I think she’s making us think and that’s in a way, education.”

Summary of Lesson 1

I believe the responses showed that some students had a modernist view of the authority of the artist while others were attempting to take a more postmodern stance. The concept of justifying one’s interpretation and not become irrational or ‘ridiculous’ in interpreting, was of significant concern to some students and I considered this concern to be modernist in thinking. However the one comment about the art text ceasing to be the artist’s work once exhibited, showed that some students were thinking the art text in a way which included multiple interpretations and context.

Students interpretations read both the textuality and the intertextuality of the art text. The student’s interpretations of Atomic Love were informed by connections from the text itself, with the figures (as a family), the familiarity of the room and the particular quality of raisins as surreal surface covering. The intertext was revealed in their responses about the

environment, and their use of words like 'surreal' 'decay' and 'subhuman'.

Lesson 2

This lesson was also short (30 minutes). I began with a question about how they understood interpretation. I introduced the concept of discourses and positioning in relation to interpretation which I continued to explain throughout the lesson. Various students then talked about the interpretations they had gotten from family or friends, of *Atomic Love* (homework). The discussion swung between interpretation and discourse with arguments about authoritative and personal interpretation as students tried to understand how discourses constitute interpretation.

Student Responses

In answer to my question about what it is to interpret, one interesting answer indicated that maybe some students had considered issues from the previous lesson.

SR; "Does it mean like your background...like your own personal ideas and how you relate them to something else?"

I introduced the concept of discourses, causing some confusion by saying I was not going to define what I was explaining about discourse and then 'defining' the term. In the discussion I used the notion of a discourse of 'waiting' (for something or someone) as a set of practices which we can usually recognize and which we use. One student's interjection here is indicative of some understanding of my particular standpoint.

SR; "Looking at your watch."

Further explanation brought interesting questions.

SR; "As in, you can be in a discourse of anything just because you understand what it is?"

SR; "Is it a sort of philosophical thing?"

I brought back interpretation as being constituted by the particular discourses in which one is dominantly or primarily situated.

SR; “So everyone will interpret differently?”

The following responses indicated a postmodern shift in thinking by some students.

RQ; “If we know that we construct our interpretations by who we are, what can we do with interpretation?”

SR; “We can look and understand what we think”

SR; “We can look at somebody else and understand how they think...because they looked at how he’s structured...from his family...background structure.”

SR; “Oh! an example from my friend’s interpretation. She’s Asian and she looked at it (*Atomic Love*) and she thought, Oh my God! discrimination and inequality...as you can see by the white people...they’ve got the power position...they’re obviously in control...she sort of thought they (mannequins) were colored people. She sees objectively that they’re not really human in a way...they don’t even have their own features so in that way she saw inequality and discrimination.”

RQ; “she’s really dominant in the discourse of being Asian?”

SR; “I think ...she recognizes everything...like she recognized racism...the theme of racism and stuff like that...she’s had more experience of it and like...it was made more obvious”

RQ; “So at the moment feeling she’s dominant in the discourses of racism so it makes her interpret in a certain way?”

SR; “I think dominant like she recognizes things that like other people are totally blind to it...plus she’s directly influenced and affected by it”

This exchange showed me that some students were beginning to understand that interpretation is constructed by particular positions and that they were using this understanding with interpretations from themselves and others. However some students tried to argue positioning in a modernist way by seeing the way we interpret as a state of mind. The following responses from C was interesting because she reflected the thinking

of some students in the class in trying to sort through the issue of discursive positioning and the way I was explaining how one can shift positions by using their own experiences.

SR(C); “I don’t always think it can be about discourses but sometimes it’s on your state of mind like how you interpret a picture. No! No! (to another student interjecting) but it may be a completely experiencing thing!...like walking down the street before school and you walk into art...and you saw a dog dead on the road...you don’t own it ...it has nothing to do with you...and you feel miserable.”

RQ; “But that’s a discourse of grief or death...and accompanying that are all the practices of grief and so on...don’t you think?”

SR(C); “It’s a state of mind...a discourse is a state of mind...like I’m feeling good.”

SR; “There’s always a reason for feeling good.”

Students continued to discuss the interpretations from family and friends.

Interpretations used references like the raisins as camouflage with military connotations, war, torture and death, or formalist references to do with composition. They continued also to question and discuss among themselves, the issue of discourses.

SR(C); “I’m just saying sometimes your feelings are not associated with your background...but exterior things like weather.”

SR; “Yeh but that’s your background as well”

SR(C); “How is that your background?”

SR; “I think the whole discourse thing is related to your experiences...your genetic makeup and also the chemicals...your body produces natural chemicals.”

This student could not escape a modernist scientific explanation for why one thought and behaved differently. However the questions and discussion continued among the other students.

SR(C); “ Is it just your lifestyle...and your life? Then why do you break

them up? OK, if you were a hermit..."

SR; " Their interpretation is totally different because of living alone all the time...because their discourses are living alone all the time."

In this exchange, these students were trying to make sense of my concept of discourses but at the same time trying to situate their understanding by categorizing in some way which hovers between modernist and postmodern thinking. I turned to the authoritative interpretation in order to introduce ways that the students may read against that interpretation.

RQ; "Should we accept it (authoritative interpretation)? What should be accepted? What should not be accepted?"

SR; "I think we should"

SR; "I think you don't have to...you can accept it bnt you don't have to agree with it. (You say) OK, that's your interpretation and drawing on what I know of that and what I think I could establish my own interpretation."

RQ; "How can we undermine those ('alienation' and 'isolation')? What sorts of things can we do to undermine them? By thinking oppositionally."

SR; "Well initially you could say because everything is covered in raisins they all have a link together...but they're not all covered in raisins..."

RR; "She's (the student) is picking up on the ambiguities and contradictions that are in this work."

SR; "It's so hard to miss that they're all covered in raisins...and also in the center you've got the fan...and the table and it seems all the figures are facing towards the furniture of the room...it looks like they're all somehow coming together...and you could almost put spokes out from the table and join them all up."

SR; "Everything is a family household and it looks quite calm in a way...you get the feeling, harmony but when you see the wine glass at the

bottom it shows discord in a way...that the family's not very happy?"

Students began to look at ambiguities in the art text and their own responses could have been pursued for ambiguities and contradictions with earlier interpretations they had made. I collected the visual verbals as the short lesson had not allowed for their examination.

Summary of Lesson 2

In this lesson, the students were more concerned about their own understanding of my concept of discourse, positioning and interpretation and the responses reflected that their understanding of these issues was quite sophisticated. The responses also showed that the girls were more open to use their own emotional experiences in trying to understand these issues. There was evidence that most students had not allied themselves closely to the authoritative interpretation but were aware of it. The responses showed that they, like the boys, eventually wanted both the authoritative interpretation and their own interpretations to be equally significant.

Lesson 3

Students were divided into groups and given the same Skoglund texts to interpret as the boys. They were to document the process of interpretation from the initial words and ideas to the final interpretation. The groups reassembled and discussed their interpretations. Students were then given Jude Schwendenwien's review of food art, in which Skoglund's *Spirituality in the Flesh* appeared, to read and keep in their visual arts process diaries. I closed the lesson with questions about the constructedness of interpretation to gain some insight into their understanding of discourse and interpretation.

Student Responses

I divided the class into groups and gave them the Skoglund texts with instructions on what I wanted them to do. After ten minutes the groups reassembled and each group discussed their interpretation. Most groups began with interpretive description of what

they saw in the text in the manner in which they had been taught in previous art criticism lessons. However their interpretations were constituted by how they situated themselves in the discursive practices of the text like the practices of cocktail parties or food as the boys had done. Examples of responses were; (from *The Cocktail Party*):

SR; “It was sickening and like bacteria or maggots crawling all over your body and then we sort of questioned that the couldn’t be real cheetos (cheese doodles) because they look more plasticity because when they’re stepping on them...they haven’t crumbled...and they’re all very uniform”

RQ; “And what sort of conclusions did you come to?”

Same SR; “Our conclusion was that it was fake and tacky and...plastic. We thought that when you’re at a social gathering you tend to look around and notice everyone else notice that you are alone...like when you’re not talking to someone it’s like you’re really conscious of it but when you’re talking to someone, you’re not so conscious of your surroundings.”

SR; “We kind of said the same thing. Its disgusting...something from the X Files...worms or maggots...there’s some sense of pattern but it’s gross. Maybe these people are like migrants from another country and...the real people are isolated but others are coupled...men and women mannequins looked like the same person like same hair no face...the cups on the table had no purpose and the color was a bit too warm and bright...this looked like it was happening in the day so it was a bit awkward...although there’s a lot of people in it it seemed really noiseless and quiet.”

This group agreed that their interpretation could fit with the practices of alienation however I believe that their interpretation was also constituted by their understanding of cocktail parties.

The next two groups looked at *Spirituality in the Flesh* and interpreted it through the authoritative interpretation of alienation.

SR; “ We also looked at the background being hamburger mince (meat) s o

you are your environment as well...she looks very defensive...like she doesn't want to touch her environment...and we started thinking how it would smell and how it would decay and it was getting a bit grisly..."

SR; "(We had) pretty much the same idea...we didn't know it was mince...we thought it was smallpox..."

SR; "and the Ayers Rock...it reminded me of Ayers Rock"

SR; "...we had the idea of humans as meat and also a comment on the fashion industry...the models as like lumps of meat and she's also very enclosed in her environment...she's very standoffish...and looks really uncomfortable."

Two groups interpreted Body Limits. One group used the authoritative interpretation but also used also formalist methods of analysis which reflected previous teaching.

SR; "...it was an interesting use of texture, camouflage, pattern, tangible, camouflage, pattern, zebras, woodgrain, birch trees, camouflage, boiled sweets because of the stripes."

RR; "Boiled sweets!"

SR; "It's because its so stripey and the lacquer on it. Some of us looked at the actual formal qualities of the picture, the lines describing form...the texture...the chair is the focus. Some of us looked at the body language, it looks like they're coming to the end of an argument, they're walking away from one another. ...after realizing it was bacon...the smell, the grease...like as if the bodies have been peeled of their skin and the flesh was showing underneath."

The last group admitted to feeling light hearted and considering the "morals of the whole issue".

SR; "It's just astounding that...as if someone would bother and that's so astounding...and in the moral side we looked at wastage and 'beware of the pig'..."

Students were then given Jude Schwendenwien's review of food art to read and then keep in their visual arts process diaries. My final question to the class asked about the constructedness of interpretation in relation to the different but similar interpretations we had just discussed. The last response was probably predictable.

RQ; "Where do these interpretations come from?"

SR; " Our discourses (lot of laughter)...like from us ...like from what it is that made us...from who we are."

SR; "I mean what else could it be."

Summary of Lesson 3

One group's responses to the *Cocktail Party* implied that the practices of cocktail parties were alienating when they spoke of their self consciousness in such situations. I believe that they adopted dominant positions in some of the discourses of young female students in presuming themselves in such a contestory setting. Another group related the likeness of the snack food to maggots and disease. They chose to dominantly position themselves, in relation to the discourses of alienation and isolation, in the discourses of disease. The students saw the practices of the cocktail party as alienating and isolating because of the perceived artificiality of those practices in relation to the discourses in which they were dominantly positioned. Students appeared to have some understanding of the concepts of discourses and positioning in discourses and the relation to interpretation.

The students were aware of the authoritative interpretation in their own interpretations. There were many interesting spaces created in their responses where marginal and ambiguous meaning could have been explored. From the use of formalist analysis by some students I consider that their thinking was modernist. However the acceptance and use of ambiguous and contradictory relationships in interpretations of the art texts, indicated that some students were thinking towards the postmodern.

My Teaching Strategies

As I have stated previously I believe that the deconstructive analysis of the responses showed that these students were 'shifting between' modernist and postmodernist ways of thinking about their relation with the art text. 'Shifting between' was indicated as modernist reluctance by students to give up an authoritative interpretation, and the fear of 'going too far' in interpreting art, and a postmodern acceptance of positioning as constitutive of interpretation. What strategies did I use in the classes which prompted these shifting responses? It is here that I need to discuss various teaching strategies that I consciously (or intuitively) used in these class discussions. I believe these strategies prompted students to make self reflective and self reflexive decisions about taking positions in modernist or postmodern practices in relation to the art text, interpretation, discourses and positioning. I believe that self reflection, looking back at the ground one has already covered, is both a modernist and postmodern tactic while being self reflexive, being critically conscious of what one is doing or thinking, is a postmodern tactic of thinking. Self reflexivity is what Culler (1982) calls theorizing one's practice (p.154).

As a teaching strategy, the lessons were sequenced, firstly, to allow students to discuss and question a broad understanding of the familiar and unfamiliar concepts I introduced. The authoritative interpretation was introduced half way through the first lesson after students had speculated about and made tentative interpretations of the art text. Secondly, in having students undertake specific homework tasks and later discuss in class, I moved them towards a personal relationship with these concepts. In the final lessons I used strategies which brought them to understand, albeit naively, that their own interpretations were constitutive of who they were and what the consequences of that understanding might be. It was also in this final lesson that I gave them one of the critical reviews of Skoglund's art to read as an 'afterword' to their own discussions and thinking.

How did I manipulate language, what type of questions and what attitudes did I adopt in the discussion which prompted particular modernist thinking? At both schools, the initial introduction by the art teacher and my somewhat aggressive attitude at the start of the

first lesson at NSBHS, established the feeling among the students that I was an 'authority'. Therefore the authoritative interpretation of Skoglund's art that I took from critical writing and which I articulated consciously and unconsciously through my use of particular words and phrases was taken by the students as the authoritative interpretation. I reinforced this by telling them that it was also an interpretation supported by the artist and several critics. This strategy of promoting an authoritative interpretation was not one that I had intended to use however in noting that students seemed comfortable with this interpretation, I continued to use it. I had made a note of this in the evaluation of the first lesson at NSBHS and decided to use the authoritative interpretation as a buffer against which to read the art text in all lessons. In the first lesson at NSGHS (the fourth in the sequence) my attitude was conciliatory. Although the students appeared more skeptical of my 'authority', they too accepted the authoritative interpretation because it corresponded with what they had to say about the art text. I believe my acceptance of the authority of a particular interpretation made students reluctant to give up that interpretation and to take risks, "going too far", in interpreting the art text. "Going too far", said a number of times in the lessons by both boys and girls, indicated, in their thinking, irrationality, "being silly", a lack of justification, even an indulgence. Students, situated by their own apparent powerlessness in the modernist structures of educational practices, see the 'adventure' and the risk taking involved in some postmodernist interpretive practices, too problematic. "Going too far" seemed to be a verbal affirmation of this.

What strategies did I use that prompted modernist thinking? I believe that when I referred to the art text in ways that were familiar like asking for a generic description of what the artist had done or the formal elements or the symbols in the text, the students responses were modernist. Whenever I agreed with students their responses tended to be modernist. When I referred to the artist's interpretation or any art world interpretation either in a derogatory or supportive way, the responses were modernist. I believe some students confused 'interpretation' with 'intention' and believed that their role in the class was to uncover an intended meaning. Therefore I believe that, whenever I reinforced their

own understanding and beliefs about interpretation and the art text, I received modernist responses.

How did I manipulate language, what type of questions and what attitudes did I adopt in the discussion which prompted postmodernist thinking? To change these student's thinking about the text towards a more reflexive postmodern one, I used strategies in the discussions which were intended to make them question and doubt their understanding of familiar and unfamiliar concepts and their modernist acceptance of an authoritative interpretation. I also gave particular tasks which were intended to have students discuss a different interpretation of the art text than their own, and yet attend carefully to their own interpretation (interviews and visual verbals).

In all lessons I played about with, or 'misunderstood' words or the meanings of words in various ways like referring to 'alienation' as 'alien' thereby making connections with the intertextuality of the art text. In explanation of unfamiliar terms, unusual analogies were made in order to make students think in different directions. I used humor and irony and even ridiculed my own statements. I believe the vulnerability shown when one questions or ridicules one's statements is necessary to promote a type of trust in the classroom. Often this manipulation of words was in the form of humorous, ironic or flippant rhetorical remarks or questions such as "This is Fred Raisin and this is Dorothy Raisin" or "How would you feel walking all over those fat raisins?" This last question focused on the tangible but contradictory quality of raisins, fat yet dried out. It initially elicited obvious modernist responses and not until I continued to press for further explanation did they begin to actually think themselves into the text.

My questioning strategies here, in having students be more self reflexive, involved taking particular attitudes towards the students. Sometimes questions were asked in a skeptical, even confrontationalist manner which forced students to open up new spaces of thinking or change direction. For example, this question was asked of the boys in a skeptical manner, "What authority is given this person to decide (about interpretation)?" which prompted two students to disagree about the significance of the artist's

interpretation. A similar question asked in the same manner at the girls school, elicited the same disagreement between students which centered on accepting the authoritative interpretation and accepting multiple interpretations. As well, in my questioning of the authority of the interpretation, students were made to reappraise their acceptance of the authority of the interpretation. This skepticism extended to a questioning of everything said in the class that was ambiguous, contradictory or vague, or indicated doubt by the students. Sometimes students became exasperated or even angry but this usually initiated further areas of discussion among students like the girl's discussion about discourses, positioning, dead dogs and hermits. I asked students to doubt my own statements about the art texts, that I might, in fact, be lying, which led to a discussion among the boys about the raisins really being atoms. Questions which connected their interpretations with the artist in some way caused students to be more reflexive which prompted postmodern responses. My questions also asked them to use their own experiences in making comparisons or interpretations and I used my own experiences as examples to explicate understanding of unfamiliar concepts, for instance how I interpreted the text, *Wild Swans* as a woman and mother in the discussion about reading differently.

My various attitudes in the lessons towards student responses was indicated by my tone of questioning and responding (my body language, seen on and interpreted from the videotapes, contributed but this is an issue I will not pursue in this study). At times I was thoughtful and concerned about the student's responses and also showed this by following their discussions with extreme interest. I needed to do this in order to see areas where I could question their thinking about the text. Sometimes I played the 'devil's advocate' and took an oppositional stance in order to continue a discussion, for example, to the student response of "love" as synonymous to "alienation". I wanted my overall attitude to be one of concern for the students in helping them understand complex issues, but I did not want that concern to appear as appeasing or placatory. Because of time constraints many responses could not be played about with and exploited for the ambiguities they contained, for example, the response which used the word "rerained" or the response which talked

about being corrupted by raisins.

In using the technique of interpretation I call visual verbals, students were able to create more space to position themselves in the art text. This space was created by what I understand to be the psychological distancing of students from the intimacy of the class in relation to the art text and interpretation. The students were distanced from the art text in working with a small photocopy (even though they understood that the slide of *Atomic Love* was itself distanced a number of times from the art text) and by working on this palimpsest alone in their own visual diaries. Students made certain interpretations of the art text by the use of collage, words, or drawing or marking over the art text that were not able to be articulated in class. Therefore the students took more risks with interpretation because, even when produced for discussion in class, the 'new' texts were thought of as 'other' or another text just like the slide or the postcard of *Atomic Love* and not the particular and peculiar interpretation of one student.

Using the postcard of *Atomic Love* to interview other people for their particular interpretation was a strategy which allowed students to see what an interpretation, uninformed by any knowledge of the art text, might look like and where it may have come from. My intention throughout the lessons was to bring students to some sort of understanding of interpretation as constitutive of discursive practices. Therefore in the discussion which followed these interviews, when students explained their parent's or friend's interpretation, some students made connections between the practices of particular discourses and the interpretation, as did the student when explaining why her friend had interpreted *Atomic Love* as a racist art text. I also prompted these connections by comparing differences or similarities in interpretations and questioning why these differences and similarities might have happened.

These strategies were intended to provoke self reflexive discussion and disruption about the concept of discursive positioning in the constitution of interpretation and ultimately of self. Not all questions gave interesting responses. As I had little previous experience in discussing these concepts with high students and was therefore feeling my way, some of

my questions were confusing. However I often rephrased the question in order to dispel this confusion. I believe that, although the student's understanding of these issues was naive, this interrogation of interpretation began some kind of thinking about self and other's differences particularly in relation to art texts. In recent correspondence with the NSGHS art teacher (personal communication, April, 1997), the students whose responses are analyzed here are still talking about some of the issues discussed. I hope to interview them and the students at NSBHS as further research in 1997.

Conclusion

From this deconstructive analysis of the student's responses, the outline of a disruptive ~~model~~ began as a tying together of modernist practices of interpretation with a postmodern understanding of the construction of interpretation with self. The basis for this postmodern disruptive ~~model~~ of critical activity therefore was not to be found in a choice between postmodernist practices and modernist practices but in an acknowledgment of a different working arrangement of modernist and postmodern narratives within a postmodern framework. The disruptive ~~model~~, which grew out of this deconstructive analysis, is explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

THE DISRUPTIVE ~~MODEL~~ AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATION

Introduction

This particular case study was conducted to provide some insight into questions about students' understanding of interpretation in art texts and the role of that understanding of interpretation in construction of self. The data from this study informed the development of a 'disruptive' ~~model~~ as a critical reflective and reflexive model for interpretation. In this chapter I describe the 'disruptive' ~~model~~ and discuss its implications for art education.

The Disruptive ~~Model~~ in an Educational Setting

In the research lessons at NSBHS and NSGHS, students appeared to allow their own positions in discursive practices to constitute reinterpretations of the dominant interpretation. This has significance in understanding interpretation. However before coming to the disruptive ~~model~~, I need to look again briefly at the primary educational setting in which this ~~model~~ will be used, in order to understand the context of the ~~model~~.

In Chapter 1 I referred briefly to the concept of disruption in relation to the modernist, structuralist nature of educational institutions. The educational narratives through which the school is read are generally ones of rationality, excellence, achievement, order, accountability, equity (Giroux 1989). What schools teach is interest related and ideologically framed. In this institution teachers and students are decentered in two ways.

The overall structuralist nature of the school revolves around relationships within the structure, and what has been authorized to be taught, centers on relationships of content and practices. To bring the student back into the center of meaning, one poststructuralist approach may be to investigate the ways that modernist structuralist practices can be disrupted by a 'close reading' of themselves. In the visual arts and for my study, modernist practices involving an authoritative or dominant interpretation may be subjected to a disruptive reading. This is not to displace or remove the authoritative interpretation, but to allow students to position themselves in the discursive practices of that interpretation and to see how that particular position may construct a reinterpretation. The disruptive ~~model~~ I am proposing is about student's ability to position themselves in the world and, in knowing their own histories, know their own strengths and limitations and therefore move towards some sense of agency or self empowerment.

The Disruptive Model

In deconstructing the responses from students, I found a reluctance to relinquish a modernist position in relation to an authoritative interpretation and a general naivete about postmodern concepts. I believe that my disruptive ~~model~~ must take these two tendencies into account. I envisage the process of the disruptive ~~model~~ being firstly, an identification of the authoritative interpretation of the selected art text. Then, in moving into an examination of the discursive practices of this interpretation, the art text is temporarily 'left behind'. Finally, in a return to the art text, a reinterpretation occurs through an understanding of positionality in discursive practices and its role in the constitution of interpretation. Certain understanding about the constructedness of self emerge from these areas.

Part 1

Establishing an authoritative interpretation from sources such as the artist, critics, historians and teachers has been discussed in the previous chapter and constitutes the first

part of the ~~model~~. From what sources to draw such an interpretation, may depend on what is available to the class and teacher. Investigation of contemporary art journals, art textbooks, art historical texts, artist's autobiographies and statements, teacher's notes and class discussion are sources for an authoritative interpretation of an art text. In the research lessons I used two pieces of critical writing from contemporary art journals, the artist's statements from an interview with two art educators, an art educator's writing and my own reflective journal to determine an authoritative interpretation of the Skoglund text. Some of these types of resources may not be available but the teacher's interpretation or an interpretation decided by class consensus is always accessible.

In the art criticism class, the authoritative interpretation may be introduced early in the conversation centered around the art text being used with this ~~model~~. In discussion on its 'aboutness', the discourse embedded in the interpretation is unpacked and the practices of that discourse examined. This examination of the discursive practices of the interpretation forms the next part of the ~~model~~.

Part 2

The interpretation is part of a discourse which has a set of practices. This part of the ~~model~~ examines the practices of the discourse of the interpretation through a class conversation, in which such things as recognizing and describing discursive practices, recalling personal experiences, 'playing around with' the practices via words and image and looking at social and historical articulation of these practices, play an important role. These discursive practices can be described in many of their manifestations. Students can recognize some of these practices and describe their own relationship with them. Questions like what do these practices look like, how would one recognize them, what particular words are constructed by them, how has the artist described these practices, come into the discussion. They may also see how these practices may fit with other discursive practices such as those of the art world.

It is here that strategies of play with language become very important. The teacher and

students may develop word play or strategies to dismantle metaphors to ‘misunderstand’ or misread, to make chance connections between words or sounds or to examine the physicality of the art text, particularly where it finds itself and in what form. In the case study, using the Skoglund’s text, the interpretation was the discourse of alienation. Such playing with language, similar to the concept of bricolage, may involve noting the many meanings of words or unraveling words such as ‘alienation’ in the Skoglund text for the interconnecting texts situated in them like sounds of words or other intertexts. For instance, ‘alienation’ contains ‘alien’, a word loaded with dense science fiction connotations as well as images of frightened Mexicans caught at the border or even white supremacists, which can be pursued for further connotations. The network of practices of the discourse of the interpretation are themselves part of a larger network. For instance, the art text’s discursive practices of installation and photography must also come into the play of, and become enmeshed in, the interpretation’s discursive practices.

What is intended in the ~~model~~ here, is that students develop a dense and thick understanding with the practices of this discourse within the limits of their experiences. At this stage the crucial question is, where do the students position themselves individually within the discourse? Do they engage in these discursive practices in a dominant way or is their engagement marginal? How do they understand their own positioning? Do they move between being dominant or marginal in these practices and what causes that positional shift? Do they ever consciously adopt a particular position and why? What is the relation of positions in other discourses like gender, ethnicity, or student, on one’s position in this discourse? In the self reflexive discussion needed to look at and find responses to these questions, students begin to have a glimpse of the constructedness of the world and themselves. The is where the ~~model~~ leaves the art text and concentrates on the student and their experiences of this discourse. Students can be encouraged at this point to think about change and the possibility of choice in positioning because of an understanding, albeit immature, of how interpretations are constituted by one’s particular positioning in all discourses.

The conversation at this point, is crucial. The teacher should be a bricoleur here, aware, flexible and adaptable, listening carefully and working intuitively in order to notice and use important phrases and statements made by students. Here contradictions and ambiguities in the conversation should be kept and remembered. What ensues in the class depends on the ways by which the teacher-as-bricoleur allows certain streams in the conversation to be followed or redirected. The teacher must be aware of the flows and eddies of the conversation and be able to act upon and redirect the stream of the conversation.. Nothing that students say in this conversation is irrelevant, that is, everything can be traced and retraced in this discussion of discursive practices. Students are explaining, through personal experiences and relationships that they see in these discursive practices, how they are situated in the world. All these experiences will be different but they may share similar understandings of these experiences.

Part 3

The students and teacher will have built up a dense, thick description and understanding of the discursive practices of the interpretation. They will have seen differences, and some similarities, of experiences of other students and will have some understanding that these have been constituted by discourses particularly those in which they are dominantly positioned. Describing discourses as overlapping web-like networks allows students to see how their own positions are constantly shifting within those networks.

In having an 'intimate' understanding of these discursive practices, students can work 'across known ground' to become more disruptive, interrogative, and begin to work against these practices. Crucial questions of who makes decisions about these practices, how these practices evolve, what or who allows these practices to exist, who allows what can be said or done, how they have changed in any way over time, already begin to disrupt the discourse. Further disruption of the dominant discursive practices by looking at marginal or oppositional practices, or looking for ambiguities or contradictions within the practices, can begin to undermine the base which legitimizes the differences in these

practices. For example, with the Skoglund text, in examining the practices of *love* which the students understood as not necessarily opposed to the dominant practices of *alienation*, contradictions arose about “different love”. Taken further, this discussion could have undermined and exploited these relationships in revealing the constructedness of oppositions. Further questions of intertextuality, particularly those looking at the traces and references from other texts, which has already begun in the earlier parts of the ~~model~~, are also necessary to return to in the conversation.

Why is it necessary for this ~~model~~ to be disruptive? The discursive practices of the interpretation need to be shown as problematic in order to provide more space for an exploration of potential for change. What I mean by this is, that by disrupting the dominant practices of the discourse of the interpretation, a space is made for other things to exist in, particularly the way we may rethink our own positionality and the way we use language in discursive practices. In rethinking our particular positioning, that one may be able to adopt different positions. may allow students to play around with notions of selves. This is where the ~~model~~ can return to the art text.

Part 4

The questions raised in disrupting the dominant practices of the interpretation can be addressed to the text, which may be made to give up other meanings in response. Do the dominant practices of the discourse of the interpretation remain dominant when the students return to the text? Do students concur with dominant interpretation? Is there somewhere in the text where the text itself subverts the dominant interpretation? How does the art text respond to being part of a discourse? Does being part of more than one discourse bring the art text back into the social world? In the Skoglund text the discursive practices of installation and photography could be seen to be interconnected with the discourse of alienation. Has one’s positionality changed in relation to the discursive practices of the interpretation or to the art text?

A crucial question here for students and teachers using this ~~model~~, concerns how they

see the constructedness of interpretation in relation to their own positions within the discourse. Other questions follow; how has knowing the discursive practices of the interpretation enabled them to position themselves within the discourse? Has that position shifted within the discourse after discussion in the class? Has the understanding of constitution of discourses and one's position changed the way one thinks of other's or different interpretations? These questions are meant to be reflective and may not provide definitive answers.

Part 5

It is here that the ~~model~~ can continue to explore the students' positions in the discourse of the interpretation through the introduction of the visual verbal. As stated previously in an explanation of the concept of visual verbals in Chapter 1, the ~~model~~ can be developed as a palimpsestic 'writing' genre, a collage/montage of words and images. The creating of another text from the art text under critical discussion, is another way that students can examine their positions in the discourse of the interpretation. The physical and mental distancing of the palimpsest allows a non threatening space to be opened for exploration of positionality. There is no method of 'visual verbaling'. Students usually use an appropriated image of the art text, reproduced electronically (photograph, photocopy, computer), and interact with that image with words and other images. Students can interact their own photographic 'identification' with the words and images. In this way the visual verbal serves either to reinforce one's perceived position in the discursive practices of the art text, or enables a choice about a different position. My understanding of visual verbals of both American and Australian students with Skoglund texts, showed that this is what happened. The Australian students generally confirmed their positions in the discourse of the interpretation by emphasizing the alienation with image and word. The American students used the visual verbal to position themselves differently in the discursive practices of their interpretation because the conversation in class had not encouraged them to declare anything but marginal positions.

Teaching Strategies

I discussed in Chapter 5 the particular strategies of teaching which prompted students into thinking self reflectively and self reflexively, that is, thinking back over the ground one has already covered and also being critically conscious of what one is doing or thinking. These strategies were ones which provoked the students to doubt their knowledge and thinking on issues of interpretation and discourses. Students were then stimulated into areas of speculative and 'risk taking' thinking or forced to defend their current beliefs which in turn opened more areas for discussion. I adopted particular types of questioning and particular attitudes or played about with language, causing students to think disruptively about the art text and the issues discussed. These strategies could be adopted when using this disruptive ~~model~~. This ~~model~~ aims to have students think reflectively and reflexively about themselves in relation to the art text. Strategies of teaching which encourage students to doubt or support their own or other's thinking are necessary for this to occur.

Conclusion

I believe this critical activity, by exposing interpretation as discursive practice, allows a number of things. Firstly, by using an authoritative interpretation of the art text to understand practices of the world, students work with the art text from a known and accepted premise. Secondly, by understanding interpretations as discursive practices, the viewer can position herself in the practices of the interpretation, thus allowing her to move into the art text itself and disrupt the dominant discursive practices in a way that may force the text to acknowledge its own constructedness in all discourses. This interaction establishes both the viewer and the art text as particular products of social construction and thus reconnects the viewer and the art text in the world. Thirdly, by moving into the art text to locate themselves in the world, viewers have to become both self reflective and self reflexive. While I acknowledge all that this may not lead students in the classroom to an understanding of self construction, it nevertheless sets them in a space where they can

begin to inquire about discursive positions in relation to self and others.

This ~~model~~ does not give answers, but instead opens up areas of thinking for students where one might understand the significance of self and identity and difference as constituted or constructed by discourses. This constitution leads one to reiterate Judith Butler's statement (in Gutting 1994) that construction is the necessary scene of agency. In beginning to understand this social constitution, viewers can also begin to make active choices about positionality and interpretation in relation to art texts.

Disruption in Educational Practice

As I have used the word 'disruption' in a number of significant areas in this study, it is here that I need to examine the term 'disruption' as it relates to educational practices and to my study. To understand the term 'disruption' in the sphere of postmodern, poststructuralist theory is to understand it as a significant critical dismantling of the concept of structures. The theorists who use this word in their writings do so in this context, explicated from the philosophical writings of Husserl and Heidegger. Husserl's concepts of Abbau (dismantling) and Heidegger's Destruktion (destruction) and Kritischer Abbau (critical dismantling) have influenced both Derrida and Foucault.

A critical dismantling of structure evolves out of concern about the adequacy of the concepts of structuralism, that is with the analytic methodology concerned with structures and with the general rules by which structures work. At the heart of structuralism is a desire to uncover the rules, the linguistic systems which form the basis of human social and cultural practice. Structuralism is intimately concerned with the cultural phenomena of modernism under whose umbrella it sits and from where it assumes that the same underlying structures determine the language of social and cultural practices. Michael Lane (in Cherryholmes, 1988) states succinctly that,

(Structuralism) is presented as a method whose scope includes all human social phenomena. . . social sciences . . . humanities . . . and the fine arts. This is

made possible by the belief that all manifestations of social activity, whether it be the clothes that are worn, the books that are written or the system of kinship and marriage that are practices in any society, constitute languages, in a formal sense. Hence their regularities may be reduced to the same set of abstract rules that define and govern what we normally think of as language (p.18)

Therefore the 'language' of clothes or myths or the practices of education, can be analyzed for meaning in terms of their structures only. Structuralist ways of thought have dominated educational practices and structuralist arguments in education have made knowledge claims which have remained unquestioned and uncriticized.

A major premise of structuralism in analyzing the structure of texts, works and practices, is that the underlying structure is defined by the relationships between their constitutive parts. This means that objects can never be related outside their structure to their social and historical contexts, that 'origin' is unimportant, that where an object is 'coming from' and how, are not issues for meaning. It also means that the human subject, the self, is excluded or decentered, the new centered subject being the structure itself. Eagleton (1983) emphasizes the anti humanist position of structuralists, "that they reject the myth that meaning begins and ends in the individual's experience" (p.113).

Modernist metanarratives as structures, appear to give us centers of authority or transcendental signifieds around which we can fix standards and goals. In educational structuralism such centers are concepts like 'excellence in education' or 'equity in education' or 'multiculturalism'. Cherryholmes (1987) suggests that in the structure of curriculum, the Bloom Taxonomy may be considered a center of authority (p. 299). Eagleton (1983) suggests that in the structures of our society, 'family', 'authority', and 'freedom' may be considered centers "around which other meanings are forced to turn" (p.131). It is here we can begin to critically dismantle or disrupt the structurality of structure. If meaning in a structure is held at the center--the transcendental signified, the 'origin' or goal--then we must ask 'what has allowed the center to exist?' or 'where did

the center come from ?' For a center to exist, other signs and meanings must have existed, and, on close examination of such centers, they are revealed as constructions.

Cherryholmes (1988) notes the important and unacknowledged way structuralism has influenced all areas of thinking in the 20th century because it promises 'order', 'accountability', 'organization' and 'control'. However structuralist practices should not be beyond interrogation, and assumptions of order, accountability, organization and control must be examined for justification of the claims they make. The apparent authority and obvious rationality of these characteristics usually inhibit critical interrogation. One would agree that to interrogate the concept of 'excellence in education' would seem irrational. The goal of excellence would seem to be a 'fundamental' goal in our society. But what exactly does 'excellence in education' mean? If one critically analyzes any system of rules by which the goal of excellence in education was to be attained, one would find, that, in fact, some parts of that system actively work against the attainment of that goal or are impossible to fulfill. Educators tend to ignore or discard such contradictory rules and not to examine the privileging of others. Such contradictions and ambiguities in educational structures or practices go unquestioned when educators ignore the social and historical context of concepts like 'excellence' or 'equity' or 'multiculturalism' when setting educational standards and goals.

The point I am making about structuralism is that it still holds sway in the discourse of education and determines most educational practices. Educational structuralism promotes order, organization and rationality but it ignores the role of the student and the teacher. This arbitrariness places education in a particular social and historical context and, more importantly, it ignores the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in all structuralist assumptions. In art education such structures as Feldman's (1976) four part model for art criticism has been found to be problematic and ambiguous, especially the position the concept of 'analysis' occupies between that of 'description' and 'interpretation'. Nevertheless some art educators have persisted in their use of this model ignoring the ambiguities. Their sense of failure with this model is perceived as their own failure to

understand or use it correctly. The metanarrative of this model, which is authoritatively centered by 'the aesthetic experience', can only be 'true' if and only if the rules are used. As a structuralist critical model it ignores social and historical significance and the particular place of the viewer in interpretation. In art education, criticism has developed from modernist models of the formal analysis of elements for meaning within the art text, to a postmodern interrogation of texts for their multiple meanings. However these models of criticism remain centered by 'the aesthetic experience'. Disrupting the concept of 'the aesthetic experience' may be ways of finding marginalized knowledge or practices in art criticism, or may allow the viewer to have a more complex relationship with the art text as an object in the world.

Critical models of interpretation of art texts have been attempts to set up rational dialogue about aesthetic response and experience. Structuralist models of interpretation cannot continue the critical reflection and awareness (reflexivity) necessary for students to come to an understanding of self, without adding strategies which open up the dialogue to include the viewer's standpoint and the social and historical construction involved in that standpoint. My concept of poststructuralist interpretation is not 'tied' to rationality and is instead 'tied' to discourses which are seen as partial and interested and 'irrational' in relation to knowledge.

Poststructuralist educational practices overlap to some degree in critical or liberatory or oppositional pedagogies. Critical or liberatory practices of education do value the experience of self and of others as important sources of knowledge. Giroux & McLaren (in Borman, Swami & Wagstaff, 1991), appear to overlap with my own aims for disruptive educational practices, in stating,

Critical pedagogy takes as one of its most fundamental aims an understanding of how the socially constructed and often contradictory experiences and needs of students might be made problematic so as to provide the basis for exploring the interface between their own lives and the constraints and possibilities within

the wider social order (p.78).

Giroux and McLaren are concerned with changing the oppressive dimensions of schooling, with social change, with classroom resistance and student struggle. While I share that concern for empowerment in the classroom, I am not so much concerned with redistribution of power, as with giving the student the skills and strategies to see themselves in a society as a different and valuable person. To see difference as valuable and important is empowering. Issues of race, gender, class, ethnicity lose their significance when decentered as conflict issues, when the emphasis is on the value of difference and the discourses which constitute those differences.

If we think that bringing students to understand that their own interpretations of meanings in art texts are constituted by socially constructed discourses is valuable, we begin to 'think' a pedagogy more sympathetic to the arts, that is "attentive to the histories, dreams and experiences that . . . students bring to school" (Giroux in Ellsworth, 1989, p.306). It is only by beginning with these subjective forms (as opposed to structuralist objective forms) that art educators can develop practices and strategies which can involve students in understanding and valuing difference. Students are capable of understanding the concept of discourses as used in my study. Art students at Dublin High School, Columbus, OH., involved in a series of art critical lessons in 1994, had a naive idea of discourses after a brief discussion; "like all your experiences and ...your...little niche whatever...just like your life...like according to the different groups you are in ...what happens to you, what groupings you are in" (Gooding-Brown, 1994). Ellsworth (1989) notes the "possibility that each student will be capable of identifying a multiplicity of authentic voices in her/himself" (p.312).

The task of the art educator is to devise strategies for critical thinking via self reflection and self reflexivity in the disciplines of visual arts education that bring students to know that their interpretations of meanings are constituted by their various positions in particular discourses. Understanding that they speak from various positions, either dominantly or

marginally, in discourses, leads students to understand an important concept. They cannot 'speak' for others but can understand where different and particular interpretations of meanings of others may come from. They can, therefore, also understand that the teacher cannot speak for them but that the knowledge a teacher brings is added to their own knowledge and reinterpreted through their positionality in discourses.

The potential for critical thinking not just in art education but across the curriculum becomes apparent here. Students are able to critically examine texts which purport to speak for everyone and begin to unpack particular biases within them. In understanding contradiction and partiality and ambiguity as necessary parts of meaning making, they do so because of the concept of difference.

The problems of critical dialogue in art criticism and the need for an atmosphere of trust and security is addressed by Barrett (1993). For me, the art class has traditionally been the area of liberatory talk, of much less inhibited conversation within the school. Nevertheless student's revelations of their positionalities within discourses can create for them, a threatening situation. Because the particular nature of visual arts and the acceptance of multiple voices in art texts, the art class may represent a safe place in which to speak out.

Postmodern Writing Genres and The Visual Verbal¹².

As I see the 'disruptive' ~~model~~ having a optional visual verbal or postmodern 'writing' genre in which to further explore positioning in discursive practices, what is important is an examination of writing and imaging. For this, I explored the 'writing' which plays with images and words, from my own experience as an art teacher, and from artists and authors of the 19th and 20th centuries who used images and words in their texts. The concept of the visual verbal as a means of writing about interpretation is one I have used over a number of years and which has a history in visual arts education in N.S.W., Australia. From my own experience, there have been various ways by which art teachers

¹² See Page 11 for an explanation of the 'origins' of this term.

and students have approached the visual verbal depending on the art text itself. Sometimes students appropriate art texts and collage the images into another art text. The use of collage and montage is important here. Sometimes words and images are used over the art text. The visual verbal is usually developed by the student out of classroom discussion of the art text. It is the appropriative quality, the palimpsestic nature, of the visual verbal which particularly characterizes it as postmodern.

The creating of other texts through which to interpret meanings in art texts may give students a better method to understand their positions in discourses. The distancing or spacing of art texts from the student allows a non threatening forum for exploration of positionality and interpretation of meanings. Disruptive interrogation of an art text through one's own art text at this distance can produce interpretations not able to be expressed verbally. I found that the Dublin High School art students had difficulties with the psychological aspects of the Skoglund text discussed in class but began to resolve these difficulties in the 'visual verbals' or palimpsests, created from their interpretations of this text.

Secondly, it is particularly important to understand and exploit the possibilities of the manipulation of word and image in making meanings in this ~~model~~. Perloff (1989) states that the concept of postmodern genres appears to be a contradiction in terms--that postmodernism "especially in its poststructuralist manifestation, has tended to dismiss genre as a more or less . . . irrelevant concept" (p.3). If we disregard the modernist question of kinds, norms and demarcations (in relation to genre) and see genre as "historically assumptions constructed by authors, audiences and critics in order to serve communicative and aesthetic purposes" (p.6) then we can also see that "generic classes are inevitably fluid" (p.6). Krauss (in Wallis, 1984) argues for the expansion of genres in her essay *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*: "critics have expanded the genre 'sculpture' to include earthworks,. . . large photographs . . ." (p.21). Her explanation for expansion "is that the genre 'sculpture' must be understood in relation to the genres of landscape and architecture. . ." (p.21). This supports Derrida's (1980) statement that "every text

participates in one or several genres, . . .” (p 65) and to this I add that a postmodern writing genre must be understood in relation to the genres of art texts. Students need to be able to see ‘writing’ about art texts as a number of writing and art genres moving between image and word. They need to understand that this writing genre is fluid and flexible, not bound by anachronistic limitations and demarcations. What this ‘genre’ does is to move from the dominant practices of critical writing to the marginalized practices of ‘writing’ in order to explore and expand polysemic interpretations of words, images and spaces .

Examples I have looked at from the 19th and 20th centuries include Lewis Carroll and the Symbolist poet, Mallarmé, Picasso and Cubist collage; the art texts of Schwitters, Hausmann, Heartfield and Stuart Davis; James Joyce; Gertrude Stein in collaboration with Juan Gris; Barthes and Derrida; Fluxus artists; the art texts of Tom Phillips and the writing of Avital Ronell.

Implications for a Postmodern Art Education

The reconnection between art as social construct and the world, the particular use of interpretation as a way into the art text, the understanding of discursive positioning and the links with interpretation, the beginnings of an understanding of self in order to make choices about one’s positioning in the world, are all major postmodern issues in this project for a new interpretive ~~model~~. They have implications and consequences for a different art criticism in the field of art education. However, I hesitate to assume that teachers and students may engage in, through using my disruptive ~~model~~, an understanding of self or agency or difference or other assumptions.

Current art criticism in the school system still tends to separate the art text from the social world in a modernist manner. Such practices are still taught with particular overtones, the generic questions, ‘what do you see?’ ‘and how does it make you feel?’ are not directed at the individual but the group, giving the ‘you’ a kind of universality. In noting questions for teachers from lesson plans for art criticism classes in a museum setting, “What general feelings do you derive from the work?” seems most commonly

asked (Teacher Resource Guide, MOCA, San Diego, 1996). I believe this type of universality maintains a modernist separation of art and the life world, where the art 'work', replete with meaning, was positioned in an seemingly inaccessible place stripped of its cultural framework, divorced from the conditions of its production (Readings in Readings & Schnaber 1993). As viewer, one was distanced from, and hesitant about the art work, by its aesthetic introversion and its inaccessibility and also by its avant gardism, being conscious of its critical undermining of everyday values. This hesitancy and distance was maintained and manipulated by the power relations of the art world itself. The viewer was kept as spectator. For instance, the critic Clement Greenberg's view of aesthetic purity, kept the art work in an elitist position above what he called 'mass culture' and maintained the distance between 'fine art' and popular culture or the empowered art world and the disempowered public.

In rethinking the world as postmodern, art works become texts, read and positioned as discursive practices of a 'modernist' popular culture which are now included as the dominant practices of the culture of the postmodern. The art text can no longer be separated from the network of discursive practices which frame it as a social product. For the viewer to be involved with the art text means a recognition of, and engagement with, those discursive practices. What this means is that the art text can be reconnected, through the recognition and exploration of discursive practices, with the viewer and the world. Thus the viewer makes the link with the art text by recognizing themselves in the world as part of the discursive practices constructing the art text. Art texts begin to become indistinguishable from the world, not a framed reflection of it, and thus begin to become some thing else. In maneuvering the art text to be this some thing else, I am concerned about the text itself as discursive practice in which we, as viewers, can position ourselves.

This disruptive ~~model~~ therefore takes a new approach to the art text with the viewer, not only as spectator, but also as participant in the text. An analogy here could be the way we are positioned as spectators at the Columbus Ballet and as both spectators and participants at the Brazilian folkloric dance company. The space between the art text and the viewer is

crossed and the viewer engages with the text. The viewer as constitutive of discursive practices connects with the art text which is also constitutive of all discursive practices. Even the concept of temporality loses its relevance here. It is not important that the art text is historically past, or that the space crossed between the art text reconnects past with present. What is important is that the viewer engages with the art text in such a way that the viewer is aware of their positioning in the discursive practices of the text and can look around at other's positioning to understand self and difference from self.

Interpretation in critical activity usually finds meaning in art texts as explication of the text itself as a unique aesthetic object. In the light of my understanding of art texts this is an 'interpretation' that seemingly has no relevance and is an 'interpretation' I intend the ~~model~~ to move away from. Interpreting what an art text means is a valuable activity but to more fully engage with art texts we need to understand interpretation as discourse. The way 'interpretation' is used in this ~~model~~ allows the viewer to enter and engage with art texts by questioning the discursive practices of the art text in relation to themselves. This understanding of interpretation corresponds to the understanding of 'text' as articulated in a previous chapter and to the Barthesian move from art 'work' to art 'text'. Interpretation as discourse, in this disruptive ~~model~~ becomes a strategy to enter the art text at any point. In choosing to work with an authoritative interpretation, one that has apparently isolated the meaning of the text, the ~~model~~ in this study acknowledges the complex interrelationship between modernist and postmodernist thinking.

Students in current structures of educational practices rarely find themselves with access to knowledge or methods which they will need to participate in a critical exploration of themselves and of the world in which they exist. As Giroux (1990) states, educational theory and practices have always been strongly wedded to the language and assumptions of modernism (p.7). These assumptions stress the individual's capacity to think critically and reflectively and are framed by the belief in the self as autonomous and rational being. Postmodernism's particular engagement with such modernist narratives provides a basis for interrogation, giving opportunities to rethink these narratives. Therefore this ~~model~~, by

engaging with a modernist narrative of authoritative privilege, allows one to read against it by disrupting it. At the same time modernist assumptions of an individual's capacity for critical and reflective thinking are not abandoned but combined with a postmodern reflexivity and exploration of self and difference through discursive practices. Thus the ~~model~~ moves between and about modernist and postmodernist theoretical positions.

An important consequence for education, in rethinking interpretation from meaning to discourse, is the concept of positioning in discursive practices. Although the postmodern self is seen as multiple, shifting identity, it must be temporarily stayed or held in some space as 'itself' in the world in order to act interpretively in relationships with others. In understanding the constructedness of self and interpretation through discursive practices, one may be able to understand what motivates one to assume or adopt or, importantly to resist, particular discursive positions. This is self reflective and reflexive activity which allows students some strategies for understanding themselves and their interpretations in relation to others. It also gives students a strategy for understanding difference because it allows students to see how others, constituted by particular positioning in discursive practices, construct their interpretations. Thus students, reading particular critical interpretations of art texts, may understand those interpretations as different because of discursive positioning.

At the same time, because of this understanding, students can also choose different positioning within discourses in order to change or rethink their interpretations, thus reinforcing the concept of difference. Critically and reflexively thinking about choice also may help students to think about the space from which they are thinking, the context in which they are interpreting. The notion of critically or reflexively thinking about choice or agency in making particular decisions about interpretations has important implications and consequences for all the disciplines of art education and education in general.

Figure 1. *Spirituality in the Flesh.*

Figure 2. *Body Limits*

Figure 3. *The Cocktail Party*.

Figure 4. *Atomic Love.*

POSTSCRIPT

‘She Just Wanted Postmodernism To Work For Her’

I have written this postscript to address briefly an issue which began to concern me at the end of this project. The issue, about my relationship with modernism and postmodernism ties in with a concern about methodology. This concern has compelled me to continue what has become a reassessment of aspects of this dissertation.

At the beginning of this project I was more than inclined to see modernism and postmodernism as cultural phenomena with conflicting interests which could be laid out as opposing schema. I concurred with those theorists who saw high modernism with a certain pessimism, which seems to juxtapose a quest for human emancipation with a system of universal oppression all in the name of human liberation (Harvey, 1989). All kinds of other narratives from the late 20th century appeared to support this view, from the ecological destruction of the rain forests of the world to the cultural domination of countries by institutions which purported to promote economic progress along with human happiness. As I stated in Chapter 1, with postmodern theorists, I considered that the grand narratives of modernism had been exhausted and for society to continue to function, all marginalized voices and their particular and localized interpretations of meanings of the world now needed to be included in the general conversation. The challenges, particularly in the second half of the 20th century, seemed to be too powerful for modernism to overcome.

Standing back from this study, I perceive now that my problem was seeing the grand narratives as more fixed and rigid than they really are. They are, in fact, more about flux, change and fragmentation, particularly in the arts. The modernist artist, in trying to capture a universal reality of human life by innovative means, inadvertently revealed a reality that was socially and historically constructed. I disregarded the areas of modernism which did try to work against the grain of oppressive and limiting narratives, albeit unconsciously, seeing only those that failed in the face of a particular form of rationalization without looking at the conditions of that failure.

In what I now see as contradictory and even hypocritical, I was prepared to throw out all modernist narratives and embrace the 'new' postmodernism. Without realizing it, this modernist practice of abandoning the past without reflexively examining the contradictions in the search for the 'new', conditioned the whole of this study. Now in the end, I find I have not abandoned the modernist 'project' altogether and I have reflexively considered some 're-turn', particularly with regard to the authority of the artist in relation to intentionality, positionality and interpretation of meaning. I mean 're-turn' to imply perhaps a turn again to the assumptions of modernism in the light of postmodern theories of difference and multiple voices. These are areas which now need to be readdressed in relation to the concept of a disruptive ~~model~~ of interpretation. I believe a reappraisal of modernist and postmodernist assumptions as oppositional is relevant in a period where postmodernism as a cultural phenomena is already losing a sense of its own relevance.

Meanwhile my postmodern rejection of universal standpoints in order to include difference, particularly concerning the self, remains strong. However my notions of an active, transforming, and possibly resisting set of selves, totally constructed through discursive practices, appears to place me in an disparate position in relation to poststructuralism. While poststructuralism also does not hold with the notion of an unified, autonomous self, stressing instead the social and historical constructedness of self, it does not allow the self much agency in understanding that constructedness. In wanting my set of selves to effectively intervene, decide and transform the social world, I

believe my various positions in the world and how I see myself positioned in the world, my discursive positioning, is significant. As Foucault emphasized in his later works, the concept of an active and transforming self is not possible without self knowledge and by self knowledge I mean, not the uncovering of one's inner self but understanding the conditions which 'allow' one to speak and act in particular ways. I believe that knowing and understanding that particular positioning in discourses and why one speaks and acts in particular ways, constitutes one's interpretations of the world. This knowledge in turn allows one the agency to consider the possibility of resistance and change. In the 'style' of Foucault, this may indicate an inclusion of some modernist concepts of change.

For me the postmodern multiple voiced interpretations of meanings, particularly of art texts, do not really get at the notion of difference adequately. Where do I go from knowing there are 20 interpretations of meaning in the art class of which the artist's may be one? If art students can understand that their interpretations of meaning are constituted by who and where they are in the world, are they able to change those interpretations or see that others' interpretations are constructed in the same way? In looking at these questions I tried to close the critical distance of modernist practice, between the art text and the self, in interpreting meaning as discursive practice. While I looked at the self through an examination of the constitution of individuals as discursive practices and power relations, I tried to go further in giving students the possibility of defining their own identity from the art text. I understand this defining of identity to be in the 'style' of Foucault's techniques of the self, by understanding interpretations of meaning as constitutive of particular positioning in discursive practices.

The framework in which I situate this poststructuralist 'going further' has modernist underpinnings in that structure itself plays an important role. Rather than decenter structure, I prefer to recenter structure as function. This may allow me to see that the analysis of research data, the structure of the ~~model~~ and the recognition and use of an authoritative interpretation, while apparently showing allegiance to modernist practices, also allows them to be positioned in a postmodern framework. I see that a more reflective

and reflexive look at areas concerning the research data and the disruptive ~~model~~, while not contriving to set both modernist and postmodernist practices against themselves, makes the question of taking sides irrelevant. This in turn allows for very different ways of conceptualizing the end of the project where discursive practices themselves have a more significant role in playing about with the language of student responses or giving back to the students their own voices.

This brings me to the concern of methodology. In an attention to scholarly writing as 'objective' and an awareness of my own voice in the analysis of student's responses, what resulted from the methodology may appear contrived and contradictory. I have a feeling that although students were speaking and responding they were not really heard in the analysis. There are also contradictions inherent in being both teacher and researcher in the same project. I conspired, in taking a particular position, with methodological approaches which I now consider limited and limiting. How much did my positioning suppress my interpretation and judgment? Thinking reflexively of these sorts of contradictions and discontinuities offers fertile ground for more unpacking against the theoretical frames.

Therefore this dissertation's closure is only temporary. It continues in what I see as an ongoing teasing out of threads connected to interesting reinterpretations and reappraisals of the student's responses. This temporary closure also allows for me, a more expansive approach, more choices, to the continued investigation of the issues which I sidelined during this project or which have developed in the rereading. What I would like to do now is to continue to position and reposition myself and the student's responses discursively against further analyses in directions of language, positioning, gender, the subconscious and maybe to areas of cognitive development. The many questions that have arisen since the 'completion' of this study are important and raise issues of contradictory assumptions about identity, self disclosure, inclusion and exclusion. For instance, in the analysis, what did I ignore and more importantly, how do I know it was ignored? Where does the concept of subconscious come into the analysis? The student's responses and my analysis of responses need to be turned over and over for what they may further reveal.

In addition, concepts such as the art object or the role of the artist, in relation to the end product of the disruptive ~~model~~ or to postmodernism are also areas for exploration. These concepts are important because they have given definition to the nature of art education. They can now become part of a loose framework from which to extend further investigation into the changes in this field. These changes are crucial if we rethink interpretation of meaning as discursive practice embedded in the art text and the consequences that may result in the art classroom. I believe the art object becomes more significant as postmodern text if one concedes that art's constructedness can be interpreted for meaning of discourses, positioning and construction of self.

When I started this project I just wanted to see if high school students could handle concepts like discourses and positioning and interpretation. I wanted to see if they were able to understand a notion of construction of self. I think what has resulted is more than can be dealt with in a single study. In acknowledging this project as incomplete and ongoing, I find relief at being able to work my way back into it in particular ways, to take different directions for the sake of what may be uncovered, to recontextualize areas or even leave areas seemingly incomplete. Donna Haraway (in Middleton & Jones, Ed., 1992) suggests that explicit incompleteness, tentativeness and partiality (partial sight and limited voice) leave more possibilities for others to join the conversation. That suggestion seems very relevant at this moment.

References

- Alcoff, L. (1988). Cultural feminism versus poststructuralism. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society. 13 (3), 405- 437.
- Allara, P. (1994). "Mater" of fact. Alice Neel's pregnant nudes. American Art. 8 (2), 7-32.
- Appignasesi, R. & Garrett, C. (Eds.). (1995). Postmodernism for beginners. London: Icon Books.
- Arnot, M. & Weiler K. (Eds.). (1993). Feminism and social justice in education: International perspectives. London: Falmer Press.
- Andermatt, V. (1979). Hélène Cixous and the uncovering of a feminist language. Women and Literature. 7 (1), 38-48.
- Apple, M. (1982). Education and power. Boston. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Arnstine, D. (1990). Art, aesthetics and the pitfalls of DBAE. Educational Theory 40(4).
- Atkins, G. Douglas. (1983). Reading deconstruction, deconstructive reading. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.
- Ball, M. (1994) Light in painting: dis-seminating art history. In Brunette, P & Wills. D. (Eds.) Deconstruction and the visual arts. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Ball, S. (Ed.) (1990). Foucault and education. London: Routledge.
- Bannet, Eve Tavor. (1989). Structuralism and the logic of dissent. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Barnes, T.J. & Duncan, J.S. (1992). (Eds.). Writing worlds. Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape. London: Routledge.

- Barrett, M. (1987). The concept of 'difference'. Feminist Review. No 26.
- Barrett, T. (1994). Criticizing art: Understanding the contemporary. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Barthes, R. (1975). The pleasure of the text. New York: The Noonday Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977). Image music text. New York: Hill & Wang.
- Barthes, R. (1981). The theory of the text. In Young, R.(Ed.).Untying the text. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Baudrillard, J. (1988). America. New York: Verso.
- Berland, J., Straw, W. & Tomas,D. (Eds.) Theory rules. Art as theory/theory as art. Toronto: YYY Books & University of Toronto Press.
- Bernauer, J. & Rasmussen, D. (Eds.). (1988). The final Foucault. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Best, S. & Kellner, D. (1991). Postmodern theory: critical interrogations. New York: Guildford Press.
- Bloom, H. (1979). Deconstruction and criticism. New York: Seabury Press.
- Bloom, H. (1987). (Ed.). Stephane Mallarmé. New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
- Borman, K.,Swami, P. & Wagstaff, L. (1991). Contemporary issues in U.S. education. New Jersey: Ablex Publishing.
- Bory, Jean-Francois. (1968). Once again. New York: New Directions Publishing.
- Bouchard, D. (Ed.) (1977). Language, counter-memory, practice:Selected essays and interviews. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Brunette, P., & Wills, D. (1994). Deconstruction and the visual arts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990). Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity. London: Routledge.
- Chapman, L. (1978). Approaches to art in education. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Cherryholmes, C. (1988). Power and criticism: Poststructural investigations in education. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clark, G., Day, M., Greer W. D. (1987). Becoming students of art. Journal of Aesthetic Education 21 No 2.

- Clark, R. (1996). Art education: Issues in postmodern pedagogy. Virginia: NAEA.
- Code, L. (1991). What can she know?: Feminist theory and the construction of knowledge. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Cook, D. (1992). The subject finds a voice. Foucault's turn towards subjectivity. New York: Peter Lang.
- Copjec. J. (Ed.). (1994). Supposing the subject. London: Verso.
- Critchley, S. & Dews, P. (Eds.). (1996). Deconstructive subjects. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Culler, J. (1982). On deconstruction. Theory and criticism after structuralism. New York: Cornell University Press.
- D'Amico, V. (1937). American Educational Fellowship Commission. Report on the function of art in general education.
- Davies, B. & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 20:1, 43-63.
- de Lauretis, T. (Ed.) (1986). Feminist studies critical studies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Dennis, L. (1970). The arts in higher education: a question of priorities. Art in Higher Institutions. Washington D.C: NAEA.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. California: Sage.
- Department of Art Education Bulletin. (1939). National Education Association report on the Cleveland and San Francisco conventions. NAE.
- Derrida, J. (1976). Of grammatology. Translated with an introduction by Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore: John Hopkins University.
- Derrida, J. (1978). Writing and difference. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1980). The law of genre. Critical Inquiry. 7.
- Derrida, J. (1981). Dissemination. Translated with an introduction by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1981a). Positions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. (1987). The truth in painting. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Devault, M.L. (1987). Women's talk: Feminist strategies for analyzing research interviews. Women and Language. X (2), 33-36.

Dewey, J. (1934). Art as experience. New York: Pedigree Books.

Diamond, I. & Quinby, L. (1988). Feminism and Foucault: reflections on resistance. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Dreyfus, H. & Rabinow, P. (1982). Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. Brighton, U.K.: Harvester Press.

Eagleton, T. (1983). Literary theory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Eco, U. (1983). The name of the rose. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Efland, A. (1987).. Curriculum antecedents in DBAE. Journal of Aesthetic Education 21 No 2.

Efland, A., Freedman, K., & Stuhr, P. (1996). Postmodern art education: An approach to curriculum. Virginia: NAEA.

Eisner, E. & Peshkin, A. (1990). Qualitative inquiry in education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Elam, D. (1994). Feminism and deconstruction. London: Routledge.

Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel like empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. Harvard Educational Review. 59.(3), 297-324.

Evans, J. Claude. (1991). Strategies of deconstruction. Derrida and the myth of the voice. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Fairclough, N. (1992). Discourse and social change. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Felman, Shoshana. (1982). (Ed.). Literature and psychoanalysis. A question of reading: Otherwise. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ferguson, R., Olander, W., Tucker, M., Fiss, K. (Eds.). (1993). Discourses: conversations in postmodern art and culture. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art.

Fine, M. (1992). Disruptive voices: The possibility of feminist research. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Florence, Penny. (1986). Mallarmé, Manet and Redon. London: Cambridge University Press.

Foster, H. (Ed.). (1983). The anti aesthetic: Essays on postmodern culture. Seattle: Bay Press.

- Foucault, M. (1972). The archaeology of knowledge. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1973). The order of things. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1978) History of sexuality: an introduction. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1980). Power/knowledge. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1985). The use of pleasure. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1986). The care of the self. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1988) Politics, philosophy and culture. London: Routledge.
- Freedman, K. (1987). Art education and changing political agendas: an analysis of curriculum concerns of the 1940's and 1950's. Studies in Art Education 29 (1).
- Frueh, J., Langer, C.L., Raven, A. (1994). New feminist criticism: art, identity, action. New York: Harper Collins.
- Garber, E. (1989). Feminist polyphony: A conceptual understanding of feminist art criticism in the 1980's. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The Ohio State University.
- Garvin, H.R. (Ed.).(1980). Romanticism, modernism, postmodernism. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.
- Gasché, R. (1986). The tain of the mirror: Derrida and the philosophy of reflection. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- GCEA (1985) Beyond creating: the place for art in America's schools. Santa Monica, California. Report from the Getty Center for Education in the Arts.
- Gergen, K. (1991) The saturated self. New York: Basic Books.
- Gilbert-Rolfe, J (Ed.) (1996). Seams: Art as a philosophical context. Amsterdam: G+B Arts.
- Giroux, H.A. (1989a) Curriculum discourse as postmodernist critical practice. Geelong: Deakin.
- Giroux, H. A. (1989b) Schooling for democracy. London: Routledge.
- Gooding Brown, J. (1994). Manuscript not for publication.
- Greer, W.D. (1993). Developments in DBAE: from art education to arts education. Studies in Art Education 34 (2).
- Gutting, G. (1989). Michel Foucault's archeology of scientific reason. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gutting, G. (Ed.). (1994) The Cambridge companion to Foucault. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harari, J. (1979). Textual strategies. New York: Cornell University Press.

Harding, S. (1987). (Ed.). Feminism and methodology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Harré, R. & Davies, B. (1992). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 20. 1.

Harrison, C. & Wood, P. (Eds.).(1992). Art in theory 1900-1990: An anthology of changing ideas. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hartman, G. (1980). Criticism in the wilderness. London: Yale University Press.

Heath, S. (Ed.). (1971). Sign of the times: Introductory readings in textual semiotics. Cambridge: Granta.

Henriques, J. et al. (Eds.). (1984). Changing the subject. Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity. London: Methuen.

Hope, S. (1987). An overview of the strategic issues in American arts education. Journal of Aesthetic Education 21 No 2.

Hoy, D. (Ed.). (1986). Foucault: A critical reader. London: Basil Blackwell.

Hurley, A. (1989). Uts pictura poesis: Vermeer's challenge to some Renaissance literary assumptions. Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. 47 (4), 349-357.

Hutcheon, L. (1988). A poetics of postmodernism: history, theory and fiction. London: Routledge.

In the last hour. Sandy Skoglund Photographs and sculpture 1979-1992. (1992) Normal OK.:University of Oklahoma Press.

Irigaray, L. (1985). This sex which is not one. New York: Cornell University Press.

Irigaray, L. (1993). Je, tu, nous. Towards a culture of difference. London: Routledge.

Jay, M. (1993). Downcast eyes. The denigration of vision in twentieth century french thought. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jencks, C. (1987). What is postmodernism? New York: St Martin's Press.

Jencks, C. (1992). The post-modern reader. London: Academy Press.

Johnson, B. (1981). "Introduction" to Dissemination, translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago, IL.: University of Chicago Press.

Johnson, B. (1987). A world of difference. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Johnson, B. (1994). The wake of deconstruction. Oxford: Blackwell.

Jones, A. (1992). Writing feminist educational research: Am 'I' in the text? In S. Middleton and A. Jones (Eds.), Women and education in Aotearoa 2 (pp. 18-32). Bridget Williams Books.

Hurwitz, A. & Madeja, S. (1977). The joyous vision. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Kamuf, P. (1991). (Ed.). A Derrida reader. Between the blinds. New York: Columbia University Press.

Koroscik, J., Short, G., Stavropoulos, C. & Fortin, S. (1992). Frameworks for understanding art. Studies in Art Education. 33 (3).

Kostelanetz, R. (Ed.). (1970). Imaged words and worded images. New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey.

Kristeva, J. (1980). Desire in language. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kritzman, L. (Ed.). (1988). Politics, philosophy and culture: interviews and other writings, 1977-1984. New York: Routledge.

Kroker, A. & Cook, D. (1986). The postmodern scene. New York: St Martin's Press.

Krupnick, M. (Ed.). (1983). Displacement. Derrida and after. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kuspit, D. (1987). Traditional art history's complaint against the linguistic analysis of visual art. Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. 45.

Lather, Patti. (1991). Getting Smart : Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern. New York: Routledge.

Leitch, V. (1983). Deconstructive criticism. An advanced introduction. New York: Columbia University Press.

Leitch, V. (1992). Cultural criticism, literary theory, poststructuralism. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lorraine, Tamsin E. (1990) Gender, identity and the production of meaning. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lotringer, S. (Ed.). (1989). Foucault live. New York: Semiotext(e).

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. (1984). The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Macksey, R. & Donato, E. (Eds.). (1970). The language of criticism and the sciences of man. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Marshall, B. (1992). Teaching the postmodern. London: Routledge.

Martin, L., Gutman, H. & Hutton, P. (Eds.). (1988). Technologies of the self. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

McNay, L. (1992). Foucault and feminism. Power, gender and self. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Megill, A. (1985). Prophets of extremity; Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Melville, S. (1986). Philosophy beside itself. Deconstruction and modernism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Melville, S. & Readings, B. (Eds.) (1995) Vision and textuality. Durham: Duke University Press.

Merrell, F. (1985). Deconstruction reframed. Indiana: Purdue University Press.

Moore, H. (1994) A passion for difference. Essays in anthropology and gender. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press.

Mowitt, J. (1992). TEXT. The genealogy of an antidisciplinary object. London: Duke University Press.

Nelson, C. (Ed). (1986). Theory in the classroom. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Nochlin, L (1973) Why have there been no great women artists? in Baker, E & Hess, S (Eds) Art and Sexual Politics. New York.

Norris, C. (1983). The deconstructive turn. London: Methuen.

Norris, C. (1987). Derrida. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Norris, C. (1989). Deconstruction and the interests of theory. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Norris, C. (1991). Deconstruction Theory and practice. London: Routledge.

Oxford Dictionary of Current English Usage. (1992). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Papadakis, N., Cooke, C. & Benjamin, A. (Eds.). (1989). Deconstruction: Omnibus volume. London: Academy Editions.

- Parsons, M. (1987). How we understand art . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parsons, M. (1992). Cognition as interpretation in art education. in Reimer, B. & Smith, R. (Eds.), The arts, education and aesthetic knowing. 91st Yearbook of National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Patton, M. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. California: Sage.
- Payne, M. (1993). Reading theory. Oxford:Blackwell.
- Perloff, M. (Ed.).(1989). Postmodern Genres . Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Phillips, T. (1985). Dante's inferno: The first part of the divine comedy. Translated and illustrated by Tom Phillips. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Phillips, T. (1992). Tom Phillips: Works and texts. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Poster, M. (1989). Critical theory and poststructuralism. London: Cornell University Press.
- Preziozi, D. (1989) New art history: Mediations on a coy science. Connecticut: Yale University Press.
- Rabinow, P. (Ed.). (1984). The Foucault reader. London: Penguin.
- Radtke, H. Lorraine. (1994). Power/Gender: Social relations in theory and practice. London: Sage.
- Ransom, J. S. (1997). Foucault's discipline Durham: Duke University Press.
- Raven, A. (1992). Sandy Skoglund. In In the last hour. Sandy Skoglund Photographs and sculpture 1979-1992. (1992) Normal OK.:University of Oklahoma Press.
- Readings, B. & Schaber, B.(Eds). (1993). Postmodernism across the ages. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Rees,A.L.& Borzello, F. (Eds.). (1986) The new art history. London: Camden Press.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). Feminist methods in social research. New York: Oxford.
- Rice, P.& Waugh, P. (Eds.).(1989). Modern literary theory. London: Edward Arnold.
- Roberts. H. (Ed.) (1981). Doing feminist research. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Ronell, Avital. (1989). The telephone book. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.
- Ross, A. (Ed.).(1988). Universal abandon? The politics of postmodernism. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Said, E. (1983). The world, the text and the critic. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Sandy Skoglund (1992) Barcelona: Fundació <la Caixa>.
- Sawicki, J. (1991). Disciplining Foucault. Feminism, power and the body. New York: Routledge.
- Scholes, R. (1985) Textual power. London: Yale University Press.
- Scholes, R. (1989) Protocols of reading. London: Yale University Press.
- Schwendenwien, J. (1992) Cravings: Food into sculpture. Sculpture. Nov.
- Schwendenwien, J. (1993) Sandy Skoglund. Journal of Contemporary Art 6. (1).
- Shaw, Mary Lewis.(1993). Performance in the texts of Mallarmé. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Shorter English Oxford Dictionary. (1980). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Shotter, J. & Gergen, K. (Eds.) (1989). Texts of identity. London: Sage
- Silverman, H. J. & Aylesworth, G. E. (Eds.). (1990). The textual sublime: deconstruction and its differences. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Smith, P. (1988). Discerning the subject. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, R. (1987). The changing image of art education: theoretical antecedents of DBAE. Journal of Aesthetic Education 21 No 2.
- Solt, Mary Ellen. (Ed.).(1968). Concrete poetry: A world view. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Spanos, W. (1993). The end of education. Towards humanism. London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Stake, R. (1995). The art of case study research. London: Sage.
- Stout, C.J. (1993). The dialogue journal: A forum for critical consideration. Studies in Art Education. 35 (1).
- Sturrock, J. (1979). Structuralism and since. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Suleiman, S. (Ed.). (1985). The female body in Western culture. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Suleiman, S. (1994). Risking who one is: Encounters with contemporary art and literature. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Suleiman, S., & Crosman, I., (Eds.).(1980). The reader in the text. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Sullivan, G. (1993) Art-based art education: Learning that is meaningful, authentic, critical and pluralist. Studies in Art Education 35 (3).

Swanger, D. (1990). DBAE: heat and light. Educational Theory 40 (4).

Taylor, M.C. (1986). Deconstruction in context. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Teacher Resource Guide (1996), San Diego: MOCA.

The History of Art Education. Proceedings from Penn State Conference. Virginia: NAEA.

Tollifson, J. (1987). A balanced comprehensive art curriculum makes sense. Educational Leadership. December.

Tompkins, J. (1980). (Ed.). Reader-response criticism. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ulmer, G. (1985). Applied grammatology. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Veyne, P. (1993). The final Foucault and his ethics. Critical Inquiry 20.

Visual Arts Syllabus 7-10. (1994). Sydney: N.S.W. Board of Studies.

Visual Arts Syllabus 11-12 (1995 draft). Sydney: N.S.W. Board of Studies.

Walker, S. (1992). An analysis of relational meaning in the practice of three professional art critics with implications for art education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The Florida State University.

Walker, S. (1995a). Sandy Skoglund and middle class American culture. Observations from a personal interview. Unpublished manuscript.

Walker, S., Krug, D. & Burkhart, A. (1995b). An interview with Sandy Skoglund on the occasion of her installing The Wedding at the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH. <http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/>

Wallis, B. (1984). (Ed.). Art after modernism. Boston: Godine.

Weedon, C. (1987 rev 1997) Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory.
Oxford: Blackwell.

Wolcott, A. (1991). Aesthetic experience, postmodern art, and contemporary art education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The Pennsylvania State University.

Worton, M., & Still, J. (Eds.) (1990). Intertextuality. Theories and practice.
Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Young, R. (1981). Untying the text: A poststructuralist reader. London: Routledge
& Kegan Paul.

Zavarzadeh, M. & Morton, D. (1991). Theory, (post)modernity, opposition.
Washington, D.C.: Maisonneuve Press.