

ART EDUCATION AND VISUAL CULTURE

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13

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is a review of literature of visual culture. It deals with developments in cultural theory and visual culture studies and outlines and analyzes how these developments intersect with the field of art education. This thesis contains an analysis of current models or frameworks in art education, considers how certain models intersect with visual culture, discusses the views of art education theorists whose works intersect with visual culture, and presents an analysis of these views, and finally considers the intersection of visual culture with art education.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Chapter I – Statement of Purpose	
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Rationale for the Study	1
1.3 Research Questions	2
Chapter II – Visual Culture	4
Chapter III – Visual Culture Studies	
3.1 Introduction	24
3.2 Influences of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies	25
3.3 Influences of Postmodernism and Poststructuralism	36
3.4 Other Discourses of Visual Culture Studies	67
3.5 Conclusion: Toward a Characterization of Visual Culture Studies	82
Chapter IV – Models of Art Education	
4.1 Background and Structure of Art Education	86
Chapter V – Contexts of Visual Culture in Art Education	
5.1 Intersections of Art Education with Visual Culture	90
5.2 Literature Review – Art Education and Visual Culture	96
Chapter VI – Conclusion	111
References	117

# **CHAPTER I – STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This thesis is a literature review of visual culture in relation to how it merges or intersects with art education. Visual culture and art education are represented as two major themes of this study. Visual culture is looked at both as a cultural phenomenon and as a field of study which has emerged from the need for analysis of this phenomenon. The second major theme is associated with the field of art education and its relationship to visual culture and visual culture studies. This theme includes analysis of current models or frameworks of art education, how particular models are aligned with visual culture, and the work of individual art education theorists as it relates to visual culture or visual culture studies. The focus of the study is of how the themes of visual culture and art education merge. The work of art educators involved in research in the area of visual culture is discussed and examined. This discussion focuses on how aspects of visual culture are represented in the work of these art educators and analyzes their particular positions in relation to the intersection of art education and visual culture. A final summary and analysis of the implications the emergence of visual culture has for art education concludes the study.

## **1.2 Rationale for the Study**

The current study is an attempt to clarify recent research and literature in visual culture and to expand upon its application in the field of art education. Visual culture studies is a growing field which critiques and analyses the emergence of a culture of “the

visual” in contemporary reality, generally referred to as visual culture. In art education, the work of many leading theorists has been engaged in a discourse with visual culture. Current research suggests a necessity for further engagement of art education with visual culture and in some cases points to a need for art education to be restructured in light of the emergence of theory related to visual culture.

This study examines visual culture, current art education models, and theoretical writing in art education related to visual culture. The purpose is to analyze how art education merges or intersects with visual culture, point out implications visual culture has for art education and discuss models or frameworks of art education reconceptualized from a visual culture perspective.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

What is visual culture?

What is visual culture studies?

Why has visual culture studies emerged as an important field of study?

What are the main models or disciplinary fields existing within art education?

What art education models intersect with visual culture?

What art education models are resistant to interactions with visual culture?

Why do certain models or disciplinary fields within art education intersect with visual culture?

Who within the theoretical field of art education are proponents of visual culture?

What are the relationships between the work of art education theorists and visual culture?

What role do art education theorists see for visual culture in art education?

What are the implications of the work of major cultural theorists for visual culture and art education?

What are some important implications visual culture presents for art education?

## CHAPTER II – VISUAL CULTURE

### Introduction to visual culture

Visual culture, like art, eludes a fixed definition. It is emergent in nature and as an entity is continually in flux. For the purposes of this study, it is important to outline aspects and important characteristics of visual culture. The term 'visual culture' is also a source of confusion because it can refer to both a discipline and a cultural phenomenon. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the field of visual culture studies, as an entity distinct from the phenomenon of visual culture but whose emergence is a direct result of concerns raised by visual culture. An analysis of visual culture studies will be the focus of the second part of this chapter.

*Visual culture* is a term used for the pervasiveness of the visual or visibility in contemporary popular culture. In *The Visual Culture Reader*, (1998), Nicholas Mirzoeff explains,

You can buy a photograph of your house taken from an arbitrary satellite or have your internal organs magnetically imaged. If that special moment didn't come out quite right in your photography, you can digitally manipulate it on your computer. At New York's Empire State Building, the queues are longer for the virtual reality New York Ride than for the lifts to the observation platforms. Alternatively, you could save yourself the trouble by catching the entire New York skyline, rendered in pastel colours, at the New York, New York resort in Las Vegas. This virtual city will be joined shortly by Paris Las Vegas, imitating the already carefully manipulated image of the city of light. Life in this alter-reality is sometimes more pleasant than the real thing, sometimes worse. In 1997 same-sex marriage was outlawed by the United States Congress but when the sitcom character Ellen came out on television, 42 million people watched. On the other hand, virtual reality has long been favoured by the military as a training arena, put into practice in the Gulf War at great cost to human life. This is visual culture. It is not just part of your everyday life, it *is* your everyday life" p 3.

Mirzoeff gives a telling, if somewhat sensational view of visual culture, in outlining some aspects of its impact on contemporary life. In *Visual Culture: An*

*Introduction*, Walker and Chaplin roughly define visual culture as those material artifacts, building and images, plus time-based media and performances, produced by human labour and imagination, which serve aesthetic, symbolic, ritualistic or ideological-political ends, and/or practical functions, and which address the sense of sight to a significant extent (1997, p. 2).

The visual has always played an important role in Western and non-Western cultures. One has only to study histories of art and design to appreciate this. Today, however, the visual has become pervasive in contemporary cultures. Western culture is inundated with imagery from visual technologies such as photography, film, television, and computers, and from consumer-based media and products such as books, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, video games, computer games and software, television programs and commercials, and the internet, to name a few. In almost every aspect of our daily lives we are confronted by the visual.

This chapter attempts to represent the field of visual culture (contemporary visuality) not as any sequential or logical unified whole. It represents a field resistant to totalizing definitions. Instead the focus here is to portray landscapes or strands of visual culture in an attempt to map the field as a pluralistic series of component parts, each component resisting unity, constantly in flux, ever-changing with the continual addition of new components and variables which reinforce the elusive nature of the field. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have described post-modernism using the term 'rhizome' – a lateral root structure of certain plants which is acented and multi-directional. Used as a metaphor this describes how social and cultural activities in postmodernism are dispersed, divergent, and acented systems or structures (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977).

This also encapsulates the nature of visual culture, a field constantly changing without definable structure, and with no one starting point or centre. This section focuses on outlining significant strands of visual culture. The selection of these particular strands is an attempt to look at some areas of development or background which have had significance for our understanding of what today could be described as a mass culture of visuality or visual culture. The strands include: visual culture and the Photographic Image which looks at the effect photography and the reproducible image has had on contemporary societies; Rhetoric of the Image – an examination of the complexity of contemporary images; Representations – an examination of the significance the visual image or visuality itself has for contemporary cultures and the relationship of the visual to semiotics and discourse; Postmodernism and visual culture – an analysis of relationships between postmodern theory and contemporary cultures and their connection with visual culture; the Visual Turn – a review of literature concerned with recent cultural shifts toward a mass culture dominated by visuality and technology's role in these developments.

### **Visual culture and the photographic image**

Many texts on visual culture (Walker & Chaplin, 1997; Mirzoeff, 1998; Evans & Hall, 1999) cite Walter Benjamin's essay *The work of art in the age of mechanical production* (1936) as a seminal work. Benjamin sees the advent of photography and the mass mechanical reproduction of images as a significant cultural phenomenon. For Benjamin, the image as an art object and a cultural artefact lost both authority and authenticity with the development of mass-produced photographic images. Before the

age of mechanical reproduction, the image, whether a painting or art object, held the power and authority of the historical tradition of the culture's past. The art object, however, when mass-produced through photography, depreciates in the quality of its presence. The authenticity of an object is all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to the history which it has experienced (Benjamin, 1936, cited in Evans & Hall, 1999, p. 74). For Benjamin, substantive duration ceases to matter, as well as historical testimony which rests on authenticity. In essence, the meaning of the art piece as an authentic and authoritative object diminishes. Uniqueness and permanence are undermined by transitoriness and reproducibility. In 1936, Benjamin's ideas conveyed the effects mass production and technologies had on meaningful art objects. For us today, his work continues to have implications in relation to how mass-produced imagery and media not only affect the authority and authenticity of particular objects but also diminish the relevance and importance of actual life events.

Susan Sontag in *On Photography* (1978), echoes concerns raised by Benjamin. Sontag sees the photographic image as having a profound effect on reality and how we see the world. For Sontag, endless recycling of the photographic image makes clichés out of actual objects, and unique distinctive artefacts out of clichés. Images of real things are superimposed on images of images. Photography becomes a medium in which anything can be said or any purposes served. Photography has confounded our understanding of reality, making it less and less feasible to reflect upon experience in relation to the distinction between images and things, between copies and reality (Sontag, 1978). Photographs have their own presence, their own material reality, with the power to subvert reality, to turn the tables on reality.

Reading or analyzing the photographic image is an extremely complex process. According to Mitchell, “spectators are easily manipulated by images, that a clever use of images can deaden them to political horrors and condition them to accept racism, sexism and deepening class divisions as natural, necessary conditions of existence” (Mitchell, 1994, p. 2). Since the beginning of photography the complexity of the nature of the photographic image has called for a need for further understanding of its ability to communicate or transmit meaning.

### **Rhetoric of the image**

In his examination of the complexity of images Roland Barthes’ essay *Rhetoric of the image* (in *Image-Music-Text*, 1977) analyzes a very basic image. In his early work Barthes focused on the structure of signs – the signifier, that which is seen (the object), and the signified, that which is meant (the concept). In this essay, he focuses more on the different ways meaning can be derived from signs (images or text).

For his analysis, Barthes uses a simple image, a photographic advertisement of some food products. Barthes uses the advertising image because in advertising signification is intentional. Barthes first poses some questions: “How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends what is there beyond?” (Barthes, 1977, p. 33). He then looks at the image on three different levels: imaginary, linguistic message, pure image. The imaginary level is the literal message level. The image is seen in its bare simplicity. This represents the description of what is there; in this case there are two packages of pasta, a can of tomato sauce, another smaller can, some tomatoes, onions, peppers, a mushroom, and several of the products are emerging from a half-

opened string bag, in yellows and greens on a red background. For Barthes this literal message is a non-coded message that depends on previous knowledge of photographs and objects in pictures (Barthes, 1977).

The next level of analysis is the level of the linguistic message. In this case the advertisement has a caption at the bottom of the picture. This is the first linguistic message. The caption is in French so it denotes a French advertisement. There are labels on the cans and packages which give the message of the company represented in the advertisement, an Italian food company. This is also denotational. This label (Panzani) also gives a connotational message, that is the Italianicity of the product.

The third level of meaning, the pure image level, represents the analysis of the image signs, which are all discontinuous but form a coherent whole. First, the image, with products falling out of the bag connotes a return from the market, which carries with it two implications: freshness of the products and its destiny in preparation for a meal. Second, there is a message implanted as part of the habits of a widespread culture – that shopping around is preferred to making all the ingredients from scratch. Third, the colours of the bag: yellow tins, green peppers, red tomatoes (the colours of the Italian flag) and background again signify Italy or Italianicity – which is a redundancy of the coded sign of the linguistic message (Panzani). Fourth, there is a message of a total culinary service which caters a full and balanced meal. Fifth, there is an implied message that the contents of the packages and cans are equivalent to the other natural products in the image. Sixth, there is an aesthetic signified, that of the products resembling a historical tradition associated with the still-life, a message which is dependent on specific cultural knowledge. Seventh, that the picture was in a magazine with a caption attached

to it conveys the fact that it is an advertisement. Eighth, there is a euphoric value conveyed by a potential to supremely satisfy. All of these signs present in this one picture are discontinuous but form a coherent whole, they require cultural knowledge, and refer back to a global signified (Italianicity). Barthes, in a comparison to a written message, explains that the different signs as signifiers float freely and discontinuously, not necessarily in linear chains as would text. Referring to the term “anchorage”, he explains that the advertisers attempt to anchor the message with specific signifiers in order to project specific meanings. The accompanying linguistic message, the written caption, is one type of anchorage, it focuses our meaning-making on the specific signifiers the advertiser wants us to create meaning from. This tactic of anchorage may be used for purposes other than advertising with apparent moral and ethical implications.

Barthes explains:

Of course, elsewhere than in advertising, the anchorage may be ideological and indeed this is its principal function; the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image causing him to avoid some and receive others; by means of an often subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him towards a meaning chosen in advance. In all these cases of anchorage, language clearly has a function of elucidation, but this elucidation is selective, a metalanguage applied not to the totality of the iconic message but only to certain of its signs. The text is indeed the creator's (and hence society's) right of inspection over the image; anchorage is a control, bearing a responsibility – in the face of the projective power of pictures – for the used of the message. With respect to the liberty of the use of the signifieds of the image, the text has thus a repressive value and we can see that it is at this level that the morality and ideology of a society are above all invested (Barthes, 1977, p. 40).

Barthes' semiology offers a practical process for analyzing the complex ways meaning, emotional impact, and manipulation become part of the photographic image-making process. Barthes' semiotic analysis stems from structural analysis but his use of socio-cultural context places it within the poststructuralist paradigm.

Barthes demonstrates the innate complexity of even the most mundane images, and a quarter century ago, was able to analyze for the ideological implications – to repress, to control, to manipulate – that become a fundamental aspect of how images are used.

Barthes' work was tremendously influential for literary theory, Cultural Studies and visual culture studies. He helped define the role of the intellectual critically engaged in the questioning of a culture's given reality as systems of meaning. His work remained characterized by this concern with conditions of meaning: with the ways in which meanings are made, presented, fixed, grounded, and then with the ways in which they can be unmade, challenged, displaced and pluralized (Culler, 1983). Barthes' work often represented an engagement with a world increasingly dominated by visual culture and its subtle yet often powerful complexities.

Barthes' theoretical work in semiotic analysis has implications for art education. His work demonstrates how images function as media and advertising representations and also displays ways images may be decoded in contemporary cultural and art historical contexts. Barthes' work points to the significance for an art education curriculum of the engagement with a critical or semiotic approach to decoding and creating meaning from imagery and artefacts. His work also points to the role of intertextuality inherent in image-text representations.

### **Representations**

In contemporary culture the photographic image has unquestionable significance for the way we perceive reality. According to Evans and Hall (1999), the mechanically

or electronically reproduced image is the semantic and technical unit of the modern mass media and at the heart of post-war popular culture. In *Picture Theory* (1994), W.J.T. Mitchell asks what pictures are and what their relation to language is. Mitchell focuses on the relationships between image and texts, in what he sees as an increasing importance of the role of the image in contemporary culture and theory. Mitchell uses the term representation in an attempt to resolve the image/text dichotomy. He sees representation as having a tradition within cultural critique and as a term which “activates a set of linkages between political, semiotic/aesthetic, and even economic notions of standing or acting for” (Mitchell, 1994, p. 6). He sees the term representation as having the power to link the fields of visual and verbal communication. Hall in *Representation* (1997) describes photographic images as operating within representational systems. Hall sees language as a representational system which uses signs or symbols to stand for or represent the meanings people wish to communicate. “Thus photography is a representational system, using images on light-sensitive paper to communicate photographic meaning about a particular person, event or scene” (Hall, 1997, p. 5). For Hall, all elements within a culture – sounds, images, notes, gestures, clothes – construct and transmit meaning. Rather than have a fixed meaning, they are vehicles for media which carry meaning, which operate as symbols, which represent meanings we attempt to communicate. We construct meaning from the symbols and objects around us through the contexts of our communication. This notion of producing or constructing meaning, what has been called a social constructionist approach to meaning, is integral to Hall’s conception of representation. For Hall, culture through the process of representation is

conceptualized reality, with the power to subvert reality, to turn the tables on reality (Hall, 1997).

Hall's concept of representation stems from Barthes' theory of semiotics and is the foundation of Hall's theory of discursive practices as a constructionist or constitutive approach to making meaning in contemporary culture. Barthes' (1972) early ideas were developed during his study of Saussurian structuralism which provided the background for the development of semiology – the study or science of signs. Barthes used this branch of structuralism mostly for the analysis of text in literature or linguistic signs but, as shown, also applied it to the study of visual signs. According to Hall (1997), today there are two main approaches used in the study of signs. The first is the semiotic approach and the second is discourse or discursive approaches. The development of discourse is integral to postmodernist theory and is discussed later in this chapter under *Postmodernism and visual culture*.

Hall (1997) makes an important distinction between the semiotic and discursive approaches. Both approaches are involved in the role of signs as vehicles of meaning in culture. Semiotics is concerned with how signs work within a language system. "Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images, and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity, or institutional site in society" (Hall, 1997, p. 6). These discursive formations help us define what is useful in formulating or constructing knowledge about subjects or sites of social activity. Working within particular contexts discursive formations allow us to consider what knowledge is useful, relevant and 'true'. In this regard a discursive

approach is one in which meaning, representation and culture are considered to be constructionist or constitutive, where meaning and culture itself are thought to be produced or constructed through discourse rather than as already existing.

Representation systems, then, whether they be signifying practices such as language or those constructed through the use of images such as with advertising, are constitutive in that they act to create subjective identities within socio-cultural contexts. This concept has significance for visual culture. Representation systems within visual culture – television programs, commercial advertisements, internet web sites, and similar visual cultural locations – are constructions of socio-cultural contexts which play a constitutive role in the subjective identity construction process. In other words, the viewer's identity is involved in a self-constructing process as she or he inter-faces with the content of a particular media. For Hall, the effects and consequences this type of discursive process invokes are essentially political. Hall explains,

It examines not only how language and representation produce meaning, but also how the knowledge which a particular discourse produces connects with power, regulates conduct, makes up or constructs identities and subjectivities, and defines the way certain things are represented, thought about, practiced and studied. The emphasis in the discursive approach is always on the historical specificity of a particular form of 'regime' of representation: not on 'language' as a general concern, but on specific languages or meanings and how they are deployed at particular times, in particular places. It points us toward greater historical specificity – the way representational practices operate in concrete historical situations, in actual practice. (Hall, 1997, p. 6)

Hall emphasizes that the discursive approach and the semiotics approach, as two versions of constructionism will often overlap when used as analytical methods. He also concedes that the so-called discursive turn has been both contested and critiqued, but is also one that is widely used today in cultural analysis. Politics, ideologies, and

ideological stances or leanings are of particular concern for visual culture, especially in relation to art education, and will be further discussed in the section on visual culture studies.

In summary, “representation” is a term used to make meaning from text or images in relation to how they are used semiotically or in discourse. It analyses and activates linkages between what signs (text or image) stand for in relation to their cultural context, and will often involve gaining understanding of the politics, semiotics, aesthetics, and economies involved in formulation of meaning. The role of discourse or discursive practices in visual culture and their implications for art education are taken up in subsequent chapters.

### **Postmodernism and visual culture**

Postmodernism is visual culture. Postmodernism has often been defined as the crisis of modernism, that is to say, the wide-ranging complex of ideas and modes of representation ranging from over-arching beliefs in progress to theories of the rise of abstract painting or the modern novel. (Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 4)

The next few pages outline developments in postmodernism as a paradigmatic socio-cultural shift from modernity to postmodernity. The focus here is the movement from a verbal and linguistic-based reality to a world where pluralistic discursive practices and the visual image become more dominant in theoretical as well as socio-cultural relations. The work of Jean-Francois Lyotard is focused on as it relates to developments in discourse or discursive practices as an emerging characteristic of the new socio-cultural paradigm. Some theorists feel questions of modernism and postmodernism are Euro-centric and gender-specific by nature and therefore render the idea of the

postmodern as irrelevant (Shohat & Stam, 1998). Others, for ideological reasons, dismiss postmodernism for the notion of late modernism, a period of late capitalism (Habermas, 1981). For the purposes of this study, the term “postmodernism” is used to represent a paradigm shift in the way we theorize and conceptualize our world and in relation to the implications this shift has had on our understanding of visual culture.

Modernity, as an historical period, tends to be fixed, at least in relation to the postmodern, with its historical association with the Enlightenment and can be characterized as the incomplete project of enlightenment (Harvey, 1990). Lyotard (1979) in *The Postmodern Condition* looks at modernity and the postmodern in relation to ‘legitimation’. For him legitimation refers to how we legitimate the criteria of sorting true statements from false. For Lyotard, there were two great legitimizing myths of modernism or narrative archetypes he referred to as metanarratives. The first is the liberation of humanity and the second the speculative unity of all knowledge (Lyotard, 1979). The first is more commonly associated with the utopian notion of Western progress and the second with the idea of a totalizing myth which explains existence or reality, whether Science, Marxism, philosophy, religion, and so on. For Lyotard, postmodernism marked a shift from these modernist ideals. In place of the totalizing philosophical traditions and even the abstract logic or the empiricist methodology of these traditions, Lyotard proposes a legitimation of knowledge based on discourse or local narratives which he characterizes as language games, and which lead to the development of new concepts and ideas. Lyotard’s ideas are, in a sense, an attack on reason as perpetuated by the project of the Enlightenment. As Sabina Lovibond puts it:

The Enlightenment pictured the human race as engaged in an effort towards universal moral and intellectual self-realisation, and so as the subject of a

universal historical experience; it also postulated a universal human reason in terms of which social and political tendencies could be assessed as 'progressive' or otherwise (the goal of politics being defined as the realization of reason in practice). Postmodernism rejects this picture: that is to say, it rejects the doctrine of the unity of reason. It refuses to conceive of humanity as a unitary subject striving towards the goal of perfect coherence (in common stock of beliefs) or of perfect cohesion and stability (in its political practice) (Lovibond, 1989, p. 6).

Lyotard feels that the totalizing myths or metanarratives represent systems or mechanisms of power and control and that these systems either assimilate or exclude all other identities, histories, and temporalities, which ultimately lead to problems or horrors such as the Holocaust (Lyotard, 1979). This exclusionary nature of modernism has significant implications for important developments in visual culture, which will be discussed later. In *The Differend* (1984), Lyotard extended his analysis of language games. These represent the discourse or narratives of small-scale collectivities, none of which has the legitimacy to subordinate others. Lyotard (1984) feels there is a fundamental injustice done whenever one language game is subordinated to another. Justice consists in remaining attentive to the conditions of 'differend', difference or what Lyotard termed absolute incommensurability (Lyotard, 1984). For Lyotard, the postmodern period marks a time when the differences or incommensurabilities between discourses must be preserved and respected as being representative of the multiplicity of ways of being. Lyotard's ideas echo the pluralism and diversity we see today in all areas of the postmodern landscape, and are especially noticeable in the emergence of new fields of study which have connections with visual culture.

Lyotard, formerly an advocate of Marxism, turned away from Marxism as seen in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979), where he portrays Marxism as a totalizing master-narrative of progressive universal political emancipation. Many theorists, among them

German critical theorist Jurgen Habermas, and French socio-cultural theorists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard, engage in contemporary socio-cultural analysis from a Marxist tradition or at least from perspectives based in Marxist terminology. This is of interest to this study, as some of the theorists more closely associated with visual culture or visual culture studies are connected with analytical traditions based in the Marxist model. These ideas will be discussed further in the following section on visual culture studies.

Liotard was a strong proponent of postmodernism and of postmodernist art. He feels that art has an ethical responsibility to preserve and bear witness to the incommensurability of languages. Lyotard's ideas form a theoretical background for postmodernism and in some respects for visual culture. Since the time Lyotard's ideas were expressed in *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) and *The Differend* (1984) there have been incredible changes in the socio-cultural landscape. These changes were brought about for the most part by rapid changes in technology and ensuing changes in the social-cultural and socio-economic spheres. Lyotard's focus on the role of discourse in defining the postmodernist landscape connects with Hall's (1997) notions of discourse or discursive practices as a way of making meaning from or constructing knowledge from imagery, cultural artifacts, social practices and so on.

### **The visual turn**

Walter Benjamin's concerns over the mass production of the photographic image were raised over 65 years ago. Today the proliferation of reproducible images is staggering. Technological advances, especially in the electronic media, have had

profound effects on contemporary culture and the way we see the world or experience reality. Satellite television, global internet, wireless computer and communication technology, cybernetic and biocybernetic reproduction, electronic image reproduction and digital imaging technology, these and other technological developments, especially in visual technology, have brought about changes in the way culture is reproduced, in the way we see reality, and in the way we see ourselves. Many feel this new electronic age is representative of a paradigm shift or turn, coinciding with the emergence of postmodernism. Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) described the history of philosophy as a series of turns. The final stage in this history he called the linguistic turn.

The picture of ancient and medieval philosophy as concerned with things, the philosophy of the seventeenth through the nineteenth century as concerned with ideas, and the enlightened contemporary philosophical scene with words has considerable plausibility (Rorty, 1979, p. 263).

Frederic Jameson, describing a turn from the predominately verbal culture, Rorty's linguistic culture, to a visual culture, refers to a new type of social life and a new type of economic order characterized by consumer society, a society of media, the spectacle, or multinational capitalism (Jameson, 1984). Don Slater (1997) in *Consumer Culture & Modernity* describes these changes as representing a structural transformation within modernity characterized by ruptures in the economic, social and cultural modes of daily life.

This sense of an epochal shift has become the focus of most social theory, the main item on its agenda: postmodernism and postmodernity, 'New Times', the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, from organized to disorganized capitalism, from commodities and exchange value to commodity-signs and sign-value. (Slater, 1997, p. 174).

David Chaney (1994) in *The Cultural Turn* supports the views of Jameson (1984) and Slater (1997), arguing that the cultural shift has its foundation in a profound loss of cultural values resulting from the two world wars, exemplified in art movements such as Dadaism. For Chaney, the doubt consuming many European intellectuals with regards to universal cultural values was intensified by their awareness that developing mass communication and entertainment technologies would increasingly threaten traditional distinctions between elite and mass forms of culture (Chaney, 1994). He argued that as traditional forms of academic knowledge and high culture, which had been the province of intellectualism are questioned and replaced, so cultural themes become more and more important to those intellectuals (Chaney, 1994). Among other issues, Chaney's work examines implications the cultural turn has had for academic knowledge, intellectualism, and traditional and status quo conceptions of culture.

Stuart Hall, echoing Chaney's ideas on the cultural turn, goes more in-depth. For Hall (1997), the conventional view was that things exist in a material or natural world, that their physical or material characteristics are what constitute what they mean, and that their meaning is formed independently of how they are represented. He feels that "since the cultural turn in the human and social sciences, meaning is thought to be produced – constructed – rather than simply 'found'" (Hall, 1997, p. 5). As mentioned earlier, this concept, referred to as a social constructionist approach, is characteristic of the shifting paradigm – meaning is never permanently fixed but is continually being constituted and reconstituted through cultural practices and social processes.

In this view, “culture is conceptualized as a primary or constitutive process, as important as the economic or material ‘base’ in shaping social subjects and historical events – not merely a reflection of the world after the event” (Hall, 1997, p. 6).

This is an important aspect of visual culture; with images meaning is never fixed but always being constituted and reconstituted in relation to use and cultural context. Both the meaning of images and their use in the public sphere are taken up in the section on visual culture studies.

In conclusion, visual culture coincides with the advent of postmodernism. Postmodernism makes a move from the legitimizing master-narratives of the Enlightenment project, but as well is characterized by those things representative of the cultural turn or visual turn. Postmodernism represents a move from a print to an image culture, an explosion in information and information technologies, the integration of state and economy, and the explosion of multinational capitalism and the globalization of the world economy. In postmodernity, hierarchies of aesthetic taste are debunked as high and low concepts of culture conflate (Mirzoeff, 1998). New technologies support post-structural and deconstructionist notions of subject, time, history, and meaning (Harvey, 1990), and the psycho-social tone becomes one of irony, cynicism, fragmentation, and schizophrenia (Woods, 1999). Postmodernism, with the advent of the global economy, marks the age of commodification. The notion of culture as an autonomous sphere dissolves, as does history, meaning, and a totalized world into cultural commodities represented by images and information (Slater, 1997). The consumption of images and information as commodities presents the consumer with the choice of what to consume; and this substitutes for the idea of democracy or freedom in the contemporary world

(Bourdieu, 1993; Slater, 1997; Jameson, 1998; Baudrillard, 1999; Durham & Kellner, 2001). The implications for education are tremendously significant. In relation to visual culture consumers have the choice over what they consume when the degree to which they are equipped to be critical about what they consume is extremely limited. This is vital due to the constructive role of visual consumption or the process of signification in relation to meaning and identity formation.

The cultural turn represents a turn away from the metanarratives as well as the structural and systematic problems inherent in the modernist tradition. Modernism and its historical past represent a tradition of exclusion where individuals, groups, or whole cultures were systemically discriminated against due to race, gender or class. The Western canon, including modernism, represents a socio-cultural tradition which was male-dominated, Euro-centric, and class and culturally biased. This is of significance to this study because of the nature of the field of art education and its integration through Western art history with the socio-cultural traditions of the Western canon and of modernism.

The visual turn is representative of a new visual existence and a new visibility of culture. Visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure are continually presented to or sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology (Mirzoeff, 1998). The new complexities of the visual field are analyzed mainly through semiotics or discursive approaches. As mentioned, semiotics is concerned with how things are represented and how meaning is produced by representations, and discursive practices are concerned with the effects and consequences

particular representations or types of representation will have on individuals or social-cultural groups.

In delineating the complex world of representation Mitchell describes the “interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, bodies and figurality” (Mitchell, 1994, p. 16). Evans and Hall elaborate:

Each of these indicates a complex set of practices which lie behind and make possible the image and its capacity to convey meaning, each of which requires its own conceptualization. ‘Visibility’ refers to the visual register in which the image and visual meaning operate. The ‘apparatus’ refers to the means or media by which images are produced and circulated, which are increasingly sophisticated and complex in our world of electronic reproduction, video and cybernetic technology. The ‘institutions’ refer to the organized social relations of image-making circulation, which today are often large-scale and corporate in structure, global in their scale of operations. ‘Bodies’ reminds us of not only one of the images privileged subjects, but of the presence of the viewer, spectator, observer, as the necessary ‘other’ in the circuits of visual meaning, which makes meaning possible, and whose conduct images regulate. ‘Figurality’ reminds us of the images’ privileged position in relation to representing or ‘figuring’ the world to us in pictorial form. However one cannot ‘read off’ any one of these individual ‘moments’ from another since they are not in a relationship of causal or sequential determination; nor do they only have external relations to each other. Rather we would prefer to think about the orbit of the image according to the theoretical model of articulation, in which a number of distinct elements interact, in a moment of temporary unity leading to ‘variable and contingent outcomes’ (Evans & Hall, 1999, p. 4, 5).

Visual culture is the visual field and the way individuals and groups inter-face or interact with it and make meaning from it. The way we analyze, critique, and discuss visual culture is the domain of visual culture studies.

## **CHAPTER 3 – VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES**

### **3.1 – Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to arrive at a working definition or characterization of visual culture studies. The intent is to explore the themes and strands of visual culture studies, how these strands emerged and came to inform visual culture studies and the implications they have for the practice and teaching of art in contemporary cultures. These implications may intersect with critical perspectives and engage with traditional views of Western art, but also may engage in explorations of how contemporary sub-cultures, non-Western cultures and popular culture inform contemporary art and art education.

The major themes interconnect with one important concept – the attempt for critical engagement with contemporary visual culture. In developments of this critical engagement with visual culture there are two prominent influences or strands which have come to inform the work of most theorists involved in contemporary visual culture studies. The first strand is critical theory and the second is postmodern or poststructural theory. This chapter opens with a look at developments connected with these two strands and attempts to demonstrate how they have formed the background of visual culture studies. Critical theory formed a background for cultural studies which has had tremendous influence on the development of visual culture studies. Postmodern or Poststructuralist theory, much of which has also influenced developments of cultural studies, is here separated from critical theory and cultural studies due to its tendency to negate the relevance of Marxism or Neo-Marxism which play prominent roles in critical theory and cultural studies.

The second part of this chapter considers prominent discourses within the field of visual culture studies. Visual culture studies crosses traditional and contemporary boundaries and informs theoretical research and writing in a wide plethora of disciplines and areas. This section examines some of the prominent fields or areas that engage in discourse related to visual culture, shows how they intersect with and inform visual culture studies and analyzes implications these discourses carry for art education.

Whenever possible, connections are made between background and developments of visual culture studies and connections and implications for art practice and art pedagogy. It remains a difficult task to define or characterize visual culture studies; the purpose here is not to arrive at a comprehensive definition, but to explore important aspects of the development of visual culture studies and show how these interconnect with or have implications for the teaching of art in today's schools.

### **3.2 Influences of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies**

As mentioned, discourse related to visual culture studies can be characterized by a more consistent engagement with and increased awareness of the need for critical examination of the visual in contemporary culture. Evans and Hall (1999) feel the visual has been under-emphasized in contemporary theory and describe current theory as rife with visual metaphors and terminologies.

It may thus appear contentious to claim, as we do, that 'visual culture' has been somewhat overlooked in the rapid expansion of cultural and media studies throughout the past decade and a half. Contentious because, after all, the work of Barthes, Benjamin, Lacan and Foucault with their clearly visual concerns – not to mention a host of others – forms the canonical foundations upon which much cultural and media studies rest. (Evans & Hall, 1999, p. 1).

The following portion of Chapter 3 examines developments in cultural studies, connections with visual culture studies, and implications for art education.

As fields of study there are many similarities between cultural studies and visual cultural studies. There is no single encompassing definition of cultural studies; it represents a complex and diverse body of work from various locations, and is concerned with the critical analysis of cultural processes and phenomena in contemporary societies. Just as there is no stable or simplistic version of visual culture studies, there is no simplistic version of cultural studies. Work in cultural studies is most often diverse in subject-matter and context specific, as it is with visual culture studies.

Narratives of the “development” of cultural studies are misleading and tend to be over-simplified, as it is impossible to pinpoint where analyses of culture began. Critical theory has had a tremendous influence on the development and emergence of cultural studies as a field of inquiry. Critical theory has its foundation in the Institute for Social Research. Founded in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1923, it has come to be known as the Frankfurt School.

In *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*, Bronner and Kellner (1989), state that the members of the Institute for Social Research “...attempted to revise both the Marxian critique of capitalism and the theory of revolution in order to confront those new social and political conditions which had evolved since Marx’s death” (p. 1). This was done through interdisciplinary theory and research. The Institute’s focus was to call into question, through critical practice, the most basic assumptions of society and culture. In critiques of what they called *mass culture*, the Frankfurt School observed that

the ‘cultural industries’ were now playing an important role in managing consciousness and obscuring social conflict...this standpoint became an essential

component of critical theory and inaugurated a new discourse about the role of mass communication and culture in the constitution of contemporary societies. (Bronner & Kellner, 1989, p. 9-10)

Critical theory and contemporary cultural studies overlap in several areas, including having social and cultural foci, interdisciplinary bases, diverse agendas, critical stances and Marxist perspectives. They share an opposition to positivism, a belief in emancipatory social change and a focus on contemporary mass or popular culture.

Critical theory and cultural studies diverged in other areas. Critical theory upheld the separation of high and low culture, and regarded mass or popular (low) culture in a negative light as a way of reproducing false consciousness and mass control by the dominant class through commercialism. The Frankfurt School promoted aesthetics as a remedy for the “baseness” of mass culture. Cultural studies rejected these ideas as propagating a hierarchical and classist status quo.

Today, cultural studies as it is currently referred to in academic settings or in academic publishing has roots in England in the 1950's and 1960's. At this time Richard Hoggart (1958) wrote about problems confronting the working-class culture of northern England. In 1964, he established at Birmingham, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), which has come to be known as the Birmingham School and is most associated with the origins of the term 'cultural studies'. Members of Hoggart's circle included Stuart Hall, who influenced developments in visual culture studies (Evens & Hall, 1999). Hoggart, influenced by the work of Raymond Williams (1958), made the early focus of the CCCS youth culture and theories and methodology on new forms of media (Durham & Kellner, 2001).

Williams, in *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), brought culture to an ordinary and common level of understanding. His work suggested that culture should be regarded as meanings in negotiation to be found in all kinds of texts, across different sites and institutions, and in everyday life (Gray & McGuigan, 1993). For Williams (1958) culture, with inherent meanings of cultivation and growth, should incorporate extended democratic notions of shared work and common space. This broadening of the concept of culture challenged the restrictions imposed by concepts implicit in traditional status quo versions of culture propagated by Academe.

From the broadening of the concept of culture emerged contentious discourse which questioned status quo judgments of cultural quality and the underlying political engagement. Previous to 1960, culture tended to be viewed as outside political debate, but by the late 1960's it had become a site of conflict and struggle and a space of negotiated meanings. Williams' and Hoggart's notions of culture helped originate cultural studies as a distinct field of study.

The early focus of cultural analysis was taken up by the labour movement in Britain, and by the social democrat and communist left political movements. By the late 1960's and beyond, the field of cultural studies included a variety of social and political dimensions, as well as connections to and across various academic boundaries.

The cultural studies paradigm increasingly became influenced by the diversity, multiplicity and plurality reflected in society. By the 1960's and 1970's, marginal groups such as African-Americans, Latinos, gays and lesbians, contested the ways they were portrayed in images and representations by media. Representations were seen as biased

and never neutral. People and sub-groups were stereotyped on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality and so on. The negative, positive or ambiguous depictions of social groups worked to position certain groups as inferior to the dominant social group.

Influenced by the inequality of media representations, cultural studies concerns and themes became more diverse, but generally the aim of cultural studies was to analyze culture as a site of negotiation, conflict, innovation, and resistance within the social relations of societies dominated by power and split by divisions of gender, class and race (Durham & Kellner, 2001).

In the post-1980's, cultural studies became global in influence and found a new alignment with the increased plurality and diversity reflected in feminist, postmodern and poststructuralist theory. In 1989, the fall of Communism in the Soviet bloc, the subsequent technological revolution, globalization and the new world economy increased the complexity of culture and the need for analysis.

The intensification of change since the 1980's has had a profound effect on our understandings of culture and its complexities. Within and around the field of cultural studies there has been debate over how to proceed with cultural analysis. There has also been debate and ambivalence about whether universities are the best place in which to pursue cultural studies. There has been a characteristic divide between humanities and social sciences, the former examining culture from literary criticism perspectives including structural linguistics and textual analysis, while the focus of the latter has been from anthropological methods such as ethnography. There have been efforts by theorists to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries of academia to pursue their concerns with culture. Many see the break with traditional boundaries and borders as a necessary

condition for the future of cultural studies. A condition also necessary for visual culture studies. It is important to see culture today as located neither in texts, nor as the product of a process, nor in the cultural resources, appropriations and innovations of everyday worlds, but in different forms of meaning-making, within various settings in societies incessantly marked by change and conflict. The best way to examine this notion of culture is through flexibility, adaptability, and interdisciplinarity.

Today there are a variety of terms, concepts, practices, and methods of analyses associated with cultural studies. As mentioned, cultural studies within academia has occupied the territories of both the humanities and social sciences. Methods of analyses have varied widely between disciplines within these fields, from qualitative and quantitative approaches in research to writing from the variety of perspectives the fields represent. For authors such as Evans and Hall (1999), visual culture studies is a natural extension of cultural studies necessary to address the visual concerns extant in contemporary societies and cultures. For art education, the shift in the way culture is viewed has important implications. In cultural studies, the concern for the inequality of media representations of various groups within society and the view that culture is a site of constant negotiation, conflict, innovation and resistance are significant concerns for art education. Today there is a need for teaching practices involved in exploring artwork from a variety of cultures, teaching to students with varied cultural backgrounds, and teaching from particular cultural perspectives and biases. These should be informed by the importance of culture, bias, stereotypes and dominance of particular groups and cultures.

## Neo-Marxism, Ideology, Hegemony

Since the inception of British cultural studies Marxism has played a consistent role in cultural studies. Rather than following traditional Marxist concepts, cultural studies theorists have used updated versions of Marxist theory, referred to as Neo-Marxism.

The revival of Marxist thought is rooted in Britain in the late 1950's and early 1960's in a movement known as the New Left. Members included Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, who edited the *New Left Review* in 1961. In their critical reading of Marx, they saw an approach for critiquing contemporary capitalist cultures. Neo-Marxism rejected reducing the basis of culture to economic determinations, rejected the base/superstructure paradigm, and the definition of ideology as a false consciousness (Hall in McRobbie, 1992).

A key concept in Marxism and Neo-Marxism is class. Shifting issues in the 1950's in the areas of economy, technology and culture caused scholars such as Hoggart (1958) and Williams (1958 & 1961) to focus on the way changes affected working class culture. These theorists were concerned with how people lacking in economic, social, political and ideological power could create identity, styles and culture, how much of their culture was influenced or imposed by institutions such as the media or education. Although, in the literature, class has diminished in importance since the 1970's, there has traditionally been a close connection between class and culture, and class continues to be seen as an area of concern for theorists of cultural studies, visual cultural studies, feminist theory and many other contemporary fields of study. To some, problems of class are now

associated with issues of subjectivity and identity, which may relate to the same concerns under a different guise (Barker & Beezer, 1992).

Ideology is also an important concept in Neo-Marxism. Although the origins and early use of the term are elusive and obscure, contemporary usage regards ideologies as sets of ideas associated with distinctive political standpoints, such as conservatism, environmentalism, feminism, and socialism. In this usage ideologies are said to represent the interests of classes or other collectivities. Many definitions have been given for the term and among these the most elusive is that given originally by Marx and Engels (*The German Ideology*, 1845-6). The most common usage within the Neo-Marxist tradition is as above, a set of ideas or beliefs associated with a certain political standpoint.

“Hegemony” is another term used in Neo-Marxism analysis and commonly used by non-Marxist thinkers. It has important implications for both cultural studies and visual culture studies. Originally used to refer to political domination or leadership, and often used in this context today, hegemony acquires a more specific meaning in the work of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is an explanation of why exploited classes accept a given social order. In Marx, the lower class would not accept the existing social order, but Gramsci argued a class’s domination was not so much the imposition of repression by a dominant regime as the fact that a prevailing mode of thought shields the existing social structure by persuasively defining for the whole society what is to be accepted as natural and normal (Gramsci, 1977). Gramsci’s version of hegemony suggests that one group will maintain dominance by reinforcing the existing social order as a normal condition of existence. For Gramsci, a predominant ideology is not a mere side-effect of economic and political realities, as in Marxism, but

was more determined by a position of influence on the public mind. The most obvious way to assert this influence is through culture and more recently, through the apparatuses of technology and media. Gramsci advocated a struggle for cultural and intellectual hegemony, to regain control of access and influence over the public mind and thus begin to hold sway with a new way of thinking which would be a necessary condition for effecting change.

The public mind for Gramsci in many ways coincides with today's popular culture. The role of the visual in social and cultural hegemony is a case for the emergence of visual culture as a field of study. The uses of the visual within popular culture, whether as mechanisms of control or as subtle forces of coercion, have been taken up within visual culture discourse. The need for examination of these issues within art education is an area of concern for this study.

Agency is a final term covered here under the Neo-Marxist rubric. In its strictest sense, an agent is someone who acts. In Gramscian theory the agent is the intellectual or persons who galvanize a class into a politically self-conscious state of action or agency, by working toward the acceptance of alternative ideas and an alternative hegemony to the status quo. Where Marx envisioned revolutionary change at the economic level, Gramsci's ideas place it more in the sphere of culture. Gramsci's ideas strongly influenced Neo-Marxist theory and were influential on the Frankfurt School and subsequent work related to "mass media" and the "culture industries".

## **Communication Technologies**

Communication technologies play an important role in cultural studies research. Communication covers a broad area including print media, radio and television, computer technology and the Internet, advertising and wireless technology. The media carry ideologies of their own, may determine the types of information, messages, images and text that circulate in society and influence or privilege certain meanings over others. The media is where meanings are most often constructed in popular culture, and therefore is where hegemony is most easily and commonly reinforced. David Sholle states “the media create a way of seeing, a method of ordering and judging, a means of selection and preference that constitutes the domain of the discussable” (in Hardt, 1992, p. 190-1). In cultural studies and visual cultural studies examining the media for visual and linguistic messages and text is key to understanding how contemporary culture and meaning is constructed.

Culture is produced through conflict and struggle present in the creation of meaning. Culture, communication, and ideology exist in an overlapping interrelationship to one another and are key to the success or failure of hegemony. In cultural studies and visual culture studies these relationships between communication, culture and meaning and of how they interact with each other and influence practices of hegemony are often analyzed through the theories of structuralism, semiotics, polysemy, discourse, poststructuralism, Neo-Marxism, Feminism and other theories and practices discussed here.

## Conclusion

The field of cultural studies, to an extent, gives us a better understanding of the study of visual culture. Cultural studies has a significant link, as suggested here, to the Frankfurt school and critical theory. Critical theorists of this tradition such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Althusser and Habermas, are firmly grounded in Marxist tradition. Contemporary critical theorists, such as Habermas (1981), have refuted the existence of postmodernism which dismisses Marxism as a grand narrative, and alternatively suggest the contemporary world is a period of “late capitalism”. Although this notion is not pervasive throughout the field of cultural studies, cultural studies remains closely connected to the Marxist tradition and Neo-Marxist perspectives.

Visual culture studies, although sharing an interconnectedness with cultural studies, is extremely broad and pervasive in its scope. It is seen as a field that resists categorization and parameters, crossing borders and boundaries within academia but also within social and cultural spheres. Where cultural studies has traditionally been connected with disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, visual culture studies incorporates the fine arts, design, craft, performing arts, arts of spectacle and mass and electronic media. It crosses disciplinary boundaries of feminism, sexuality, and gender theory, postcolonial theory, film studies, as well as cultural studies, and other fields of study.

As outlined here, visual cultural studies has both been influenced by cultural studies and crosses the boundaries of cultural studies in practice. Visual cultural studies has also been significantly influenced by poststructural and postmodern theory and these influences are explored in the next section of this chapter.

Cultural studies, as it makes up part of the background of visual culture studies, has implications for pedagogy and art education. Education, especially in the area of art, must now consider cultures, sub-cultures, cultural perspectives, the context of culture in a created object or artwork, the ways cultures are controlled or manipulated or, as with hegemony, the ways culture is used to coerce or manipulate. The concerns explored by cultural studies, especially in the areas of cultural negotiation and meaning-making, are of direct concern to art education. Art is concerned with cultural artefact and the creation of art is an act which takes place within particular cultural contexts and is involved in the creation of meaning out of these contexts. Cultural contexts, therefore, should also be considered when examining the art of the past or of different cultures.

### **3.3 Influences of Postmodernism and Poststructuralism**

#### Introduction

The changes to society which fall under what has been characterized as postmodernism have had the most profound effect on the emergence of visual culture. For Mirzoeff (1998), visual culture is postmodernism. Postmodern and poststructural theories are closely related if not completely interchangeable.

This section explores the influences postmodern and poststructural theory have had on the emergence of visual culture studies. Postmodern theory has been characterized by a rejection of totalizing, grand narratives as all-encompassing explanations of reality.

In place of totalizing narratives such as religion, Freudism or Marxism, Lyotard (1979) has argued for a landscape of diverse, mini-narratives or local narratives which he

characterized as discourses. For Lyotard, discourses may often exist in opposition to each other or be incommensurable but must continue to exist and respect one another within this state of incommensurability. This field of diverse discourse, which for Lyotard characterized postmodern reality, is also a reflection of the field of visual culture. Visual culture studies is a pluralist field of diverse discourse which aims at examining the visual within cultures. For art education it is important to engage in an acceptance and tolerance of cultural diversity, but also look at the implication cultural and social or ethnic diversity has for pedagogical practice.

Along the same lines, Jacques Derrida (taken up in this section) argues for more tolerance of diversity by questioning or deconstructing concepts of what is “normal”.

Derrida’s work aligns with visual culture studies in that it questions traditional conceptions of what is normal and analyzes the ways these conceptions are used to exploit, manipulate, control or in some cases construct and inform the identities of individuals and social groups. Derrida’s work reinforces the significance of marginal discourse.

Michel Foucault has questioned how particular groups or discourses have come to be marginalized. The analysis of his work here looks at the way particular discourses, such as gender and sexuality, have come to be marginalized, how particular terms such as “the gaze” have originated and the implications they have for visual culture studies, and how relations of power and knowledge are used to control groups and individuals.

This section also considers the work of Guy Debord, Jean Baudrillard, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and examines their work in light of visual culture studies and in relation to implications for art education.

## Jacques Derrida

Derrida's poststructuralist work stems from the theories of structuralism.

Structuralism has its roots in the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure felt that the world around us was made up of structures. He felt one of the best examples of his theory of structures was to be found in language; verbal and written language offered the best examples of how signs made meaning through an arbitrary system of social convention (Hawkes, 1977). The study of signs came to be known as semiology or semiotics and more than just the structures, tends to deal with the social and political dimensions of signs, as demonstrated in Barthes' analysis of an Italian food product advertisement (Barthes, 1977).

Derrida's work is characteristically post structuralist in that it stems from the structuralist tradition, and operates within structuralism to subvert some of its most basic tenets and assumptions.

Derrida's early work was first in support of the phenomenological tradition of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, and soon after a critique of some of the concepts central to their thought. In *Origin of Geometry*, Derrida (1962) critiqued Husserl's notion of an imminent consciousness which was capable of creating meaning independently of both the subject and the object. Derrida felt this ideal of a pure and immanent perception existing independently in consciousness was problematic as the tool of this consciousness must come from a social, historical and conventional language (Norris, 1987). Derrida felt consciousness was dependent on language or the linguistic sign through representation for the possibility of creation of meaning, and that language or the sign

was dependent on social, cultural and historical constructs. These ideas are consistent with early writings of Wittgenstein (Pears, 1971) and Derrida's contemporary, Lacan (in Lodge, 1988), and reinforce the notion that thought or creation of meaning is contingent on language and signs (which for Saussure included the image), a theme consistent throughout postmodern philosophy and poststructuralist theory.

In *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*, Derrida (in Lodge, 1988) discusses a significant idea which remains consistent throughout his theoretical work and which had implications for his development of deconstruction. This essay focused on the metaphorical construction of the notion of structure as represented in Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology. Derrida attempts to expose the limitations of this concept of structure, a privileging of central explanatory terms. Derrida sees structuralist discourse as made up of unconditioned centres and origins which supposedly provide grounds for objective accounts of diverse phenomena (Derrida in Lodge, 1988). These foundations are assumed to have a fixed meaning (transcendental signified) which acts as an immovable limit on the play or variability of structure, closing off the possibility of structural instability and change. Derrida argues against the supposition that structures are dependent on fixed centres or given origins, and sees these as first principles or master concepts which are arbitrary constructs used to privilege a certain way of thinking and reasoning over other possibilities. Here, Derrida's questioning of centralized explanatory structures to give a coherent and comprehensive understanding of reality connects with Lyotard's examination of totalizing narratives.

Derrida was an advocate of decentrism and anti-foundationalism. These concepts surfaced in Derrida's later work. He rejects the concept that any cultural phenomena can

be explained as the effect of one objectively existing, fundamental cause. He feels particular disciplines, using foundationalist arguments, attempt to present meanings and truths as obvious. For Derrida, what accounts for meaning or truth is determined by the limitations of the discipline which supposedly discovers and describes them. Extending his theory, he attempts to show that all meanings and truths are never absolute or timeless, but are always framed by socially and historically specific conditions of knowledge (Norris, 1987). For Derrida, all fields of knowledge structure themselves around central principles which are arbitrary constructions and yet the fields in question often fail to acknowledge or draw attention to this process of construction. Because of this, Derrida felt no one discourse should have domination or authority over another. Lyotard would call for them to exist in a egalitarian state of incommensurability.

In Derridian deconstruction, Derrida immerses himself in the very structure of the text's argument, critiquing and exposing the contradictions, limitations and presuppositions. Derrida uses the externalities or marginal devices of the text, such as footnotes or citations, and other incidental details to show that what has been posited as central, primary and originary to the text's meaning is actually more dependent upon these devices which are secondary, marginal and derivative. Derrida uses the tradition of logic and destabilizes and decentres the structures from within the structuralist field. The extension here, which has implications for visual culture studies, is that in the transference to the social and cultural spheres the significance for the construction of meaning moves from the dominant groups to groups and voices that are marginal and closer to the boundaries of social and cultural fields. In theories which refer to the importance of space and location, including writings in feminist and postcolonial theory,

the location of the marginalized space as a location from which to speak is often an essential aspect of these fields. In art education, and education generally, it is important to question and continually look critically at any text or system which sets itself up as authority. In student meaning-making critical thinking becomes an important focus.

Derrida's deconstruction goes further in his attempts to destabilize the logic, presuppositions and structures which constitute the dominant tradition of Western thought. Derrida characterized this dominant tradition of thought with the illusory belief in certainty and presence. For Derrida, Western forms of knowledge such as science, philosophy and even common sense are built up on certain centres and origins and these things carry meaning apart from the meaning given to them by words or language. For Derrida, this notion of a fixed or transcendental meaning was a myth which he termed the metaphysics of presence (Norris, 1987). For example, questions such as 'what is postmodernism? Art? Visual culture?' suggest these have a fixed presence, they are separate entities unto themselves, centred on some sort of encompassing theory. For Derrida, it is by reference to such presences that interpretations and theories can claim to represent valid pieces of information. To take it further, giving an all encompassing definition or theory of what visual culture is would be to give it a mythic presence by which we could say something is part of visual culture, not part of visual culture, contains more characteristics of visual culture, and so forth. Derrida's deconstruction seeks to expose how language used in particular fields both creates the essential presence through which knowledge can claim to be true, and conceals the means by which it creates this presence. Working through structuralism and the structures of language Derrida breaks

down, decodes, or deconstructs the way relations are made to create the mythology of presence.

The use and manipulation of signs in advertising is an arena where the metaphysics of presence is constantly used to assert validity of a consumer product or superiority of one consumer product over another (Barthes, 1972).

A second area, and one which influenced some feminist theorists, is Derrida's work concerning binaries or systems of opposition. For Derrida, the sense of presence constructed by fields of knowledge is reinforced through systems of opposition. Derrida argues that thought is a continuous and arbitrary act of splitting concepts into oppositions. It is habitual to think with oppositions such as good/evil, private/public, nature/culture, modernism/postmodernism, positive/negative, white/black, female/male. For Derrida, one half of the opposition is always seen as inferior to, derivative of, less than, subjected to, or expressive of the other half, which in this system is privileged as the pure, primary presence (Kamuf, 1991). The privileged term is usually first in the dichotomy and is often favoured or biased over the other term. The biased term becomes the assumed grounds of validity in argument and interpretation. Feminists who fall within the poststructuralist paradigm have used these theories to critique traditional problems of gender bias and domination. Others reject the poststructuralist paradigm entirely as a male-dominated theoretical construct.

Another deconstructive notion is the 'illusion of coherence'. For Derrida, all texts are made from an author's decision of what is to be included. The process of inclusion necessitates a coincidental process of exclusion. Derrida argues that what is excluded plays as important a role in the meaning of the text as what is included, and therefore

what is included forms an illusion of coherence. The role of deconstruction is to expose the coherence of a text as a precarious illusion. What a text presents as central is just as likely to be created by information that is marginal or not included.

In conclusion, Derrida, then, argues against the underlying foundations and centralized structures which so often give systems of thought or theories their meaning. He argues against essential presence (the metaphysics of presence) whereby the mere existence of something, such as the term 'visual culture', is presumed because of its existence to carry a fixed or stable meaning. For Derrida, nothing has a fixed or stable meaning completely unto itself. He argues against the privileging that is inherent in binary systems of language where one term in an opposition is always favoured over another, thus setting up situations of bias and discrimination within language. Finally, Derrida argues against the illusion of coherence whereby a narrative is suggested to be true or authoritative due to what is included, whereas what is excluded may often be more relevant to the meaning of the narrative or discourse. Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction emphasizes the importance of interpretation in the dissemination of meaning.

Derrida's work influences visual culture studies in several ways. The process of deconstruction focuses on the meaning of the text that is peripheral to the main text, or marginal. It is in the marginal locations that meaning is most often found. Important discourses within visual culture studies have been influenced by Derrida's work with regards to marginal meaning and marginal voice. The discourses of groups which see themselves as marginal or peripheral to mainstream thought have important relevance within the visual culture field. It is often through visual representations that groups

marginalized due to class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity and so on, have found themselves on the periphery of mainstream culture. Derrida's work, which focuses on the periphery as an important location of meaning-making and which also argues against centralized explanations and illusions of coherence, so often inherent in mainstream and popular culture, gives relevance to the work and the voices of groups that have traditionally been marginalized.

Derrida's work has relevance for art education on several levels. In art representations it is important to be aware of how people or groups of people are being marginalized and through imagery, reinforced into positions of marginality. Art, especially through art historical interpretation, has had a role in reinforcing the mythical concepts of presence and coherence. The Western canon and the ways it has been upheld or reinforced through traditional art historical interpretation has created the illusion of coherence of Western culture. This has to be accomplished at the expense of marginalized groups, but also it has a place in non-Western cultures outside the Western paradigm. Visual culture studies gives credence to groups and voices which have traditionally been silenced by this marginalization. Within the paradigm of visual culture it is the art educator's role to help students assess and analyze how the illusions of foundations and centralized systems, essential presence, binaries and coherence create the illusion of meaning and act to reinforce bias, status quo, and discrimination within social and cultural structures.

## Michel Foucault

Foucault's work has been very influential in the development of visual culture studies. His contribution includes the terms surveillance, the gaze and scopic regimes. His work shows how the body becomes complicitous in its own subjectification. For art education, the significance of Foucault's work is in the areas of critical awareness and critical thinking. The focus of critical thinking is concerned with the role of the visual – visual apparatus and technologies and the gaze – and how it has come to be influenced by technologies which control actions and behaviours in society.

Foucault's early work dealt with how subject, power and knowledge relations played themselves out over time, through the analysis of discursive and non-discursive practices. His later work turned the focus away from discourse and towards technology (Sheridan, 1980). Foucault's use of the term technology or technique relates to notions derived from Marcel Mauss, who saw virtually every form of human action as embodying a framework of repetition. For Mauss, the most mundane of human actions (such as spitting) were involved in repetition and thus became techniques, giving precedence to technique over contingency for understanding human actions. A regularity of actions, therefore, can emerge as technique, which become actions which are ingrained or taken for granted. Mauss called techniques of the body "technology without instruments" (Lechte, 1994). For Foucault, the body of the subject incorporates a regularity of actions or techniques through processes of objectification, whereby the subject or self plays a role in her or his own subjectification. This is an important aspect of Foucault's notion of how the body of the self becomes complicitous or a collaborator through relations of power and technique to its own subjectification. Foucault termed

these techniques of control “technologies of the self” and felt that as technology, techniques could be transferred across different sets of practices, as forms of bodily discipline demonstrate (Lechte, 1994).

Foucault’s concept of “technologies of the self” influenced Pierre Bourdieu in his development of the concept of habitus. Bourdieu’s concept of the logic of practice relates to Mauss’ notions of technique and “technology without instruments”. Bourdieu argues that limits and possibilities within society or social structures become inscribed in individuals. This takes place through socialization but also through processes developed over long periods of time and which may become part of tradition. For Bourdieu, the possibilities and constraints of social action, of what is appropriate behaviour, are incorporated into individuals and become instinctual or a kind of second nature (Wolfreys, 2000). The habitus, then, is the instinctive sense of what may be possible and how this becomes a pattern or mode of behaviour. The habitus is passed on to an individual over generations and so it has an instinctive nature, but it is also influenced from an early age through education and culture. The habitus is concerned with the possibility that always exists within the boundaries or limits imposed by the habitus. The habitus, then, becomes a technology of social control. The habitus closely relates to Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. The art educator, in promoting creativity, may attempt to push students beyond these limits or boundaries that their own particular culture, family background or mainstream culture has inscribed in them. Students should be pushed to think beyond what is always familiar and acceptable to them, to think “outside the box”.

Foucault's work showed how the habitus or what he called technologies of control were imposed through visual means. He demonstrated how technologies of control were used on particular populations, and these in turn resulted in the subjects exercising control over themselves. One of these technologies of relevance to visual culture studies and which has become a prototype of modern surveillance is the panopticon. Foucault, in studying the origins of clinical medicine, looked at hospital architecture in the second half of the eighteenth century. He was interested in finding out how the medical gaze was institutionalized and "how it was effectively inscribed in social space, how the new form of the hospital was at once the effect and the support of a new type of gaze" (Foucault, 1977, p. 146). In examining a series of different architectural projects, Foucault noticed how the problem of visibility of bodies, individuals and things under a system of centralized observation, was one of the most consistent directing principles of design. Foucault saw further problems related to the need to avoid contact, contagion, physical proximity and overcrowding while ensuring air circulation and ventilation, a need to divide up space while keeping it open but also to ensure a surveillance which would be both global and individualizing while separating individuals under observation. Later, while studying the penal system Foucault noticed similar problems which ultimately in almost every case referred to Jeremy Bentham's device, the panopticon. The panopticon incorporated a perimeter building in the form of a circle in the middle of which was a tower. The outer building was made of prison cells, each cell the width of the building. Each cell had two large windows, one facing the tower and the other on the outside of the building, allowing daylight in so that inmates could be constantly observed during the day by a person in the tower. "All that is needed is to put an overseer in the

tower and place in each of the cells a lunatic, a patient, a convict, a worker, or a schoolboy” (Foucault, 1977, p. 147). For Foucault, the panopticon reversed the idea of a dungeon as a system of containment. The new device allowed for the overseer’s gaze and daylight to play a role in the subjectification of the inmate, while at the same time, under this scopic regime, the panopticon was a technology of the self, causing inmates to alter and adjust their own behaviours.

...we are talking about two things here: the gaze and interiorization. And isn’t it basically the cost of power? In reality power is only exercised at a cost. There is an economic cost, and Bentham talks about this. How many overseers will the panopticon need? How much will the machine then cost to run? But there is also a specifically political cost. If you are too violent, you risk provoking revolts... In contrast to that you have the system of surveillance which on the contrary involves very little expense. There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorisation to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over and against himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously by and for what turns out to be nominal cost (Foucault, 1977, p. 149).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault goes on to explain, “In this form of management, power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise this power as well as those who are subjected to it” (Foucault, 1979, p. 198). For Foucault, the panopticon, through spatial ordering, brought together power, control of the body, control of groups and knowledge. In an efficiently visible organization individuals are located and controlled in space.

Foucault felt the logic offered by the panopticon was not only efficiency but also normalization. For Foucault, normalization is a system of finely gradated and measurable intervals in which individuals are distributed around a norm (Sheridan, 1980). The norm

both organizes and is the result of the controlled distribution. In the system of normalization there are no fixed points for making judgments or imposing will. For Foucault, this was the effect of “bio-power”, a power where the individual and the body become and maintain the regulatory functions. The development of medicine, psychiatry and some of the social sciences and their collaboration in the sphere of legal deliberations in the nineteenth century led to what Foucault felt was a normalization of the law. Rather than deliberating between absolute concepts of right and wrong, the law began to revolve around arbitrary notions of what is normal and abnormal. In his later work, Foucault demonstrated how technologies of normalization (medical practice, psychoanalysis, government institutions, statistical research and so on) systematically created, classified, and controlled anomalies in the social body. Through systems of normalization, people and practices seen as being outside the margins of what was considered normal were looked at as socially deviant and therefore marginalized (Sheridan, 1980).

These ideas on the concept of normalization form an integral part of postmodern and poststructural theory but also are the basis from which visual culture studies has emerged. The concept of normalization is connected to Derrida’s concept of centralized explanatory systems, and to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. The illusory limits or boundaries of the habitus are, for Foucault, the boundaries dividing the norm from the marginal spaces. Foucault, in his work on sexuality, power/knowledge, and the formation of scopic regimes, exposed how society increasingly came to judge behaviour located on the periphery of what is “normal” as immoral or socially unacceptable. Cultures and subgroups which are not, through their behaviours and actions, part of the mainstream group that represents the norm, are also seen as socially deviant or objectified

as other. In contemporary cultures the marginalization of groups is often reinforced visually – through the electronic media, through advertising imagery and so on. Historically, this marginalization has been reinforced through art. In Western art, the depictions of non-Western cultures and individuals has often reinforced their marginalization. An example may include depictions of harem women as the exotic other. A task of art educators would then be to expose the way imagery has been used throughout art history, but as well in contemporary culture, to reinforce the marginalization of specific groups and individuals within societies and cultures. Students should also be made aware of how scopic regimes play themselves out in society. How are ordinary citizens watched, visually recorded, gazed at and how does this control and limit their actions? How can these ideas of the gaze, the viewer and the viewed, and the way scopic controls modify and limit behaviour and action be incorporated into an informed and thought-provoking art practice.

Since his death in 1984, Foucault's work has been tremendously influential. Foucault's theories have contributed to a proliferation of literature on the politics of space. His work on how architecture was used as a method to control and exercise power spatially diverged from traditional thinking which privileged time and the "project" as representational of "progress". His ideas about power, surveillance, the notion of scopic regimes, the gaze, normalization and marginality, and his work on sexuality and madness have influenced many fields of study within the visual culture studies spectrum including postmodern and post structuralist theory, cultural studies, feminism, postcolonial theory, queer theory, and film and media studies.

## Guy Debord

Guy Debord (1967) describes the representations of reality as related to spectacles. For Debord, “the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images” (Debord, 1967, p. 95). According to Debord, contemporary life has become an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived had moved away into a representation. The proliferation of images has caused a separation of the individual from the unity or harmony of actual life. Reality considered partially unfolds, in its own general unity, as a pseudo-world apart, an object of mere contemplation (Debord, 1967, p. 95). Debord feels the real world changes into simple images and that these images become real beings that make the world visible by a means of various specialized mediations, no longer able to be grasped directly. The spectacle inherits all the weaknesses of the Western Modernist project that, according to Debord, undertook to comprehend activity in terms of categories of seeing. The concrete life of everyone has been degraded into a speculative universe (Debord, 1967, p. 97).

In *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes describes professional wrestling as “the spectacle of excess” (p. 15) and equates it with religious worship. Barthes and Debord highlight through their writing on the spectacle the significance the visual has come to play in our daily lives. Debord’s work influenced Jean Baudrillard in developing ideas of how reality has become a flux of images, of simulations and simulacra, which have replaced the actual object in creating an altered and simulated version of reality.

In art the spectacle has often been used as a device for comment, scrutiny, or as the artwork itself. Spectacle is a consistent theme in the art of Andy Warhol, in some of

Joseph Beuy's work, and in work done by performance artists. Christo's and Claes Oldenberg's sculptural work are connected with spectacle. In an age where the spectacle, especially through television, is so common, the artist must often think about her or his audience in relation to the pervasiveness of imagery related to the spectacle of excess.

### Jean Baudrillard

The work of Jean Baudrillard represents a critical look at contemporary society relative to the transformative effects of the image. His work stems from the tradition of Benjamin, Barthes, and Lyotard (1979), in terms of its emphasis on the sign and image. In his early writings, Baudrillard develops a narrative about the end of modernity as an era dominated by production, industrial capitalism, and a political economy of the sign (Woods, 1999). Baudrillard extends Marx's notion of a political economy where the operation of exchange is based on commodities. For Baudrillard, because signs are produced as commodities there is a need to critique semiology, the way signs are produced and understood. Baudrillard applies this background to the analysis of the new forms of technology, culture and society characterized by postmodernity. He argues that where earlier cultures depended on face-to-face communication, and later print, contemporary culture is dominated by images from the electronic mass media (Lane, 2000).

Baudrillard's conception of postmodernity relies on the ideas of simulation, implosion and hyperreality. Baudrillard, along with Lyotard (1979), feels we are in a postmodern era of simulations that is dominated by information, signs and cybernetic technology (Kellner, 2002). The simulation is the model or image presented through the

media. For example, a soap opera star would be an image or model of a real person who becomes a real person to viewers of the soap opera. Baudrillard argues that in contemporary society distinctions between simulations (the model or image) and reality are eroded. When the simulation becomes mistaken for reality, reality implodes or loses significant meaning. Semiology and the notion of simulations are central to Baudrillard's concept of history. He calls the period from the Renaissance to the industrial age the 'counterfeit stage', where signs reflected and distorted reality. The 'production stage' is the industrial age, where signs disguised the absence of a basic reality. The third stage, the 'simulation stage', is our current era where signs no longer bear any relationship to reality (Baudrillard, 1983).

In the era of simulations, contemporary or postmodern society, the real (reality) is produced by the models of reality. The real and the unreal (model) are indiscernible. Baudrillard calls this hyperreality, a reality where distinctions between objects and their representations are dissolved (implosion) and one is left with only simulacra, representations of reality (Hawk, 2001). Advertising messages relayed by media tend to be self-referential signs that lose contact with the things they signify (represent), which is an example of how images are used in a destruction of meaning. An example of this is found in representations of cities in advertising. Vancouver is often represented as a city of exceeding natural beauty with healthy people engaged in winter and summer recreational activities. In reality, it is also a city confronted with poverty, homelessness, a bleak outlook for indigenous people, and a horrendous drug problem. Baudrillard's work gives instances of hyperreality where the model determines the real. For example, actual musicians on MTV or Much Music are turned into simulations. They no longer

have a specific historical context through which they arose. They are merely images or models on a screen, for other musicians to emulate if they want to perform on MTV. The simulations of the musicians no longer refer to a situation that brought on resistance or expression. For example, putting gangster-rap music on the screen takes it out of its historical and cultural context as the creative expression of resistance to the feeling of domination in urban life. These images blend in with or become blurred with all the other images on screen. This takes away the reality of the historical context and replaces it with hyperreality. When the context is removed, all resistant meaning is removed. In the world of hyperreality, the lines of dominance and resistance, of high and low implode or collapse (Hawk. 2001). For Baudrillard, not only does it become ever more difficult to distinguish the simulation from real life, but the reality of the simulation becomes the benchmark for the reality itself. The world becomes a universe of simulacra without referents. Reality is replaced with hyperreality; the two become indistinguishable. In the world of hyperreality, where people are unable to distinguish between the real and the simulation, they become cynical and apathetic. For Baudrillard, there is no hope for resistance, no escape from this universe of simulations and simulacra, from hyperreality.

Some of the ideas presented here suggest a contemporary world where visual culture is a particular and central problematic. In art education, where visual culture is emerging as a field of close relation and proximity, the need for a critical analysis of current and future roles for art education is paramount. As mentioned, Baudrillard's theories, at their worst, suggest a nihilistic reality from which there is little hope of escape or resistance. Some feel Baudrillard represents the worst of postmodernist excess and that his ideas not be taken too seriously (Woods, 1999). However cynical

Baudrillard's theories may appear, his concepts and terminology have influenced and been reflected in the work of a multitude of contemporary theorists, including theorists in art education.

The ideas of simulacra and simulation and the effects of mass media on culture have roots in critical theory and the work of Walter Benjamin, and much later Marshall McLuhan. The relationship of image and reality can be seen in the artwork of Andy Warhol and Cindy Sherman, among many others. Art practice and pedagogy engaged with Baudrillard's theories would be concerned with how images are used to alter realities and create new realities or hyperreality. Teachers would be concerned with how students' lives are affected by the media and advertising in relation to disconnecting them from traditional concepts of reality to be replaced by simulated worlds or hyperreality and with how these concepts would inform creative and artistic processes.

### Deleuze and Guattari

The theoretical work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari more than any other reflects the landscape of visual culture. The concept of the rhizome is continually used to characterize the complexity and diversity of the field of visual culture (Mirzoeff, 1998). The rhizome is a lateral plant or tuber structure that grows and crosses in all directions. It is a metaphor for horizontal movement with no central point. The horizontal axis represents a movement away from a dualistic or bifurcated conception of reality, developed in Plato and continuing through to the modernist philosophy of the subject/object split and the Hegelian dialectic. The dualistic reality is contingent on a vertical or hierarchical philosophy contingent on the notions of the unity of the subject

and the subject/object identity. The Deleuze and Guattari project is to attempt to move away from representational, hierarchical and dualistic conceptions of reality and identity to a complex field where identities and representations are always in flux, contingent on diversity and pluralism. This horizontal space is characterized as the rhizome.

Deleuze and Guattari formed a team in the early 1970's to analyze and critique traditional views of the self or subject and society. Their critique was aimed at capitalism, Marxism and orthodox psychoanalysis, including those perspectives put forth by Freud and Lacan.

Deleuze came from the empiricist traditions of philosophy, although his concepts were derived from the ideas of the more marginalized thinkers, Leibniz, Spinoza and Nietzsche. Guattari, a psychoanalyst, was a student of Lacan. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1977), they argued that capitalism functioned as territorializing human life; human beings, through the discourses and institutions of modernity, were dominated by a 'soft' fascism which exerted control into all aspects of daily life. Like Foucault and Debord, they argued that capitalism infiltrated all facets of existence and severely limited the possibility of freedom, expression and satisfaction. Their views were consistent with Marcuse (1966) who saw developing communication technologies and consumerist society as increasingly expanding into peoples' lives and creating a new form of totalitarianism based on the production of false needs. Marcuse argued that capitalism, through the media, sought to penetrate consciousness itself, neutralizing voices of dissent and turning subjects into interchangeable parts of the capitalist machine. Mass culture, through the media, operated by supplanting the status quo into the unconscious resulting in a loss of individuality as people accepted the values

of the “norm”. Thus, capitalism was seen as an authoritarian force reducing people to passive social conformity.

Deleuze and Guattari used the term territorialization to characterize this process. They argued that capitalist systems through discourse and constructed social values and norms attempt to tame or control human desire and creativity by channelling them into organized social arenas or codes such as consumerism, finance, jurisprudence, the nuclear family, social class, and conventional gender roles (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977). A concept closely related to the ideas of Derrida, Foucault and Bourdieu, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the perceived established norm or values of a society, as reinforced through consumerist culture and the media, are often not the true values of that society. Deleuze and Guattari (1977) use the term molarity, a concept used in statistics, to refer to a situation where a quality is held in common by the largest number of group members. However if there are many qualities under review (and if the group is made up of many sub-groups due to ethnicity, race, gender and so on) then the largest common quality subset may be substantially less than 50% of the total members. So the norms and values may often be established on the basis of a minority which assumes the character of a majority group within the society. In molarization the statistically-largest common quality is absolutized and read back into all the members of the group. Before molarization there is diversity, group members and subgroups with different qualities; after the molarizing process there is a quality which characterizes all members of the group, but which some members or subgroups lack. These members must negotiate their identity in relation to the norm set by molarization. All the while, the norm is an illusion, a construct which may be shared by a small percentage of members of the total group.

The qualities produced in the molarity process eventually come to dominate the entire society, until other molarized qualities take over in an ongoing cycle. For Deleuze and Guattari, the molarizing process is a territorializing process which functions at connecting members of a society to the dominant institutions and discourse of that society, neutralizing and therefore restricting voice, creativity and dissent. For Bourdieu this territorialization process would be the function of the habitus which establishes the limits of action within the set norms and patterns of behaviours, while Foucault calls it normalization.

Deleuze and Guattari depart from Marxist notions, such as those put forth by Marcuse, by rejecting the unity of a working class as a myth which suppresses diversity. They see class struggle in Marxism and Neo-Marxism as totalizing strata within society that comprises diverse groups divided along lines of gender, race and ethnicity. The social class aspect of the struggle is for them, one of many aspects which deserve consideration.

In characterizing the diversity of society, Deleuze and Guattari (1977) use the analogy of the rhizome. They contrast the rhizome to the hierarchical, tree-like structure of modernism which they term arborescent. The arborescent structure incorporates any system that functions through binary logic and transcendental systems – beginnings and ends, logical progressions, subject/object and so on. The arborescent paradigm is the modernist paradigm, the reality of totalities, progress and foundations. The rhizome is the reality of diversity, multiplicity and pluralism. In the rhizomatic paradigm there are no centres, only positions which are themselves elusive, ever-changing in relation to other positions with the ever-evolving and expanding field. The rhizome is the power of

open connections and the changing relations between concepts. For Deleuze and Guattari it is a network of connections across which things continually flow and disperse; a continual mapping, an in-between, indefinable space, a becoming (Holland, 1999). As mentioned, the rhizome reflects the landscape of visual culture, but it also reflects the broadening landscape of art education, a field which increasingly develops and expands its parameters of concern under the rubric of art pedagogy. Discourses in the area of multiculturalism, pedagogy of resistance, gay and lesbian studies, technology and media, and discourses relating to many other areas of concern, are constantly emerging within the theoretical field of art education.

Deleuze and Guattari argue for an engagement with the rhizome or the rhisomatic process. They reject the Hegelian notion of the unity of the subject with a set and stable identity and the Lacanian notion of the subject defined by lack and unfulfilled desire. They see capitalism as a process of integration of subjectivities, of identities. Guattari elaborates on capitalism and subjectivity:

...its objective (capitalism) is not an immediate profit, a direct power, but rather to capture subjectivities from within, if I can use this term. And to do so what better technique is there to capture subjectivities than to produce them oneself? It's like those old science fiction films with invader themes, the body snatchers; integrated world capitalism takes the place of the subjectivity, it doesn't have to mess around with class struggles, with conflicts: it expropriates the subjectivity directly because it produces subjectivity itself. It's quite relaxed about it; let's say this is an ideal which this capitalism partially attains. How does it do it? By producing subjectivity, i.e. it produces quite precisely the semiotic chains, the way of representing the world to oneself, the forms of sensitivity, the forms of curriculum, of education, of evolution; it furnishes different age groups, different categories of the population, with a mode of functioning in the same way that it would put computer chips in cars, to guarantee their semiotic functioning. Yet with this in mind, this subjectivity is not necessarily uniform but rather very differentiated. It is differentiated as a function of the requirements of production, as a function of racial segregations, as a function of sexual segregations, as a function of "x" differences, because the objective is not to create a universal subjectivity, but to continue to reproduce something that guarantees power with a

certain number of capitalistic elites that are totally traditional... (Guattari, 1985, p. 6 & 7).

Here Guattari echoes Foucault's notion of control through technologies of the self.

In Deleuze and Guattari desire is a positive concept, it is a collaging process, a process of assemblage that seeks to include and affirm as a way of multiplying possibilities and making connections, stemming not from lack but an overflowing plenitude (Holland, 1999). Desire is a production, a creating of situations, and a process of continual assemblage, of multiple collage. In this process the subject or self is continually being created, assembled, reassembled, in a never-ending process of change and becoming. For Deleuze and Guattari, this process eludes the before and after, it exists in the interstice between became and become, and therefore becoming exists in a continual present. The self in the rhizomatic sphere is characterized by both instability or uncertainty and continual possibility. Deleuze and Guattari relate this continual changing or morphing identity to schizophrenia, and liken the rhizomatic sphere to a world where schizoanalysis is the preferred method to the arborescent paradigms of the paranoid and neurotic. Schizoanalysis refers to a process where the identity and the individual is in a constant state of flux; the individual, through constant interaction with the infinite relations possible within the rhizome, is therefore constantly in a state of formation, of becoming. Identity is never completely fixed or stable.

This process of becoming, for Deleuze and Guattari, is a creative process. It is echoed in the lives of the Dada artists, such as Duchamp, who incorporated their lives into their art. Or Warhol and Beuys, whose lives and art were almost indiscernible from one another. In contemporary cultures, the idea that art and life are inseparable becomes more and more prevalent. With the increase of social and cultural issues related to the

environment and ecology, cultural hegemony, concerns over education, politics, terrorism and war, the lives of students have engaged in more creative and complex associations and relationships with the world. The concepts of Deleuze and Guattari offer a positive and creative way of relating to the world. The rhizomatic process is an artistic process of constant creativity and change.

In *Anti-Oedipus* (1977) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari have developed a system of thought characterized by machines to describe the interaction of organic and inorganic material and the processes of subjectivity. The concept of machines has an integral role in the rhizomatic process. In a general way the machinic process describes the interaction of forms and materials which are both living and inert material, both abstract and concrete. The machine is a structure or contraption of component parts, an assemblage apparatus which produces effects. Atoms, molecules, concepts, through their existence, continually fold and create layers and levels of increasing complexity and diversity, as explained by Deleuze in his analysis of Leibniz (Deleuze, 1988). Through their existence they create and impart energy through the effects of their interaction and assemblage with other machines.

The concept of desire interconnects with this machinic process. Entomologically, desire connotes destiny and through destiny, fate or the fatality of chance. The power to interrupt or exert oneself into the arena of chance requires the intervention of the will. It is here Deleuze uses Nietzsche's concept of the will-to-power as an intervening machinic process which connects desire through the desiring machine to the assemblage or collage with other concepts, other machines (Deleuze, 1986). Desiring machines have a tendency to hybridize or cross-fertilize in a process that multiplies possibilities. It is in

this conception of desire that Deleuze and Guattari distance themselves with the interiority of the subject central to modernist and psychoanalytic conceptions. Desire, rather than residing in the unconscious and interior of the self, becomes an exteriorized machinic process of assemblage (Holland, 1999). In Deleuze and Guattari, subjectivity becomes a process of the id whereby our subjectivity is in continual flux of exteriorization, constantly assembling and reassembling, constructing and deconstructing, collaging and becoming – a process characterized by change and fluidity, continually open to new possibilities. In Deleuze and Guattari, the universe is in a continual process of production and destruction, construction and deconstruction, ever evolving and changing. Their conception of the subject is as a desiring machine which exists with other machines in a fluxual process of universal change, a concept that is simultaneously productive and creative. This process is an existential machinic process of becoming.

... no longer a reading of a pure representation, but a composition of the world, the production of a body without organs in a sense that the organs there are no longer in a relationship of surface-depth positionality, do not postulate a totality itself referenced on other totalities, on other systems of signification that are, in the end, forms of power. Rather these are forms of intensity, forms of existence-position that construct themselves as they represent it, exactly like in art, forms that construct coordinates of existence at the same time as they live them (Guattari, 1985).

There remains the question of how this process, the machinic process of the desiring machine, asserts itself in a capitalist reality that territorializes or funnels our desires through territorial groupings such as the church, the family, the group or institution, or any other social arrangement, that acts on the self through implicit power, or infiltrates the subject and makes it complicitous in its own domination. How do people escape the territorialization process?

Deleuze and Guattari feel the subject must subvert these groupings through deterritorialization. In the territorializing process, as mentioned, the self is infiltrated by the imposed values of the dominating power and becomes a partner in its own subjection – a process which takes place in all aspects of daily life, according to Marcuse (1966) and Foucault (Sheridan, 1980). Territorialization impedes the movement beyond the structures and strata that act to channel energies and creativity. In capitalism the context is the soft manipulation of the self by media and the forces of consumerism.

Deterritorialization involves abstracting from a particular context, such as pervasive consumerism, in such a way that new connections or assemblages are formed that decode the interpretive matrix of that context. It is to grasp, analyze or decode the base context of the paradigms of one's existence in such a way that flows which had been impeded or limited within that context or those paradigms are given a way of proceeding beyond the limits of that context (Holland, 1999). Deterritorialization is a simultaneous process with reterritorialization – since capitalism requires social grouping to function, there must be reterritorializations into new groupings of the state, the family, the group, and so on. For Deleuze and Guattari, this process means becoming free to move into a new line of flight. It essentially means to be able to perceive the contextual paradigm one is in and by perceiving it, find a way out of it. Lines of flight can be realized through expression and creativity, i.e. Einstein and relativity, Cezanne and the reconception of forms in painting, le Corbusier and the reconception of space in architecture, Woolf or de Beauvoir and the feminist perspective, or, perhaps, the reconceptualization of art education through the lens of visual culture. Lines of flight are not characterized by antagonisms, they move beyond rationality, bifurcation, logical and dialectical processes. If antagonisms are seen

as antithetical state thought structures, their predominance in society would create violence and confrontation. The line of flight allows for complexity, diversity and pluralism. Guattari (1985) argues this process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization can be seen in the work of Debussy, the way he reconstructed entities to go beyond the boundaries he confronted.

These entities obviously produce a vision of the world, they produce a world, they produce universes of reference that have their own logic in the same way that a musician like Debussy, at one point, invented a new type of relationship of musical writing, a new type of scale, a new type of melodic and harmonic line, and suddenly produced new universes and fertilized an entire series of machinic phyla for the future of music (Guattari, 1985).

Deleuze and Guattari attempt to create a form of subjectivity that erases the Platonic mind/body dualism, and avoiding a holism or monism, they move subjectivity to a third position, not a dualism or a monism but an assemblage or multiplicity characterized by intensities and flows (Holland, 1999).

How do these ideas connect with teaching art? The concept of territorialization presented here relates to Foucault's concept of normalization and Bourdieu's concept of habitus. The territorialization process involves the continual imposition of limits and boundaries. The creative process continually comes up against the imposed limits and boundaries. As mentioned, creators often develop concepts that go beyond the territorialized borders, the imposed limitations of the paradigms they live within. To foster creativity in art students it is important to analyze and foster critical awareness of territorializing processes – to deterritorialize and reterritorialize. We need to teach students to continually look at their worlds creatively and find ways to move beyond imposed limitations and to express this in their artwork.

For Deleuze and Guattari, creativity and artistic process are seen as endeavours that occupy a third space, they operate outside the dualistic parameters of rational, logical processes. They are processes of continual deterritorialization and reterritorialization. For Deleuze, they are also processes of resistance. "When we say to create is to resist, it's effective, positive; the world would not be what it is if not for art, people could not hold on anymore" (Deleuze, 1988-89, p. 14). Deleuze sees art as "...freeing life from prisons that humans have created and that's what resistance is. That's obviously what artists do, ... there is no art that is not also a liberation of life forces, there is not art of death" (Deleuze, 1988-89, p. 14).

Deleuze and Guattari's work is covered here in a very superficial manner. Together they covered a vast area of theoretical ground and because their thoughts attempt a framework outside of traditional theory many of their concepts and much of their vocabulary are new and original, adding to the complexity of the work. Deleuze and Guattari's work speaks to those who are actively deconstructing molar identities and processes of molarization, or deconstructing mainstream, status quo processes of social control. Their work challenges critical awareness of the arenas of ecology, of marginal voices which affirm desire outside the boundaries of unified identity and normality, and of the reinvention or reterritorialization of life outside a market workplace/consumer situation. Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis is a process which challenges status quo strata and structures and which pushes people to challenge traditional assumptions of sanity, security and identity. Entering the rhizome, for them, is a pragmatic process, a praxis, which is characterized by instability and uncertainty, but which simultaneously is a process of affirmation and of power. Taking the critical stance of the rhizomatic

process is to resist the imposition of objectifying and territorializing or controlling processes extant in society. It is to enter a realm of resistance to power structures, thereby gaining power for oneself. Art making and other creative endeavours are part of this affirming and positive process. It is a politics and pragmatics of daily life.

### Conclusion

The contributions of postmodern and poststructuralist theorists to visual culture studies is substantial. Their theories reflect a visual culture which, like the rhizome, is boundless and without centre. It is a field of study which thrives on flux and uncertainty and eludes stability and fixed definition.

For art education, these ideas present many challenges. Current curriculum, in many cases, continues to be embedded in a traditional or modernist paradigm. Art education theory would benefit from curriculum which questions and problematizes traditional views of art history and established perspectives entrenched in the Western canon. The enlightened art teacher will push students to question status quo, to look critically at traditional paradigms, and to attempt to move beyond the limits and boundaries imposed by those paradigms. To deconstruct or deterritorialize the limiting paradigms of centralist foundational thought, of forces of normalization, of structures of habitus and territorialization should become a major focus of the contemporary art teacher.

### 3.4 Other Discourses of Visual Culture Studies

#### Introduction

Anthropology and the social sciences, structuralism and poststructuralism, Russian formalism, semiotics, critical theory, psychoanalysis, philosophy, postcolonial studies, feminist theory, and film studies are some of the areas that have influenced the emergence of visual cultural studies. Within the world of academia, visual culture studies became a reaction to the once-held belief that the university or academic setting was neutral and apolitical. Visual culture studies and discourse tended to challenge the political neutrality of all institutions, especially in relation to the visual (Walker & Chaplin, 1997). Discourses first emerged within the fields of art history and criticism, and within the humanities and social sciences. Discourses of visual culture studies were first informed by an engagement with traditional art history, which, contested first by feminist theory, broadened to include feminist writing and then issues related to postcolonial theory (Walker & Chaplin, 1997). Film, media and communication studies were clearly areas concerned with the visual and they brought visual culture studies into an engagement with consumer culture.

Marshall McLuhan (1964), in *Understanding Media*, argued that education was the “best defence” against the assault of the new world of electronic media. According to Walker and Chaplin (1997) many academics agree with McLuhan:

... they see their task as one of demystifying and demythologizing the media in the belief that such knowledge will arm students against the blandishment and lies of the commercial media and political propaganda, (p. 7)

Many academics within the field of cultural studies would see this engagement with media propaganda as central to their terrain. For the terrain of visual culture studies,

however, the machinations of the media and consumerist culture form only an aspect of the field. The way images have made their way through history, whether as art, as commentary, or as documentation, are of concern to visual culture studies. Also of concern to the field, as shown in the previous sections of this chapter are the discourses that have been traditionally marginalized within the Western canon, including discourses of gender and sexuality, of race and ethnicity, of class or socio-economic issues.

Shohat and Stam characterize visual culture studies as polycentric.

The emphasis on 'polycentrism' is not on spatial or primary points of origins or on a finite list of centers but rather on a systematic principle of differentiation, rationality and linkage. No single community or part of the world, whatever its economic or political power, should be epistemologically privileged. (in Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 46)

Although contrary to the a-centric ideas expressed by Derrida and reinforced by Deleuze and Guattari's characterization of the rhizome as an ever-expanding space without centres, the significance of Shohat and Stam is suggesting visual culture studies as a space of diversity and difference.

For Irit Rogoff, visual culture studies goes beyond the field of vision and the production and study of images.

At one level we certainly focus on the centrality of vision and the visual world in producing meanings, establishing and maintaining aesthetic values, gender stereotypes and power relations within culture. At another level we recognize that opening up the field of vision as an arena in which cultural meanings get constituted, also simultaneously anchors to it an entire range of analyses and interpretations of the audio, the spatial, and the psychic dynamics of spectatorship. Thus visual culture opens up an entire world of intertextuality in which images, sounds and spatial delineations are read onto and through one another, lending ever-accruing layers of meanings and of subjective responses to each encounter we might have with film, TV, advertising, art works, buildings or urban environments. (in Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 14)

Rogoff's words suggest the range of visual culture is beyond just the visual and relates to areas informed by other senses as they are interconnected to the visual. The text accompanying the advertisement image, the sounds of the music video, film, or television program – as visual culture is borderless and boundless, so too is visual culture studies.

This section examines some of the discourses that inform visual culture studies beyond what has been presented here in the areas of cultural studies and postmodern and poststructural theory. Visual culture studies has an obvious role to play in discourses related to media and cultural studies, but has also been concerned with the discourses of areas or fields of study that have been neglected within modernist and traditional paradigms. Some of these areas, which have been given more credence within the postmodern paradigm include, as mentioned, discourses related to issues of gender and sexuality, socio-economic issues, and issues of race and ethnicity. These issues tend to be addressed or argued from the fields of feminism, postcolonialism, multiculturalism, and theory related to gender and sexuality. In art education, especially in North America, these areas of discourse have gained a more prominent focus within recent years. In the United States, the National Art Education Association has established caucuses to address issues of women's rights, social theory, multiethnic concerns and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered issues (queer theory). This section presents a brief analysis of the work of prominent theorists within some of these areas, and examines connections their work has to visual culture studies and discusses some implications for art education.

This section examines the work of theorists engaged in feminist, gender and sexuality issues under the title *Feminism, Gender and Sexuality*. Issues related to race and ethnicity are under the title *Postcolonial theory*.

## **Feminism, Gender and Sexuality**

Today the fields of study incorporating feminism and issues of gender and sexuality are diverse and complex. Notable figures in early modernism were the writers Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein, and later, Simone de Beauvoir. After the second world war, feminists struggled to implement equal rights and benefits in all areas of society, efforts which have continued through to contemporary times. Feminists have been divided on how best to achieve their objectives. Warren Hedges (1996) at Southern Oregon University has provided a taxonomy of feminist intellectual traditions which includes the following positions: (1) liberal feminism which seeks equal rights for women via political and civil channels; (2) cultural feminism, which seeks to recover lost female voices from the past; (3) separatism, which seeks to establish female-only spaces and fora where women can determine their own values and beliefs; and (4) queer theory, which explores the marginalization, radicalism and value of marginalized sexual identities (e.g. homosexuality) (Hedges, 1996). Hedges also mentions anti and pro-pornography theorists, as well as other “hybrid” feminisms which derive impetus from other theoretical schools, such as poststructuralist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, and materialist feminism.

Studies of gender and sexuality tend to fall within two main areas: theorists who accept the distinction between gender as nurture and sex as nature and are interested in

exploring marginalized subject positions, and theorists who follow the poststructuralist and postmodern positions, whereby everything including sex and race is determined by language and ideology. In general, the positions of theorists of feminism, gender or sexuality tend to argue the need for awareness of conceptions of gender and sexuality being performative and constructed forms of identity.

Michel Foucault has been extremely influential on the development of gender and sexuality theory. The French poststructural feminists, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous, influenced by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, either evolved theories related to these theorists or rejected them entirely to form theories more aligned with feminist concerns. Eve Sedgwick was influential in establishing the critical school of queer studies. Judith Butler followed Sedgwick's lead to help make queer studies an important field of theoretical discussion. Laura Mulvey, influenced by Foucault's notion of "the gaze" has explored feminist issues related to media and film studies. bell hooks, a teacher, writer and cultural critique has analyzed society extensively in her writings on issues of racism, sexism and homophobia.

### Julia Kristeva

Julia Kristeva is a French poststructural feminist who follows the general parameters of Lacan's theories on psychosexual development, but revises Lacan in offering a more central position for the maternal and the feminine. Her work attempts to develop a less sexist and phallogocentric model for the subject than both Lacan and Freud. Kristeva resists labels such as theory and feminist. She sees her work as allowing practice to test theory, letting the two to enter into a dialectical relationship

(Kristeva, 1980). Although dedicated to the feminist movement, Kristeva's position is of an intellectual woman who need not back any one particular movement or field, but remain to whatever degree possible critical of the exclusionary nature of particular groups. In this vein she attempts to include a transdisciplinary approach using aspects of psychoanalytic theory, philosophy, historic analysis and semiology or "semanalyse" (semanalysis) which she defines as a critique of meaning, of its elements and laws (Kristeva, 1980). She feels the position of the intellectual should be one of dissent. "Dissenting from all political power groups, be they in the government or in the opposition, the intellectual's position should be one of continuously challenging all orthodoxies" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 9).

In summary, Kristeva's work represents a critical reinterpretation of Freud and Lacan in relation to the feminine which she felt was seriously lacking in their work. She comes at her analytics through an engagement with semiology as much as with psychoanalysis, as influenced by her study of Russian formalism and a long-standing association with Roland Barthes, who often extolled her work. In her unique analysis of the art of Giotto and Bellini, Kristeva outlined a dual function of colour in art: (1) to subvert the oppressive nature of the symbolic order (language/culture) everpresent in the narrative representation function of the artwork and (2) by connecting the artist and viewer through their instinctual reactions with the maternal and their own physical self, their bodies (and the relation to *jouissance* – a sense of joy or ecstasy). Colour plays a liberating role, freeing the self from the dominant and rational aspect of language and its tautological connection to ideology. Kristeva's work thus has significant implications for art education.

## Luce Irigaray

Luce Irigaray is a French poststructural psychoanalytic theorist and philosopher. Along with Kristeva and Cixous, Irigaray has criticized feminist efforts toward a single, totalizing and unified feminist perspective as undermining plural perspectives and narratives of women. She aligns an all-encompassing feminist perspective with phallogocentric or male-dominant theory, which fails to account for experiences of women across class, race and culture. Irigaray sees pluralistic and marginal feminist perspectives as vital in the resistance to patriarchal dogma.

In her doctoral thesis in philosophy, published under the title *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985a), Irigaray criticized Lacanian psychoanalytic theory from a feminist perspective, which led to her expulsion from the University of Paris VIII (Vincennes). The primary strands in her work include: philosophy, psychoanalysis, linguistics, social critique, feminism, and gender issues.

Irigaray's work in general represents a critique of phallogocentrism (combining phallus and logos or rationality) of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. Irigaray has arrived at the significance of difference or alterity as in Lyotard and Derrida but from the perspective of gender and psychoanalysis. Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva feel it is important to speak from a different space or location, from a more marginal space and to speak in ways that subvert the linearity and unity of the patriarchal order. This marginal space would represent a plurality of places and voices, an excess; the self and identity, then, are fragmentary, multifaceted and in continual creation and flux. Progressive works of art are also seen as fragmentary, incomplete and non-systematic

(Ward, 1999). This view would regard mainstream popular or mass culture as representative of the patriarchal paradigm.

Unlike Kristeva, Irigaray places the visual in relation to sexuality in the terrain of the masculine. Where masculine sexuality is based on the visual, looking, the male gaze and is predicated on the phallogocentric (male-centred) system, female sexuality would counter vision with touch. Irigaray sees female sexuality as a commodity and the female as a product within this system. She feels a system based on female sexuality would substitute touch for vision and blur the boundaries or distinctions made between self and other or subject and object; this system would privilege multiplicity and plurality and undermine phallogocentric concepts of commodity and ownership. In many respects, her work offers feminist interpretations on the Deleuze and Guattarian model.

### Helene Cixous

Cixous' work is aligned with and interconnects with many of the ideas presented in the work of Kristeva and Irigaray. Her intellectual influences include psychoanalytic theory, deconstruction, history and literary criticism. She has written extensively on a number of subjects, but her thought is best represented in the essays *Sorties* (1975a, translated in 1987), *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975b, translated in 1981) and *Coming to Writing* (1991).

As in Irigaray, Cixous centres her work in the female body. She sees the feminine undermined within a male-dominant system and by male hegemony as represented in Western traditions which privilege the male in relation to rational thought and subsequent binary oppositions. As in Irigaray, Cixous analyzes the male economy of looking, the

male gaze which she terms a voyeur's theory in relation to the work of Lacan and Freud. This male economy of desire acts as an objectification, expulsion and fragmentation of the feminine. For Cixous the feminine is plural in its drives and desires. Cixous posits the importance of writing in a female voice located at the space of the female body, a position marginal to culture dominated by the paternal. Cixous associates this marginal position with *écriture féminine*, a discourse originating in the pre-Oedipal drives, the instinctual drives of the body. Unlike Irigaray, Cixous argues that *écriture féminine* is not tied to one sex over another, but is a type of writing predicated on inclusion of the other. She would cite the work of Jean Genet or James Joyce as *écriture féminine*, males writing in a feminine voice. This type of writing fragments, disrupts and destabilizes traditional concepts of writing. Cixous feels the *écriture féminine* will destabilize the system of binary oppositions and the hegemony of male discourse and culture. Along with Kristeva and Irigaray, Cixous' discourse presents a marginal voice of difference and alterity to the more mainstream or male-positioned discourses. For art education, the work of these theorists inform from non-traditional perspectives.

### Judith Butler

Judith Butler was influenced by Lacanian psychoanalysis in establishing her position in the examination of gender. She questions the traditionally held view that certain gendered behaviours are natural, and highlights throughout her work that gendered behaviour is a learned performance, an act which is imposed on us by the social norm of heterosexuality (Butler, 1990). Through her work Butler challenged essentialist gender identities, and problematizes traditional views of how gender identities are

perceived within social and cultural contexts. Identity, for Butler, is an illusion which is simultaneously created by our actions or performances. Following Foucault's (1978) work on sexuality, she parts with traditionally held beliefs of stable identities and set gender differences, and argues that this perspective is a result of subtle and blatant social coercions (Butler, 1990). Aligned with Kristeva's notions of the abject (a feminine position preceding the male dominant symbolic order of language in Lacan, Butler uses the domain of the abject to argue critically against the symbolic order which acts in an oppressive manner against perceived notions of the feminine identity. By highlighting the artificial, proscribed and performative nature of gender identity, Butler problematizes the very definition of gender and challenges status quo conceptions of identity in a resistance aimed at the rights of marginalised identities, especially gay and lesbian identity. Butler's work has influenced the discourses of gender and sexuality in visual culture studies through her questioning the existence of gender, seeing it as a product of culture.

### Laura Mulvey

Laura Mulvey makes use of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis in her examination of how women are portrayed in film. She considers film to be an instrument of the male gaze, continually producing representations of women in relation to patriarchal and sexual fantasies and from a male point of view (Mulvey in Chandler, 1992). In studying cinematic spectatorship, Mulvey has analyzed how subject positions are constructed by media texts, rather than investigating individual viewing practices in specific social contexts. She uses Freud's notion of scopophilia, which refers to the

pleasure involved in looking at other peoples' bodies as objects, often eroticized, to argue how film viewers will objectify females presented on the screen through a voyeuristic process. Mulvey holds that in patriarchal society pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female (Mulvey in Chandler, 1992). She argues that traditional films present men as active, controlling subjects and treat women as passive objects of male desire, and do not allow women to be sexually desiring subjects. This controlling male gaze objectifies the woman and presents her as an image or spectacle. Mulvey sees the cinematic codes of popular films as being "obsessively subordinated to the neurotic needs of the male ego" (Mulvey in Chandler, 1992, p. 33).

### bell hooks

bell hooks is an African American feminist theorist engaged as a teacher, writer and cultural critic. hooks consistently examines and criticizes social places where sexism, racism, and homophobia are found. She shows a commitment to personal experience, to anti-essentialist understandings of identity, and to maintaining an activist agenda in writing, teaching and everyday life. hooks' work focuses on an array of alternative and mainstream cultural practices, from representations of race and gender to systemic and institutionalized oppression. In *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981) and in later works she explores black popular culture, the multicultural trend in education, and the development of new critical methods appropriate to African American writing and art.

hooks seeks a geography, territory, or space for women which does not hide difference behind the veil of universal masculinity. Similar to theory introduced by

Deleuze and Guattari (1978) and Homi K. Bhabba (1994), hooks brings the “third-space” into her work. In *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life*, she writes of a third-space, an alternative spatiality of continual disruption in which the politics of location and identity are constantly being reformed and questioned: “this space of radical openness is a margin – a profound edge. Locating oneself there is difficult yet necessary. It is not a safe place. One is always at risk. One needs a community of resistance” (hooks, 1991, p. 149). For hooks, marginality is a space of resistance, and throughout her work she argues for a new arrangement of place, politics and identity, a space of dislocation. Men and women experience space differently, therefore hooks’ work is often concerned with examining differences of gendered spaces.

### Conclusion

These theorists are engaged in discourses that inform visual culture studies along the various lines of feminism, gender and sexuality. Themes consistent throughout their work include the questioning or problematizing status quo and patriarchal conceptions of gender, sexuality and feminine identity. They are representative of a vast and growing field of discourse in feminism, gender studies and queer theory and are presented here to give a very small view of discourse within these fields as a whole.

The work of these theorists has been influential on art education theorist whose work is concerned with similar themes. Theorists will often cross the boundaries of the different fields – for example, the work of art educator Dipti Desai has been concerned with feminist, gender, multicultural and postcolonial issues. Her work is reflective of the

way visual culture studies operates in relation to transdisciplinarity and unbounded pluralistic discursive practices.

## **Postcolonial Theory**

Postcolonialism is a critical perspective through which to view colonialism. It involves the social, political, economic and cultural practices which arise in response and resistance to colonialism (Loomba, 1998).

Colonial scholars have often interpreted religious, scholarly, political and artistic qualities of the Orient as either interior or as an exotic other. This objectification of the Orient has been used in colonial discourse and culture to justify the colonization of the East. Colonial powers legitimized their oppression of Eastern cultures by citing what to them was their superior justice system. Therefore, European cultures justified their colonization on the pretext of being keepers of the law and rulers of an inferior race. Postcolonialism problematizes the Western humanistic metanarratives on the basis of which colonialism was justified. Colonialism, therefore, now exists within the political framework of the postcolonial context (Loomba, 1998).

Franz Fanon is considered one of the founders of postcolonial discourse. In his work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), Fanon problematized the Colonial discourse and argued for a democratic revolution by the proletarian and sub-proletarian classes of Algeria against French colonialism. Fanon uses psychoanalytic to argue that the impact of colonialism had adverse effects on the colonized subject's psyche. Fanon argues against Western stereotypes that suggest the colonized subject is biologically different from the colonizer. He argues against those who claim that colonialism was rooted in

racial, psychological, and biological differences between the colonized and the colonizer, and suggests colonialism caused the racial differences and effaced black identities.

Edward Said made a strong impact on the formation of postcolonial discourse with his book, *Orientalism* (1979). Said examined how the colonized is constructed by the colonizer and how the Orient (today the Middle East), through European texts, art and media, represented the Orient as strange and exotic. He examines how the colonized came to be depicted as “other” and how this led to a constructed dichotomy of the superiority of the West over non-Western peoples and cultures.

Homi K. Bhabha analyzes the ways in which the identities of the colonized and the colonizer are constantly in flux, a process he refers to as hybridization. In *The other question: the stereotype and colonial discourse* (1983, in Evans & Hall, 1999) he examines racial and sexual forms of difference through what he refers to as a double articulation: “the body is always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power (p. 371). Bhabha argues that through colonial discourse “race” is inscribed on the body of the subject through diverse ‘visible’ signifiers; race and sexuality, he argues, fall more within the domain of vision than other differences. Through colonial discourse “race” is inscribed on the body of the subject through diverse ‘visible’ signifiers; race and sexuality, he argues, fall more within the domain of vision than other differences. Through colonial discourses these differences are made to seem ‘real’ and therefore ‘true’. Bhabha argues that because of these differences that are seen (skin colour and other ethnic markers in race and biological differences of gender), the differences are emphasized through the stereotyping process as outside of historical processes, outside of

construction, and as part of nature, and for this reason more verifiably true (1983, in Evans & Hall, 1999).

Gayatri Spivak in *Can the subaltern speak?* (1988) combines the fields of postcolonialism and feminism to examine what she sees as collusion between colonialism and patriarchy. The subaltern, which in Spivak's case are marginalized Indian women, are doubly oppressed by the colonizing culture dominated by the white male, and by the men of their own culture. Spivak argues that because of this double oppression, the colonized woman rarely, if ever, is able to verbally oppose her oppressed position. Spivak suggests a need for attention to be given to the problem of silenced women and asks that their silence be questioned.

Postcolonial theory has influenced the diverse discourses of people with backgrounds in non-Western cultures but has also been influential on the multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural discourses within Western cultures. In terms of visual culture studies, postcolonial discourse is concerned with how people have been or continue to be marginalized by Western or dominant cultures according to race and ethnicity. This would include groups living within Western society or cultures. More specifically, visual culture discourse is concerned with how individuals or groups are portrayed visually and how visual depictions reinforce stereotypes and support domination or privilege one culture over another. In art education such depictions may take the form of art objects, such as those displaying subjectification through slavery, exoticizing non-Western cultures, and generally objectifying non-Western and non-caucasian individuals and cultures by portraying them as inferior or as other, and therefore as less privileged.

### **3.5 Conclusion: Toward a Characterization of Visual Culture Studies**

Despite their similarities many of the theories discussed here which characterize the field of visual culture studies are diverse and in some cases contradictory in nature. Many of the theoretical positions are not directly concerned with visual culture, such as those of Helene Cixous or Jacques Derrida but in all of the theoretical frameworks taken up here can be seen background positions other theorists have used in developing and expressing views more closely associated with visual culture. The focus here has been to analyze the positions of key theorists whose work has had a strong impact on the diverse theories and conceptions that make up the field of visual culture studies. The common thread which runs through the work of these theorists is either the problematizing of the visual or the problematizing of the cultural arenas of contemporary cultures. This problematization tends to be concentrated in two main areas: the work of theorists who are aligned with the paradigm of late capitalism and theorists whose work is aligned with the postmodernist paradigm. Theorists who are grouped in the late capitalist paradigm, Frankfurt school theorists, Jurgen Habermas, Frederic Jameson, and to some extent Pierre Bourdieu, to name a few, tend to follow tenets of Marxist theory or argue their theoretical positions with terminology based in Marxism. Many of the theorists working in the field of cultural studies are aligned with the late modernist paradigm. The postmodern and poststructural theorists tend to view Marxism as a centralized and totalizing theory, a paradigm which is unable to address the diversity and complexity of the contemporary sphere.

A third area of work is done by theorists who view both these paradigms as being aligned with white, Western patriarchy, as most of the foundational theorists within both paradigms tend to be white European males. Most of the theorists whose work is based within this third position write within the field of feminism or within the fields concerned with gender, sexuality, race or which fall within the area of postcolonial theory. Many of these theorists, such as Irigaray, Butler and hooks cross traditional boundaries, preferring to write from perspectives that are not easily positioned within a theoretical matrix.

Whether theorists argue from a late capitalist perspective, a postmodern or poststructuralist perspective or reject both in creating new positions from which to address and argue their concerns, all of the theorists covered here tend to have resistance as a common theme throughout their work. Whether this is aimed against social structures of power and normalizing values, as in neo-Marxist positions, or against centralized totalizing theories and the unity and stability of identity, as in theories within the postmodern paradigm, or from the marginalized positions of feminism, sexuality and race, resistance to the operations of power within society and culture can be seen as a major theme of concern throughout the theoretical background of visual culture studies.

A second major theme which characterizes visual culture studies is transdisciplinarity. Walker and Chaplin in *visual culture : An Introduction* (1997) list thirty-four academic disciplines that intersect visual culture. Visual culture as a field of study crosses traditional boundaries and itself resists traditional boundaries and limitations. Mirzoeff (1998) explains:

Visual culture ought not to sit comfortably in already existing university structures. It should rather form part of an emerging body of postdisciplinary academic endeavours from cultural studies, gay and lesbian studies, to African-American studies, and so on, whose focus crosses the borders of traditional

academic disciplines at will. The viability of each approach relies on their continued ability to challenge their host institutions, not in their easy absorption within them (Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 11).

Mirzoeff goes on to explain that rather than regarding visual culture as an academic discipline he sees it as "... a fluid interpretive structure, centred on understanding the response to visual media of both individuals and groups in everyday life" (Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 11).

Evans and Hall (*Visual Culture : The Reader*, 1999) characterize the emergence of visual culture as a response to studies that emerged from an engagement with structuralism and its focus on language and text. They see visual culture studies as an area where the visual was not given adequate focus within the field of cultural and media studies.

For Evans and Hall, the visual has been an area of neglect within the larger field of cultural analysis. Evans and Hall (1999), Mirzoeff (1998), Walker and Chaplin (1997) to name a few, see the need to address the visual within culture as an important contemporary concern.

The visual as a contemporary concern calls for its problematization within the contemporary socio-cultural sphere. The analysis of visual culture presented here, then, sees the focus of visual culture studies as having four major characteristics: (1) visual culture as a need to problematize the visual within the social and cultural realms; (2) visual culture as a sphere of resistance to dominant forms of power and control within contemporary cultures and societies; and (3) visual culture studies as a transdisciplinary and multi-perspective field of study that continually crosses borders and boundaries of a diverse array of academic disciplines and areas of study and research, and (4) visual

culture studies as an inclusionary field encompassing discourse from all areas of the socio-cultural sphere, especially discourse of groups traditionally marginalized.

In conclusion, the diverse ideas, positions, and theoretical frameworks taken up here are meant to characterize the complex field of visual culture studies and to show the diverse ways the visual has come to be problematized within contemporary cultures.

## CHAPTER IV – MODELS OF ART EDUCATION

### 4.1 Background and Structure of Art Education

**What art education models intersect with visual culture? What art education models are resistant to interactions with visual culture?**

Today the field of art education has developed and continues to change to reflect the diversity and pluralism extant in contemporary societies. The many facets and cultures existing within societies have come to be reflected more in pedagogical practice. To mirror the changing paradigms within contemporary societies and cultures the field of education needed to be reconceptualized. Pinar describes this shift in *Understanding Curriculum*:

By the early 1980's, the movement to reconceptualize the curriculum field lost the cohesive bonds that maintained the coalition during its first years of struggle and enthusiasm. Opposition to the traditional field was no longer powerful enough force for coalition, as the movement had succeeded in delegitimizing the ahistorical, atheoretical field of the pre-1970 period. With the continued resistance of Marxist scholars to a multi-perspectival conception of reconceptualization and curriculum, with the emergence of autobiographical studies as a major force in the field, with the current expansion of existential and phenomenological scholarship, with the burgeoning of feminist theory, and the appearance of poststructuralism in curriculum studies, the original reconceptualist movement can be said to have disappeared. Its success was its demise as a movement. The Reconceptualization had occurred (Pinar et al, 1995, 1996, p. 238).

In the late 1970's, Laura Chapman in *Approaches to Art Education* wrote about similar changes taking place within the field of art education:

The history of art education in the public schools is marked by shifts in territory and in practice. At various times art programs have been dominated by one of three overriding concerns: developing the well-rounded child through art, promoting the knowledge and appreciation of art as a subject, and fostering the ability to relate art to daily living. The time is ripe for a fusion of these three

concerns: personal fulfillment through art, appreciation of the artistic heritage; awareness of the role of art in society (Chapman, 1978, p. 18).

Chapman's words project an insight into the changing field of art education, although her term "artistic heritage" would more appropriately be "heritages" to reflect the diverse cultures and sub-cultures within the contemporary landscape, and "the role of art in society" would more appropriately be termed "the roles of art within the pluralistic arenas of social spheres". Chapman addresses some of these issues when she states:

Indeed, at no time have we been so aware of the stereotypes – social, racial, sexual, vocational – that past educational practices and narrow concepts of art have helped to create. If it is easy to endorse a single doctrine of art education, it is also hazardous. What we need is a concept of education that will help children to appreciate the artistry in varied life styles and to wisely shape their own. This is one of the main challenges facing art education..." (Chapman, 1978, p. 18).

As we saw in Pinar (1995, 1996), some of Chapman's insights have taken place within the fields of education, and curriculum more specifically, and more recently have infiltrated the field of art education. Pinar's text characterizes these changes by looking at curriculum through the lenses of a diversity of perspectives, including historical, political, as racial text, as gender text, as postmodern or poststructural text, as phenomenological text, as autobiographical and biographical text, as aesthetic text, as theological text, as institutionalized text, as international text, and so on (Pinar et al, 1995, 1996). Pinar's attempt to characterize the field of curriculum in this way reflects the concerns that dominate the complexities and diverse nature of the contemporary social sphere. Pinar expresses a limited view of the complexity of the current field of art education. By characterizing the field in relation to the "aesthetic text" he somewhat limits the diversity which makes up the current field. The field of art education is, rather,

more closely analogous of the way he has expressed his reconceptualized understanding of the current field of curriculum.

The area of aesthetics is but one arena within the contemporary field of art education. Other areas of research, theory, and pedagogical practice that fall within the current paradigm include history or historical approaches, socio-cultural approaches, policy studies, approaches concerned with democracy and social reconstruction, teacher education, approaches concerned with cognitive and artistic development, approaches concerned with feminism and issues of gender and sexuality, approaches concerned with issues of race and ethnicity, approaches related to comprehensive arts education stemming from Discipline-Based art education (DBAE), approaches concerned with media and technology, approaches concerned with curriculum assessment and approaches which fall within the sphere of visual culture.

Today, the work and concerns of art education theorists tend to fall within these diverse areas. Many theorists work within the parameters of the areas outlined here, but the cross-disciplinary nature of their work also places them beyond the boundaries of any one area. For example, the work of Dipti Desai crosses the boundaries of race and ethnic issue, feminism and gender, democracy and social reconstruction and visual culture.

Following is a diagram which attempts to place art education theorists within the above frames. This is an arbitrary look at the field of art education, and both the areas or frames suggested here and the theorists represented are in no way intended as a comprehensive characterization of the field of art education. Rather it is simply an attempt to characterize the layout of current concerns and to place some of the current

theorists within these frames according to some of the common themes existing within their work.

The following chapter will review the literature of some art education theorists and attempt to show how their work intersects with the larger field of visual culture studies.

# **CHAPTER V – CONTEXTS OF VISUAL CULTURE IN ART EDUCATION**

## **5.1 Intersections of Art Education with Visual Culture**

### **What art education models intersect with visual culture?**

This section looks at three strands of categories which encompass the models of art education as outlined here. These categories include models that share a strong correlation with ideas and concepts relevant to visual culture studies, models whose theories exist in a contradictory, problematic or ambiguous relationship with visual culture studies, models that have no direct relationship with visual culture studies but which may intersect with visual culture studies indirectly.

### **Art Education Models which Correlate with Visual Culture Studies**

The models correlational with visual culture studies would include democratic concerns/social reconstruction, socio-cultural issues, race/ethnic issues, issues of gender and sexuality, media and technology, and visual culture. That a growing field within art education which may be called “visual culture education” shares commonality with visual culture studies seems quite obvious. In connection with the literature review conducted here, fields of study within art education which deal with gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, media and technology and socio-cultural issues also share obvious connections with visual culture studies. Democratic issues and social reconstruction is

interconnected with the work of theorists within the late modernist field of inquiry, the poststructural/postmodern domain, and with the work of theorists outside the boundaries of these theoretical perspectives. Social reconstruction is a movement that seeks social change within the institution of education. In *Conflicting Conceptions of Education*, Eisner and Valance characterize those endorsing the views of social reconstruction:

Social reconstructionists see schooling as an agency of social change, and they demand that education be relevant both to the student's interests and to society's needs. Curriculum is conceived to be an active force having direct impact on the whole fabric of its human and social context (1974, p. 135).

Social reconstruction has its roots in the work of Lester Frank Ward. In *Dynamic Sociology* (1883), he argued that "human beings could create social change and that, in fact, the primary aim of education was the preparation of individuals to participate in social change (in Pinar et al, 1995, 1996, p. 104). These views were echoed by John Dewey in *Democracy and Education* (1916). Tanner and Tanner (1990) describe Dewey's stance:

Hence, in much of the literature in curriculum history the term social efficiency is interpreted in the narrow and evil sense as the subordination of individuals to the demands of the industrial system and the authority of a ruling class. For Dewey there was another side of social efficiency – a side having a far different and broader meaning (being able to take a determining part in the political process and in the exercise of justice in daily life); and a socio-psychological meaning (complete development of personality – the recognition of the uniqueness of the individual as essential to the well-being of a democratic society) (Tanner and Tanner, 1990, p. 24).

Dewey's interpretation of social efficiency is more connected to the area of progressive education related to the democratic concerns of the individual. In curriculum development these concerns were later to be taken up in the theoretical work of Peter McLaren, Henry Giroux, Elizabeth Ellsworth, Michael Apple, and others. Giroux

developed critical pedagogy, which was educational theory developed from the concerns of and his engagement with the Frankfurt school. Ellsworth wrote a scathing criticism of critical pedagogy in *Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy* (1989), where she attacked critical pedagogy along several lines including from the feminist perspective where she saw it as reinforcing repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination. Michael Apple in the early 1990's reacted to what he regarded in the apparent turn toward postmodern theory as a turning away from perspectives of struggle and resistance. In *Ideology and Curriculum* (1990 a), Apple argued for maintaining a class perspective in order that a critical perspective of resistance not be disregarded within curriculum and education.

In Pinar (1995, 96), understanding curriculum as political text falls within the traditions of social reconstruction. In the field of art education, this line of understanding has been developed by theorists engaged with democratic issues. Patricia Stuhr, in *Multicultural art education and social reconstruction* (1994), analyzes how multicultural approaches found in general education relate to art education, and further discusses the relationship between multicultural approaches and social reconstruction. Stuhr argues that multicultural education teaches social action skills which help students shape and control the worlds in which they live (Stuhr, 1994). Using the work of Sleeter and Grant (1988), Stuhr outlines five multicultural approaches to education but emphasizes that only one, "Education That is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist", is relevant for art education as an approach which is "compatible with the tenets of radical social change" (Stuhr, 1994, p. 177). She sees an art education which is social reconstructionist as involving active democracy within schools, teaching students to analyze life situations,

teaching social skills and encouraging and fostering the practice of democratic action, and teaching social cooperation skills across lines of gender, race, class and disability in order to raise awareness and practice against oppression (Stuhr, 1994).

Dennis Fehr's work echoes themes consistent with Patricia Stuhr. In *Dogs Playing Cards: Power Brokers of Prejudice in Education, Art and Culture* (1993), Fehr takes a more radicalized stance toward resistance in education than positions proposed by Stuhr. Fehr maps out seven arenas of social oppression including censorship, patronage, education, race/ethnicity, sex, violence and art education. Fehr regards discipline-based art education as an area of oppression that operates under the guise of creative expression. Fehr aligns his work with Michael Apple, and sees Apple's *Ideology and Curriculum* (1990a) as identifying a covert curricula of oppression existing within public schools. Fehr cites Tomhave's model of multicultural education (Fehr, 1993). Of the six levels outlined in Tomhave, Fehr focuses on the sixth level, *social reconstruction*. "Adherents to social reconstruction hold that art education and the educational curriculum in general are powerful components of the machinery of power... Reconstructionists in art education call for art study that takes action against structural inequalities" (Fehr, 1993).

The theoretical work of Stuhr and Fehr connects with several concepts presented in the section on visual culture studies. Positions of power inherent in educational institutions coincide with critical theory, Foucault's work in relation to how social power functions, feminist theorists, the theoretic work of Deleuze and Guattari, and the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu. Stuhr and Fehr both call for a curriculum of action in art education through their work in multiculturalism and social reconstruction. Where some

theorists would regard resistance within educational processes as futile, Foucault and Bourdieu and others would point to positive action as a possibility for change, Deleuze and Guattari, Feminist literature and work done in postcolonial studies and in literature aligned with issues of race and ethnicity. Work done in critical theory and cultural studies would also support the position that a pedagogy reinforcing change through social action is also possible within art education.

### **Models of Art Education that Hold Positions Problematic, Contradictory or Ambiguous to Visual Culture**

Positions held in the areas of aesthetics, comprehensive arts education (DBAE), history or historical issues tend to be problematic and often ambiguous in relation to visual culture. In historical inquiry, as well as in aesthetics, connections may support theoretical positions existent in visual culture or may be contradictory depending on the views expressed by a particular theorist. For example, if an art historian is expressing views that support status quo positions with regard to the Western canon in relation to art history, their views would contrast with visual culture studies. An historical position that views Western art historical traditions critically would be aligned with visual culture theory.

Eliot Eisner's writing on aesthetics provides an example of work that conflicts with theoretical positions within visual culture. In *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Enquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice* (1991a), Eisner presents the notion of the connoisseur and connoisseurship as a concept of art educational criticism. Eisner proposes that connoisseurship involves a kind of qualitative knowing that is able

to recognize or appreciate excellence, “to experience the qualities that constitute each [say wine, a book or a school] and to understand something about them. It also includes making judgments about their value” (1991a, p. 69). Eisner’s idea of connoisseurship is oppositional to visual culture theory along several lines. His position is consistent with supporting the authority of the Western art critic who makes qualified judgments on artefacts based on his or her own particular “educated” opinion, in other words according to taste. Bourdieu’s work in relation to symbolic capital and more specifically, cultural capital, addresses these concerns specifically. For Bourdieu, the qualifications that allow for such an authoritative voice are in part formed by the habitus but also act as forming or reinforcing concepts of the habitus which acts as a device of control inscribed on the body of the social individual. For Bourdieu, both the habitus and symbolic capital (in this case the authority of the expert) function to reinforce domination indirectly by ensuring the individual’s complicity in the domination process. Along another line, Foucault would see a need to problematize the authority of the expert; how is his or her authority constructed socially and how is it used in socio-politico power relations. Lyotard, Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari would view the position of the expert as within an hierarchical, unified, centralized and totalizing structure. If the expert or connoisseur happens to be a white male who argues within the Western art historical canon, criticism from feminist, race, ethnic and class perspectives would be too diverse and abundant to address.

Along the lines of Eisner’s connoisseurship, positions expressed within the curriculum of comprehensive Arts Education, formerly Discipline-Based art education (DBAE), has left itself open to feminist criticism (Hamblen, 1983) and as exclusionary of

issues related to race, ethnicity and class. Although Comprehensive Arts Education has attempted to address some of these issues with regard to curriculum design, traditionally the program of DBAE has worked more toward reinforcing the Western Canon and Modernist paradigm of formalism than as a self-reflective approach which looks at the necessity for problematization and critical awareness.

### **Models Not Directly Connected with Visual Culture Studies**

Areas that have no direct link with visual culture theory may include assessment and policy studies. These areas, though, may be associated with visual culture theory indirectly. For example, if links can be made between policy or assessment initiatives and government control apparatus connection with visual culture theoretical positions become more apparent. Connections may be made between education policy and the institutional functionings of hegemony in Gramsci, the connection with the role of habitus in Bourdieu, or relations of power in Foucault. Even the most neutral of spaces within art education may be open to critical analysis when viewed within a particular context, or when seen in relation to the ways they have been constructed as areas of inquiry.

## **5.2 Literature Review – Art Education and Visual Culture**

### **Who within the theoretical field of art education are proponents of visual culture?**

In this section, the work of five art education theorists is examined to explore links and intersections with the field of visual culture studies or to analyze how they envision future connections between art education and visual culture. This section will

examine to varying degrees the work of Kevin Tavin, Paul Duncum, Kerry Freedman, Brent Wilson and Dipti Desai.

### Kevin Tavin

In *The impact of visual culture on art education* (2000), Kevin Tavin describes an experience where he was expelled from the Illinois art education Association's 52<sup>nd</sup>

Annual Conference at Hamburger University, McDonald's Corporate Office Campus:

In my presentation, which had been accepted nine months earlier, I planned on addressing how megacorporations produce knowledge, distribute and regulate information, help construct identity, and promote consumption through visual representations. I was prepared to reason that educators should investigate how corporate power manages dissent, constrains agency, and impacts our ability to act as critical citizens (Tavin, 2000, p. 20)

This excerpt from the first paragraph of a panel discussion Tavin participated in at a 2000 NAEA conference in New York can be used to paraphrase other articles he has written recently (Tavin, 2000; 2003; Tavin & Anderson, 2003).

Tavin's words in this paragraph intersect with several important aspects of visual culture presented here. When he refers to "how megacorporations produce knowledge" connects with Foucault's notions of how knowledge and power are interconnected and inscribed in the individual at the level of bodily action in daily life. How megacorporations "distribute and regulate information" ties in with notions of state apparatuses of control seen in the work of Marcuse and Habermas and examined within cultural studies. His words, "help construct identity" relate to Deleuze and Guattari's notions of how the arborescent or hierarchical-based culture constructs identity in relation to difference based in dualities – a notion dealt with by many feminist theorists. When

Tavin says, “promote consumption through visual representations” he again connects with cultural studies and the work of Evans and Hall. When he uses the terms “how corporate power manages dissent, constrains agency, and impacts our ability to act as critical citizens”, he may be referring to Gramsci’s notions of hegemony and agency in particular but also connects with several theorists presented here whose work deals with the various ways power is used as a force of domination, from critical theorists and neo-Marxists to the work of Foucault and Bourdieu.

In an article written with David Anderson, Tavin (2003) reiterates a stance which promotes resistance from a visual culture perspective. In *Teaching (popular) visual culture : Deconstructing Disney in the elementary art classroom* (Tavin & Anderson, 2003) he uses the Disney corporation to show how popular images can be used to manipulate people through a complex affective process, whereby beliefs, desires, and values are negotiated through pleasure and meaning. Tavin and Anderson examine Disney in relation to it being a multi-billion dollar corporate power with the ability to shape identities, to shape and normalize understandings of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and history, in a sense, to create a cultural pedagogy with which to indoctrinate youth. Tavin and Anderson give suggestions for alternative pedagogical approaches which help children to think critically about the visual phenomena they are exposed to and how it is used to shape the ways they think, feel and act.

This is also not a plea for teachers to become psychic terrorists, destroying the real pleasure students receive from popular culture. Popular culture offers immense opportunities for escape, fantasy, joy and dreaming. “But like all dreams, the dreams that Disney provides are not innocent and must be interrogated for the futures they envision, the values they promote, and the forms of identity they offer” (Giroux, 1999, p. 7) (Tavin and Anderson, 2003, p. 34)

Along similar lines, Tavin's article *Wrestling with angels, searching for ghosts: Toward a critical pedagogy of visual culture* (2003) examines aspects of critical pedagogy and visual culture as transdisciplinary discourses and focuses on popular culture as a site in need of critical understanding and resistance. Tavin's work is closely aligned with critical theory, critical pedagogy, and cultural studies analyses, but what is unique about his writing is that he offers pragmatic applications with which to implement critical thinking and skills of resistance by teachers at the grade school level. In this respect, Tavin provides through his writing a resistance of possibility and positive applications which may work toward a grass roots level of social change.

Tavin argues for a visual culture pedagogy of inquiry. He feels that art educators should initiate a visual culture practice within classrooms by asking both themselves and students questions:

What images are we currently exposed to in visual culture? What investments do we have in certain images? What are these investments? What do we learn from these images? What do the images not teach? Do these images provide or signify a certain lifestyle or feeling for us? Do these images help mobilize desire, anger, or pleasure in us? Do we believe these images embody sexist, racist, ableist and class-specific interests? What are the historical conditions under which these images are organized and regulated? How is power displayed or connoted throughout these images? By focusing on everyday experiences, teachers and students will see the pedagogical power of visual culture ... (Tavin, 2003, p. 208).

Tavin calls for a visual culture of transdisciplinarity. He sees a need for visual culture to cross and challenge traditional academic boundaries and to provide provisional theoretical collaborations. "In this sense, transdisciplinarity can be seen as a gleaning of knowledge and practice from a myriad of recognized disciplines while pushing against and permeating the once-rigid boundaries of those disciplines" (Tavin, 2003, p. 208). He sees visual culture as being resistant to remaining "confined to the restricted parameters

defined by experts in a given field". Tavin characterizes visual culture as a matrix which crosses diverse disciplines, theoretical domains and arenas of knowledge. "... visual culture is a site of convergence and contention across disciplinary lines that helps break down artificial barriers and undermines confidence in canonized knowledge" (Tavin, 2003, p. 209). Tavin advocates for a practice of visual culture that engages in critical pedagogy and uses the site of popular culture as a place for critique and resistance.

Tavin's work connects with representations of visual culture presented here along several different lines. Tavin's theoretical approaches to visual culture problematize the visual within social and cultural spheres, argues for a resistance or struggle against dominant forms of power represented through the visual, and sees visual culture studies as a field of transdisciplinary approaches, crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries and branches of thought. Tavin chooses to base his approach to visual culture in the realm of popular culture, an area where the visual has proliferated in contemporary societies and cultures. However, it is important to acknowledge that visual culture studies also engages in studies of cultures beyond the popular culture and North American frames, including cultures of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and sub-cultures and marginal cultures which exist at the border of mainstream cultures, as well as hierarchical and elitist cultural groups.

#### Paul Duncum

In *Defining visual culture for art education* (2000), Paul Duncum attempts to analyze and examine the characteristics of visual culture as they pertain to art education. He looks at visual culture from the perspectives of four different, although somewhat

overlapping views. Bryson, Holly and Moxey (1994) theorize visual culture from an art historical perspective. They view aesthetic value in relation to prevailing social conditions. Duncum argues that because the artefacts they study are mainly painting and sculpture from an historical perspective, their pragmatics of visual culture are limited.

In Jenks (1995), the focus is visual culture as a social history of visibility. Duncum points out that Jenks' "emphasis highlights an important issue. In defining visual culture it is important to concentrate not only on visual artefacts but also on the context of viewing" (2000, p. 32).

Duncum argues that Mirzoëff (1998) comes closer to a workable definition of visual culture for art education when he defines it as:

visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology [which is] any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural visions, from oil paint to television and the Internet (in Duncum, 2000, p. 33)

Duncum is critical of Mirzoëff's definition and sees it as limited because it suggests visual culture requires mediation through a technological device. He sees Barnard's (1998) definition as more significant for art education. For Barnard, visual culture involves the signifying systems within a society which include:

institutions, objects, practices, values and beliefs by which a social structure is visibly produced, reproduced and contested ... in which people exist in positions of unequal power and status and visual culture may be thought of as the ways in which that structure of inequalities is first made possible and then either continued or contested (in Duncum, 2000, p. 34).

Although Duncum regards Barnard's definition as the most applicable to art education, in his conclusion he simplifies it: "visual culture consists of all the visible

artefacts studied in terms of the beliefs and values from which they arise and with which they are viewed". (p. 35).

In *Visual culture: Developments, definitions and directions for art education* (Duncum, 2001), the same concerns and definitions are presented. Near the end, however, in a section subtitled *Curriculum Directions for visual culture*, Duncum outlines the questions of two theorists which he sees as contributions to curriculum based on visual culture. The first is a series of questions put forth by Mitchell (1995) which include:

What is the boundary between visual culture and visual nature? What is an image? (Are all images visual?) How do images function in consciousness, in memory, fantasy, and perception? ... How do images communicate and signify? What is a work of visual art? What is the relationship between art and visual culture in general? How do changes in the technologies of visual reproduction affect visual culture? (in Duncum, 2001, p. 108, 109).

From a perspective more engaged with the politics of representation and view, Rogoff (1998) presents these questions:

Who we see and who we do not see ; who is privileged within the regime of specularly; which aspects of the historical past actually have circulating visual representations and which do not; whose fantasies are fed by which visual images? ... What are the visual codes by which some are allowed to look, others to hazard a peek, and still others are forbidden to look altogether? In what political discourse can we understand looking and returning the gaze as an act of political resistance? Can we actually participate in the pleasure and identify with the images produced by culturally specific groups to which we do not belong? (in Duncum, 2001, p. 109)

In these two articles, Duncum examines how the term "visual culture" should be defined for art education and how it should be approached and used in pedagogy.

Duncum emphasizes a visual culture based in the popular culture of mass media. There are three areas of concern regarding Duncum's analysis. The first is that little distinction

is made between visual culture as the phenomena of the visual operating with socio-cultural spheres and visual culture studies or visual culture as a method of inquiry. The second concern, which relates to the first, is the lack of focus on the transdisciplinary nature of visual culture studies. Visual culture, as seen in Tavin and in the work of numerous theorists presented here, requires transdisciplinarity. In Duncum's work this important characteristic of visual culture studies is either overlooked or given insignificant emphasis. In Deleuze and Guattari, encompassing visual culture within any particular framework would function to make it hierarchical in structure or arborescent, the very structures that its developments and characterizations have resisted or attempted to subvert.

Another area of concern in Duncum is the lack of emphasis placed on visual culture studies as a site of problematizing the visual field. As outlined here and also extant in the work of Tavin, Duncum's work lacks a more thorough characterization of visual culture studies as a position from which to problematize the visual. A final concern is the lack of emphasis placed on resistance, especially from a pedagogical perspective. As Tavin argues, the need for a visual cultural pedagogy of struggle and resistance is a defining aspect which should mark the field. Duncum does give some attention to the notions of problematization and resistance, as in the questions presented here by Rogoff, and his article *A case for an art education of everyday aesthetic experiences* (1999). However, these concepts tend to take up a more marginal space within his work, although they should be more central to work related to visual culture.

Kerry Freedman

In *Context as part of visual culture* (2000a), Freedman suggests that visual culture plays a role in the socialization process. “It teaches people what to look at and how to look at it (in the interest of its creators). As a result, students learn many things from visual culture (e.g. social, habits, values, and mores) and about visual culture, regardless of whether we include analyses of it in curriculum” (p. 43). She argues that teaching visual culture in context because “aspects of the formal structure of imagery are hidden and must be taught” (p. 43). Here Freedman seems to equate visual culture as made of structured artefacts whose structures are not immediately apparent and are in need of formalist examination. This perspective is more related to structural and formalist methods or approaches to understanding cultural artefacts which predate most of the theoretical work presented here.

In *Social perspectives on art education in the US: Teaching visual culture in a democracy* (2000b), Freedman argues for an art pedagogy of difference which is inclusive of marginal groups and identities and includes a politics of action in the areas of art, education, and community. She sees visual culture as instrumental in the deliverance of this pedagogy.

Freedman sees this type of education as democratic and suggests it rests on four basic foundations:

- a) a broadening of the domain of art education
- b) a shift in the emphasis of teaching from formalist concerns to the construction of meaning
- c) the importance of social contexts to that construction

d) a new definition of an emphasis on critique (2000b, p. 315)

Freedman uses these four foundations as points from which to expand her ideas of how the field of art education should be reconceptualized. She argues for visual culture to effect a broadening of the domain of art education, that art education move away from formalist aesthetics and analysis toward construction of meaning, that meaning be constructed within or with regard to social and cultural contexts, and that critical social theory be used in art pedagogy to ensure and reinforce democratic processes. Freedman endorses a social reconstructionist approach to critical enquiry in art education, and she sees a need for more critical inquiry from socio-cultural perspectives in light of recent changes in society and theory toward the cultural.

Rather than explore deeper meaning of visual culture, Freedman argues for a consideration of visual culture in relation to current concerns related to the broadening field of mass media, new technologies, and the turn toward the cultural and visual. Freedman's article reviews the field of art education and, although it does not extensively explore the concepts of problematization and resistance in visual culture, she provides a sound argument for the need of art education to be reconceptualized in relation to contemporary concerns.

In *Visual art/ virtual art: Teaching technology for meaning* (1997a), Freedman explores the use of technologies, such as computers, to develop critical awareness and help students negotiate meaning. She argues for an art education which analyzes and explores technologically-produced imagery. In this article, Freedman uses questions and critical methods to successfully teach concepts relevant to visual culture studies. In *Critiquing the media: Art knowledge inside and outside of school* (1997b), Freedman

focuses on teaching methods which problematize visual culture by critically examining the meanings and representations existent in different types of mass produced imagery, including film. She explores how these can be used by classroom teachers.

Freedman's *Teaching Visual Culture* (2003) provides a thorough conceptual framework for teaching certain aspects of visual culture in schools, but is weak in its characterization of visual culture as a field of study. However, it is a helpful addition to issues relating to the intersection of visual culture and art education pedagogy.

### Brent Wilson

In *The parable of the para-site that ate art education* (2000), Brent Wilson uses analogy and metaphor to characterize the way traditional forms of art education are being replaced by the engagement of youth with technologies such as television and computer in relating to their world and in constructing their identities.

In *Of diagrams and rhizomes: Visual culture, contemporary art, and the impossibility of mapping the content of art education* (2003), Wilson characterizes the current field of art education as a rhizomatic, a term borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari to symbolize the complex nature of the contemporary socio-cultural sphere. He suggests three strategies for dealing with an art education that encompasses contemporary art and what he calls rhizomatic popular visual culture:

(1) opting for the status quo which precludes the addition of contemporary art and popular visual culture, (2) supplementing existing curricula, and (3) fully submitting to the new and popular (2003, p. 214)

Wilson also adds a third position, which he sees as occupying a space between traditional art culture and contemporary art and popular culture.

Wilson's arguments in relation to visual culture are somewhat ambiguous. He makes the error of characterizing visual culture as popular culture in the dichotomous relationship which is signified by the high culture/popular culture binary. This is an oversimplification of visual culture, which beyond this dichotomy encompasses the marginal spaces of minority groups and sub-cultures, the spaces of groups formed along lines of race, ethnicity, ability, class, and so on, culture groups existing outside Western paradigms, not to mention the problematizations incurred by analyses of visual culture presented here.

Despite this oversight, Wilson's article does examine several important issues. Wilson argues against attempts at mapping contemporary art education which incorporates visual culture, seeing this as an exercise in futility since the field would resemble a rhizome and be beyond a comprehensive mapping logic. Wilson compares the rhizome metaphor to the *dojinshi* phenomenon, which compares to the "fanzine-like" comic books that Japanese teenagers create and circulate. Wilson claims that in the Tokyo Comic Market there are over 22,000 booths with "perhaps over 100,000 young artists" (2003, p. 220) who sell their *dojinshi* to up to one-half million buyers. For Wilson, this process functions like a rhizome:

*Dojinshi* is in a continual state of deletion and supplementation. The disappearance of one part of no particular consequence because it will be replaced or supplemented by other parts – other characters, other functions, other plots, and their extensions. The supplementations are all quotations from other *dojinshi* elements which are, in turn, quotations from manga. Manga elements are quotations from the entire realm of visual culture, Eastern and Western, high and low (2003, p. 222)

*Dojinshi* becomes a diverse, complex system of art-making that evolves in all directions according to its own irrational logic. Individuals continually make connections

between text and images within the contexts of their own lives. On a more minor scale, Congdon and Blandy (2003) examine the relevance and popularity of zine culture in North America, and see it as a media from which critical awareness and pedagogy can be practiced. One aspect of zine culture, as examined by Wilson is that it resists dominant ideologies through expression, helps create identities based on realities outside of consumer markets, and resists control of the marketplace through the functioning of independent marketing and sales.

The zine culture connects with Deleuze and Guattari's notions of creating spaces and positions outside the traditional and normative spheres and of creating personal identities based on continual assemblage, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. As a pedagogy, a program based on these types of artistic activities would be very empowering for youth, if they were left to proliferate and keep their creative and child-centred characteristics. If supplemented by critical approaches to influences of visual culture, such a pedagogy would be even more empowering.

### Dipti Desai

One of the primary concerns of multicultural art education is to provide accurate and authentic representations of the art of racially and ethnically marginalized groups in the United States and of subordinate cultures around the world. This corrective measure is a move to dismantle stereotypic representations of race, ethnicity, and culture (Desai, 2000, p. 114).

Dipti Desai, in the first sentences of her article *Imaging difference: The politics of representation in multicultural art education* (2000), gives an accurate representation of her perspective on the intersection of multiculturalism and art education. Desai sees multiculturalism as problematic along several lines. She views the use of terms accurate

and authentic as constructed terms which hold a false universal claim of authority. She contends that there is a problem where multiculturalism does not distinguish between racially subordinate groups in the United States and culturally subordinate groups around the world, thus falsely representing them as equal (Desai, 2000).

Desai argues that the relationship between representation and power should be examined in relation to historical moments, particular locales, and subject positions which emerge from the complexities of domination and subordination. She sees this approach to multiculturalism as “grounded in a politics of location and positionality” (2000, p. 127) and expresses the need for art educators to “reflect on and present the political agendas that shape our teachings about other cultures” (2000 p. 127). Desai’s work on multiculturalism connects with the postcolonial theory of Said and Bhabba, and also the work of Derrida. Her writing follows from theories presented in feminism, especially those of bell hooks. She also argues from positions of cultural studies and neo-Marxism.

In *Multicultural art education and the heterosexual imagination: A question of culture* (2003), Desai discusses the locations of sexual diversity and difference within multicultural art education. Desai argues her position from the perspective of queer theory and its contribution to problems of identity and subjectivity, and attempts at understanding intersections between sexuality with race, ethnicity, gender, and social class. Desai argues for an understanding within art education for placing homosexuality beyond marginal locations and that defines homosexuality not in relation to heterosexuality or to deviant forms of sexuality.

Desai's work here intersects with Foucault, Irigaray, Butler, and also with writing which is representative of queer theory.

Desai's theoretical positions are aligned with many theoretical positions presented here in visual culture studies, and along with Kevin Tavin, her work is more closely connected with visual culture theory than many of the art education theorists this study has examined.

## CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

The focus of this thesis has been to examine visual culture and visual culture studies and to analyze their intersections with art education. This examination has shown that the study of visual culture is based on the work of theorists engaged in postmodern and poststructural writing. Although these theorists are not art educators, their work has had significance for the theoretic shift from the modernist to the postmodernist paradigm and has been instrumental in the emergence of visual culture studies due to their engagement in theory related to visual concerns and to discursive practice.

The background of visual culture studies, as pointed out by Evans and Hall (1999), can be characterized by two main methodologies: semiotic analysis and discursive practice. Semiotic analysis or semiology, as represented in the work of Roland Barthes (1977), evolved from the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Russian formalism. Barthes incorporated social and cultural dimensions to Saussure's structural analysis. This use of context in the analysis of signs or artefacts reflects a shift from modernist formalism to postmodernism.

Semiotics is a highly specialized field which may have implications for art education in the area of art criticism, especially in relation to revisionist criticism and critical approaches to viewing contemporary images and art objects.

Discourse, the second and most pervasive methodology in visual culture studies involves the hermeneutics or interpretation of information (signs, images, etc.) from varied and diverse perspectives. Discursive practice comprises multiple theories where no one theory is privileged and where diverging discourses exist within an arrangement

of mutual incommensurability. In relation to visual culture studies, discursive practice tends to be concerned with the visual and how aspects of the visual – signs or images, technology, media, the gaze, surveillance, spectacle, scopic regimes, and so on – influence, are informed by, and are engaged within the spheres of contemporary cultures.

There are two main intersections between art and education and visual culture studies that this thesis examines. These include discourses of or concerned with marginalized groups, cultures, and sub-cultures. Individuals belonging to marginalized groups are generally resistant to dominant culture and see themselves as viewed as “other”, as less privileged, as stereotyped, and/or discriminated against in these cultural relationships and interactions. Marginalized discourse tends to resist normalizing and limiting processes within the boundaries of mainstream or dominant cultural practice. The work of art education theorists, including Dipti Desai, has been left largely unheard. The voices of individuals belonging to marginalized groups tend to be resistant to mainstream culture and to normalizing and limiting processes which exist within the boundaries of mainstream cultural practice. For these reasons, outlined here in the analysis of the work of Derrida, Foucault, and others, visual culture studies is often characterized by discourses concerned with resistance.

This concept of resistance is also evident in a broad range of discourse taken up by individuals who may not be writing from marginalized locations but who are concerned with the ways media, technology and consumerist culture reinforce traditional and status quo conceptions of the social and cultural. These discursive practices tend to be aligned with the traditions of critical theory and cultural studies, and are diverse and

pervasive within cultural studies. They share with marginal discourses a theme of resistance and desire for social change.

Debbie Smith-Shank and others demonstrate discursive writing from locations traditionally marginalized. In recent years there has been a considerable increase in art education discourse generated by theorists who write from locations that have been marginalized by issues of class, gender, race, sexuality, and so on.

The second main intersection between art education and visual culture studies is with discourses which do not occupy marginalized locations, but which are engaged in a critique of and/or resistance to dominant culture. These discourses tend to examine the ways aspects of dominant culture, including the media, technology, and consumerist culture reinforce traditional and status quo concepts of the social and cultural. These discursive practices tend to be aligned with the traditions of critical theory and cultural studies, and are diverse and pervasive within visual culture studies. They share with marginal discourses the themes of resistance and desire for social change. In art education, discourses engaged in resistance and critical awareness of dominant cultural forms include the work of theorists in the reconceptualization and multicultural arenas, theorists engaged critically with implications of technology and media, and theorists whose recent work has been engaged directly with visual culture.

This thesis has found that the field of art education increasingly reflects the pluralistic and diverse nature of visual culture and the field of visual culture studies. As suggested in *Celebrating Pluralism: Art Education and Cultural Diversity* by Chalmers (1996) and the broad range of discourse that has emerged in recent years, art education has come to reflect a field of continuous change and diversity. These changes, also

reflected in the emergence of caucuses on a variety of social and cultural issues within the National Art Education Association in the United States, signal a field which is currently engaged in and grappling with the paradigmatic shift between the monoculture of the modernist reality and the pluralism of the postmodern world. How this shift plays itself out in educational institutions in the coming years remains a task for art educators. It may be that art education can take the lead here in informing the change that is needed throughout other fields of education.

As mentioned, this thesis has demonstrated ways visual culture has come to represent a shift toward the pervasiveness of the visual field in contemporary culture. It has pointed out ways the visual has been used to manipulate, control and dominate groups and sub-cultures within societies and has shown how traditional and status quo conceptions of reality have been promoted, reinforced and maintained through dominant visual means. Visual culture studies attempts to address these concerns by accepting the voice and the concerns of minority groups and sub-cultures as legitimate in relation to other groups or cultures within various social spheres.

Lyotard (1979) voiced concerns regarding legitimation of the discourses of individuals, interest groups, sub-cultures, cultures, and so on. He saw the need for credibility to be given to the discourses of traditionally marginalized groups and saw opposing discourses as existing within a state of incommensurability, a state of tolerance and acceptance.

Visual culture studies, then, can be characterized as a diverse and multifaceted field of inquiry which attempts to address concerns posed by traditional, hierarchical and

The position of this thesis is that there is a need to reconceptualize art education, and for that matter, education in general. The art teacher should engage students in critical inquiry with respect to the way the visual is used within social and cultural spheres. Students need to engage in an inquiry with how the visual is used to promote and manipulate conceptions of reality, and how particular conceptions may be used to maintain and reinforce status quo or traditional hierarchical versions or perspectives of reality. As suggested in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, creativity is a form of social and cultural resistance – but for them creativity goes beyond the limits and boundaries imposed by convention. The enlightened teacher leads students to gain an understanding of their world thus giving students the options they require to begin to build their own conceptions of reality, to develop their own world views. An engagement with visual culture in the classroom is the beginning of opening the minds of students to the options and possibilities that exist for the individual with an inquiring mind. An education in critical awareness and inquiry is essential to setting the stage for self-discovery and creativity. It is this state of awareness that gives the individual the ability to recognize and resist forces of manipulation and domination existing within dominant cultures and media. Visual culture studies is a unique field that offers art pedagogy, in particular, a vital role in disseminating the type of information that is necessary to foster informed and creative thinkers. The need then is for the field of art education to accept visual culture studies based on the particular paradigm outlined here. Art education, especially in the schooling institutions and curriculum in North America, remains deeply entrenched in traditional and modernist paradigms. The reconceptualization of art education needs to begin at the level of the education of teachers and perhaps of teachers' teachers. This

entrenched in traditional and modernist paradigms. The reconceptualization of art education needs to begin at the level of the education of teachers and perhaps of teachers' teachers. This thesis proposes that through visual culture education the minds of students open to the possibilities of engagement with their lives and their worlds, and that they will ultimately be richer for it.

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