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Beyond the Anti-Aesthetic

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the degree of Master of Arts. "**

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This thesis is dedicated to the man who introduced me to the
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Radivoje Spicanovic

1941-1997

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ABSTRACT

Beyond The Anti-Aesthetic

This thesis is a critical examination of postmodernist pedagogy currently used in the education of visual artists. It is particularly concerned with the teaching of the traditional disciplines of painting and drawing within a postmodern context. My hypothesis is that the teaching of visual arts within a postmodern orientation more or less relies on an anti-aesthetic stance that is content-centered, with an insistence on critically and politically aware art. The overall objective of this thesis is twofold: First, to generate some questions and ideas that could be of assistance to post-secondary art instructors. Second, to establish a framework for an extended qualitative research that will address the impact of postmodernism on education of artists. The title "*beyond the anti-aesthetic*" does not necessarily present itself as a negation of the postmodernist paradigm. It identifies a need to revitalize visual art instruction within the postmodern model, to re-address the interplay between form and content in visual art and enhance critical thinking.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse comporte une épreuve critique du pédagogie postmoderne applicable dans l'enseignement des arts visuels. Elle touche particulièrement sur l'enseignement traditionnel de la peinture et du dessin, qui se retrouve dans un contexte postmoderne. En un mot, mon hypothèse maintient que l'enseignement des arts visuels dans ce contexte postmoderne se fie, plus ou moins, à une politique contre-esthétique. Dès lors, cette politique contre-esthétique devienne contenu-fixé avec une insistance sur l'art qui est conscient des critiques et les politiques qui l'entourent. L'objectif principal de cette thèse se reprend en deux points. Premièrement, d'invoquer des questions et des réflexions qui peuvent être applicables pour les enseignants post-secondaires. Deuxièmement, d'établir un cadre défini pour une recherche qualitative qui va, en revanche, démontrer l'impact du postmodernisme dans l'enseignement aux artistes. Ce titre de «Beyond The Anti-Aesthetic» ne se représente pas nécessairement comme une négation du paradigme postmoderne. Au contraire, il identifie le besoin de revivifier l'instruction des arts visuels dans ce cadre postmoderne. En plus, il cherche re-reconnaître l'enjeu entre la forme et le contenu dans les arts visuels et étendre la pensée critique.

INTRODUCTION

A. Hypothesis

This study critically addresses the education of visual artists in the postmodern era. Throughout this thesis I will address my research question from a twofold point of view, as an art instructor and a visual artist. More specifically, I will examine a postmodernist pedagogy that draws upon an anti-aesthetic stance. My hypothesis is that an anti-aesthetic stance has become a dogma exercised in both the making and teaching of visual art over the past twenty years. Hence, the extreme formalist approach to art of an earlier era and the accompanying " pedagogical formalism" (Feldman,1992) has been replaced by an equally extreme anti-aesthetic stance. In some sense this study examines the educational potential of a fusion of these two apparently diametrically opposed points of view.

B. The Anti-Aesthetic Stance

In this thesis the term anti-aesthetic may be considered a synonym for postmodernism and its artistic practices. In his early definition Foster(1983) underlines that the term " anti-aesthetic also signals a practice, cross disciplinary in nature, that is sensitive to cultural forms engaged in a politic (e.g., feminist art) or rooted in a vernacular--that

is, to forms that deny the idea of privileged aesthetic realm" (Foster, 1983, p. xv). In short, an anti-aesthetic stance represents a criticism of modernism and its aesthetics with an intent to promote a socially and politically aware art. In the teaching of painting and drawing, the anti-aesthetic stance identifies a pedagogy that focuses on the exploration of content that articulates social concerns and appropriates images of popular culture. However, this is generally practised through the verbalization of ideas and postmodern art theory rather than on the actual process of making art; that is, little attention is paid to how the concepts are transformed through the medium (Richmond, 1996, Becker, 1996).

Even though the effects of this situation have yet to be fully determined there is a notion that today's education of visual artists lacks serious interest in the mastery of medium and the formal visual structure of art (Becker, 1996). The popular phrase "anything goes" that underlies postmodernism has become synonymous with the education of visual artists.

C. Background and the Problem

When I was an art student, I became aware of the gap between the traditional aesthetic or formalist approach in teaching visual arts and a postmodern one. The latter often has been called anti-aesthetic, anti-formalist, anti-painting and even anti-art. At first, this gap seemed to me logical in the postmodern art climate and regarding the background and the age

of my art instructors. The younger generation of art instructors was much more familiar with postmodern art theory. Also, their artistic practice reflected an anti-aesthetic stance.

In stride with the popular tendencies in the artworld most of the students adopted an anti-aesthetic stance as introduced by the younger generation of art instructors. The traditional aesthetic concerns for visual form and medium were seen as academic and anachronistic to art while the post-modern anti-aesthetic stance became the right recipe for creating a significant contemporary art work. This recipe can be formulated as an insistence on the political content in art that reflects social and cultural issues such as racism, gay liberties, feminism, postcolonialism, ecology, etc.

In such an atmosphere ". . . students in visual art classes in universities and elsewhere are just as likely to be asked to deconstruct and rework existing art in order to show its inadequacies, or politicize chosen issues and events, as develop their own creative work" (Richmond, 1996, p.2). By contrast, instructors and students who are interested in the more traditional approach to visual art via perceptual experimentation and formalist questions have been criticized for their individual escapism and social irresponsibility (Richmond, 1996). I argue that this situation does not stimulate the visual curiosity of young artists and stifles an open mindedness to a multitude of approaches to art.

D. Statement of the Problem

There are two main problems that I identify in the postmodern education of visual artists. First, postmodern instruction of visual arts fails to relate content to form. There seems to be a refusal to acknowledge the relevance of visual art form in relation to content. The logical conclusion to this line of thinking is that in today's teaching of visual art an idea is more important than a visual image. Visual art within a postmodern framework has emphasized the discourse of art and hyper politicized statement making rather than an interest in how the ideas involved in discourse become embodied through the medium (Becker, 1996).

Second, in spite of its insistence on critical thinking and political art, postmodern education does not really train artists to be socially responsible for their intentions in art and life outside the art school (Becker, 1996). It needs to address more energetically issues of audience, art market and the institutional context of art. This also suggest that art schools should consider the relation between ethics and art, and how to teach this.

Throughout this thesis I will argue that a current postmodern anti-aesthetic stance does not provide a relevant theoretical framework for teaching visual arts, particularly for those involved in the traditional disciplines of painting and drawing. Also, in attacking the more oppressive notions of

modernism postmodern model forgets to critically address its own practice and the oppressive systems of the present.

E. Objective(s)

The objectives of this thesis are twofold. The first is to examine the problems of current postmodern art educational practice, as revealed through a critical analysis of the literature. The resulting questions and ideas should provide building blocks for an evolving model. "Beyond the anti-aesthetic" does not signal the negation of the postmodernist paradigm but its revitalization. I will rely particularly on David Trend's (1992) cultural pedagogy, critical questions borrowed from Becker (1996) and Gablick's (1990) model of reconstructive postmodernism.

Trend (1992) sees cultural pedagogy as the form of cultural politics which should address not only how art gets produced but also how it comes to function in the wider social community. It involves a variety of discourses, texts, images and actions through which students construct their understanding of reality in light of their cultural and individual identities. Becker (1996) raises a set of important questions in regard to the issues of political art and its content, audience and art market. In turn, she questions how these issues should be addressed in the education of artists.

Gablick (1990) distinguishes between deconstructive and reconstructive postmodernism. I support the latter orientation,

as an attempt to bring back something that we have lost in attention to deconstructive postmodernism. A postmodern consciousness needs to regain some faith in the emancipatory effect of art and its spiritual dimension that reaches beyond the materialistic, political and techno-scientific world.

The second objective of this thesis is to contribute to an apparent need in the field. Even though there are numerous volumes written on postmodernism and even on pre-university postmodern art education, there is very little material that addresses the influence of postmodernism on the education of artists. Moreover, there is very little research in general that examines art instruction at the postsecondary level, as exemplified by the following journals: Studies in Art Education, Visual Arts Research, Aesthetics Education, Canadian Review of Art Education, Aesthetics and Art Criticism. Why is pedagogy in B.F.A. and M.F.A. curricula not more regularly and critically addressed? Why do many art instructors see themselves only as artists who also teach rather than as possible educational researchers as well? There is a need to generate more knowledge about the education of artists regarding both practical methodology and its underlying theoretical pedagogy. Otherwise, we will continue to have an atmosphere in which the practice will remain obscure and segregated from the wider field of art education.

In the last part of this study I will refer in particular to a qualitative research methods that seem to offer promise

for an investigation into visual art instruction at the postsecondary level. I will conclude with an outline of a preliminary proposal for an extended qualitative field research study to address the effects of postmodern thinking on the education of visual artists. This thesis also sets the stage for my own Ph.D. research in the future.

F. The Stylistic Form

Part of the study may be seen as a critical writing that exists in the form of a collage of various quotations and ideas by different authors. Bernatchez(1995) comments that " recent critical writing appears more often as an assemblage of quotations than as a creation by a single author (e.g., Ulmer,1983, Foster,1983)" (p.160). The collage format seems appropriate to me insofar as it shows clearly who are the original authors of the ideas expressed herein; i.e., at this stage I am still very much a beginning researcher.

The idea of thesis-as-collage reflects also the poststructuralist view of the postmodern artist as collage maker or bricoleur(Kearney,1988). Bernatchez(1995) explains the method of decoupage and collage as ". . . a technique by which we remove certain elements from their larger context (in this case, some authors from others, some texts by an author from his other texts, some parts of the same text . . .), these elements are then juxtaposed; this juxtaposition forms a new context through what one might call an interactive effect"

(Bernatchez,1995,p.163). In this thesis the new context should be seen as a cluster of ideas that suggests a pedagogy beyond the anti-aesthetic.

G. The Content

This thesis consists of five chapters: i) postmodernism in education ii) postmodern art iii) teaching visual arts in postmodernism: critical examination, iv) beyond the anti-aesthetic; summary of the ideas and v) implications for the future research: outline for a qualitative research investigation.

The objective of the first chapter is to introduce the term postmodernism and to discuss postmodern thinking as it is currently practised in education. It is important to distinguish among the set of associated terms such as modernity, modernization, modernism and postmodernity, postmodernization and postmodernism. In education, they are very often used in an interchangeable and confusing manner. Also, I am presenting postmodernism as an open-ended and flexible term that should be seen as continuous with modernism. In discussing postmodern thinking in education I will give particular focus to critical thinking (Usher & Edwards,1993) and cultural pedagogy (Trend,1992).

The second chapter deals with postmodern art and its aesthetics (anti-aesthetic). The objective of this section is to describe

postmodern art vis-à-vis the dichotomies modern/postmodern, aesthetics/anti-aesthetic.

In the third chapter I will address critically the education of visual artists in postmodernism. I will examine in particular the anti-aesthetic stance, which fails to bring content to form in teaching of art. Also, I will address the issues of the artworld, audience and art market, which seem to be overlooked in the postmodern approach.

Chapter four is a constellation of ideas and questions resulting from the previous chapters. It offers a myriad of possibilities to reach beyond the anti-aesthetic and, I hope, sets the stage for further research and examination of issues and ultimately influences the education of artists.

Finally, in the last chapter I will introduce qualitative research methods and outline a preliminary proposal for a field research study. This thesis becomes a theoretical framework for my future field research that will question the effects of postmodern thinking in the teaching of traditional visual arts.

CHAPTER 1: POSTMODERNISM IN EDUCATION

In order to address critically postmodern pedagogy it is important to clarify the terms postmodernism and postmodernist education. The objective of this chapter is twofold. First, it is to introduce the term postmodernism which appears to be at once fashionable and elusive (Sarup,1993). Second, I want to discuss postmodernist thinking as it relates to pedagogy.

1.1 The Etymology

The term "postmodernism" pervades the cultural strata of our lives. It is definitely one of the most popular words of our age (Clark,1996). Whether we talk about the ecstasy of communication (Baudrillard,1983), cyber space, the global village (Jencks,1986) or simply the late corporate capitalism (Jameson,1983), our discourse remains identified with the term postmodernism. Bernatchez(1995) interprets postmodernism as the cultural version of the post-industrial or post-capitalistic world of globalization. In defining the term Jenks(1986) points out that, " in short it means almost everything and thus nearly nothing" (p.30). I argue that in today's education of artists this term has been used to demarcate the break from modernist aesthetics rather than to explain contemporary cultural practices.

1.1.1 The History

The idea of postmodernism was first introduced in 1934 by the Spanish writer Federico De-Onis in his *Antologia de la poesia espanola e hispanoamericana* to describe a reaction within modernism. In 1938, the term postmodernism was used by Arnold Toynbee in his *A Study of History*. Toynbee identified postmodernism as the new historical cycle epitomized by the decline of Western capitalism and rise of Non-Western cultures and pluralism (Jencks,1986).

1.2 Ambivalence and Elasticity of Postmodernism

In discussing postmodern art education Clark(1996) sounds a cautionary note in regard to the communicative elasticity and deliberate ambivalence associated with postmodernism. He emphasizes three main characteristics associated with the term. First, postmodernism is transitory ;". . . it suggests only what it is not rather than what it is ".¹ Second, postmodernism is transcendent, which means that postmodernism is reflected in a variety of disciplines. It can be seen as a cross-disciplinary practice. There is a specialized terminology that demarcates a postmodern discourse(e.i., master narrative, simulacra, decentered subject,etc) and theoretical frameworks such as poststructuralism, deconstruction, reconstruction, and feminism. Third, Clark sees postmodernism as transitional, which means that postmodern theories do not always depart from modernist principles (Clark,1996). He points out that a feminist or

postcolonial theorists may speak from the perspectives " that are modernist, postmodernist, or somewhere in-between" (Clark,1996,p.1).

1.3 Defining Postmodernism

Why do we need a clear definition of postmodernism in education? As a preliminary response to this question, the following paragraphs point to the variety of language and concepts covered under the umbrella term " postmodernism". In some sense, any attempt to define fully postmodernism, that is, to provide fixed explanations seems to be antithetical to its underlying premise; that is, the nature of postmodernism is ultimately against totalization and fixed concepts (Usher & Edwards,1993). The postmodern condition can be perceived as a 'sensitivity to differences' or a 'war on totality'." It is a period in which everything is delegitimised" (Jenks,1986,p.10). It was modernism that was interested in definitions and descriptions of itself in order to underline its timeless ideals (Sarup,1993).

In today's education of artists, postmodernism is mainly discussed as a radical break from modernism and its formalist discourse. The irony here is that in taking such a stance these advocates have made postmodernism as fixed and doctrinaire as the formalist approach to art once was. But education in a rapidly evolving world needs to remain flexible and open to discourse from a multitude of perspectives. If postmodernism is

to be a credible and viable educational influence, it too must be capable of flexibility. As Usher & Edwards(1994) state,

To talk about postmodernity, postmodernism or the postmodern is not therefore to designate some fixed and systematic 'thing'. Rather, it is to use a loose umbrella term under whose broad cover can be encompassed at one and the same time a condition, a set of practices, a cultural discourse, an attitude and a mode of analysis (p.7).

1.4 The Continuation

Lyotard(1984) sees postmodernism as the state that both precedes and conditions modernism. He explains the apparent contradiction in terms in the following manner. Lyotard sees postmodernity as the force, the perpetual avant-garde that precedes modernity hence it is premodern in its nature. Postmodernism ". . . understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant. A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern" (1984,p.563).

However, Lyotard's view seems to be contradictory to the very nature of postmodernity, that it is not reflected in progress and innovation but rather in reification and repetition. His discussion does not explain satisfactorily, at least to me, how something can be both " pre" and " post" simultaneously. Even if the event can be, both "pre" and "post", then the designation " post" is inadequate and

confusing.² Lyotard apparently proposes this view in order to maintain continuity between modernism and postmodernism, but his explanation does little to clarify issues for the university art class.

1.5 The Confusing Terms: modern, modernism, modernization

Foster(1983) states that " what postmodernism is, of course, depends largely on what modernism is, i.e., how it is defined" (p.189). As an aid to that cryptic definition in this section I would like to distinguish among the associated terms: modernity, modernization and modernism. In education these terms are very often used as interchangeable; but such flexibility does not help to clarify issues (Sarup,1993). The clarification of these terms might help students to understand better the historical context of both modernism and postmodernism.

Usher & Edwards(1994) look at modernity as a distinct historical epoch that finds its roots in the late eighteenth century Enlightenment philosophy in which the economic and socio-cultural development of the society and the roots of the nation state had been initiated. With more specific reference to art Habermas(1983) identifies modernity with the ideal of European high art and its development under " the project of modernity" (p.9). This project can be formulated as an attempt to " develop objective science, universal morality and law, and

autonomous art according to their inner logic"
(Habermas,1983,p.9).

The Enlightenment narrative was conceived on the principles of universal reason, objective knowledge, rational emancipation and autonomy of the individual self. Habermas adds that cultural modernity had been particularly formulated through the segregation among the three spheres of science, politics (ethics) and art (aesthetics). Ultimately, the term, modernism has come to be associated with art and its discourse (aesthetics).

The last associated term, modernization refers particularly to the economic development of society, capitalism, industrialization, and growth of science, technology, and urbanization. In other words, it does not put special emphasis on art.

1.6 Loss of the Master Narrative

Lyotard(1984) identifies the loss of so called master narratives such as, liberation of humanity, progress, the emancipation of the proletariat, equality and increased power in postmodernism. In addition, he distrusts any form of universal philosophy as promulgated by authors such as Marx and Hegel. Therefore, " the grands récits of modernity - the dialectic of Spirit, the emancipation of the worker, the

accumulation of wealth, the classless society - have all lost credibility" (Sarup,1993,p.145).

In addition, Lyotard notes the gap between narrative knowledge (e.i.,myth, magic, folk wisdom) and science, which according to him, has led to the disappearance of the former. However, he insists that the flexible capacity of the narrative knowledge can encompass all three spheres (science, ethics and aesthetics) without losing their particular characteristics (Bernatchez,1995).

1.7 The Late Modernism and The Anti-Aesthetic

In discussing modernism art critics often refer to the *Late or High modernism* of the early 1960's and the art criticism of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried. In Huysen's (1990) words *High modernism* is identified with the special status of the aesthetic and the idea of art work as autonomous.³

Thus, postmodernism refers to the artistic practice which opposes high modernism and Greenbergian formalist aesthetics. In addition, postmodernism challenges the very special status of the aesthetic. Hence, the term anti-aesthetic becomes a synonym for postmodernism. Hal Foster(1983) underlines that,

anti-aesthetic signals that the very notion of the aesthetic, its network of ideas, is at question: the idea that an aesthetic experience exists apart, without

'purpose', all but beyond history, or that art can now effect a world at once(inter)subjective, concrete, and universal - a symbolic totality (p.xv).

In light of the foregoing I will use to the term anti-aesthetic to demarcate a practice that breaks from aesthetic and formalist discourse.

1.7.1 Postmodernism of Resistance

Foster distinguishes between the postmodernism of resistance and that of reaction. The former is concerned with the critical deconstruction of tradition in order to resist the existing social and cultural status quo. The latter repudiates modernism but celebrates the status quo in a neoconservative fashion (Foster,1983,xii). Foster supports the postmodernism of resistance which ". . . seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and politicalaffiliations" (p.xii). Congruent with this view Fehr(1994) sees art educators in the postmodern arena as the leaders of a resistance to the oppressive notions of the past reflected in the dominance of Western fine arts, the concept of artist as the bearer of meaning, marginalization of women in art, etc (Fehr,1994).

I agree with Fehr that art educators should become the leaders of the resistance, not only to the oppressive systems of modernism but also to those of the present.

The place of postmodern art education lies outside reified modernist conventions. . . .The modern art educator ignored the art world and produced a visually illiterate generation. Today's art educators can learn from this lesson. Postmodern art education must be more than a chronological term. It cannot reject the oppressive notions of the past unless it understands them (Fehr,1994,p.214).

However, I do not agree with a notion that modern art educator produced a visually illiterate generation. In the modernist approach to teaching visual arts the development of vision and the perfection of medium vis-à-vis visual art form were privileged over anything else (Foster,1985, Wolcott,1996). Haanstra(1996) states that one of the central goals of art educators in this century has been the perceptual learning ". . . in terms of development of the faculty of sight and the development of the 'appreciation' of the beautiful" (p.197). The real problem within the modernist approach in teaching visual art was that there was little concern for the social and cultural context of art (Anderson,1995). By contrast, a postmodern approach that relies on an anti-aesthetic stance is much more interested in art as ideational and contextual than as visual and formal. Therefore, the issue of a " visual literacy " is much more doubtful in postmodern art education.

1.8 Postmodern Thinking in Education

In this section I would like to sketch briefly some characteristics of postmodernist thinking in education. In particular I will address the critical thinking and pedagogy which is at the core of postmodernist education.

Education does not accept easily postmodern thinking because both educational practice and theory were founded on the modernist tradition of the Enlightenment narrative; and education is, by nature a conservative institution, that is, slow to change (Usher & Edwards 1993). Lyotard(1992) states that the project of modernity was dependent on education which, in turn was seen as a vehicle of emancipation and progress of society ". . . that will also produce enlightened citizens, masters of their own destiny" (p.97). In spite of the strength of the modernist tradition and education's conservative tendencies, in the last fifteen years the influence of postmodernism on arts and education has been enormous (Trend,1992).

The very core of postmodernist pedagogy lies in the criticism of modernism, or the challenge to what Habermas(1983) calls the 'project of modernity'. Generally speaking, postmodern education is reflected through the persistent debates on issues such as pluralism, historicism, representation, gender, cannon - all of which challenge the modernist paradigm of universal knowledge and progress.

Postmodernist education jettisons the master narratives of the Enlightenment, which were conceived on the principles of universal reason, objective knowledge and rational self as the prerequisite for the emancipation and progress of society (Carr,1995,Keith,1993).

Such a move is the result of another influence within postmodernism, a reliance upon a post-structuralist paradigm. Post-structuralism demarcates the way of thinking or a mode of analysis interested in the productive signification of any textual structure (written or discursive) vis-à-vis its context (e.i.,practices and institutions). Relying on post-structuralism, postmodern education demands that its discourse needs to assert its legitimacy within a relevant social and political context.

Post-structuralist concerns and questions - about language, texts, interpretation, subjectivity for example, specifically lend themselves to larger historical, cultural questions which inhabit the post-modern moment (Usher & Edwards,1994,p.18).

1.8.1 Deconstruction and Education

Another important issue within post-structuralism is that of deconstruction, the term that has been appropriated from Derrida's(1994) texts. Derrida(1994) talks of deconstruction as neither a 'deconstruction' nor a method of reading and

analyzing texts. It refers to the reading texts within and how texts deconstruct or subvert themselves (Usher & Edwards,1994).

Furthermore, deconstruction is not only the strategy for reading texts, it refers to a 'deconstructive process' that is always present in texts and waiting to be read (Payne,1993, Usher& Edwards,1994). As such deconstructive process helps the opening up of texts in order to show ". . . how meaning is organised in powerful interpretations, and what function that organization serves-some interpretations are more plausible and powerful than others" (Usher & Edwards,1994,p.145). Of what concern is deconstruction to education? In describing the meaning of education in Derrida's texts and vis-à-vis deconstruction Usher & Edwards(1994) state,

Derrida's texts suggest, however, that the 'meaning' of education is not to be found in this 'outside' but rather in the inside, in the story or stories (narratives) which education tells about itself or, perhaps more accurately, the stories told for and about it (p.145).

The construction of meaning and a critical analysis of its production vis-à-vis the representation and the dynamic social power structure is at the core of postmodern pedagogy. Language is seen as the key to a dynamic process of becoming " . . . a means by which individuals and social groups enter into and construct the world for themselves through the medium of words, spoken and written" (Jackson,1991,p.130). The emphasis stresses

that what we know about the world is determined by what we say about it. Also, representation is not seen as a neutral process or value free, there is a politics of representation that must be questioned (Usher & Edwards,1994). Instead of perceiving the world as an objective reality, as was the case in modernism, the world becomes a constellation of signs; hence, everything we perceive becomes part of the narrative. In this sense pedagogy represents both a discourse of critique and a project of possibility (Giroux,1992).

Furthermore, postmodern education constructs itself through constant questioning of epistemological absolutes such as truth, certainty, reality and beauty. As such it is opposed to the modernist paradigm ". . . which treated absolutes as articles of faith" (Clark,1996,p.10). Postmodernist orientation is underlined by the sense of doubt, and this is why often it has been seen by neo-conservatives as sceptical, cynical and nihilistic (Clark,1996).

In the writings of Derrida, Lyotard, Jameson and Spivak, postmodern thinking moves beyond a criticism of the modernist paradigm. It becomes a method of questioning our ability to perceive and recognize the truth. As opposed to the modernist paradigm of knowledge as disinterested or objective and separated from power, postmodernist education relies on the Foucaultian stance that knowledge is always found in relation to power; " no power can be exercised without the extraction,

appropriation, distribution, or retention of knowledge" (Foucault, 1990, p. 87). In this way postmodernist thinking in education exposes all master narratives as socially constructed and open to subjective interpretations. These show that our world is made of a multiplicity of voices, realities and histories.

The relation between power and knowledge is crucial in any attempt to address the issues of truth in regard to society, its asymmetrical power relations and the structure.⁴ The truth is not a matter of methodologically controlled rational investigation alone but a complex process operating at a multiplicity of levels (Usher & Edwards 1994). In addition, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application (Foucault, 1980).

1.8.2 Postmodern Pedagogy and Democracy

One of the effects of postmodernism on education can be seen also in the shift in focus on the practice of pedagogy. There is a shift from seeing pedagogy as the concept of transmission of knowledge and skills to the pedagogy as a form of cultural politics (Giroux, 1992). Trend (1992) sees pedagogy as a form of political and cultural production that is involved in the construction of knowledge (as opposed merely to its dissemination), the questioning of representations and social relations. The goal is a more democratic society (Trend, 1992). This seems to be congruent with Carr's (1995) global view on

postmodernism as an attempt to reinforce the relation between education and democracy. The following quotation signals the direction that I take throughout this thesis.

The real challenge of postmodernism is to reconceptualise the relationship between education and democracy in a way which acknowledges - rather than simply repudiates - the postmodernist critique of Enlightenment philosophical thought (Carr,1995,p.79).

1.9 Cultural Pedagogy

What I would identify as postmodernist pedagogy, Trend(1992) calls a cultural pedagogy. The goals are inseparable from those of a cultural democracy. Trend sees cultural pedagogy as the dynamic process of opening up to discussion and expanding the diverse principles of liberty, human dignity, recognition and social justice. It becomes the strategy within a political movement to establish and develop democracy. Moreover, " cultural pedagogy encompasses a cultural production via construction and organization of knowledge, values, desires and social practices" (Giroux,1992,ix). It involves a variety of discourses, texts, images and actions through which meaning gets constructed and students shape their individual and collective identities.

As part of his definition of cultural pedagogy Trend(1992) notes a relationship between art and pedagogy. This relation

should reveal a whole spectrum of human experiences and values. It becomes a dynamic process in which a variety of voices and views coalesce vis-à-vis their cultural, ethnic or social background. The principles such as free expression and free speech are pivotal to Trend's(1992) model of cultural pedagogy. However, it seems to me that even in Trend's ideal relationship between art and pedagogy the focus is rather on discourse than on an artistic form.

In Trend's model pedagogy is mainly seen as a form of cultural politics that does ". . . not only address how the art gets produced, but also how art comes to function in the wider social community" (Giroux,1992,p.viii). This is an important point, however, art educators need to establish pedagogy that will foster the production of art via development of skills and technique and equally an understanding how art functions in society.

On the other side, Trend's view of the artist is interesting for its ramifications on the education of artists. He sees the artist as a cultural worker, however, not in a romanticized view of the artist who works on the margins of society. In Trend's model it is important to expand the concept of cultural work; this will lead to the inclusion of a variety of professions such as law, social work, architecture, medicine, theology, education, and literature. The issues related to public philanthropy, media reception, town meetings,

and popular education are also incorporated into the model. In this way it becomes possible to critically analyse different forms of representation and how they are perpetuated and controlled through particular social and cultural institutions.

In short, the redefinition of the concept of cultural worker as implicated in the education of artists can open up the debates on the position and possibilities of art in the capitalist art world. Trend also questions whether art can resist the artworld? He worries that the once radical and critical postmodern art has become commodified by the institutions of the art world. Nonetheless, Trend believes that art can always have power to promote a political action.

1.9.1 Critical Thinking

Trend's (1992) cultural pedagogy is based on the essentiality of critical thinking and self-reflexivity on the part of both instructors and students. What we teach, why we teach, and how we teach are questions that pervade cultural pedagogy (Keith, 1992, Hamblen, 1991). In addition, " postmodern education, then, requires a questioning, critical mind -- education is both content and an examination of content and pedagogy " (Keith, 1994, p.52).

Where Trend's emphasis is on culture, for Usher and Edwards (1994) postmodern pedagogy is, above all, critical thinking.⁵ It draws upon the principles of the Frankfurt

school, feminism, Freirean pedagogy, postcolonialism , poststructuralism and postmodernism in order to create a radical approach to education. The eclecticism and pluralism that comes with a critical pedagogy reflect directly a postmodern atmosphere. The principal issue is to introduce heterogeneity, and embrace the differences. The objective is to emancipate through fighting oppression on every single level, whether we talk of gender, race, class or sexual preference. In this way" education as a form of cultural politics is an attempt to reconceive and reconfigure the notion of citizenship in the postmodern moment" (Usher & Edwards,1994,p.215). The failure of the modern liberal state lies in its inability to include all citizens in the dynamic participation of creating a more democratic society. As Usher & Edwards(1994) state,

Thus modern conceptions of citizenship in which 'progress' comes about through the nation-state are displaced by a postmodern notion where the state no longer has primary responsibility for producing progress and where citizens are required to become active on their own behalf. Critical pedagogy aims to support such activity in order that the oppressions and exclusions of modernity are not reinforced (p.216).

One of the basic questions in critical pedagogy is, " Who speaks?" The deconstruction of the authoritative voices - those who speak for and on behalf of others is at the core of

critical pedagogy. Thus, individuals are seen as the active producers of knowledge that is not a stable and objective entity but as ". . . a particular and historical relation which individuals enter as active constituents" (Jackson,1991,p.127).

Usher & Edwards(1994) underline that a critical pedagogy struggles on two fronts. On the one side it rejects Marxist correspondence or the conflict theory of schooling in which the function of education is entirely determined upon the needs of the capitalist economy that produces the workers. On the other side critical pedagogy rejects the new-right cultural restorationists interested in the concept of cultural oneness conceived upon their set of shared values and a curriculum that relies on discipline-regulated knowledge.

In critical pedagogy educators are not seen as ". . . the helpless agents of the system but as *transformative intellectuals*" who are empowered in order to empower students (Usher & Edwards,1994,p.219). In this situation the dialogue between teacher and student is tremendously important.⁶ They work as partners and their dialogue is seen as the dynamic structure. The overall goal of critical pedagogy as such is emancipation as opposed to oppression. Therefore, it foregrounds politics and hence emancipation, by linking educational practices at the micro-level with political action at the macro-level (Usher & Edwards,1994).

1.9.2 The Criticism

Usher and Edwards(1994) demonstrate that what is presented as a discourse on postmodern education appears to be at once both over-theorized and under-theorized; over-theorized because it is not quite sure how most of the argument can be transformed through an educational practice; under-theorized because most of the modern goals of education are still shared with a postmodern critical pedagogy. Also, critical postmodern texts forget to subject themselves to the critical method they inflict upon their modernist targets. For example, Keith(1994) emphasizes the positive postmodern challenges to aesthetics and traditional Western education however, without questioning possible limitations within the postmodern model. Genuine critical thinking must be reflexive and able to critically re-address its own practice and institutions and fight the oppressive notions which also exist in postmodernism. In the third chapter I will examine some of the limitations and contradictions inherent in a postmodern approach in the teaching of visual arts.

CHAPTER 2: POSTMODERN ART

This chapter examines current definitions of postmodern art and aesthetics. From my perspective as a visual artist I will try to demonstrate the dichotomies, modern/postmodern and aesthetics/anti-aesthetic.⁷ Moreover, this chapter initiates my conceptual foundation for a critical examination of postmodern education for artists.

2.1 Is there postmodern art?

In the previous chapter I argued that postmodernism should not be discussed as a fixed concept. In education, the term postmodernism has to be presented as open ended and flexible in order to explain the artistic and cultural practices of both past and present. In this section the first question I will address is, " Is there a truly postmodern art? " Should we talk of postmodern art as a particular style in art that has been recognized within a framework of art history? Shapiro(1980) defines style as

. . . a system of forms with a quality and a meaningful expression through which the personality of the artist and the broad outlook of a group are visible. . . .It is besides, a common ground against which innovations and the individuality of particular works may be measured (p.137).

This concept of style appears to be antithetical to the very core of postmodernism which refutes modernist aesthetic criteria such as individuality, stylistic innovation and originality (Hart,1991). In the same fashion, Morgan(1996) argues that there is no postmodern art style. A postmodern approach to art is reflected through repetition and reification of objects from the past rather than the innovative creation of new forms. By bringing historical symbolism into the present most of the art created in postmodernism appears rather as an homage to the past. " The same signs get repeated; thus there is no forward motion. There is a stasis. There are no cause and effect relationships in most forms associated with postmodernism" (Morgan,1996,p.75).

Rather, we should talk of postmodern art as an umbrella that encompasses pluralistic and eclectic practices in art. Jencks(1986) states that postmodern art emerged from the the social and political ferment of the 1960's and 1970's, it appeared through a number of recognized movements such as Pop art, Hyper-realism, Photo Realism, Conceptual Art, Allegorical and Political realism, New Image Painting, Transavantguardia, Neo Expressionism (Jencks,1986). He claims that the main underlying principles of postmodern art are stylistic and philosophical pluralism, eclecticism and a critical approach to preexisting ideology.

More precisely, Jencks(1986) explains postmodern art as the method of double coding, that includes modern techniques and something else seen as traditional, however presented through irony and allegory. For Jencks, a postmodern art is also ". . . influenced by the world village and sensibility that comes with this, an ironic cosmopolitanism" (1986,p.22).

To sum up, postmodern art should not be thought of as a style; rather it is more of a movement that starts in the late 1960's consisting of deliberate departures from modernist formalist aesthetics. These depatures may be loosely categorized not only as postmodern but as anti-aesthetic or anti-formalist. In this section I will try to show what makes postmodern art above all anti-aesthetic in its character. In order to do so we should first look back at the Greenbergian aesthetics, the core of high modernism (Benjamin,1996).

2.2 Greenbergian Aesthetics

The art critic, Clement Greenberg(1966) remains a key figure in any postmodern debate. The art criticism of Greenberg relies on the Kantian philosophical view of aesthetics and art as unique and autonomous from the other two spheres, cognition(science) and ethics(politics). According to Greenberg there is always something integral and intrinsic to specific artistic practices that has to be recognized. The problem is that in his model these practices and experiences are seen as autonomous from any other mode of human experience including

cognitive experiences.⁸ Greenberg argues that the unique value of modern art lies in its own self-referential nature and the unique aesthetic experience it provides.

The concept of purity is pivotal to Greenberg's definition of art. It refers to the self-definition of the medium and the specific disciplinary practice of art (Foster, 1985). As Greenberg says, "the essence of modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticise the discipline itself - not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence" (Greenberg, 1965, p. 193).

Consequently, the disciplines of painting, sculpture, or architecture were seen as distinguished from each other and dependent upon a specific system of historical codes and aesthetic criteria. Greenberg bestows upon this system exclusive attention to the perfection of medium and visual formal structure of art works; the Greenbergian aesthetics, was, par excellence, formalistic. Thus I would define formalist art criticism as a methodological orientation to the discussion and evaluation of art based strictly on the consideration of the medium (e.i., oil paint on canvas) and the substantial formal aspects (line, color, shape, texture, light and shadow, mass and volume, space and depth) in their morphological design relationship. Consequently, the teaching of visual art within a

modernist framework was established upon a so-called *pedagogical formalism* (Feldman,1992).

. . . the doctrine that ultimate focus of aesthetic attention and critical meaning is, or ought to be, organization and presentation of the visual elements of works of art; line, shape, color, texture, mass, space, volume and pattern (Feldman,1992,p.122).

It is important to underline that Greenbergian aesthetics was not only form centered but also painting centered. It favoured the pictorial paradigm of painting, and more precisely, non-representational abstract painting, over the other forms of art. This contributed to the domination of painting in modernism and a general anti-painting reaction in postmodernism. It was crucial to Greenberg to distinguish between painting and sculpture as well as between abstract painting and representational art. He saw the latter linked to literature. In order to overcome the literary character of representation visual art must refer only to the medium vis-à-vis its visual structure.

For Greenberg, the flatness of the canvas, its two-dimensional surface possessed a hidden potential for embodying a spiritual reality. This view focused on an artist's inner being and the self conscious experimentation within the perceptual possibilities of the medium. In this way the sensuous aspect of art becomes dominant (Benjamin,1996). The

experience of art becomes more or less a mere optical experience entirely dependent on the seeing and the close attention to the medium.

For Greenberg this view reflected a historical approach to art that was inaugurated by the impressionists, in their response to the invention of photography. In discussing the influence of the impressionists Greenberg did not include their reliance on representation. According to Greenberg representational art, which relies on subject matter and narrative description, was disqualified as impure or as non-art.

2.2.1 Apolitical Discourse on Art

Another important aspect of the Greenbergian formalist aesthetic is that it claimed a universal applicability, because the formal aspects of an artwork (e.i., symmetry, proportion, balance) are generic and intrinsically present in all art forms, no matter what the cultural background (Hamblen, 1991). It is apparent from the above description that the social and cultural context of art and the issues of artistic cultural production were not a part of Greenbergian aesthetics. These were seen as extraneous to artistic practice. In late modernism, art was identified with high culture and as such it has become elitist and separated from society. The dichotomy between art and society pervades throughout modernism.

Therefore, we can talk of modernist art and aesthetic as largely apolitical.

However, Efland(1992) brings up the interesting point that in spite of the insistence of Greenberg on the autonomy of art from political and social issues, the popular magazines such as Time and Life, which can be classified as magazines for the masses(i.e.,non-elitist) frequently contrasted the art and artists of America to those of communist Soviet Union. The freedom of expression in American art was seen as the freedom of American people.

2.3 Bringing Art back to Life

The significant feature of postmodernism is the breaking down of the hierarchical barriers between high and popular culture, art and everyday life leading to 'a stylistic promiscuity favouring eclecticism and the mixing of codes; parody, pastiche, and irony; a playfulness and the celebration of the surface depthlessness of culture (Usher & Edwards,1994,p.12)

On the other hand, we can talk of postmodernism as an attempt to bridge the dichotomies of modernism. Postmodern art is interested in bringing art back to life and to its social and cultural context from which it derives. This is reflected through art that appropriates images of popular culture and content that deals with social and political

issues (Holt,1995,Wolcott,1996). The postmodern discourse on art is contextually focused on cultural criterias and with an ". . . emphasis on decontextualizing, reframing and recontextualizing agreed upon social and philosophical realities" (Anderson,1995,p.49). Therefore, the practice of postmodern art ". . . is not defined in relation to a given medium--sculpture--but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium--photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself-might be used" (Kraus,1983,41).

By abandoning the disciplinary character of modernism and its formalist discourse interested in form, medium and seeing, postmodern art is above all anti-formalist or anti-aesthetic. It presents itself as a form of political and critical rhetoric, the form of cultural activism. As Foster(1983) puts it,

anti-aesthetic also signals a practice that is cross disciplinary in nature, that is sensitive to cultural forms engaged in a politic(e.g., feminist art) or rooted in a vernacular-that is, to forms that deny the idea of a privileged aesthetic realm (Foster,1983,p.xv).

2.4 The Critical Inversion

The term anti-aesthetic became a synonym for postmodern visual art practice (Holt,1995). The problem with this term is that it assumes a narrow definition for aesthetic identified with the ahistorical concept of aesthetic experience and formalist discourse on art. One of the basic problems in postmodern art theory is that it often interprets modernist aesthetic criteria narrowly and without explaining the philosophical and historical context in which these criteria emerged (Holt.1995, Shusterman,1997).

I believe that the function of aesthetic and its relationship to art needs to be clarified in teaching art. I do not agree with some of my colleagues who describe the relationship between aesthetics and art by referring to Barnett Newman's phrase " aesthetics is for me like ornithology must be for the birds" (quoted in Mattick,1993,p.253). Rather I take the position that in the education of artists, aesthetics and art are inseparable.

By clarifying the relation between art and aesthetics we could enhance students awareness of the relationship between experience and discourse, practice and theory, artists and theorists. Besides making art, young artists should also know how their art is discussed, treated and understood within the culture(Feagin,1995). I would agree with Mattick(1993) that,

Artists, unlike the birds in the wild, are engaged in a cultural and therefore historically evolving activity. For this reason aesthetics is actually quite unlike ornithology. The birds do not, for example, question the concepts evolved by theorists to describe their activities. The rise of art-world anti-aesthetics sets a valuable example for a critical engagement with the assumptions, and so with the history, of aesthetics itself (Mattick,1993,p.258).

2.5 Radical Anti-Aesthetic of Joseph Kosuth

One of the most influential advocates for the separation of art from aesthetics was Joseph Kosuth(1972), a conceptual artist and critic of modern art. He argues that, " all art after Duchamp is conceptual in nature because art only exists conceptually" (1972,p.33). Kosuth's radical anti-aesthetic and conceptual approach to art has been very influential. As Morgan(1996) says " conceptual art became a code for anything that could be called an "idea" and was fast becoming a radical presence on M.F.A. programs, an alternative to formalism" (Morgan,1996,p.71).

In his well known work Art After Philosophy(1972), Kosuth insisted on the elimination of aesthetics from art. He claims that the relationship between art and aesthetics emerged out of assumption that ". . . any branch of philosophy that dealt with "beauty" and thus, taste, was inevitably duty bound to discuss

art as well and, this is false" (Kosuth,1972,p.158). In addition, Kosuth sees the aesthetic discourse as formalistic in its nature; it is restricted to the morphological context of art. Furthermore, aesthetics deals with our opinions on perceptions of the world and as such, it is unable to provide an understanding of the conceptual meaning of art.

I argue that an aesthetic discourse draws upon the experience of art, which involves more than the perception of the physical form of art. Also, our visual perception is inseparable from the feelings, ideas, values, associations and cultural prejudices which all come along with the physical reception. Regarding the implication of this view in teaching art I would refer specifically to Berleant(1991). He states that,

What adds to the marvelous complexity of perceptual experience is that it is more than sensory in its qualitative content. As human beings we are cultural creatures, unable to sense without the the presence of associations and meanings. The very process of sensory development is, in fact, a process of acculturation through which ideas and beliefs become embodied in our direct experiences (1991,p.48).

However, Kosuth(1972) insists that ". . . aesthetic considerations are extraneous to an object's function or "reason-to-be", unless of course, that object's reason-to-be is

strictly aesthetic "(p.159). In his opinion, a purely aesthetic object is a decorative object, its status is determined upon the process of ornamentation, that is, adding something to make it more appealing to our senses. Kosuth is even more radical when he states that, ". . . formalist art (painting and sculpture is the vanguard of decoration, and strictly speaking, one could reasonably assert its art condition is so minimal that for all functional purposes it is not art at all, but pure exercises in aesthetics" (p.159).

However, Bernatchez(1995) raises a concern that , " if aesthetics becomes divorced from artworks, then the other structural accident happens in which art works no longer signify anything" (p.139). Relying on Kosuth's radical notion, most of the postmodernists dismissed aesthetics and criticized painting as anachronistic and academic. The death of painting has been repeatedly proclaimed for the last twenty-five years). As Lawson(1985) explains there is, " . . . continuing debate between the "moderns" and the postmoderns" that is so often couched in terms of the life and death of painting" (p.164).

Referring to Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions, Kosuth proclaims that " works of art are analytic propositions" , their validity depends solely on the definitions of symbols they contain and the artist's intention (Kosuth,1972,p.165).

The validity of artistic propositions is not dependent on any empirical, much less aesthetic, presuppositions about the nature of things. For the artist, as an analyst, is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things. He is concerned only with the way, (1) in which art is capable of conceptual growth and (2) how his propositions are capable of logically following that growth? In other words, the propositions of art are not factual, but linguistic in character - that is, they do not describe the behaviors of physical, or even mental objects: they express definitions of art, or the formal consequences of definitions of art. Accordingly, we can say that art operates on logic (Kosuth, 1972, p.165).

It seems to me that Kosuth's view on artworks as analytic propositions leads to a state in which interest for the visual structure of art, its form, becomes replaced by the interest in structures of discourse, which can justify art as a concept. At that point art work starts to lose its body, and "anything visual can be called art". . . [t]he sentence "this is art" is a convention. Historical knowledge alone is required to make and judge art, some intellectual curiosity or interest for the 'logic' of Modernism, some strategic desire or interest to see it further extrapolated and tested on mere institutional grounds. Art fades into art theory" (Duve, 1990, p.272).

I think that today's teaching of visual arts more or less relies on Kosuth's radical anti-aesthetic view which approaches art exclusively as ideational and conceptual. In that situation the discourse of art takes over the practice of making art; the teaching of visual art becomes no different from teaching critical social sciences. Richmond(1996) argues that " the real tragedy of postmodern thinking in art and art education is the privileging of theory over practice and the consequent negative influence on student understanding and artistic capability" (Richmond,1996,p.2). This effect will have particular consequences on teaching more traditional disciplines such as painting and drawing to which the formalist concerns with the medium are constitutive to the making of art. In the next section, I will try to describe the structure of postmodern anti-aesthetic art.

2.6. Beyond the Surface / Collage

If the grid is an emblem of modernism, formal, abstract, repetitive, flattening ordering, literal - a symbol of the modernist preoccupation with form and style, then perhaps the map should serve as the preliminary emblem of postmodernism: indicating boundaries beyond the surface of the artwork and surfaces outside art, implying that boundaries are arbitrary, and flexible, and man-made systems (Kraus,1993,p.9).

In looking at today's visual art one must notice that very often the surface of postmodern art shares some formal features with art of the early Avant-garde, in particular with Dada and Surrealism in its use of text, photography, and stylishly ordered juxtapositions of images and objects. The surface of what I call anti-aesthetic art is very often shaped through the method of collage. Therefore, the formalist principles of organization such as organic unity, movement, balance, rhythm are of very little concern in the postmodern visual surface (Mattick, 1993). In painting, there is a shift in attention from the brushstroke, medium and the spiritual gesture in painting that was seen in modernism as the most privileged signifier of the pictorial paradigm (Kelly, 1980).

Postmodern art can be also explained through a theory of photographic intervention within 'dominant visual ideology'. It signals the emancipatory transformation and the end of the dominant 'masculine' high-arts of painting and sculpture (Owens, 1985). Foster (1985) reminds us that contemporary visual art does not necessarily abolish an interest in perceptual experimentation, but it insists on its relation with other practices.

2.7 Art work as Text

Very often the surface of much of contemporary visual art is not only meant to be seen but to be read as well. There is a strong implication of language that has been explored by

artists as both descriptive of process and part of the process. Therefore, language and image seem to be treated without priority; as well as, there is an interest in their interplay. Moreover, the text is very often used as a formal visual element. " Whether printed or painted, xeroxed or sculpted, typed or taped, words have surfaced both as a prominent image within the visual arts and also in many cases as a central subject" (Prinz,1991,p.1). The concept of art work as text is well reflected in the work of artists Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holtzer, Philippe Perrin and Bruce Nauman. Describing the work of the artist Barbara Kruger Richmond(1996) comments,

Through photomontage, often involving large letters of text, Barbara Kruger sets about disrupting viewers' responses to images that shape ideas of power, gender, and consumerism, while eschewing notions of aesthetic intent (p.13).

The construction of meaning and its interpretation is central in the postmodern art paradigm. The art work as text can be seen also as an "event" which ties the verbal to the visual body of an artwork. " The materiality of the practice: initially defined in terms of the constraints of a particular medium, it must now be redefined as a specific production of meaning" (Kraus 1990,p.99). However, the meaning appears as ambiguous provoking the viewer to get involved in its playful construction. Regarding this Lawson(1985) notes,

Meaning is intimated but tantalizingly withheld. It appears to be on the surface, but as soon as it is approached it disappears, provoking the viewer into a deeper examination of prejudices bound inextricably with the conventional representations that express the (p.159).

Within the formalist aesthetic the meaning of the visual image was regarded in relation to its form as a visual symbol. By contrast, the postmodern visual image is often considered as "text" that is polysemic and open ended (Fehr,1994). This reflects a poststructuralist view on text that can be experienced only through its dynamic production; meaning is seen as contextual hence always open to new interpretations (Barthes,1985).⁹ Fehr(1994) defines an image not as ". . . a bundle of shapes releasing a single theological meaning - the message of the Artists God-but a multidimensional space in which variety of shapes, none of them original, blend and clash" (p.210).

In the modernist paradigm, the viewer was expected to adopt an *aesthetic* attitude, the key to an aesthetic experience (Stolnitz,1960). This meant to adopt a passive appreciative role that involves a disinterested contemplative perception of artwork for its own sake alone. Any other interests such as ethical, political, or practical were seen as extraneous to both art and the aesthetic experience.¹⁰

In postmodernism, the viewer is not a "passive" consumer of meaning but the active co-producer (Barthes, 1977, Fuller, 1982, Walker, 1995). The meaning in postmodern art appears as a socially constructed entity, thus one must go beyond a contemplative seeing of art work. Postmodern visual art requires the viewer ". . . to look beyond the formalist compositional qualities of a work, decode its symbolic imagery, and expose its embedded cultural assumptions" (Clark, 1996, p.2).

2.8 Postmodern content

If modernist aesthetic celebrated the object of art and the appreciative seeing of art form, postmodern aesthetic is interested in meaning that is constructed through a dynamic relationship between an experiencing subject and the content of art works. Therefore we can talk of postmodern aesthetic as content centered. I would define content of art as the body of ideas, the knowledge attached to the physical form, and linked to the representation and its interpretation (White, 1993). Dziemidok (1993) states that content is "everything represented and expressed in a work while the form may describe the means and the ways of representing and expressing that something" (p.186). Bernatchez (1995) suggests that it might be useful to distinguish between the meaning and content. Deinhard (1970) defines the meaning as an outcome of the interpretation on the given imagery, it is contingent on specific time and place.

While the content is the result of the analysis on the formal aspects of painting (Bernatchez,1995).

In an enigmatic fashion Lyotard(1984) also talks of postmodern content that presents unrepresentable.¹¹ What is characteristic for the visual art of 1990's is that its content very often articulates the popular social and political issues related to racism, aids crisis, rights of gay/lesbian in the society, feminism, post-colonialism, ecology,etc. Postmodern art relies on so-called *social aesthetics* (Deitcher,1990), ". . .it addresses the concept of power – its source, exercise, and consequence" (Clark,1996,p.2). If modernism, treated art as sacred, in postmodernism art is linked to the 'profane' , referring to various levels of daily life and culture. Finally, the image becomes . . . ,

an amalgam of quotations cobbled together in countless corners of culture. . . .Sociopolitical subject matter-advocating the concerns of ethnic, religious, and other minorities as well as women and environmental groups - is now common (Fehr,1994,p.212).

2.8.1 Defining a Hypothesis

My starting hypothesis is that education of visual artists in the postmodern era directly reflects these ideas and assumptions. Postmodern pedagogy is highly content-centered and it is underlined by an insistence on the politicization of

art. This is what I identify as an anti-aesthetic stance. However, the stance is dogmatic in its ignoring of the generic visual nature of art; that is, it refutes formalist concerns with the medium as anachronistic. It fails to relate content to form or simply ignores the possible importance of their relationship in teaching visual arts. In discussing art in the postmodern climate Bernatchez(1995) notes,

The particular quality of art could be derived from the form in which content is expressedNot only that, but much current work that is defined as art is overtly textual and verbal, with fairly explicit content and minimal symbolic quality (p.110-111).

This result is that an anti-aesthetic approach in teaching art does not sufficiently address how ideas are transformed through the medium. This has particular impact on students who are working in a more traditional fashion of perceptual experimentation (such as occurs in painting). Furthermore, anti-aesthetic stance is not far from an anti-art attitude, ". . . that refuses to take pleasure in its own formal properties or denies conventional forms or complexity of form and defies traditional expectations " (Becker,1996,p.45). This brings us to the question, " Of what concern is the mastery of medium and the visual structure in the postmodern education of artists? " What makes the teaching of visual art in postmodernism indeed visual? In the next section I will

introduce some inconsistencies within current postmodern approach in the teaching of visual arts. Moreover, I will insist on some pedagogical strategies that are based on critical thinking, however, without losing a concern to get students interested in the interplay between content and form, between ideas and medium.

2.9 Post Modern Artist

In his definition of the postmodern artist Lyotard(1984) claims that " a postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher; the text he writes, the works he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work" (p.564). In this view the postmodern artist is working in the avant-garde fashion which challenges the traditional aesthetic criterias for judging art and the established bourgeois institutions of art.(King,1996)¹²

On the other side Kerney(1994) sees the postmodern artist as a bricoleur or collagist who is the cultural producer. This seems to be quite opposed to the modernist view of artist as individual innovator. The postmodern artist does not rely on innovation and originality but on pastiche and allegory. In the postmodernist paradigm ". . . there are no original ideas in art; images can always be deconstructed to reveal antecedent constructs and concepts" (Clark,1996,p.28).

Jameson(1983) points out that it was the modernist aesthetic that was bound to the concept of the unique individual self, that is, a prerequisite to innovation and originality which leads further to the recognition vis-à-vis individual style in art. By contrast, he sees postmodernity as identified with the late corporate capitalism in which the individual self has been marginalized, ". . .that kind of individualism and personal identity is a thing of the past; the old individual or individualist subject is dead"

(Jameson,1983,p.115) Jameson adds that the identity of the individual subject is also denied by poststructuralist theory. According to poststructuralists, the individual subject is a 'myth'; it never existed beyond the construct of philosophical and cultural mystification which convinced people to think that there is such a thing as a unique individual self

(Jameson,1983). This notion appears as a negative based universalism. It is unacceptable to an educational environment that has to be able to recognize and encourage the development of both, individual and cultural identities of students.

2.9.1 Critical reflections

Much contemporary art is made by MFA'd, academically trained, T.V.-saturated artists who are equipped with the "right" references, buzz words, and recipes for "success". The majority read the same books and art magazines, attend "canned lectures" by traveling

cultural eminences, and pay close attention to the blockbuster exhibitions showcased at the "right museums" with the same artists (King,1996,p.86).

In this section I would like to address the question, How different is postmodernism today from that of the 1970's? Why should this difference be addressed in the education of artists? King(1995) says that the early postmodern art of 1960's and 1970's can be identified as the last avant-garde. It had a two-fold point of resistance. First, the early postmodern artists rejected the Greenbergian formalist aesthetics and the dominance of abstract painting. This resulted in a plurality of expressions and a vernacular art criticism which brought the art from various strata of culture. Second, the early postmodern artists questioned the context of art and the relationship between art and its value determined by the institutions of the art world such as galleries and museums. As a result of this trend an institutional theory of art and a contextual art criticism emerged (Danto,1964, Anderson,1995). Early postmodern artists exhibited their work outside the conventional gallery and museum spaces and questioned the role of the art critic.

However, the definition of postmodernism today is different and so is the concept of the postmodern artist. The postmodern artist of the 1990's relies heavily on postmodern art theory and she/he is following rather than challenging the

already established issues of postmodernism. Postmodernism is largely ideological rather than practical. The use of technologic and electronic media as well as the appropriation of images and the issues of popular culture as a content of art has become a predictable formula of postmodernism . As King(1996) points out, " the new post-modern, sees life and the world as an extension of television, xerox copy of culture, society and economy" (p.83).

Also, Morgan(1996) argues that " being an artist today is a matter of trying to locate one's position in Postmodern-culture" (p.75). The possibility of artist-as-individual self becomes questionable. Both teaching and making visual art today have become more or less the process of following postmodern paradigm and fitting into the postmodern culture. Today's postmodern pedagogy tends to continue to kick the dead horse of modernism. It seldom critically addresses its own concepts vis-à-vis practice. The education of artists needs to be more reflexive and to critically address postmodern clichés. In this way challenging ideas and issues can be brought up which should result in art that points the way out of prevalent ideological cul de sacs of postmodernism.

This leads us further to the questions of art in the world of postmodernism. Today, " one's success in the art world is determined upon whether or not one, appears in the 'hottest' exhibitionsand represented by the coolest art

galleries" (King,1996,p.81). Most of the even radical postmodern art has been commodified just like the other modernist objects of art (Trend,1992). This brings us to the questions which can enhance a critical pedagogy in the education of artists. How did once radical postmodern art become co-opted by the same systems that it wanted to resist? Is resistance possible within the art world? Should we help young artists to find their place in the art world or to resist it? If the latter, what practical alternatives we can offer to them?

CHAPTER 3: TEACHING ART IN POSTMODERNISM

In this chapter I will address critically the education of artists in the postmodern climate. I am particularly concerned with the teaching of traditional disciplines such as painting and drawing in postmodernism. The objective of my criticism is not to reinforce a formalist approach in teaching traditional visual arts but to promote a pedagogy in visual arts that is sensitive to the social, political and cultural dimension of art without losing an appreciation for its generic visual character.

3.1 The Effects of Postmodernism

One of the primary effects of postmodernism on the education of artists is that it changed how and what artists choose to study and to specialize (Becker, 1996). They are not only still gravitating towards the traditional disciplines in painting, drawing, and sculpture but also to video art, computer art, performing and an interdisciplinary art. The study of art in the postmodern climate is underlined by a freedom of choice and expression that was lacking in the modernist disciplinary paradigm. A young artist is given freedom to explore new media through a challenging cross-disciplinary practice.

The teaching of art in postmodernism expands over the realm of fine arts and includes all visual images(Duncum,1997). This becomes an important and positive effect of postmodernism which encourages open-mindedness in students." Imagery is now infinitely more plentiful, pervasive, immediate, and ephemeral than ever before" (Duncum,1997,p.73). The distinction between art and popular culture seems to erode in postmodernism. What makes an art imagery different from an image of popular culture? Is there a need for a specific discourse which will address the human experiences and values that may be found in the popular electronic media? If art education in this century has been founded on a distinction between high culture and popular culture then it has to find a new theoretical foundation (Ef land,1990, Duncum,1997).

Particularly regarding the interest of young artists in the new technologies (e.i., computer art, video art) I would like to point out that the education of artists should go beyond the mastering of new technologies. The question is what makes these new ways of expression artistic? What distinguishes video and computer art from the everyday electronic imagery? Here I would like to refer to the comment of Don Foresta, a professor at the Ecole Superieure des Arts decoratifs in Paris, who states that art schools should not only teach students to explore the new technologies, vis-à-vis technique and skills, but should also help young artists to understand technology's humanistic, historical and philosophical dimensions.

Art schools should provide an important forum for discussion about technological development and artistic endeavor throughout this century. It is not enough for students to master the operation of the machines, they must understand artistic, scientific, philosophic aspects of the twentieth century history (Foresta,1997,p.267).

3.2 Traditional Visual Arts in Postmodernism

In this study, I am particularly concerned with the impact of postmodernism on the teaching of painting and drawing. As I mentioned earlier, modernism and its aesthetics were very much painting-centered. The focus was given to a self-conscious experimentation with the medium and formal visual structure of a painted surface. A reliance on Greenbergian aesthetics meant that there was no need to interpret painting within the framework of representation (Benjamin,1996).

The modernist-oriented teaching of painting and drawing was more or less defined by a pedagogical formalism which directed students' attention only towards the formal aspects of art work (Feldman,1992). Content and the subject matter were of a secondary concern or, as Piper(1993) says, ". . .social content - particularly explicit political matter was demoted . . . to irrelevance, as 'sullyng' the purity or impeding the 'transcendence of a work" (p.58). Such an approach further perpetuated the isolation of painting and fine arts from the

other art forms such as craft and folk art; as well, it separated art from its social and cultural context.

In an anti-formalist(anti-aesthetic) fashion postmodernists oppose this view, opening a whole spectrum of pluralistic practices within an overall objective, to bring art back to life. This has changed attitudes towards the teaching of the more traditional media. The effects of postmodernism such as the decentering of the subject, de-emphasis on the object of art, and an interdisciplinary tendency, have both liberated art from the strict disciplinary criteria and changed the ways in which students approach their artwork and the world around them (Becker,1996).

However, the teaching of traditional visual arts within a postmodern orientation still necessitates the exploration of the ideational and critical capacities of visual art, its textual and verbal character. Consequently, young artists have become more interested in philosophical issues and their articulation (conceptual intents) than in the actual making of art. Becker(1996) states that in postmodernism the traditional medium is not so interesting to young artists as the ideas they want to transform and communicate. This is what I identify as an anti-aesthetic stance in teaching visual arts. If art instruction is more focused on the verbalization of ideas and concepts than on the making of art, anything could be a medium

of art, and anything visual could be art when approached from a critical anti-aesthetic stance and postmodern art theory.

Steiner(1989) argues that the insistence on the anti-aesthetic in Western societies results often in the emphasis on postmodern theory over artistic practice (quoted in Richmond,1996). Therefore, we can assume that teaching art within the postmodern paradigm also demonstrates a dichotomy of theory/practice. In spite of its theoretical burden the teaching of visual art in postmodernism and particularly teaching of painting must continue to encourage the making of art. It has to provide an atmosphere in which students can master their medium, skills and technique vis-à-vis their ideas. In this way "great" art may continue to be produced in the future and the meaning of an art school in postmodernism may become revitalized.

4.3 Basic Problem(s)

One of the basic problem in the postmodern education of artists is that the whole concept of postmodernism tends to be seen as a radical break from modernism and its aesthetics. What replaced aesthetics and formalist art criticism in the teaching of visual arts is more likely to be a body of applied theory appropriated from the disciplines of philosophy, anthropology, sociology of art and psychoanalysis (Morgan,1996). What impact this has on teaching the traditional disciplines has to be determined.

Becker(1996) warns that this shift became a problem to the art faculty, ". . .some of whom are comfortable working with such constructs and with difficult theoretical texts, some of whom are not" (p.98). Also, there is a question of how truly knowledgeable these staff are in the various disciplines. In such an atmosphere there is a gap between the younger and the older generation of art instructors in which the former is much more aligned with postmodernism. There must be a better interaction between these two groups. I believe that in the teaching of visual arts both formalist and postmodernist experiences are of importance. What we need is a practice that encourages young artists to explore and understand art on both conceptual-ideational and formal-structural levels.

However, much of today's teaching of visual arts ignores the traditional aesthetic and formalist questions as anachronistic and trivial to art. I argue that in traditional disciplines such as painting, formalist questions are generic to the process of making art; but the perceptual analysis of form should not be seen as the sole legacy of modernism. It is natural to art as both perceptual and qualitative. Therefore, formalist aesthetic questions ". . .should be reviewed as examples of particular art theory influenced by a distinct set of historical and philosophical circumstances" (Jones,1980,p.50).

What I also find problematic in postmodern education is that it criticizes modernism and its aesthetics without a clear explanation of the context from which modernism derives. There is a article by Dziemidok(1993) on Artistic Formalism: Its Achievements and Weaknesses which could be useful to all of us whose pedagogy refers to the criticism of formalism. In this article Dziemidok discusses formalism within a consideration of its historical and philosophical context. He also refers to the *contemporary anti-formalism* which does not ignore the significance of the formal aspects of artworks. Such a model seems to be much more suitable for an art education environment.

Contemporary anti-formalists reject only the tendency toward absolutization of the formal aspects of artworks and the claims of radical formalism which postulate that a) the extraformal (substantive, cognitive, philosophical and historical) aspects are absolutely irrelevant to the artistic value of an art-work and that b) application of any nonformal criteria of valuation is unjustified (Dziemidok,1993,p.190)

3.4 Relating Content to Form

The appropriation of images from the popular culture and the sociopolitical subject matter in postmodernism leads to a notion in which ". . .art work is looked at as a document; what does it have to say ?" (Wolcott,1996,71). With a focus on an exploration of ideas and postmodern issues, the teaching of art in postmodernism becomes content centered. I have identified content as the ideas, or a body of knowledge attached to an image, everything expressed and represented (White,1993, Dziemidok,1993). 'Form' may be understood as the means and ways of expressing and representing those ideas. In the teaching of visual art we can also talk of form as a structural arrangement of content as it is represented in terms of substantial elements such as lines, shapes, and colors in their relationships.

My next argument is that teaching visual art within a postmodern paradigm fails to bridge the dichotomy of content/form.¹³ As well, it neglects the possible educational significance of their interplay. In the teaching of visual art, both form and content need to be addressed equally because, there is no form without content as there is no content without form (Feldman,1992,Rader & Jessup,1986). In this notion, Bernatchez(1995) proposes that, " the 'art' in art work is what cannot be assigned. It does not have to do with specific form,

nor with specific content, but with the relation between the two" (p.137).

I believe that visual art instruction should be able to address this relation, the interplay between content and form. Also, there is a need to look at relations between the visual context of art(pictorial organization) and the social, cultural and economic context. The question of how content is expressed in form should be foundational to visual art instruction.

Students look for the means whereby they can deal with their content: this invisible that wants to speak. It is through the process that they can find the means to make the invisible, visible, where the form will carry the content but objectify it, even veil it sufficiently, but appropriately carry its meaning; and where the student can say, 'This is me, but in a space where I can be me and not-me' (Duncan,1992,p.69).

In addition, how a work of art is expressed is crucial to the concept of a sensuous understanding. By sensuous understanding I mean an understanding through the senses that involves both sensory perception and cognition, that is, the interplay between form and content. Such understanding is inseparable from recognition and acknowledgment of our values and feelings in the experience of art (Berleant,1991). In searching for an epistemological justification of aesthetic experience in an anti-aesthetic climate Bergman(1993) argues

that the interplay between form and content should be looked at as a possibility for gaining knowledge about the world around us. By going in this direction it is possible to link percepts to concepts, feeling to reason, visibility to invisibility, materiality to spirituality in art. This is exactly what is missed in most of the postmodern discourses on art (Shusterman,1997).

3.5 Institutional Theory of Art

Janet Wolff(1983) distinguishes two main developments in aesthetic theory: the theory of aesthetic attitude, and the institutional theory of art. While the former relies on the Kantian concept of disinterestedness and the aesthetic experience, the latter demarcates a postmodern shift from the concept of aesthetic experience. It emerged in the late 1960's as the so called " new art theory " which stresses the issues of an art world, and its contextual and institutional aspects. Mattick(1993) reminds us that " an anti-aesthetic" trend within aesthetics made its first appearance in 1964 in an article written by Arthur Danto under the influence of Andy Warhol's Stable Gallery show of that year" (p.254).

I have described postmodernism as a revolt against modernist aesthetics and formalist art criticism. The result is a whole spectrum of pluralist practices in art which brought a variety of art forms and expressions. The modernist aesthetic framework is no longer seen as a viable form for discussion of

these new practices. One outcome of this new orientation is also an emergence of new discourse on art. Part of that discourse is an institutional theory of art. In this section I will concentrate in particular on the institutional theory of art and its implications for the education of artists.

3.5.1 Theory of ArtWorld

Wolcott(1996) looks at the implications of Danto's (1981) theory of the art world and the teaching art. The artworld can be defined as an institutional system that provides background for the conferring of status on objects and practices we call art.¹⁴ The theory offers an understanding of the complex structure of art in a postmodern climate. According to Danto, in order to understand art, one must acknowledge the non exhibited aspects of art work. Referring to the Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes, Danto states that the perceptual qualities of an art work vis-à-vis a restricted, formalistic sense of aesthetic experience cannot provide an understanding of the work. He claims that, aesthetic understanding is far closer to intellectual action(cognition) than to a mode of sensory stimulation and calls for an aesthetic stance as something that has to be constructed (Wolcott,1996).

What complicates the issue of aesthetic understanding for Danto is that the perceptual-formal properties of art work vis-à-vis aesthetic experience are not sufficient to permit distinguishing between art and non art (Shusterman,1997). It is

crucial to bring the philosophical, historical and social contexts into an interpretation because these determine both the meaning and value of art work. " To see something as art requires something that eye cannot decry - an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto,1964,p.575).

Wolcott(1996) claims that Danto's theory of the art world provides a definition of art that recognizes the complexity of art work and influential social, cultural and historical conditions. In addition, Wolcott insists on the inclusion of external information regarding an artist's biography and the social moment in which the artist works. However, she does not forget that only the combination of the variety of interpretational approaches can provide a fair understanding of both form and content in an artwork.

3.5.2 Critical Reflection

As in the case of most of the postmodern theories, Danto's theory is blind to the affective insistence in the experience of art (Shusterman,1997). Jameson(1984) identifies postmodernist aesthetics with the "waning of affect" while Shusterman(1997) questions if there is an end to aesthetic experience in postmodernism.

Most of the postmodern discourse and anti-aesthetic discourses on art convey a lack of interest in bridging the gap

between pleasure and meaning, feeling and cognition, enjoyment and understanding. It is important to relate these and revitalize what I call a humanistic approach to art that will address the variety of human values immersed in the experience of art. Wolff(1983) argues that the experience of art,

. . .cannot be reduced to the totally extra aesthetic aspects of ideology and politics, although as we have seen, it is equally true that an aesthetics which ignores the social and political features of aesthetic judgment is unacceptable and distorted (p.107).

Is there a need for an aesthetic stance in education of artists? If there is then it should be approached vis-à-vis the experience of art as an event of participation, in which students make, feel look, reflect and discuss their art, and in the process articulate a variety of human values. These values appear in their imaginative, sensory and social dimension. A genuine aesthetic stance involves both the sensual and cognitive, because it relies directly on one's horizons. By horizons, I mean the constantly evolving history of an individual, one's knowledge and sensibility, and social and cultural background. White(1993) defines horizon as,

. . .it is almost synonymous with context, that which surrounds each act of experiencing. Horizon is that which in some measure pre-establishes or pre-determines our experiences. It includes our individual, constantly

renewing histories, societal influences, the era into which we are born. We may or may not be aware of our multiple horizons but they influence us all the same (White,1993,p.116).

In the teaching of visual arts today there is a need to establish pedagogy that will be sensitive to students's horizons and those influences which determine both individual and cultural character of art.

3.6 The Issues of Art Market

The implication of Danto's theory of an art world for the teaching of art offers a possibility for a discourse on values related to the art market and the institutions of art. In today's education of artists, these issues have not been sufficiently addressed. In fact a postmodern education of artists continues to fail to prepare young artists for life outside the art school. We end up with a population of young artists who are not prepared to cope with the highly materialistic artworld around them.

I remember that in my education there was no single course which help me understand how to write a contract with an art dealer, how to write grants, how to approach galleries or simply, how to find ways to live from art. The question here is how young artists can survive as artists. Why do we have such a big population of artists who live in poverty? Should

the art educators take responsibility for this situation? Should we find ways to resist the art system or to learn how to manage it. Therefore, if we accept Danto's theory of an artworld then it is logical to address it vis-à-vis the future of young artists we educate. In his well known article, Art and Its Market, Carrier(1985) raises some interesting issues about the teaching of painting within the university.¹⁵ Should we teach only skills to young artists or also find the ways to prepare them for an art market in which they are expected to establish their practice? How does University education prepare people for the world? I believe that we must provide our students with an understanding of the art world. Becker(1996) raises a set of important questions for art educators which should help us realize our duty to help young artists cope with the world around them.

How realistically have we prepared them(artists) to handle the art world that they must master in order to survive as artists? How well have we prepared them to write grants so that they might get fellowships and buy themselves time to be artists? How well do they understand the market place they are entering? (Becker,1996,p.88-89).

3.7 The Issue of Audience

In spite of using a political content that portrays the social and cultural issues in a recognizable imagery most postmodern art appears to be also highly enigmatic and ambiguous. The meaning becomes accessible only to an "educated" audience that is familiar with ironically depicted politically correct issues typical of the postmodern agenda. Therefore, we can argue that elitism is as prevalent in postmodern art as it was in modernism. For example the political voices in the works of Chris Burden, Mike Kelley, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holtzer are understood only by those who are engaged in art and the current debates around power, domination and gender reflected in their work (Becker, 1996).

Relying on the most pronounced ideological examples of postmodern art and theory introduced by their instructors, young artists explore the political content in art without a sincere interest in the topic of audience. I believe that the postmodern education of visual artists fails to address the issues of audience in art, and thus loses its critical and political credibility. It does not sufficiently train students to question if their work is really communicating their intentions. Becker(1996) points out that " students need to be helped to understand not only the subject of their work but its objective, they must learn to ask themselves who would be their

ideal viewer and who, most likely, will be their actual viewer?
" (Becker,1996,p.68).

Art educators should pay particular attention to the issue of audience as well as the historical examples of political art and artists and their actions which were committed to social change. We have to train young artists to take social responsibility vis-à-vis their intentions. I do not say here that students should be taught to simplify and adjust their work to a general audience but that by developing their sense of the audience, students will be more aware of the social and political dimensions of their work. To end this section, I borrow a quote from Becker(1996) which seems to sum up the importance of addressing the issue of audience in postmodernism.

Young artists must be taught to ask themselves how far they are willing to go to make certain vital connections apparent to a more diverse audience. Without such assistance, even post-modern work seems caught in a modernist paradigm - as it waits for its inherent genius and universal appeal to be discovered and trickle down to the masses. As we offer students our knowledge and experience, we extend to them ability to communicate to as large an audience they choose. As we encourage or discourage the art school tendency toward hermeticism, we either free young artists from the confines of the

art world's terminally hip subculture or circumscribe them within its discourse forever (Becker,1996,p.68-69).

3.7.1 The Political Education

Art students should be informed that to adopt a political content in art, which directly articulates social concerns, is not the only way to be politically active. This possibility is very often ignored by art teachers. Art educators seriously committed to political action and social change have to teach students that besides making art, an artist is a social being engaged in numerous social and cultural activities, organizations and institutions of society. In this way the education of artists becomes the education of the whole person vis-à-vis social and cultural context. It is the ". . . interaction of the entire person that is deemed important and the recognition that our lives and work are political simply because we activate them within society" (Becker,1996,p.103).

Further, there is a need to formulate methodology which promotes critical thinking in the education of artists. Art educators have to be able to distinguish between the political and politicized education (Giroux,1995). The political education relies on a pedagogy that always questions its own politics and encourages students and artists to become critical citizens in order to challenge the dominant cultural and political power towards a more democratic society. The politicized education is equal to "pedagogical terrorism", it

remains faithful to the political agenda of dominant culture, ". . .that refuses to examine its own values, beliefs and ideological construction" (Giroux,1995,p.9). There is a need to bring a visionary discourse in the education which will re-addresses the meaning of artist in the society and redefine her/his role as a public intellectual.

As public intellectuals, we must define ourselves not merely as as marginal, avant-garde figures, professional, or academics acting alone, but as critical citizens whose collective knowledge and actions presuppose specific visions of public life,community, and moral accountability (Giroux,1995,p.13)

3.8 Reconstructive and Deconstructive Postmodernism

Susi Gablick(1990) distinguishes between deconstructive and reconstructive postmodernism. Even though both camps see the modernist paradigm as dysfunctional, the general difference between them lies in the way artists look at the function of art in society as well as art's role in the future. According to Gablick, deconstructive postmodernism is dominant and visible in the art world. It draws upon the deconstruction of cultural signs and their meaning in both representation and reality. In the first chapter I have underlined that the deconstruction is interested in reading texts within texts and how texts deconstruct or subvert themselves. Also I have introduced the postmodern art work as text. One can formulate

deconstruction in art as the process of bringing the meaning of artwork(text) into the interpretation vis-à-vis its structure and context from which it derives.

There is a sense of doubt and ultimate disbelief in the great emancipatory effect of art that pervades deconstructive postmodernism. A deconstructive artist relies on the realization that the value of art is determined by the institutional art world and that any ". . . positive action is doomed either to impotence or co-optation by an economic system that has become virtually uncontrollable" (Gablick,1990,p.179). In addition, she/he refutes the modernist ideals of stylistic innovation, originality and uniqueness and see herself more or less as a counterfeiter who does not invent but simulates the work of other artists in an ironic fashion. This idea is echoed in Baudrillard's(1983) concept of simulation as the disappearing game of postmodernism " where the moment of truth becomes false" (Gablick,1990,p.181). My question is; What impact can the deconstructive view have on education and the concept of creativity in teaching of art? Should we let young artists think that they simulate art of others or should we instead encourage their innovative curiosity? In criticizing deconstructionists Richmond(1996) states,

Without standards of truth, reason, and value; without believable conceptions of intentionality and selfhood; without subscription to possibilities of creative thought

and action beyond those reduced to textual and social determinants; without continued reference to an external reality; responsible, civilized life would be impossible (p.2).

This does not mean that the education of artists should not address the limits of the art systems that are addressed in the deconstructive mode. However, we also have to have a way to get beyond these limits in order to enhance the belief of young artists in the further production of art. As Richmond(1996) argues, " the challenge in art and education is to be aware of the fragility and uncertainty of many of our important beliefs and assumptions but not to give up" (p.3). Otherwise, ". . . we have this policy of going nowhere, of not occupying a position, becoming nothing, having no positive horizons, no optimistic goals, no constructive alternatives" (Gabllick,1990,183). In the following section I will argue that Gablick's model of reconstructive postmodernism is much more suitable for teaching art.

3.8.1 Reconstructive Postmodernism

Reconstructionists, on the other hand, are trying to make the transition from Eurocentric, patriarchal thinking and the dominator "model" of culture to a more participatory aesthetics of interconnectedness, aimed toward social responsibility, psychospiritual empowerment, deep ecological attunement, good human relations, and a new

sense of the sacred - all that the old industrial paradigm has tended to exclude (Gabllick,1990,p.181).

Gabllick argues that reconstructive postmodernism is less visible in the art world. As opposed to deconstructive postmodernism, it is associated with the "re-enchantment" of our world, by which she means attention to the issues mentioned in the above quotation. The reconstructive artist still believes that art has potential to emancipate humanity on both an individual and cultural strata. Reconstructive postmodern art does not merely react to the status quo in a deconstructive fashion; it actually seeks new visions and possible pragmatic solutions to revitalize society.

The reconstructive postmodern aesthetics remains loyal to the modernist view that the experience of art transcends the consumer culture and reaches toward the mystical, even archetypal, realm of human spirituality. In Gablick's words the reconstructive postmodern artist can be perceived as a shaman, concerned with the revitalization of the human soul and expansion of our horizons. In this context the shaman's role is to remind us of our roots, to enhance social dreaming and, if one subscribes to Jungian psychology, a sense of a collective unconscious. In some sense, the reconstructive model becomes the method in which postmodernism becomes re-mythologized.

I agree with Gablick that the postmodern consciousness needs to regain some belief in the emancipatory effect of art

and its spiritual dimension that reaches beyond the cliché of the ordinary, found in the technoscientific, informational and materialistic world. This should not be perceived as the mystification of art. It is not the intent of reconstructivism to preserve the uniqueness of art or to increase its autonomy from society. The reconstructive model becomes an appeal to bring back something that we have lost within postmodernism. I think here of hope and optimism, which is hard to feel in the hyper-politicized, anti-aesthetic imagery of much of postmodern art. In most of the art shows I have visited in the last few years I had a strange feeling of going nowhere, cold reality with no dream, no desire. Even though socially relevant, the meaning of some art work becomes a burden that suffocates the energy and pleasure that I expect in the experience of art. What makes art different from the artificial, mechanical and cold materialistic world around us? The purpose of a reconstructive postmodernism ". . . is not the simplistic one of a romantic return to nature or an idealizing of archaic cultures, but the deeper issue of recognizing that we do not live in a dead, mechanistic world" (Gablick, 1990, p.189).

CHAPTER 4: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF ARTISTS

Throughout this thesis I have addressed critically the postmodern education of visual artists from a twofold point of view, as a visual artist and an art instructor. My objective was likewise twofold: First, to generate some ideas and questions in order to improve art instruction in a postmodern post-secondary education. Second, to establish a ground on which to build a future research project. In the following section I will summarize the main points from the previous chapters.

4.1 Summary: Beyond the Anti-Aesthetic

In the first chapter I introduced the term postmodernism and postmodern thinking in education. Even though it is one of the most popular words of our time, the term postmodernism remains enigmatic (Clark,1996, Sarup,1993). In consideration of the communicative flexibility of the term I have argued that we do not need a finite definition of postmodernism. Art educators have to be able to re-interpret postmodernism in an open-ended fashion that is critical of modernism and encourages investigation beyond the fixed and outdated concepts.

Also, educationally effective critical postmodern literature has to be more reflexive and able to expose how knowledge is linked to the power and perpetuated in the society

in both past(modernism) and the present (postmodernism). This is in order to preserve postmodern thinking from becoming "under-theorized" and dogmatic in its rejection of past models (Usher & Edwards,1994).

One of the main effects of postmodern thinking on education is the focus on the practice of pedagogy. What makes postmodern pedagogy different from the traditional models is the shift from the concept of pedagogy as a form of transmission of knowledge and skills to pedagogy as a form of cultural politics. Postmodern pedagogy is above all a critical pedagogy that exposes contradictions and challenges socio-cultural structures of representations and power. To sum up, postmodern pedagogy is concerned with cultural democracy, to be established through a redefinition of the relationship between education and democracy.

In this thesis I have stressed particularly the link between art and pedagogy in postmodernism. Trend's(1993) cultural pedagogy insists on the relationship between art and pedagogy, artists and educators, in order to create possibilities for a more democratic society. In this model, the artist is seen as a cultural worker, a critical citizen whose role in the society is to actively participate in the social events and institutions rather than to maintain the romantic model of lonely artist who makes art on the margins of the society. Thus, art educators should address not only how art

gets produced but how it comes to function within a wider social context. This is particularly relevant given the pluralistic nature of urban university studio art classes in North America.

In the education of artists, cultural pedagogy becomes a dynamic process that involves a variety of discourses on the images, texts, movies, street art actions in order to bridge the gap between the art and society, high and popular culture. The discourse of cultural pedagogy draws upon the concept of recognition. It is pluralistic and eclectic; it invites all voices, no matter what is their ethnic, racial, gender, or background. However, there is a legitimate concern that the teaching of visual art today may not be that different from teaching in social sciences. One of the negative effects of postmodern thinking and the anti-aesthetic stance in the teaching of visual arts is the dominance of theory and discourse over practice of making art (Richmond, 1996). In order to move beyond the anti-aesthetic art educators have to look for the most suitable ways to incorporate cultural pedagogy within studio art instruction, and without the dominance of theory over practice.

In the second chapter I have introduced postmodern art vis-à-vis the dichotomies modern/postmodern, aesthetics/anti-aesthetic. The late modernism relied on Greenbergian formalist aesthetics that was about the surface and the self-conscious experimentation with the medium in order to convey an aesthetic

experience that extends beyond time, place and social context. By contrast, the anti-aesthetic focus lies beyond the surface. It denies the privileged realm of the aesthetic experience by questioning , " Is what you see what you get? "(Wolcott,1996).

As opposed to a modernist aesthetics which favoured form (appearance) of an art work, the postmodern anti-aesthetic is concerned with the content in art, and construction of meaning. It relies on a content and subject matter that directly articulates popular social and cultural issues often embodied in a blatant recognizable imagery. Postmodern art work is seen as a text, its meaning is highly dependent upon the discursive explanation of the social and cultural context of art (King,1996). The problem is that today's visual art seems much more textual and verbal than visual in relation to mastery of the medium. For this reason I became afraid that the phrase anything goes started to underline the teaching of visual arts in postmodernism.

In the third chapter I examined the effects of postmodernism on the education of artists. We have seen that postmodernism has positively changed the ways how and what artists choose to study. There is a shift in their interest from the traditional disciplines to a more interdisciplinary approach to art, as well as the implications of technological and electronic media for art purposes. The new disciplines such as video and computer art are particularly attractive to students, but art instructors have to address the cultural,

philosophical, and the artistic aspects of these new media. We have to encourage students to question what makes the use of electronic and technologic media in art different from the everyday imagery (Duncum,1997, Lovejoy,1997).

As a painter I felt the need to address critically the impact of postmodernism on the teaching of more traditional disciplines such as painting and drawing. My criticism evolved around two main problems. First, teaching of art within a postmodern model has tended to be content-centered. This model fails to relate content to form. A related issues are the dominance of theory over the practice, and the verbalization of ideas over the mastering of technique and the medium (Richmond,1996, Becker,1996). The second problem that I have found in postmodern art instruction is that in spite of its insistence on the politically and critically aware art it fails to make artists socially responsible for their intentions. It minimizes the issues of audience and the artworld.

Breaking away from the pedagogical formalism (Feldman,1992) the postmodern approach has adopted an anti-aesthetic stance that narrowly defines aesthetics with formalism. Consequently, the formalist questions concerned with the form and perfection of the medium have been seen as academic and anachronistic rather than as generic to the visual structure of art. That is why postmodern art instruction fails to bridge the dichotomy of content/form.

There is no form without the content and no content without form. Art instruction must be able to address the interplay between the two. If we promulgate students' interest in the content (ideas) that encourage a critical and political consciousness we should also make them concerned with the ways how these are transformed-expressed through the visual medium. Art educators have to make students question how their art works communicate their intentions. Art instruction in the future should address the whole spectrum of values involved in the interplay between content and form and question what these values have to do with knowledge of the world (Bergman,1993). In this sense the teaching of art becomes concerned with the making of art and the development of human horizons.

In painting and drawing we must be able to re-consider the issues of medium vis-à-vis its history and its peculiar physical and metaphysical characteristics. Postmodern art pedagogy tends to overlook those formalist concerns that are constitutive of the perceptual and affective character of visual art. Here I think of the questions related to the formal perceptual analysis of art work and feeling that comes in working with medium. " What strikes you as formally significant in the work? What is the intended impact on my emotions? Why does it make you feel that way? "(Anderson,1988) Teaching art beyond the anti-aesthetic means to relate perception to cognition, ideas to feelings, in short the visible to the invisible. In this spirit, a process of making

of art creates a myriad of opportunities in which students can shape their own individual identities while the meaning of art schools gets re-affirmed.

An art school is a minisociety, a buffer between the art world and the wider culture, a place where young artists are socialized into their chosen identities. If it is successful, students learn how to think visually as well as how to execute ideas with the greatest degree of professional expertise (Becker, 1996, 88).

To teach art beyond the anti-aesthetic means also to find the new possibilities for art as a form of critical rhetoric and the artist as a cultural activist. Art instruction that moves beyond the anti-aesthetic negativity remains interested in the political content and appropriation of images of popular culture, however with a concern for the audience in art. Art educators have to train students to be able to distinguish between the ideal and the actual audience (Becker, 1996).

Political art has to be able to reach beyond a select audience of like-minded practitioners. Otherwise we are left with an elite; and art becomes alienated from society even in postmodernism. We have to teach students to be socially responsible for the art works they make (Becker, 1996). In practical terms, this means encouraging students to question the possible consequences and options opened up by the visual statements they make. Therefore to teach art beyond anti-

aesthetic does not mean to give up political content in art but to explore it with more sincerity and social responsibility.

The political content in art is not the only way to be politically active. We have to address these possibilities in the education of artists through a pedagogical work that is political and not politicized. The genuine political pedagogy encourages students and artists to question how cultural work is produced, distributed and exploited within the systems of cultural and political power in order to envision actions which will lead to a better society. On the other hand, the politicized pedagogy remains determined by a dominant and unreflexive political agenda that refuses to examine its own values, beliefs, and ideologies (Giroux, 1995). I believe that artist-as-citizen of the future should make both art and actions to promote a more just and democratic society.

The education of artists in the future must address more the issues of artworld and art market. We must think of art students also as future professionals and prepare them better to cope with the world outside the studio. However, there are still few courses to help young artists deal with art markets, galleries, grant applications, written consent, contracts etc. There is a need to bring a specific marketing oriented course(s) in an art curriculum and find ways to share our professional experiences as practicing artists with our students in order to make them aware of the world they are

about to enter. Otherwise we will continue to increase the population of bright young artists who will continue to live on the poverty line.

Finally, a postmodern consciousness that relies on a deconstructive approach needs to regain some belief and optimism in art and its spiritual dimension. In fact, it needs to become reconstructive because in order to move beyond the cliché of the ordinary, techno-scientific and materialistic world. Reconstructivism is more suitable for teaching art because it does not limit artistic range and activity to the politically correct; it nourishes one's belief in making art that has its impetus in freedom of thought. It may even be that in order to get over the anti-aesthetic we will have to be re-exposed to art that transcends the consumer culture and reaches into the mystical, even archetypal realm of human spirituality.

To teach visual art beyond anti-aesthetic means to establish an art instruction that is above all concerned with human values in art in their imaginative, sensory, and social dimension. Practically speaking, art instruction has to be able to address the interplay between form and content while it encourages critical thinking. Our future artists have to be able not only to transform their ideas and create art that continues to emancipate on both individual and cultural strata. They should be able to raise their voices and participate in

various social actions that lead towards a more democratic society. Art school must become a place where art gets linked to life.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

There are numerous volumes written on postmodernism and postmodern art but very little research that examines the impact of postmodernism on the education of artists. Regarding the journals that I have examined such as Studies in Art Education, Aesthetics Education, Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Visual Arts Research, Canadian Review of Art Education there is very little educational research in general that looks at the pedagogy and values involved in teaching visual art at the postsecondary level. Both qualitative and quantitative research in art education is much more oriented towards teaching art at the elementary and secondary levels than at the B.F.A. and M.F.A. levels. Therefore, the rationale and practices underlying the teaching of visual arts at these latter levels remains obscure and segregated from the wider field of art education. One of the basic reasons for this situation is that most art instructors apparently see themselves as artists rather than as educators (Trend, 1992). In addition, most of

them are unfamiliar with pedagogically-oriented research methods.

The lack of a research base in the education of artists neither assists those who teach nor those who will teach visual art at the post-secondary level. Therefore, the final section of this study describes a research project that evolves from the foregoing and that I intend to pursue in the future. In the following section, I will introduce briefly a qualitative research model and outline a preliminary proposal for a field study.

5.1 Qualitative Research and the Education of Artists

A qualitative research paradigm may be the most suitable one to address questions related to studio art instruction. Studio art instructors in particular have rich opportunities for pursuing a qualitative field research, using the setting in which they teach. The postmodern penchant for critical dialogue finds a parallel in the research model's emphasis on reflexivity. Qualitative research and the theory of reflexivity recognize that the researcher, in our case an art instructor, should be always regarded as part of the researched (e.i., studio art class). Indeed art instructors are very much a part of the setting in which they teach. They have an opportunity to describe a phenomena as it appears, and as part of their daily routine. As Eisner(1991) states " qualitative researchers

observe, interview, record, describe, interpret and appraise settings as they are" (Eisner,1991.p.330).

Qualitative research is naturalistic in its approach and so is art. As opposed to positivism and quantitative research that is conceived on a dialectic of causal relationships, universal laws, and neutral observation language, the main goal of naturalistic study is to describe a phenomena as it appears in its natural states. One of the most typical examples of naturalistic study is ethnography, including educational ethnography. Qualitative research is values sensitive; it allows one's own bias and voice to reflect one's cultural background and individual identity. Here I would draw a parallel with the teaching of art that is underlined by a concern for human values and the nurturing of students' cultural and individual identities through art. We can talk of qualitative method as a possibility ". . .to search for inaccessible or taken-for-granted aspects of the aesthetic, personal, social and political dimensions of the art experience" (Stokrocky,1991,p.42).

Qualitative research in art education always starts with general open ended questions such as: What should we teach? How do we teach? and Of what significance is our teaching? In this way we provide a research context in which to generate more specific research questions. To sum up, qualitative research methods offer a myriad of possibilities for the production of a

truly new body of knowledge. It may point to the potential richness of an emphasis on dialogue between art instructors and students. To have more research that addresses the teaching of art at the postsecondary level means not only to reveal and promote human values and experiences involved in art but to reveal and promote the potential range of their educational dimension.

Imagine if every art instructor were to take field notes for only one class and send them to a national art education association. What a body of information we could have. What research questions we could generate. For now, our greatest challenge lies in how to get art instructors more involved in educational research that addresses teaching visual art in B.F.A. and M.F.A. levels. Art instructors should be aware that the examination of their pedagogy and the context in which they teach is necessary in order to provide a fair instruction to future artists. Also, the examination of both content and pedagogy reflects directly a critical postmodern thinking in education.

5.2 Preliminary Proposal for a Field Research Study

In this section I will outline a preliminary proposal for a field study that relies on qualitative research methods. Generally speaking, my future research question addresses the effects of postmodern thinking on teaching in the traditional visual arts. What have we learned from postmodernism? More

specifically, I will examine the impact of postmodernism on the dichotomies, form/content and theory/practice in the teaching of visual arts.

The possible objectives of this study are three-fold. First, to provide an authentic description of postmodern thinking in the teaching of visual arts at the postsecondary level. Second, to promote the educational relevance of the interplay between form and content in the teaching of art. Third, to formulate an alternative pedagogical model for the teaching of painting and drawing at the B.F.A. level.

The expected time duration of this study is one academic year. After choosing a research setting (e.i., University Faculty of Fine Arts, department of painting and drawing) and getting research permission it is important to determine and outline appropriate research steps. After outlining a clear research question one of the most important questions for all qualitative researchers is how to determine the most suitable methods for a research study. The list of already existing methods in qualitative research is helpful but it is not the "answer", because ". . .most writing on research methods relies either on abstract prescription or recounts" (Ball,1985,p.51). The validity-trustworthiness of a research study depends on methods, their ethical and practical appropriateness in approaching the human subjects, and educational issues both in theory and in practice. Also, the validity of a research study

stands in relation to the logic of the arguments and procedures. My proposal consists of four steps;

A. The collection and analysis of the course outlines.

B. Semi-guided interview of the art course instructor.

C. A Participant-observation of the studio/seminar art class

D. Semi-guided interviews of students.

A) In the first step I will examine the list and content of courses offered in the B.F.A painting and drawing curriculum. I will have to collect and examine the existing course outlines. Even though most of the course outlines do not entirely explain the methodology, they should reflect some of the effects of postmodern thinking in teaching of art. At the same time it will be helpful to check the educational and cultural background of the instructors. As mentioned earlier the younger generation of instructors tend to be much more aligned with postmodern thinking and an anti-aesthetic stance.

Following the examination of the course outlines I will choose the particular course that will provide the actual research site. In this study I will concentrate on a course that implies both theory and practice and that draws upon the postmodern paradigm(postmodern theory, critical thinking, contextual art criticism, and an anti-aesthetic stance).

Therefore, I will focus on a studio/seminar course which involves both theory(discourse) and practice(art making). The use of postmodern theory (poststructuralism, feminism, neocolonialism etc) in a studio/seminar course demands attention to pluralism and critical thinking.

In my education such courses were offered in the second and third year of the program. In practice a studio/seminar usually includes art making, group criticisms, presentations, discussions on the assigned readings and even guest lecturers. One such course I attended included presentations, discussions and lectures by four instructors, each presenting specific topics. By concentrating on a studio/seminar class I will be able to examine the dichotomies of form/content, theory/practice that I saw as most persistent in my own education (Richmond,1993, Duncan,1993).

B) The second step in this qualitative research study should be to interview the art instructor of the studio/seminar class. I will be using a semi-structured guide line interview. This type of interviewing is based on four to five open-ended questions that complement the research question, with the possibility of more questions as the discussion proceeds. Some questions might be; i) Of what significance is postmodern thinking in your pedagogy ? ii) Which aspects of postmodern thinking do you find most challenging and why? iii) Of what concern are formalist questions in the teaching visual arts?

iv) Of what significance is content in teaching art? v) What is the significance of the interplay of form/content in teaching of art? These questions arise from my critical analyse of the literature that forms the body of the current study. There will be a possibility to expand, raise some extra questions and clarify stances and issues. Sometimes just another, "why" or "how" leads to a helpful clarification or simplification.

It is important to be aware that my stand and bias could influence responses; but the open-endedness of the questions and the dialogic nature of the interview should put these issues on the table. Anyhow, a guide line interview should be used cautiously, because there is a possibility that a researcher could influence or elicit a desired response from the interviewed. Seidman's(1991) view on guide line interviewing suggests a reflexive awareness to interviewing

If interviewers decide to use an interviewing guide, they must avoid manipulating their participants to respond to it. They should ask questions that reflect areas of interest to them in an open-ended and direct way, perhaps acknowledging that the questions come more from their own interest than from what participant has said. Interviewers must try to avoid imposing their own interests on the experience of the participants. Interviewers guides can be useful but must be used with caution (Seidman,1991,p.70).

In this interviewing I will be using a tape recorder; thus I should be also aware of time consumption in transcribing and analyzing collected data. The analysis of collected data can directly influence the validity and credibility of a whole research project (Harmmsley & Atkinson,1983).

C) The next step in this study is based on the method of participant observation. This means that I will situate myself within the studio-seminar class and for the whole semester I will observe and describe the educational practice and the climate of the class. In this way I will be able not only to collect data but also to experience the effects of postmodernism on the practice of teaching art.

To what extent I should participate within the setting is always a question. " Decision about the role to adopt in a setting will depend on the purposes of the research and the nature of the setting" (Harmmsley & Atkinson,1983,p.97). According to Ball(1985), a method of participant observation could be divided in two types: hard-line and soft-line participant observation.

The former stresses the need to share in activities of the researched in a direct and complete way, to do what they do, while the latter emphasizes the necessity of the observer's presence but without specifying the need to do what the researched do (Ball,1985,p.25).

The most suitable approach will be that of a soft-line participant's observation. The soft-line participant observation in my research means to articulate my presence and activities within the role of the observer. However, the theory of reflexivity suggests that there is no such thing as a ghost-like naturalistic observation. Relying on the theory of reflexivity I would be aware that the researcher should be always regarded as a part of the researched. This means that I have to be a part of the setting, and that there must be some form of interaction as well as participation with the subjects. I would try to define my role of observer-as-participant focussing particularly on observing and listening.

During the observation I will write down my field notes which should help me better describe my experiences. The questions I will be using for semi-structured guide-line interviewing could help to classify and articulate the field notes. These notes will be analyzed, coded and indexed after each session. One of the most important things in such a method is also ". . .to not allow material to pile up unanalyzed, or even worse unread " (Delamont,1992,p.151). However there is always a critical question as to how much field notes really describe the actual happenings in the setting. " Note taking and writing demand transformation and recontextualization. We claim that the scene really happened, but the scene did not happen in precisely the form we announce " (Fine,1993,p.278). As a critical researcher I will be also observing the setting

outside the framework of my research question. I will be looking at the issues such as studio space and facilities, number of students, cultural background of students, atmosphere, etc.

D) The final step in this qualitative research study will be to interview four students after the end of the year. By having interviewed both instructor and students I will have a more complete picture about the effects of postmodernism on the education of visual artists as well as on art produced by young artists. I will use questions similar to those I used in interviews with the instructor. Also I will ask students to evaluate the course they attended and to suggest possible alternatives.

At the moment, the purpose of this proposal is to make art instructors more interested and familiar with the educational research. This preliminary research model offers a variety of possibilities to examine the effects of postmodernism in the practice of teaching visual art as it is taught. In conjunction with a critical analysis of the literature this proposal offers a conceptual framework for my future study. The ultimate objective will be to formulate an alternative pedagogical approach which would be examined in my own teaching of painting and drawing.

Endnotes

1. Clark(1996) also formulates the transitory characteristic of postmodernism as a possibility to move from postmodernism. " As has been the case with most previous breaks with convention, our present postmodernist era will likely acquired a defining title of its own only in retrospect by those promoting some future movements" (Clark,1996,p.1).

2. Lyotard's view that work can become modern only if it is first postmodern is confusing. It is unclear how the term "post" can also signify the "pre" state. To Lyotard this is a perpetual process which is the key to the continuum from modern to postmodern. In this way postmodern functions in an avant-garde fashion that challenges the existing state in order to move the whole game ahead. Bernatchez(1995) states that in French there is a verb tense *futur antérieur*, that describes a future that will have taken place before another future. This is how Lyotard uses post not as in after but as in prior to an after, both tied together.

3. This distinctive character of art was seen in its ability to produce an aesthetic experience that is unique and autonomous from other modes of human experiences. In the theory of aesthetic attitude Stolnitz(1984) defines an aesthetic experience as a disinterested and contemplative perception of an object for its own sake, without regard for any external purposes or interest. The cognitive, ethical, and any other instrumental purposes and interests were seen as extraneous, hence non-essential to aesthetic experience. By contrast, anti-aesthetic denies this special status of the aesthetic experience and its ahistorical character.

4. I refer here to Quantz(1992) and his view on the meaning of truth within critical discourse. " Truth is embedded in the social relations of material practices, revealed in the demystification of ideology and culture, conceived in a vision of freedom, and proved in the emancipation of people. . . Truth is often found in the free society that does not yet exist but must be arrived at through the negation of that which is " (Quantz,1992,p.462-463).

5. The idea of a critical praxis had been developed in the "negative dialectic" of the Frankfurt School (Frankfurt Schule) established in the work of Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer and Habermas. They saw it as the dynamic relation between theory and practice or the theory that is constructed

in practice. For example, Horkheimer sees truth as a moment of correct practice (Quantz,1992).

6. Felman(1992) argues for a rich dialogue between student and teacher. " The pedagogic relationship is not a substance but a structural dynamic: it is not contained by any individual but comes about out of the mutual apprenticeship between two partially unconscious speeches which both say more than they know. Dialogue is thus the radical condition of learning and of knowledge, the analytically constitutive condition through which ignorance becomes structurally informative; knowledge is thus irreducibly dialogic " (Felman,1992,p.153).

7. See Bernatchez(1995) in Art and Object-X; Things I found while digging a pond. She proposes that ". . .postmodern aesthetics can only be understood in relation to the dichotomies of modernism " (1995,p.110).

8. Greenberg's distinction between cognitive and aesthetic draws upon the Kantian view. In The Critique of Judgment(1790), Kant distinguishes between the pure and impure aesthetic experience. The pure aesthetic experience is disassociated from any cognitive or practical interest; the art form is enjoyed for its own sake in an enjoyable contemplative fashion; . . ." that is, perception without pre-conception " (White,1993,p.71). The judgement of taste is cardinal to this view. Kant saw it as purely subjective and freed from any any pre-established concepts and principles which usually led to cognition.

9. In his well known essay From work to Text, Barthes(1985) says, " The text is experienced only in an activity of production . . .The text is plural. This is not simply to say that it has several meanings, but that it accomplishes the very plural of meaning: an irreducible(and not merely an acceptable)plural. The Text is not a coexistence of meanings but a passage, a traversal; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination " (p.170-171). There is an apparent contradiction in Barthes's view. How can something be both irreducible(implied singularity) and plural (implied extendability)?

10. In addition, Rader & Jessup point out that " aesthetic attitude is concerned with the imaginable perfection of the vision and not the real existence of the object" (1976,49).

11. See Lyotard(1984). In What is postmodernism? he states, " Modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents, but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure. . . .The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of unrepresentable " (1984,p.565).

12. See Burger(1984) " The negation of the Autonomy of Art by the Avant-garde". Trans. Michael Snow.Docherty,1993. " The European avant-garde movements can be defined as an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society. What is negated is not an earlier form of art(style) but art as an institution that is unassociated with the praxis of the life of men "(1993,239). Quote borrowed from Bernatchez(1995).

13. I think that the dichotomy of form/content finds its roots in the Kantian distinction of the pure aesthetic experience, in which the art form is enjoyed for its own sake in an enjoyable contemplative fashion. Any interest in the content as related to cognition was seen as extraneous to art. By contrast, postmodern art instruction is underlined with an interest in the construction of meaning as related to content and subject matter of art work.

14. I refer here to Dickie's(1974) definition. By relying on Danto's view, George Dickie(1974) defines art world as the " bundle of systems: theater, painting, sculpture, literature,music and so on, each of which furnishes an institutional background for conferring of the status on objects within its domain " George Dickie: What is Art? An Institutional Analysis (p.436).

15. See David Carrier(1985), Art and Its Market " Perhaps there is nothing tragic in this situation, since art students inevitably find that they cannot support themselves as artists meanwhile,they have at least chose to study what interest them. Perhaps however, if they understood the art market better, fewer students would choose such a career. Given is tangential relation to the art market, being in the university is in itself not likely to give students such an understanding"(p.195).

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