Pedagogical Reflections: Post-Modernism in the Studio Teaching of Painting

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This thesis is dedicated to the artist-teachers of painting who participated in this study.

To artist-teachers of painting

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Boyd White for his sagacious guidance and supervision of my studies, as well as his patience in reading and editing this text. I would like to thank my advising committee members: Dr. Ann Beer and Dr. Elise Bernatchez for their generous and honest criticism of my research. Also, I would like to acknowledge the financial support of Fonds FCAR to my studies from 1999 to 2001. Finally, I thank my wife, Aleksandra Zivanovic, for believing in us and in this work.

Abstract

Drawing upon a review of literature and interviews with four artist-teachers, this thesis explores the implications of post-modernism on the studio teaching of painting. Additional emphasis is placed on uncovering the issue of the-death-of-painting and its links to post-modernism, and my own reflexivity as a painter and a teacher of art. The thesis presents also an attempt to respond to an apparent lack of educational research that addresses post-secondary studio teaching of art, and that engages artist-teachers in reflection on their teaching philosophies. The overall objective of this thesis is to generate a body of knowledge that could be of assistance to other practitioners in the field in their own pedagogical reflections and development of contemporary studio instruction. Thus the questions and ideas brought in this study present both an invitation and directions for future inquiries in this area of education.

Résumé

En se basant d'une revue de la litérature et des entrevues faites avec quatres artistes-enseignants, cette thèse explore les implications du post-modernisme face à l'enseignement des peintres de studio. De plus, une certaine concentration est mise à découvrir la question de la mort de la peinture et son relation au post-modernisme, avec ma propre réflèction comme peintre et enseignant de l'art. Cette thèse présente en plus un effort à répondre au besoin d'un domaine ou peu de recherche est faite pour addresser l'enseignement de l'art au niveau post-secondaire; une recherche qui engage les artistes-enseignants face à leurs philosophies pédagogigues. L'objectif principal de cette thèse est de contribuer à la connaissance dans ce domaine pour assister d'autres artistes-enseignants avec leurs réflèctions pédagogiques et au dévelopement de l'instruction contemporaine en studio. Donc, les questions et les idées qui sortent de cette étude font, en premier, une invitation, et en deuxième, offre une direction pour des recherches au futur dans ce domaine de l'éducation.

'Our admiration for painting is the consequence of a long process of adaptation which has gone on over centuries, and exists for reasons which very often have nothing to do either with art or the mind. It is, at bottom, a relationship of convention' (Gombrowicz to Dubuffet). The only question is how such a machine can continue to function in a situation of critical disillusionment and commercial frenzy. And if it can, how long will this illusionism, this occultism last. A hundred years? Two hundred? Will art have a second, interminable existence, like the secret services, which, though we know they have long had no secrets to steal or exchange, still thrive amid a superstitious belief in their usefulness, and continue to generate a mythology? (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 185)

You cannot open up a question without leaving yourself open to it. You cannot scrutinize a "subject" (training, for example) without being scrutinized by it. You cannot do any of these things without reviewing ties with the season of childhood, the season of mind's possibilities. (Lyotard, 1985, p. 100)

Introduction

During the past few decades, which have been distinguished in visual arts by the proliferation of post-modernism, the practice of painting has been vociferously criticized. The recurring debates on the validity of painting and proclamations of its death, led many painters, including myself, to look at post-modernism as antagonistic to their practice, as well as to blame it for an overall loss of faith in art and painting in particular. Hassan (1975) writes that "postmodernism is essentially subversive in form and anarchic in its cultural spirit. It dramatizes its lack of faith in art even as it produces new works of art intended to hasten both cultural and artistic dissolution" (p. 200). Drawing upon both a review of literature and interviews with four artist-teachers from Montreal and Toronto, this thesis explores the implications of post-modernism on the post-secondary studio teaching of painting.

On one hand, there seems to be a consensus among artists and theorists that post-modernism, in general, signals an overall critique of modernism and its formalist aesthetics which find their ultimate end in the ideas of American art critic Clement Greenberg. It is with Greenberg's criticism that painting, or more specifically, modernist painting, earned a privileged status, and ". . . was seen as a magnificent asylum for authentic culture against an ocean of capitalist kitsch" (Mayer, 1996, p. 20). One of my initial observations has been that within a

theoretical and discursive climate of post-modernism, painting has been scrutinized as an obsolete artifact of modernism and seen as incapable of grappling with contemporary issues. And, like modernism itself, painting has been also declared dead. Arthur Danto (1999) writes that the "death of painting" might be seen as ". . . a corollary of some revolutionary agenda, in which the agency of art was to be enlisted in some social and political cause" (p. 138). Further, he suggests that it has to do in particular with a heavy atmosphere of post-modern theory in the 1980s (Danto, 2003). Yet, it was this decade that was also marked by the resurging popularity and marketability of painting in the art world.

On the other hand, post-modernism has been associated with a body of theory that has replaced formalist discourse, and that now presents the dominant framework not only for understanding contemporary art making but also for formulating the objectives and philosophical rationale of teaching art today. This body of theory, referred to variously as post-modern, applied, or critical theory, encompasses in its discourse the ideas adopted from semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism, as well as the concepts of visual culture, cinematic, literary, and architectural theory (Elkins, 2001, Morgan, 1996, Nadaner, 1998). While looking at the position of painting in an era of critical theory, art educator Dan Nadaner (1998) states, "if painting is not "dead", it is not very healthy within the critical climate of recent years" (p. 168). This leaves one wondering of what concern the speculations on the vitality and fatality of painting

might be to artist-teachers. I hope to demonstrate in this thesis that questioning the validity of painting has been not only intensified with post-modernism, or more specifically, with post-modern discourse on art, but also has become integral to painters' critical and contemporary awareness.

Let me point out also that post-modern debates on the validity of painting have provided impetus for numerous art projects on an international level, such as: *Examining Pictures* (1999), Whitechapel Art Gallery in London; *Trouble Spot Painting* (1999), NICC and MUKHA in Antwerp; *Painting at the Edge of the World* (2001), Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; *Cher Peintre* (2002), Centre Georges Pompidou; *Painting on the Move*, Kunstmuseum, Kunsthalle, and Museum fur Gegenwarstkunst in Basel (2002) (Storr, 2003). All of these projects, more or less, saw as their purpose an attempt to revitalize the credibility of painting as contemporary artistic practice. Storr (2003) writes that these projects " . . . have attempted to straighten things up; but in various degrees they turned out to be lively exercises in showing how big and oddly configured the house of painting was, rather than putting that house in order" (p. 176). How ironic it is that the curator of *Painting at the Edge of the World*, Douglas Fogle, opens his curatorial essay by comparing metaphorically the position of painting today with the corpse of Harry, the mysterious subject in Alfred Hitchcock's (1955) film, *The Trouble with Harry.*

> Throughout the last 150 years, with the precision of a finely tuned art-historical clock, painting has appeared at the hospital emergency room

"dead on arrival". But, like the inert body of Harry, painting lies there in plain sight, dead yet very much present, and strangely lacking the rigor mortis that is characteristic of cadavers as we know them. Like the characters in Hitchcock's film, many of us seem troubled by the status of painting's fluctuating life signs. But what exactly is the trouble with painting? Why does it confound us so much? What is the power of this medium, which we profess to love and to hate so virulently? And more significantly, why has its status as living or dead become so important to us? (Fogle, 2001, p. 14)

A. Background and Research Questions

In 1989 I immigrated from former Yugoslavia with an intent to become a painter. Prior to my undergraduate studies in Canada, I acquired some foundational training in drawing and painting which was primarily focused on studies from observation. I saw both my freedom and faith in painting in the approaches that celebrated the mercurial and poetic painterly practices as exemplified in the work of modernist abstractionists, Kandinsky, de Kooning, Hofmann, and Pollock. Moreover, I was not aware of post-modernism and the death of painting until I started my studies in Canada.

As an undergraduate painting student in the early 1990s, I realized that debates on the validity of painting and polemics about its death had become not only inseparable from discussions on post-modernism, but also often led to bickering among students and faculty. Like many students at the time, I wondered what was the purpose of speculating on the demise of an artistic

practice in the context that is supposed to promote art making and nurture creativity instead of turning students' development into personal crisis and a cynical disbelief in the future of art. In spite of learning a great deal about painting, I finished my undergraduate studies with a certain doubt regarding the meaning of teaching painting in the post-modern world.

My interest in post-modernism and concerns about its possible negative influences upon painting as a viable art form persisted. This led me to graduate studies in education rather than to an M.F.A.. In my master's thesis *Beyond the Anti-Aesthetic,* I critically addressed the meaning and ramifications of an anti-aesthetic stance in the context of the post-secondary teaching of art. That provided an important impetus for envisioning a more extensive research project that would involve field work and that would engage other artist-teachers. Also, during the past several years, I have been involved in the teaching of painting and contemporary issues at the post-secondary level. Finally, I arrived at the following two research questions that provided the initial framework for this thesis:

> *How do artist-teachers involved in post-secondary studio teaching, interpret post-modernism and its underlying speculations on the validity of painting? What might be the implications of post-modernism on the teaching philosophies of artist-teachers?*

The first question embodies my interest in uncovering critical perspectives of other artist-teachers on the topic that has occupied me for almost a decade. It is also meant to explore how these practitioners have learned about post-

modernism and what kind of criticism of painting they may have encountered in their own art training and professional practice/teaching. By focusing on the teaching philosophies of artist-teachers, the second question investigates the implications of participants' understanding of post-modernism on their pedagogical orientations and objectives. Let me underline here, however, that the objective of my investigation is not to categorize certain philosophical and pedagogical concerns of artist-teachers as post-modern. What this thesis attempts to do is simply to illuminate some issues and challenges that post-modernism presents to the post-secondary teachers of painting, as well as to myself as a painter and art educator.

B. Rationale for Field Research and Methodology

One of the first steps in exploring my research questions was to look at the existing literature that deals with post-modernism and the post-secondary studio teaching of painting. However, my review of literature in this area was rather sparse, simply because there is an overall lack of research that addresses how art is taught at this level. Also, most existing texts that deal with teaching art to artists do not exemplify the pedagogical approaches of artist-teachers. The more I researched this area of education, the more I became aware that there is a sense of segregation of educational practices at the B.F.A. and M.F.A. levels from their immediate neighbour, art education (Spicanovic, 2000). Although it is

beyond the scope of my study to investigate the reasons that underlie this segregation, one of my objectives over the past decade has been to foster research and contribute to knowledge dedicated to teaching art to artists.

Following my review of literature, I realized that the only way to pursue my research questions would be through field research that would engage other artist-teachers in reflection on post-modernism, painting and studio teaching. In addition, I was committed to research that would enable me to engage in dialogue with my colleagues, and that would allow them to formulate their views freely and in their own language. Thus I decided to employ qualitative research interviewing as the main method of my investigation; and the field component of this thesis includes the interviews of four artist-teachers who teach painting at the post-secondary level. As an artist, I see many similarities between art and qualitative research. Like art, qualitative research is subjective. It acknowledges the qualities that individuals ascribe to their lived experiences as well as descriptions that are constructed in reflection and interpretation of those experiences. As Eisner (1991) suggests "it is through the perception of qualities—not only those we can see, but those we experience through any of our senses—that our consciousness comes into being" (p. 1).

Generally speaking qualitative interviews are usually discussed as open-ended or conversational engagements varying in their a priori structure and in the latitude allowed to the interviewees in formulating their responses (Marshall &

Rossman, 1999). With respect to the specific focus of my study on post-modernism and studio teaching of painting, as well as with consideration of the fact that I am a novice qualitative researcher, I decided to adopt a more structured research design which relies upon the interview-guide approach. The interview guide consists of an outline of topics and subjects ". . . within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (Patton, 1990, p. 283). The interview guide ensures also that the same issues are addressed with all participants. One of the benefits of this approach is that it facilitates a more systematic data collection. As well, the interview guide may provide an initial structure for categorization and analysis of data. I have also added a few standardized general thematic questions (i.e., What does post-modernism mean to you; of what concern is the statement "painting is dead" to you?). All other questions were formulated in the course of the interviews, supporting the qualitative and conversational character of the interviews. The epistemological issues and rationale of my research methodology, as well as underlying ethical concerns are discussed in greater detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

Let me elaborate briefly on the term artist-teachers that is used throughout this thesis. It is used to identify practicing visual artists, more specifically, painters, who teach at the post-secondary level. Ashwin (1994) notes, "the role of artist as teacher is as old as art itself, but the character and context of that role has changed historically and continues to change, creating many variations in the

form of interaction between teacher and art student" (p. 39). Departing from an apprenticeship (pre-Renaissance) model in which artists were trained under the guidance of a mature and well respected artist, the role of the artist-teacher became institutionalized with the academies of art (Renaissance), art schools (Bauhaus), and ultimately, with university art departments. Singerman (1999) writes that the role of the artist-teacher has been fully recognized with the emergence of university art departments, in which practicing artists have been tenured as faculty, while their artworks have started to be interpreted as research However, Singerman asserts that in the language-centered context of university, the role of the artist-teacher becomes problematic. He notes that due to their primary commitment to studio practice and lack of an academically appropriate language, artist-teachers often have been seen as both a threat to the university and victimized by it. He suggests that artist-teachers have been seen as ". . . confused hybrids, not acceptable by either species. They have become, that is, what used to be called artist-teachers, a phrase in which the supplement "-teacher" designates the presence of language and the absence of a certain presence, as even those who argued in favor of artists on campus were forced to admit" (Singerman, 1999, p. 164). Minimalist sculptor Dan Flavin (1968) distinguished between the 'overt verbal responsibility' of artist-teacher and the silence of studio space, seeing the former as an imperative for artist's renewed status in society. The voices of artist-teachers brought in this thesis might be

seen as manifestations of such verbal responsibility with respect to the topic of post-modernism.

C. The Significance and Limitations of the Study

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical. It rests in an attempt to produce an authentic body of knowledge that builds upon the views of practitioners involved in the studio teaching of painting, providing an insight into pedagogical issues pertinent to the meaning of post-secondary teaching of art today. In fact, the thesis provides a theoretical/philosophical background for further pedagogical reflections and development of studio pedagogy. Although it is particularly concerned with the studio teaching of painting, it could be useful to all post-secondary teachers of art because of its focus on post-modernism, which, as suggested earlier, has become central to teaching art today. This thesis could be also of significance to M.F.A. students who plan to pursue teaching and who find themselves at the initial stages of developing their teaching philosophies. The study also has been important to my own pedagogical development and articulation of my own teaching philosophy. Undoubtedly, by having an opportunity to talk to other practitioners, I have been able to re-evaluate the rationale and objectives of my own teaching. In addition, this thesis raises a myriad of new questions and ideas that, in turn, should provide impetus for more research dedicated to the advancement of teaching art to artists. As an artist-teacher committed to educational research, I intend to pursue some of those questions in the future and continue contributing in this area of education.

As many researchers have suggested, there is no perfect research design. A discussion of the limitations of the study is necessary in order to clarify what this study is and is not about. There are two potential limitations of this study that I have been aware of since its inception: a) The field research relies on a single research method of interviewing; and b) It involves only the views of artist-teachers.

It could be argued that interviewing as a sole research method cannot provide a sufficient insight into the actual practice of teaching of painting, and that interviewing combined with the method of participant observation provides "thicker" qualitative descriptions. It is important to distinguish here that this study is not about exploring the implications of post-modernism in the actual practice of studio teaching, which would imply addressing the art instruction within the context of studio classes. Rather, it is about exploring the implications of post-modernism in the teaching philosophies of artist-teachers. Thus what is explored is what they think about post-modernism and the debates on painting, as well as how their pedagogical concerns and objectives respond to post-modernism. As Patton (1990) suggests, the basic purpose of interviewing "is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. . . .We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things" (p. 278).

It could be argued that another potential limitation of this study lies in the fact that its research questions are geared solely towards the views of artist-

teachers. This excludes the views of art students. I would argue that the credibility of this study lies in its exploratory nature and the provision of questions and responses that encourage artist-teachers to reflect critically and openly on the subject of post-modernism and on their own pedagogies. In addition, the questions that I asked in interviews are also concerned with engaging participants in reflecting on how post-modernism enters their studio classes. This necessitates some sensitivity to students' work and interests. I see this reflection on the behalf of practitioners interviewed in this study also as a part of their responsibility to students.

D. Content

This thesis is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter, *Discourse on Post-modernism and Painting*, introduces the meaning of post-modernism in specific relation to painting. I see the texts reviewed in this chapter as also pertinent to post-secondary teaching and studio/seminar discussions of contemporary issues pertinent to painters. The objectives of this chapter are twofold; first, to introduce the meaning of post-modernism; and second, to uncover post-modern discourse on painting with an emphasis on the issue of the death of painting. The meaning of post-modernism is introduced with respect to the views of Jencks (1996), Lyotard (1984, 1985), and Steinberg (1972). Given that post-modern criticism of painting often finds its point of departure in the criticism of Greenberg's ideas, Greenberg's (1963) definition of the modernist painting is reviewed in great detail. In addition, this chapter introduces the critical views of Jameson (1983), Kuspit (2000), Sandler (2002), and Zizek (2000), which allude to some negative aspects

of post-modernism and its links to deconstruction. Finally, by drawing upon the views of Armstrong (2001), Bois (1990), Buchloh (1984, 1994), Crimp (1981), Danto (2003), and Reid (1988), I introduce the post-modern criticism of painting and the issue of the death of painting.

The second chapter, *Modernist and Post-modernist Teaching of Art,* presents various pedagogical values that pertain to modernist and post-modernist teaching of art. Modernist teaching of art is discussed in relation to the legacy of Bauhaus and pedagogical formalism. The shift from a modernist to post-modernist orientation in teaching art is presented with reference to the views of Becker (1996, 1999), Elkins (2001), Goldstein (1996), Nadaner (1998), and Singerman (1999). One of the things that I argue in this chapter is that formalist questions should not be considered simply as a part of modernist legacy, and abandoned as anachronistic and academic, but as foundational to an understanding of painting. Additional emphasis is placed on uncovering the problematic position of painting in an era of critical theory, as stated by Nadaner (1998). Finally, I point out some shortcomings in the existing texts that deal with the post-secondary teaching of art, arguing for more field research that exemplifies the views of artist-teachers, and that engages these practitioners in reflection on their teaching philosophies.

The third chapter, *Qualitative Research Methodology,* introduces the research methodology and interviewing method that I employed in my field work. Following a brief historical overview of qualitative research with respect to its

naturalist legacy and the issue of reflexivity, I contextualize in this chapter the design and objectives of my research. With reference to the views of Patton (1990), Seidman (1991), Kvale (1996) and Silverman (2000) I address my role as a qualitative interviewer. Specific emphasis is placed on discussing epistemological and ethical concerns pertinent to the validity of my field research. In addition, by adopting reflexivity, I also question the implications of my subjectivity and personal feelings about the topic of inquiry in the interview context. This in particular allows me to understand better not only the importance of objectivity in scholarship, but also how personal my convictions about post-modernism are. Finally, this chapter introduces the methodological framework adopted in the transcription and analysis of data, including an in-depth review of categories.

Chapter four, *Interviews*, introduces the views of four artist-teachers Catherine, Mira, Marcus, and Patrick. The analysis reveals not only their experiences and perspectives on post-modernism and the validity of painting with reference to the statement "painting is dead", but also various pedagogical issues and objectives embedded in the studio teaching philosophies of these practitioners. Individual profile sections are allocated for each participant and each profile includes quotations obtained from the interviews accompanied by my descriptions. These are meant to contextualize what has been said. With respect to transparency, one of the main criteria employed in evaluating qualitative reports, I explain how certain findings are obtained, and evaluate critically some

of my questions. I see this sort of self-criticality as pivotal to my own development as a qualitative researcher. As my analysis progresses from one participant to another, the similarities and differences in participants' views are pointed out, leading to the formulation of salient concepts and themes. The chapter closes with a report table that sums up the main concepts in the perspectives of all four participants.

With more specific reference to research questions that provided an initial framework for this study, participants' perspectives and their underlying concepts are further interpreted and analyzed in the last chapter of this thesis, entitled *Pedagogical Reflections*. This chapter presents an attempt to illuminate some critical issues and challenges that post-modernism presents to studio teachers of painting. It also proposes some new directions for future research. The ideas and questions raised in this chapter do not present an attempt to generalize how painting is or should be taught in the post-modern era. Rather, these constitute a background for further reflection and inquiries into the studio teaching of painting today.

Finally, the conclusion presents a summary of provisional statements that point out some implications of post-modernism on the post-secondary studio teaching of painting.

CHAPTER 1: Discourse on Post-modernism and Painting

This chapter deals with the meaning of post-modernism and discourse on painting. The theoretical texts reviewed are also pertinent to the post-secondary teaching of art. My objectives are twofold: first, to introduce the meaning of post-modernism in relation to painting; and second, to uncover a post-modern discourse on painting with an emphasis on the issue of death-of-painting. Post-modernism is introduced with respect to the views of Jencks (1996), Lyotard (1984, 1985), and Steinberg (1972). Given that post-modern criticism of painting often finds its point of departure in the criticism of Greenberg's ideas, Greenberg's (1963) definition of the modernist painting is reviewed in great detail. In addition, the critical views of Jameson (1983), Kuspit (2000), Sandler (2002), and Zizek (2000), are introduced. Finally, by drawing upon the views of Armstrong (2001), Bois (1990), Buchloh (1984, 1994), Crimp (1981), Danto (2003), Fogle (2001), and Reid (1988), I introduce a post-modern discourse on painting and the issue of death-of-painting.

1.1 Post-Modernism: The Etymology

Over the last couple of decades, post-modernism has gained an enormous popularity in art, signaling in principle a repudiation of modernism and formalist aesthetics which found their ultimate end in the ideas of American critic Clement Greenberg. It has been also integral to the discourses of social sciences and humanities, as well as ascribed to various aspects of the late capitalist society

and contemporary western culture affected by pluralism, information technology, electronic media communication, as well as the shift of industry towards tertiary economy (i.e., services, cultural goods) (Jameson, 1983; Taylor, 1985; Zizek, 2000). As a matter of fact, post-modernism has become a buzzword of our contemporary times, which allows one to reference it in conversation and appear philosophical without necessarily saying anything substantial, while citing post-modernism can help people find commonality within diversity (Clark, 1996). However, it is this ubiquity and adjectival discursive character of post-modernism that also frustrates efforts towards clarification of its meaning. In this chapter, I focus on the meaning of post-modernism in specific relation to painting.

With respect to the word *modern* that derives from Latin, *modo*, (*modernus*) meaning present (just now)[1], the word post-modern signifies a time consciousness that operates ". . . beyond, contra, above, ultra, meta, outside of the present" (Jencks, 1996, p. 14). Lyotard (1985) asserts that the prefix "post-", does not signify a movement of *comeback, flashback,* or *feedback*, that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure in "ana-": a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, anagogy, and anamorphosis that elaborates an "initial forgetting" (p. 80). Lyotard reminds us that a similar kind of analysis was employed by avant-

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[1] Drawing upon the work of German literary critic and historian Hans Robert Jauss (1964), Habermas (1983) writes that, "the word "modern" in its Latin form "modernus" was used for the first time in the late 5th century to distinguish the present, which had become officially Christian, from the Roman and pagan past. With varying content the term "modern" again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new" (p. 3). In Modernity – An incomplete project, In H. Foster (Ed.,). *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on postmodern culture.* Seattle: Bay Press.

garde artists. In fact, he perceives the interest of avant-garde artists in questioning modernity as analogous to the process of anamnesis in psychoanalytic therapy.

> Just as patients try to elaborate their current problems by freely associating apparently inconsequential details with past situations — allowing them to uncover hidden meanings in their lives and their behavior — so we can think of the work of Cezanne, Picasso, Delaunay, Kandisky, Klee, Mondrian, Malevich, and finally Duchamp as a working through (*durcharbeiten*) performed by modernity on its own meaning. (Lyotard, 1985, p. 79 - 80)

According to Jencks (1996), the term post-modernism was used first by the Spanish writer Federico de Onis (1934) in *his Antologia de la Poesia Espanola e Hispanoamericana,* who referred to it as a reaction within modernism; but, not necessarily its end. Also, in 1947, Arnold Toynbee used the term in his *A Study of History* to propose the end of dominance of the Western cultures, capitalism, individualism and Christianity, and an inevitable rise of non-western cultures and pluralism. Jencks notes that Toynbee was very skeptical of the "global village" and aware of the decline implicit in the prefix 'Post'. Further, he notes that this skepticism was present also in the literary criticism of Irving Howe (1963) and Harold Levine (1966), and that the first 'positive' application of the prefix 'post' was formulated by writer Leslie Fiedler (1965) who associated it with a set of opposing social trends, as in, "post-humanist, post-male, post-white,

post-heroic, . . . post-Jewish" (in Jencks, 1996, p. 19). Although the movements identified by Fiedler provided an impetus for conceptualizing the notion of post-modern culture, according to Jencks, they were never fully realized. Nevertheless, criticism of the elitism, academic Puritanism, and the western centeredness of the modernist paradigm, might be found in the most contemporary discourses on post-modernism.

Art educator Roger Clark (1996) ascribes the popularity of post-modernism to its deliberate ambivalence and communicative elasticity. He sees the latter as the outcome of the following three characteristics. First, post-modernism is *transitory*. That means it ". . . suggests only what it is *not* rather than what it *is* [italics in text]" (Clark, 1996, p. 1). Clark writes that as it has been the case with previous breaks from convention, our post-modernist era will be probably defined by the parties promoting some future movement. Second, post-modernism is *transcendent* because its theories which initially found their popularity in architecture, have now become a part of most disciplines, most notably literature and sociology. According to Clark, this has led to the formulation of specific terminologies such as master narratives, simulacra and decentered subject, and different theoretical perspectives such as poststructuralism, deconstruction, and reconstruction, ". . . making post-modernism as-a-whole difficult to discuss" (p. 1). Third, Clark sees post-modernism as *transitional*, which means that post-modernist theories do not

always depart from modernist principles, and that they may draw upon perspectives that are modernist, postmodernist, or somewhere in-between.

Furthermore, Clark states that the deliberate ambivalence of post-modernism ". . . can be understood in terms of recent paradigmatic movements away from objectivity, rationality, and universality" (p. 2). I agree with Clark that in the realms of the theory and practice of contemporary art, these movements have contributed not only to pluralism and the new ways of constructing and interpreting the meaning of art, but also created the sense of doubt that permeates post-modernist theory. "This element of doubt is so strong that postmodernism is more often than not attacked for its skepticism, cynicism, and nihilistic attitudes than for its central propositions" (Clark, 1996, p. 2).

1.2 Different Versions of Post-modernism

The architectural theorist and architect Charles Jencks (1996) distinguishes between the streamlined version of postmodernism, late modernism, and hyphenated 'post-modernism'. He sees the streamlined version of 'postmodernism' as dominant in western culture, and associates it with the work of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, J. -F. Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Frederic Jameson — the 'philosopher kings of post-modernity'. According to Jencks, their ideas suggest that postmodernism presents a break from modernism and the ideas of the Enlightenment project, due to their post-structuralist orientations and commitment to deconstruction. Jencks argues that a streamlined version of 'postmodernism' ultimately bears a sense of doubt in art which parallels a realization that ". . . a society has either fragmented or become

a consumerist hyper-reality" (p. 16). Before we look at Jencks' alternative concept of hyphenated post-modernism, let me sketch briefly the Enlightenment project, also known as the project of cultural modernity.

1.3 The Project of Modernity

The project of cultural modernity originates in the work of 18th century Enlightenment philosophers, whose ideas presented a break from the discourses of religion and metaphysics, proposing instead an organization of substantive reason through the three autonomous spheres; science, morality (ethics) and art (aesthetics). Habermas (1983) points out that "the project of modernity formulated in the 18th century by the philosophers of the Enlightenment consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic" (p. 9). Generally speaking, the objective of this project was not only to offer a philosophical rationale for production and organization of knowledge within each of these three spheres, but also to establish a foundation for governing society and culture and a secure progression from feudalism to capitalism (Eagleton, 1990). Further, each one of these three spheres of knowledge was subdivided into specific disciplines, and each discipline had been granted autonomy through discourse and knowledge regulated by the experts. Habermas writes that with the emergence of an aestheticist conception of art in the middle 19th century, artists were encouraged to produce art for art's sake. "The autonomy of the aesthetic sphere could then become a deliberate project: the talented artist could lend authentic expression to those experiences he had in encountering his own de-centered subjectivity,

detached from the constraints of routinized cognition and everyday action" (Habermas, 1983, p. 10). However, Terry Eagleton (1996) argues that in modernity, art became autonomous from the cognitive, ethical and political by being integrated into the capitalist mode of production. Thus in the project of cultural modernity,

> Art exists, not for any specific audience, but just for anybody with the taste to appreciate it and the money to buy it. And in so far as it exists for nothing and nobody in particular, it can be said to exist for itself. It is independent because it has been swallowed up by commodity production. (Eagleton, 1990, p. 368)

Habermas writes that one of the main problems with the project of modernity is that it created a rupture between "objective reality" as interpreted by experts, and the "actual reality" of everyday life. In his view, this rupture led to a split between culture and society, and it was this split that provided a point of departure for negation of expertise, which is also embedded in the post-modern critique of cultural modernity.

> The differentiation of science, morality and art has come to mean the autonomy of the segments treated by the specialist and their separation from the hermeneutics of everyday communication. This splitting off is the problem that has given rise to efforts to "negate" the culture of expertise. (Habermas, 1983, p. 9)

There were two main narratives that underlined the project of modernity: one that is speculative in its nature and that implies that knowledge has to be produced for its own sake (as it was exemplified in the work of German idealist philosophers), and the second, that knowledge should serve the emancipation of people and humanity at large (Lyotard, 1984). These narratives were also accompanied by a belief that progress in science, technology and law would benefit humanity as a whole, while art should provide a unique and autonomous human experience (i.e., aesthetic experience) that lies outside of the realm of everyday reality. In his seminal work, *The post-modern condition: A report on knowledge*, Lyotard (1984) defines post-modern as incredulity towards metanarratives, which provided reference for both production and legitimation of scientific knowledge in modernity. And, this incredulity, according to him, is the result of scientific and technological progress in post-industrial western societies.

Lyotard (1985) suggests that one of the reasons why the project of modernity failed is that the identity of the subject of emancipation was never properly recognized within the grand narratives of modernity (i.e., the dialectics of Spirit, the emancipation of the worker, the hermeneutics of meaning, the creation and accumulation of wealth, and classless society). In this sense, the project of modernity presented a false idea of universal humanity, and failed to clarify whose humanity needs to be emancipated. Moreover, Lyotard notes that the there are two streams of humanity. "One faces the challenge of complexity, the other that ancient and terrible challenge of its own survival" (1985, p. 17). In

Lyotard's view the ultimate failure of the project of modernity lies in its inability to consolidate these two streams of humanity and identify properly the subject of emancipation. Lyotard reminds us that over the past two centuries the quarrels between liberals, conservatives and leftists have been directed toward the subject of emancipation.

> It is true that ascertaining the identity of the subject who suffered most from a lack of development — the poor, the worker, or the illiterate — continued to be an issue throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As you know, there was controversy and even war between liberals, conservatives, and "leftists" over the true name to be given to the subject whose emancipation required assistance. Yet all these tendencies were united in the belief that initiatives, discoveries, and institutions only had legitimacy insofar as they contributed to the emancipation of humanity (Lyotard, 1985, p. 77).

Drawing upon the work of Theodore Adorno, Lyotard writes that the modern idea of universal humanity failed ultimately with the Holocaust. His question is, "What kind of thought is capable of "relieving" Aushwitz — relieving (*relever*) in the sense of *aufheben* — capable of situating it in a general, empirical, or even speculative process directed toward universal emancipation?" (p. 78).

With the emergence of poststructuralist, post-marxist and psychoanalytic (post-Freudian) perspectives in the 'sixties, the ideas embedded in the project of modernity started to be more openly criticized. With these perspectives and

particularly post-structuralism and its underlying methodology of deconstruction, the modernist beliefs in objective knowledge, emancipation of humanity, and autonomous status of art were put into question and exposed as fallacious and oppressive.

1.4 Late Modernism and Hyphenated Post-Modernism

Jencks argues that many 'postmodern' theorists of art such as Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Craig Owens, J. -F, Lyotard and Frederic Jameson tend to use the prefix *post* loosely, misinterpreting Late modernist art as post-modern. One of the main reasons for such confusion is that both terms are applicable to Late capitalist post-industrial society. For example, Jencks criticizes Rosalind Krauss for misinterpreting the sculptural practices of Richard Serra, Walter de Maria, Robert Irwin, Sol LeWitt, and Bruce Nauman as post-modern. In her essay "*Sculpture in the expanded field*", Krauss (1983) adopted structuralist diagrams to map out the expansion (one might see it as rupture) of the modernist discipline of sculpture. In addition, she demonstrated that the work of the above-mentioned artists does not belong to existing categories of art such as sculpture, or architecture, as well as landscape. What makes their work post-modern according to Krauss, is that it refutes modernist categories (structures) of art and formal criteria given to the medium of sculpture.

> For, within the situation of postmodernism, practice 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. (Krauss, 1983, p. 41)

Jencks argues that Krauss' approach epitomizes traditional modernist interest that insists on defining and categorizing things by trying to point out first what they are not. I agree with Jencks that post-modernism should not be used simply to label artistic practices that cannot be categorized as modern. I also agree with Jencks that the sculptors that Krauss associates with post-modernism take ". . . modernist disjunction and abstraction to an extreme" of minimalist self-referentiality which embrace neither double coding nor post-modern commitment to pluralism" (p. 46). Moreover, Jencks argues that distinction between Late modern and post-modern art is not just another pedantic categorization. It is necessary in order to understand the underlying values and philosophy embedded in post-modern art making.

> To call a Late-Modernist a Post-Modernist is tentamount to calling a Protestant a Catholic because they both practice a Christian religion, or to criticise a donkey for being a bad sort of horse. Such category mistakes invariably lead to misunderstanding, which in themselves may be very fruitful and creative (the Russians read *Don Quixote* as a tragedy) but it is ultimately a violation of the work. (p. 46 - 47)

Jencks proposes a hyphenated version of post-modernism as an alternative. According to him, this version of post-modernism does not necessarily abandon the ideals embedded in the project of modernity. Rather, it attempts to re-

envision them with respect to pluralism and sensitivity to community. Most importantly, Jencks states that one of the things that is most characteristic of post-modernism and that unites every post-modern movement is its commitment to pluralism.

> Post-modernism is not anti-modernism; it is neither traditionalism nor the reactionary rejection of its parent. It does not, as the philosophers Jurgen Habermas and Jean-Francois Lyotard contend, reject the Enlightenment project; that is, the social emancipation of humanity, increasing freedom and universal rights. Rather, it rejects the totalizing arguments with which universal rights are often imposed by an elite on a subservient minority (along with so much else). Modern liberalism fought for the 'universal' rights which the First World now partly enjoys; post-modern liberalism argues that the agenda of multiculturalism, and the rights of minorities should be asserted where they do not diminish the rights of other minorities. In this sense it is the direct heir of its parent and could not have occurred previously. It is quite true that the logic of modern and post-modern liberalism are different, and sometimes in conflict, but that does not make either of them invalid. They are both necessary to the concept of justice in society. (Jencks, 1996, p. 15)

Most importantly, Jencks's hyphenated post-modernism does not signal the end of modernism, but rather its continuation and transcendence. The notion of revisiting the past (be it modern or pre-modern) vis-à-vis appropriating and re-

interpreting the historical modes of art making within a contemporary production is pivotal to this double meaning of post-modernism. I see Jencks's definition as also pertinent to my own teaching and commitment to promote students' awareness of the links between past and present models of art making. I see such awareness as integral to students' understanding of painting as historical and cultural practice. Thus my commitment to keep a hyphenated version of post-modernism throughout this thesis.

1.5 Double Coding

The concept of *double coding* is pivotal to Jencks' hyphenated version of post-modernism. In architecture, double coding implies a mixing of modern techniques with 'something else' (i. e., symbolic elements) in order to communicate with the public and concerned minority, usually other architects. This is exemplified in the hybrid architectural structures designed by Robert Venturi, Hans Hollein, Charles Moore, Robert Stern, Michael Graves and Arata Isozaki. In addition, Jencks associates double coding with allegorical and parodic homage to the past as well as sensitivity to the global village – "an ironic cosmopolitanism".

Jencks identifies double-coding also in the Italian Neo-Expressionist painting of the 1980s, also known as *transavantguardia*. The work of Carlo Maria Mariani, Sandro Chia, Mimmo Paladino, Enzo Cucchi and Francesco Clemente epitomizes this movement. What these Italian painters have in common is not only that they were influenced by the practices of *arte povera* [2], but also that their

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[2] The term *arte povera* was coined by Italian critic Germano Celant (1967). He used it to identify the work of thirteen young Italian artists-sculptors and installation artists of Turin, Milan, Genoa

work presents a return to figurative imagery and representational content. Jencks sees this return to representation and figuration as one of the main manifestations of post-modernism in painting. In addition, this return signals a break from Greenberg's ideas of modernism that advocated purity of formalist abstraction. I will address Greenberg's definition of modernist painting in great detail later in this chapter. The return to figuration and representational painting is exemplified also in the work of German Neo-expressionist painters, Kiefer, Immendorff, Baselitz, Lupertz, as well as in the American New Image painting of Hurson, Jenney, Rothenberg, and Bartlett (Fineberg, 1995). The painting of Neo-Expressionists included flamboyant brushwork, nationalistic posturing, pre-modern stylistic devices and an ironic depiction of mythological subject matter (Heartney, 2002). However, as Jencks points out, "whereas in the past a mythology was given to the artist by tradition and patron, in the post-modern world it is chosen and constructed" (p. 32).

The subject matter of Neo-Expressionist painters implies not only a homage to the past and interest in reformulating the self-identity in painterly expression, but also in the meaning of art as socially and culturally constructed. This is exemplified in the work of one of Jencks's favorite "post-modern" painters, R. B. Kitaj. "Characteristically, he [Kitaj] confronts modernist techniques of collage and flat, graphic composition with Renaissance traditions, just as he

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and Rome, among them Anselmo, Boetti, Calzolari, Fabro, Kounellis, Mario Merz, Marisa Merz, Paolini, Pascali, Penone, Pistoletto, Prini and Zorio. In Celant's view, the work of these artists addressed the relationship between art and life as presented in nature, elemental matter or cultural artifacts, and experienced through the body. Mario Merz's *Cone* (1967) and Alighiero Boetti's *Columns* (1968), both share the totemic presence evocative of nature. In J. Fineberg. (1995). *Art since 1940: Strategies of being.* New York: Harry N. Abrams.

places the Holocaust — and its modernist causes — in opposition to a more healthy situation, whether a natural landscape or cityscape" (p. 42). Finally, the double coding has to do also with the fact that most of the post-modern artists, architects and writers had been trained (educated) in modernism. Thus, it is logical that their work keeps a modern sensibility to a certain extent, ". . . some intention which distinguishes their work from that of revivalists, be it irony, parody, displacement, complexity, eclecticism, realism or any number of contemporary tactics and goals" (Jencks, 1996, p. 30). Anyhow, this interest in referencing past, and appropriating and combining stylistic elements from different historical periods epitomizes Jencks's idea of double coding and post-modernism in painting.

1.6 From Bricolage to Anything Goes

To Lyotard (1985), the question of post-modernity is first of all a question of expression of thought in architecture, art, literature, philosophy and politics. By looking at the architectural practices of Portoghesi and Gregotti, Lyotard associates post-modern architecture with a deliberate abolition of Euclidian principles of space, which reached their climax in the architecture of de Stijl.

It is important to note that it was Charles Jencks, who was one of the first to note the beginning of the end of the modernist international style in architecture that was advocated by architects Le Corbusier's and Mies Van der Rohe. In his book, *The language of Post-modern Architecture*, Jencks writes that on July 15, 1972, at 3:32 PM, Le Corbuiser's *Pruitt-Igoe* housing in St Louis (which was one of his prize winning projects) was demolished as an

uninhabitable environment. Jencks suggests that this emblem of modernist architecture failed partly due to its poor fabrication and inappropriate choice of materials, and partly because it did not communicate with its inhabitants and respond to their taste and needs. One of the pioneers of post-modern architecture, Robert Venturi insisted that architects need to learn more about the landscapes and urban contexts of their buildings rather than to follow the abstract and doctrinaire agenda of modernists focused on functionality, progress and emancipation. Jencks describes the work of Robert Venturi, James Stirling and Charles Moore as hybrid structures that include unconventional materials and a stylistic revival of ornamentation and classical structural elements.

Post-modern architecture, according to Lyotard, proposes the modifications of the inherited modernist space through *bricolage*[3] which he refers to as ". . . the multiple quotation of elements taken from earlier styles or periods, classical and modern; disregard for the environment; and so on" (p. 76). However, Lyotard notes that post-modern *bricolage* defined by replication and referencing of the past sometimes leads to forgetting or repressing of the past rather than to surpassing it. Lyotard identifies bricolage also in the painting practices of the 'eighties' (i.e., Neo-Expressionism) which, according to him, alongside referencing past styles, also incorporated the sensibilities of naivety,

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[3] The concept of *bricolage* was initially found by Claude Levi-Strauss in his seminal book, *The Savage Mind* (1966). Levi-Strauss' concept of bricolage, as well as his famous distinction between a bricoleur and engineer, have been investigated by Jacques Derrida (1966) in his essay, *Structure, sign, and play in the discourses of human sciences*.

irony and cynicism. Lyotard's interpretation of bricolage, as a key to the understanding of post-modern art and architecture has been quite influential. It has led to interpretation of the role of the post-modern artist as that of a *bricoleur.* Drawing upon Lyotard, Kearney (1988) states that in post-modernism the model of productive inventor that was once ascribed to the modern artist ". . . is replaced by that of the *bricoleur,* someone who plays around with fragments of meaning which he himself has not created" (p. 13).

Further, Lyotard sees post-modernism as a 'moment of relaxation' in the arts, a period in which inherited modernist interest in experimentation and innovation became replaced by a "new kind of sensibility". Thus, he identifies post-modernism as a period of slackening, the eclecticism of consumer culture and the realism of *anything goes*; "it's time to relax" (p. 8). In Lyotard's view, the *anything goes* embraces the realism of money and ultimately an absence of aesthetic criteria. And ". . . in the absence of aesthetic criteria it is still possible and useful to measure the value of works of art by the profits they realize" (Lyotard, 1985, p. 8). Moreover, Lyotard raises a cautionary note that in the world of 'anything goes', artistic and literary investigations are being threatened by cultural politics on one side and the art/book market on the other.

1.7 Post-Modernism as Pre-Modernism and the Aesthetics of the Sublime

What makes Lyotard's view of post-modernism exceptionally interesting and problematic at the same time is that he interprets it as some sort of perpetual avant-garde time-consciousness that precedes modernism. Lyotard supports his

thesis by pointing out the recurrence of the avant-garde in modern western art history as well as by asking:

> What space does Cezanne challenge? The Impressionists'. What object do Picasso and Braque challenge? Cezanne's. What presupposition does Duchamp break with in 1912? The idea that one has to make painting — even a cubist painting. And [Daniel] Buren examines another presupposition that he believes emerged intact from Duchamp's work: the place of the work's presentation. The "generations" flash by at an astonishing rate. A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Thus understood, postmodernism is not modernism at its end, but in a nascent state, and this state is recurrent. (p. 12 - 13)

However, it could be argued that Lyotard's view appears to be contradictory to the very nature of post-modernism in art, which instead of progress and innovation (the principles ascribed to modernist art) implies reification and repetition. Jencks (1996) criticizes Lyotard's proposition in the following manner.

> It is as if every good artist had to be an Einstein overthrowing a previous Newtonian paradigm. The fanatical pursuit of overturning assumptions, rules out the post-modern commitment to micro-creativity, invention within a language as well as its obligation to the local community. (p. 49)

Lyotard elaborates his idea further by distinguishing between modern and post-modern art in regard to the aesthetics of the sublime. Initially, he suggests that the notion of progress in the modern world implies *presentation of new*

realities proposed by the mechanical and industrial arts on the one side, and the fine arts and literature on the other. By referring to the work of Benjamin and Adorno, Lyotard notes that science and industry are as much open to suspicion with regard to reality as art and writing. Modernity, in principle, according to Lyotard, does not only imply suspicion of reality but an interest in imparting other forms of realities offered either through techno-science or the arts. Using art to present such "realities" and ultimately, to demonstrate a lack of reality in reality itself, is what characterizes modern art. Moreover, Lyotard suggests that within the realm of art, this lack of reality is most poignant in presenting a reality that is equivalent to an encounter of the sublime. ". . . [T]he aesthetic of the sublime is where modern art (including literature) finds its impetus, and where the logic of the avant-garde finds its axioms" (p. 10). Although it is well beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the origins of the concept of the sublime with respect to its Enlightenment founders Burke, and Kant, as well as the painting of Friedrich [4], I would like to touch upon briefly Lyotard's view of this concept in order to understand better his distinction between modern and post-modern art as they apply to painting.

According to Lyotard, the sublime is a feeling (or the feeling of sublime) which was conceptualized in the philosophical work of Immanuel Kant. Kant saw

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[4] German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich was one of the first artists to deal with the subject of sublime in painting. One of the prime examples is his painting *Monk by the Seashore*, 1809-10, in which a lonely human figure of the monk seen from the back is engulfed by the tumultuous vastness of the sea and the sky at night. The juxtaposition of human figure to infinite and boundless space of nature is evocative of terror, fear and human mortality, or simply said, these are seen as equivalent of the sublime.

the sublime as a powerful and equivocal emotion that bears both pleasure and pain: "or rather, in it pleasure proceeds from pain" (p. 10). Although one might see this definition of the sublime as analogous to neurosis or masochism, Lyotard perceives it as pivotal to the philosophy of the subject, which according to him, finds its roots in the work of Augustine and Descartes. The sublime implies a conflict within the faculties of the subject, more specifically, ". . . between the faculty to conceive of something and the faculty to "present" something" (p. 10). Lyotard distinguishes also between sublime and beauty, suggesting that the former is a modern concern, while the latter belongs to pre-modern work. The experience of beauty, according to him, is a pleasurable experience and arouses independently and without conception. In the Kantian view, the experience of beauty pertains to reflective judgment – "that may be felt in the form of pleasure" (Lyotard, 1985, p. 10). The sublime, on the other hand, ". . . occurs when the imagination in fact fails to present any object that could accord with a concept, even if only in principle" (p. 10). It entails desiring to conceive something great and powerful and yet not having the capacity to present it. Lyotard proposes that the meaning of sublime in modernity is linked to one's realization of ideas that are unpresentable.

> These Ideas, for which there is no possible presentation and which therefore provide no knowledge of reality (experience), also prohibit the free accord of the faculties that produces the feeling of the beautiful. They

> obstruct the formation and stabilization of taste. One could call them unpresentable. (p. 11)

In Lyotard's view, the presentation of the unpresentable is what was essential to modern painting. In other words, "showing that there is something we can conceive of which we can neither see nor show— this is the stake of modern painting" (p. 11). The question is how [did] the *modern* painter make visible something that cannot be seen? In order to impart the unpresentable, modern painting had to depart from figuration and representation. It had to become "blank" (abstract), which means presenting something negatively, through non-representational form, or better, norms of expression unfamiliar to the common taste of the time. Lyotard sees the epitome of such conception in the abstract painting of Kasimir Malevich's, perhaps in his illustrious painting, *White on White: Suprematist composition* (1918).

> . . . like one of Malevich's squares; it will make one see only by prohibiting one from seeing; it will give pleasure only by giving pain. In these formulations we can recognize the axioms of the avant-gardes in painting, to the extent that they dedicate themselves to allusions to the unpresentable through visible presentations. (p. 11)

However, Lyotard points out that in spite of its commitment to present the unpresentable, the experience of modern painting never successfully conveyed the sublime. Due to its recognizable consistency and collectively shared nostalgia (taste) for the unattainable, modern painting offered a solace of pleasure rather

than a true experience of the sublime, which according to Lyotard, ". . . is intrinsically a combination of pleasure and pain: pleasure in reason exceeding all presentation, pain in the imagination or sensibility proving inadequate to the concept" (p. 15).

On the other hand, post-modern art, according to Lyotard, would be that which repudiates not only the consolation of correct forms but also the consensus of taste that allows nostalgia for the unpresentable to stay operative in society. Post-modern art promotes ". . . inquiries into new presentations — not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that there is something unpresentable" (p. 15). In this context, Lyotard identifies the work of the post-modern artist or writer as that of a philosopher. "[T]he text he writes or the work he creates is not in principle governed by pre-established rules and cannot be judged according to a determinant judgment, by the application of given categories to this text or work. Such rules and categories are what the work or text is investigating" (p. 15). In this sense, post-modern art work might be seen as an event in which the existing cultural conventions of art are put into question rather than as an object which has a fixed meaning. Moreover, Lyotard asserts that the post-modern artist works without rules, and is concerned with formulating "the rules for what *will have been made* "[italics in text] (p. 15). Lyotard's invention of post-modernism within language is apparent when these rules, and the role of an artist as philosopher, are interpreted as analogous to the French tense of *future anterieur.*

> This is why the work and the text can take on the properties of an event; it is also why they would arrive too late for their author, or, in what amounts to the same thing, why the work of making them would always begin too soon. *Post-modern* would be understanding according to the paradox of the future (*post*) anterior (*modo*). [italics in text] (p. 15)

In my view, Lyotard's idea of the post-modern artist who works without rules and by investigating the existing rules and categories of art, urges a certain critical mobility in post-modern art making. Perhaps it is meant to remind us that such spirit might be missing in the post-modern reality of "anything goes" that rests upon the realism of money and the absence of aesthetic criteria.

King (1996) states that Lyotard's idea of the post-modern artist as a philosopher who works outside the existing rules and categories appears no longer viable because post-modernism itself has changed. She argues that post-modern art ". . . although claiming to erode disciplinary boundaries and definitions of modernism, became subservient to specific theories and rules of postmodernism" (p. 83). King discerns between early and late post-modernism. The purpose of this distinction is to uncover how late post-modernist art became corrupted by the art world (the system which the original avant-garde tried to resist). King identifies the early post-modernism in the post-minimalist, conceptualist and pluralistic practices of the 1960s. She states that early post-modern artists were critical of the dominant Greenberg's aesthetics and the institutional structure of the art world. They were interested in bringing art outside

of the galleries and museums, and in activating alternative and artist-run spaces. To early post-modernists, "the art was the idea and the idea was their art" (p. 84). King believes that this notion placed the artist in the position of critic and theorist as well. Although the pluralism of early post-modern art practices instigated erosion of the existing categories in art, it never became recognized by the art world as, for example, Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism or Neo-expressionism were. What is remembered of the early post-modern is mainly Pop-art which, in spite of its radical looks, was easily institutionalized by the art world. King notes that the *late* post-modernism of the 1990s plays a quite different role. It embraces a realization that art cannot resist the artworld. In fact, it implies a notion that avant-garde *resistance* has never been possible, and that bourgeois institutions of culture and art market are inseparable from art. As opposed to a modern artist, who, in an avant-garde fashion, strove towards invention and authenticity that challenged the Salon and Academic painting, the late post-modernists seem to accept the norms and rules dictated by the art world. Moreover, King sees the late post-modern art as highly dependent on theory and dominant schools of thought such as post-structuralism, semiology, feminism and psychoanalysis. This poses a question, whether post-modernism also signifies the end of the avant-garde.

> Yet strangely, in their quest of a shared artistic freedom and rejection of tradition and "rules", PM artists appear to be returning to the 19th century model, when an artist's survival depended on acceptance by the Academy

and Salons (which reflected the taste or lack of taste of the bourgeoisie and its institutions). (King, 1996, p. 81)

Zizek (2000) writes that in order to reproduce competitive market conditions, art had to produce shocking effects. He suggests that it is the integration of culture (from which art is inseparable) and market that has paralyzed the avant-garde logic of provocation. Zizek argues that in spite of its potential to impart shock value, post-modern art lost the transgressive avant-garde spirit and became successfully accommodated within the art market.

> Just think of recent trends in the visual arts: gone are the days when we had simple statues or framed paintings — what we get now are exhibitions of frames without paintings, dead cows and their excrement, videos of the insides of the human body (gastroscopy and colonoscopy), the inclusion of olfactory effects, and so on. Here again, as in the domain of sexuality, perversion is no longer subversive: such shocking excesses are part of the system itself; the system feeds on them in order to reproduce itself. Perhaps this is one possible definition of postmodern art as opposed to modernist art: in postmodernism, the transgressive excess loses its shock value and is fully integrated into the established artistic market. (p. 25)

1.8 Greenberg's Legacy: Modernist Painting

Let us look back once again, this time at Clement Greenberg's definition of modernist painting. Greenberg was one of the most prolific theorists of high

modernism and one of the greatest advocates of American abstract painting. His writing has been seen also as the ideological underpinning of the modernist teaching of art and thus deserves to be reviewed in detail. In addition, Greenberg saw painting as the central and the most important discipline of modernism. As de Duve (1996) writes, "in Greenberg's view of modern art, the relation of painting to art is equated with that of modernist painting to modernism at large" (p. 206). On the other hand, it is also important to underline that post-modernist discourse on art finds its impetus in the criticism of Greenberg's ideas of modernism.

> In some measure Greenberg's critics were justified in singling out his modernist paradigm as they did, because it was the basis of the dominant art critical theory and practice in the 1960s. And if it was to be challenged, a new postmodernist paradigm for considering and evaluating art would have to be formulated. One was. (Sandler, 2002, p. 210)

In this section I focus mainly on reviewing Greenberg's seminal essay, *Modernist Painting* (1963), which summarizes and complements his earlier ideas on modernist art exemplified in his influential essays, the *Avant-Garde and Kitsch* (1939) and *Towards a New Laocoon* (1940).

In Greenberg's view, the term *modernism* refers to more than just art and literature. It involves an interest in self-criticism that emerged out of the criticism of the Enlightenment. In fact, Greenberg distinguishes between the criticism of the Enlightenment and the self-criticism of modernism, associating the latter with an attempt to redefine the purpose of art in modern culture and society. "The

Enlightenment criticized from the outside, the way criticism in its more accepted sense does; Modernism criticizes from the inside, through the procedures themselves of that which is being criticized" (p. 12). These kinds of critical procedures find their roots in the work of Immanuel Kant who, according to Greenberg, was the first [modernist] to address the means of criticism itself. Kant's work laid the foundations for a disciplinary and self-referential approach to knowledge and art in particular, foundations which Greenberg saw as essential to modernism.

> The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself—not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. (p. 12)

In *Modernist painting*, Greenberg argues that the initial position of the arts defined by the Enlightenment was somewhat similar to that of religion. In the initial blueprints of the Enlightenment project, both were considered to be less serious than, for example, science and law; the arts were symbolically associated with entertainment, and religion with therapy. In order to reclaim their status beyond entertainment, the arts dedicated themselves to demonstrating an experience that is valuable in its own terms.

> Each art, it turned out, had to effect this demonstration on its own account. What had to be exhibited and made explicit was that which was unique and irreducible not only in art in general, but also in each particular art. (p. 13)

Modernism may be typified as a pursuit of self-referential art, which asserts that autonomy and the unique status of art could be realized only through testing the intrinsic and self-referential parameters of the medium. "Each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself" (p. 13). Therefore, the ultimate goal of modernist art lies in the pursuit of its *purity* or, more specifically, its self-definition.

Greenberg argues that the traditional commitment of painting to realism and an illusionist approach to representation prevented painting from reaching its self-definition. "The limitations that constitute the medium of painting — the flat surface, the shape of the support, the properties of pigment — were treated by the Old Masters as negative factors that could be acknowledged only implicitly or indirectly" (p. 13). On the other hand, modernist painters such as Manet and Cezanne looked at these factors as positive. Their work suggests that the formal limitations of painting should be addressed openly and as essential to the practice of painting. Greenberg's formalist approach to painting is a radical one due to his notion that the concerns with the shape of the support and for color are not truly essential to painting because they are shared also by other disciplines such as theater and sculpture. According to Greenberg, the only aspect that painting does not share with other arts is its *flatness*, the two-dimensionality of the picture plane. Thus, in order to present itself as pure and self-critical in terms of modernism, modernist painting had to acknowledge flatness as essential to its experimentations with pictorial space. This affirmation of flatness results in a

picture that is about a picture (formal presentation) rather than about what is in the picture (representation).

> Whereas one tends to see what is *in* an Old Master before seeing it as a picture, one sees a Modernist painting as a picture first. This is, of course, the best way of seeing any kind of picture, Old Master or Modernist, but Modernism imposes it as the only and necessary way, and Modernism's success in doing so is a success of self-criticism. (p. 14)

However, Greenberg suggests that this approach does not necessarily imply an abandonment of representation of recognizable objects. What modernist painting abandons are traditional approaches employed in rendering an illusion of three-dimensionality. Modernist painting has to present itself as perspectiveless. Greenberg states that "all recognizable entities exist in the three-dimensional space (including the pictures themselves) and the barest suggestion of a recognizable entity suffices to call up associations of that kind of space" (p. 14). The alternative, according to Greenberg, does not lie ultimately in abstract and non-figurative painting (as proposed initially by Kandinsky and Mondrian). In order to pursue its self-definition, painting must disassociate itself from anything that has to do with three-dimensionality.

> Three-dimensionality is the province of sculpture, and for the sake of its own autonomy painting has had above all to divest itself of everything it might share with sculpture. And it is in the course of its effort to do this,

and not so much — I repeat — to exclude the representational or the 'literary' that painting has made itself abstract. (p. 14)

It is important to recognize that Greenberg does not see the modernist abandonment of three-dimensionality as a break from tradition. Rather, it presents an intensification of painting's historical resistance to sculpture from which painters initially borrowed rendering principles of shading, relief and space. Greenberg sees the earliest resistance of painting to sculpture in the work of the sixteenth century painters in Belgium, Spain and Holland, and their concerns with color. However, he fails to provide concrete examples that document such a tendency. Further, he points out that even the work of Neo-classical painters such as David and Ingres, which initially presented an attempt to revive sculpturality and drawing, manifested the qualities of color and flatness. "Thus by the middle of the nineteenth century all ambitious tendencies in painting were converging (beneath their differences) in an anti-sculptural direction" (p. 15). Modernist painting then presents an intensification in the pursuit of this direction.

Greenberg observes that the traditional concerns of color versus drawing became replaced in the work of the Impressionists by an interest in optical experimentation freed from tactile associations. "It was in the name of the purely and literally optical, *not in that of color* [added italics], that the Impressionists set themselves to undermining shading and modeling and everything else that seemed to connote the sculptural" (p. 15). This is a problematic proposition because the opticality of painting cannot be separated from the concerns with

color and its chromatic (optical) characteristics. Anyhow, Greenberg suggests that Cubists' work took optical experimentations even further, providing an ultimate sense of flatness. Nonetheless, Greenberg extends his view by saying that there were other 'norms' of painting such as that of finish, texture, value and color, and these are also of concern to a modernist painter. As a matter of fact modernist painting implies a continuous testing and re-testing of these as well as their re-defining.

> It would take me more space than is at my disposal to tell how the norm of the picture's enclosing shape or frame was loosened, then tightened, then loosened once again, and then isolated and tightened once more by successive generations of Modernist painters; or how the norms of finish, of paint texture, and of value and color contrast, were tested and retested. Risks have been taken with all these, not only for the sake of new expression, but also in order to exhibit them more clearly as norms. (p. 15)

However, Greenberg writes that simplifications and complications of these norms that are of particular concern to abstract painters could be also limiting. In addition, he saw the purpose and limitations of modernist painting in the work of Mondrian. In spite of its aspirations and rigorous forms of testing the norms of the picture, Mondrian's painting, according to Greenberg, appears more subservient to norms of color and frame than the late work of Monet. He underlines that the function of modernist self-criticism in painting then is not only to conceal these limitations but to analyze them openly. "Modernism has found that these limiting

conditions can be pushed back indefinitely before a picture stops being a picture and turns into an arbitrary object; but it has also found that the further back these limits are pushed the more explicitly they have to be observed" (p. 16).

Even though modernist painting abandons an illusion of three-dimensional space and sculptural *trompe-l'oeil,* it still suggests an illusion of the third dimension, but an optical one. It is the optical illusion that is pivotal to a modernist experience of painting.

> The first mark made on a surface destroys its virtual flatness, and the configurations of a Mondrian still suggest a kind of illusion of a kind of third dimension. Only now it is a strictly pictorial, strictly optical third dimension. Where the Old Masters created an illusion of space into which one could imagine oneself walking, the illusion created by a Modernist is one into which one can only look, can travel through only with the eye. (p. 16)

Greenberg compares this experiment with optical illusion as analogous to experimentation in modern science. "Scientific method alone asks that a situation be resolved in exactly the same kind of terms as that in which it is presented — a problem in physiology is solved in terms of physiology, not in those of psychology; to be solved in the terms of psychology, it has to be presented in, or translated into, these terms first" (p. 17). Analogously, he proposes that modernist painting operates only within the parameters of its visual presentation. Thus the subject matter must be translated into purely pictorial/optical terms, that means in a way in which it entirely loses its literary character. What matters is the

aesthetic consistency in experimentation with the medium. In fact, it was the medium of painting that was the ultimate subject matter of modernist painting, as it was exemplified in the work Post-Painterly Abstractionists such as Noland, Frankenthaler, Bush, and Louis. In addition, Greenberg sees modernist painting as spontaneously and subliminally pursued through individual practices rather than upon theoretical concepts. Moreover, he indicates that these individual practices do not imply a break with the past. As well, they are not supposed to offer theoretical explanations bur rather to turn them into empirical ones. In his essay *Modern and post-modern*, Greenberg (1980) underlined that modernist painting has been driven mainly by its aspiration to aesthetic value and excellence pursued for its own sake and nothing else, as art for art's sake.[5] However, Greenberg did not explain any necessary connection between quality and autonomy, or purity, and he did not specify what constituted quality in art, even though he believed that it was present in the formalist painting of Louis, Noland, and Olitski (Sandler, 2002).

1.9 Formalism or Modernism?

> Whereas modernism simply appears as a tendency, to which works belong or not, formalism involves the way in which the aesthetic judgment, moved (or unmoved) by the content of a given modernist work, is

[5] In his essay *Modern and post-modern*, Greenberg saw post-modernism as an anti-thesis to all he loved, and defined it as a ". . . lowering of aesthetic standards due to the democratization of culture under industrialization". Modern and post-modern, *Arts Magazine*, February, 1980, p. 65

compelled to approve (or disapprove) of the form in which the work remodels its historical conventions. (De Duve, 1996. p. 211)

In the post-modern discourse on art, formalism is seen as synonymous with modernism. The problem is that many post-modernists perceive the formalist criticism as an anachronistic and academic narrative that belong to modernism rather than as discourse that is applicable to all visual art making. Joseph Kosuth (1972) accused painting as being the pure formalist art — the vanguard of decoration whose ". . . art condition is so minimal that for all functional purposes it is not art at all, but pure exercises in aesthetics" (p. 159). This becomes particularly problematic to the studio teaching of art (painting) from which formal and aesthetic concerns with the medium are rather seen as inseparable. I will return to this issue in the next chapter of this thesis.

De Duve (1996) points out that readers of Greenberg tend to confuse modernism with formalism and vice versa. This is because Greenberg's formalist discourse is in stride with modernism's essentialist imperative of self-criticism. Greenberg is partly responsible for this confusion because he never distinguished clearly between the two terms. Generally speaking, formalism presents a methodological orientation to the discussion and evaluation of the value of artwork as determined solely by the properties of form such as color, shape, edge, compositions, etc., and visual logic among them. The concept of formalism in art was introduced by English theorists, Roger Fry (1866 -1934) and Clive Bell (1881 -1964). Fry (1920) insisted on the importance of plastic and

spatial relationships in painting, while Bell (1913) developed a concept of "significant form". Bell (1913) thought that formal elements such as color, line, shape, texture, "arranged and combined according to certain unknown and mysterious laws lead to significant art form" (p. 28). In addition, Bell saw significant form as capable of conveying an unique "aesthetic emotion" that is distinct from any other emotions and experience. Greenberg's criticism presents an expansion of these ideas with respect to modernism. De Duve (1996) sees formalist discourse as the central narrative of modernism that offers a rationale for an aesthetic judgment. In its simplest terms the sentence "this is beautiful" or "this is art" (as art) expresses, formulates, formalizes in language the affect or feeling of quality constituting the aesthetic judgment, as if quality were a property of the work in its visual appearance, in its form" (p. 214).

Even though both modernism and formalism appear as deeply intertwined, De Duve claims that the former has to do with the *generic, an* affirmation of flatness in painting, while the latter refers to its specificity, 'aesthetic value'. On the other hand "content is the one thing that never acquires discursive existence in formalist criticism. Content is ineffable because it is a feeling and because feelings do not get communicated by talking about them . . ." (De Duve, 1996, p. 212). However, unlike other formalists who excluded the issue of content entirely from their discourse, Greenberg talks about *content* as a particular aesthetic (sensuous) value that comes with the feeling and an inspiration from working with the medium.

> Quality, aesthetic value originates in inspiration, vision, "content" not in "form". . . Yet "form" not only opens the way to inspiration; it can also provide means to it; and technical preoccupations, when searching enough and compelled enough, can generate or discover "content". . . .That content cannot be separated from its form. (Greenberg, 1978, p. 211)

The problem with this view is that it allows only one kind of content, an aesthetic one, and its value is solely determined by the judgment of taste. This links Greenberg's view back to the Kantian judgment of taste and disinterested aesthetic experience which were cardinal to modernist aesthetics. Janet Wolff (1983) distinguishes two main developments in Western aesthetics: 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 post-modern shift towards institutional context of art as it was exemplified in the writing of institutional theorists of art George Dickie and Arthur Danto.

Even though Kant himself saw taste as inevitably subjective, he introduced the judgment of taste as an universally applicable concept to the experience of art. Therefore, judgment of taste must be free from any subjective ulterior motives and purposes. It involves a contemplative perception without pre-conception. The focus is on the appearance of the object; its essence rather than its existence (Hamblen, 1991; Rader and Jessup, 1973; White, 1993). According

to Kant, the distinguishing characteristic of the judgment of taste is that it is *disinterested*. The concept of disinterestedness was initially introduced in the work of Shaftesbury and Shopenhauer (Hamblen, 1991, Wolff, 1983). It entails perception pursued for its own sake, excluding all personal and ulterior interests such as cognitive, moral, practical etc. Within the context of formalism, the disinterested aesthetic experience became a central concept in the modernist experience of art. The more pragmatic idea of disinterested aesthetic perception, was formulated by Jerome Stolnitz (1960), in his theory of the aesthetic attitude. The following quotation epitomizes Stolnitz' s (1984) theory.

> To perceive the painting aesthetically, which is to say, disinterestedly, precludes using it as a documentation of something extraneous to itself. Disinterested perception precludes all such purposes. To perceive the painting aesthetically is to contemplate it for its own sake alone. Then attention dwells on the painterly medium, shaped into this unique body. (p. 27)

Feminist writers have been arguing that there is no such thing as disinterested aesthetic perception (Congdon, 1991). In fact, it has been suggested that the nature of disinterested aesthetic experience is such that it privileges and empowers male gaze. "Investment in the look is not privileged in women as in men. More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters . . ." (Irigaray in Owens, 1983, p. 71).

At its core, post-modernism implies a criticism of the modernist paradigm, and its formalist discourse in which painting, or better still, abstract painting had a dominant position. Undoubtedly, Greenberg's ideas which were pivotal to the modernist paradigm, were first to be challenged in the 1950s and 1960s by many theorists and artists who perceived Greenberg's position as essentially dogmatic and exclusivist, as well unsuitable to accommodate new tendencies in art making. Sandler (2002) makes an interesting point suggesting that Greenberg,

> . . . was often condemned for narrowness and an arrogant refusal to take non-formalist art seriously. But, with the backing of a powerful coterie of artists; dealers; collectors; historians; and museum directors, curators, and trustees, Greenberg managed to outlast all of his detractors. Oddly enough when the art-critical tide turned against modernism in the 1970s, Greenberg's reputation only grew, for he became the foil — the esteemed foil — of a new breed of antimodernists or postmodernists. Ignoring other interpretations that rooted modernism in Dadaism, constructivism, and surrealism — interpretations that stressed social and psychological concerns — they generally accepted Greenberg's definition of modernism as the operative one. Thus postmodernism could be characterized as anti-Greenberg-inspired formalism. . . . (p. 210)

The anti-Greenberg-inspired formalism (post-modernism) finds its roots in the 1960s, in the work of Minimalists who accepted the modernist interest in form and resolutely abstract structure on one side, and literalness of materials they

worked with, on the other.[6] In fact, many theorists saw minimalist art as the beginning of post-modernist critique of institutional and discursive conditions of modernism, the critique which find its roots in the work of Courbet and Duchamp. But if we want to trace the downfall of Greenberg's idea in painting, then we must go first to Robert Rauschenberg's *flatbeds* of the 1950s and 1960s and the writing of Leo Steinberg. In fact, Steinberg was one of the first critics to identify a new direction in painting — post-modern painting.

1. 10 The Flatbed Picture Plane and Post-Modern Painting

In his acclaimed essay *Other Criteria*, Leo Steinberg (1972) suggested that the traditional conception of the verticality of the picture plane that is meant to be seen in a standing (erect) posture had been challenged by the work of Robert Rauschenberg and Jean Dubuffet. He associated their work with the concept of the "flatbed picture plane". The term flatbed, according to Steinberg, derives from printmaking; a horizontal bed on which the printing surface rests. In the context of painting, Steinberg states that "flatbed picture plane makes its symbolic allusion to hard surfaces such as tabletops, studio floors, charts, bulletin boards — any receptor surface on which objects are scattered, on which data is entered, on

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[6] Greenberg saw Minimalist's use of materials and their commitment to geometric modular simplicity as antithetical to modernist ideals of autonomy and quality In his essay, *Recentness of sculpture*, Greenberg (1968) said that, "Minimal art remains too much a feat of ideation [the mental formation of ideas], and not enough anything else. Its idea remains an idea, something deduced instead of felt and discovered. The geometrical and modular simplicity may announce and signify the artistically furthest-out, but the fact that the signals are understood for what they want to mean betrays them artistically. There is hardly any aesthetic surprise in Minimal art...Aesthetic surprise hangs on forever — it is there in Raphael as it is in Pollock — and ideas alone cannot achieve it. In Gregory Battcock (Ed.,). Minimal art: A critical anthology, (Ed.). New York: E.P. Dutton, 183 - 84.

which information may be received printed, impressed — whether coherently or in confusion" (p. 84). Thus with the flatbed picture plane, the painting is no longer the analogue of purity and optical experimentation but of operational processes and the subject matter (content) suggesting the shift from nature to culture. Steinberg traces the origins of this shift in the work of Monet, Mondrian and Schwitters as well as in Duchamp's *Large Glass* (1915) and *Tu m'* (1918).

Steinberg sees Robert Rauschenberg and Jean Dubuffet as instigators of this shift in the art after Abstract Expressionism. In this section I focus particularly on Steinberg's interpretation of Rauschenberg's work. In his paintings, *Canyon* (1959), *Winter Pool* (1959-1960) and *Pilgrim* (1960), Rauschenberg integrated non-artistic and mundane objects such as a pillow, ladder and chair with the picture plane. As well, these objects are juxtaposed to various painterly marks. "Though they hung on the wall, the pictures kept referring back to the horizontals on which we walk and sit, work and sleep" (p. 87). In Steinberg's view this approach to conceptualization of pictorial space departs from both pre-modern interest in an illusion of space and the modernist commitment to flatness. It must be noted that Rauschenberg appropriated methodology that was developed initially by Dadaists, Constructivists and Surrealists. It was in the work of modern artists associated with these movements, that juxtaposing painted marks to words, found objects, and images appropriated from popular culture became possible. In this sense Rauschenberg's work also might be seen be seen as an extension of the modern avant-garde practices.

In the '60s, Rauschenberg pushed the idea of flatbed even further, by using photographic transfers, silk-screen images, and transfer drawings in a collage fashion.

> If some collage element, such as a pasted-down photograph, threatened to evoke a topical illusion of depth, the surface was casually stained or smeared with paint to recall its irreducible flatness. . . .The picture's "flatness" was to be no more of a problem than the flatness of a disordered desk or an unswept floor. (Steinberg, 1972, p. 88)

As opposed to modernist sensibilities of the sublime, transparence, timelessness, and monochrome, Rauschenberg's flatbeds exemplified opacity, literalness and appropriation of various historical and cultural references. Thus, the consequences of the flatbed picture plane are not only formal but also cultural and contextual. By employing the content and subject matter that deals with everyday culture, Rauschenberg's flatbeds signify an attempt to re-establish links between painting and everyday life.

The flatbed picture plane was most symbolically pronounced in Rauschenberg's gesture of turning his own bed into a painting, presenting it in an upright position against the wall. Steinberg sees the horizontality of the flatbed not only as analogous to "making" (operation) but also as open ". . . to any content that does not evoke an priori optical event" (p. 90). In Steinberg's view, the flatbed picture plane cuts across both realms of abstract and representational, offering more than a new category of surface. The flatbed, which presents an all-purpose

picture plane, ". . . accommodates recognizable objects, it presents them as man-made things of universally familiar character" (p. 90). According to Steinberg this was also manifested in the graffiti based "man made reality" in the painting of Dubuffet, and pop images of Johns, Lichtenstein and Warhol. Steinberg saw these artists as concerned with picture "conceived as the image of an image" (p. 91). Ultimately, he characterized the work of these artists as the beginning of a new direction in painting (post-modernist painting) which seeks to reformulate the experience of art and in doing so undermines the distinction between art and non-art as well as the modernist categories.

> The all-purpose picture plane underlying this post-Modernist painting has made the course of art once again non-linear and unpredictable. What I have called the flatbed is more than a surface distinction if it is understood as a change within painting that changed the relationship between artist and image, image and viewer. . . It is part of a shake up which contaminates all purified categories. (p. 91)

1.11 Critical Inversions: The Negative Effects of Post-Modernism on Art

Before I turn to the issue of the death of painting, let me introduce briefly some critical views that point to some negative aspects of post-modernism. This will also include a brief introduction of the concept of deconstruction which has been seen as one of the main strategies of post-modern art making.

Jameson (1983) traces the origin of post-modernism in the early 1960s, a climate in which modernism and its aesthetics had been established in the academy and felt academic by a whole new generation of painters, poets and musicians. His theory of post-modernism draws upon the two main themes: the transformation of reality into images and the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents. The first one refers to the proliferation of the hyper-consumerist society and multinational capitalism. The other has to do with the end of history and post-structuralism, which ". . . rather than offering a theory of postmodernity" offers "an archeology of modernity", or a theory of modernism at the stage of its exhaustion. (Huyssen in Duval, 2002, p. 9).

Jameson identifies pastiche as one of the main characteristics of post-modern art. He describes pastiche as an imitation of previous (dead) historical styles in a form of parody (blank parody) that is stripped of its satirical spirit and ability to impart a more concrete critique of the dominant systems of representation.

> Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal* [italics in text] compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humor: pastiche is to parody what that curious thing, the modern

> practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the stable and comic ironies of, say, the 18th century. (Jameson, 1983, p. 114)

Further, Jameson adds another aspect to this new stylistic moment of post-modernism — the death of the subject, or simply said, the end of individualism. He points out that modernism thrived on the inventions of a personal style and uniqueness of self-identity. In addition, he suggests that there are two positions which signal the disappearance of the individual subject in art. One has to do with the age of corporate capitalism which relies on the notion of organization man, bureaucratic spheres of business, the state, and the demographic expansion. The other, more radical position, which he identifies with post-structuralism, implies not only that individual subject was thing of the past, but also that it was a *myth* which actually never existed. Its identity and autonomy have been nothing else but a fictitious construct based on a "philosophical and cultural mystification". With respect to these two positions Jameson raises an important question:

> What we have to retain from all this is rather an aesthetic dilemma: because if the experience and the ideology of the unique self, an experience and ideology which informed the stylistic practice of classical modernism, is over and done with, then it is no longer clear what the artists and writers of the present period are supposed to be doing. What is clear is merely that the older models — Picasso, Proust, T.S. Eliot — do not work any more (or are positively harmful), since nobody has that kind

of unique private world and style to express any longer. (Jameson, 1983, p. 115)

Morgan (1996) states that "being an artist today is a matter of trying to locate one's position in postmodern culture" that presents itself as the rule of the predictable spectacle, entertainment and arousal. "It requires an inner directed sense of reality, one that resists de-centering and the loss of self-esteem" (p. 75). If modernism was concerned with the generative terms of "autonomy" and "quality" as well as the transcendent and universally visual idea of art, post-modernism then is concerned with the "relevance" of art and its position in social and cultural contexts (Sandler, 2002). It was in the complex social and political ferment of the 1960s, the issues of civil rights activism, Vietnam war, feminism and sexual liberation, as well as expansion of media and information culture, that many artists we identify as post-modern found their subject matter. Although this engagement with critical issues contributed greatly to the expansion and liberation of art from the exclusivist discipline-based definitions of art, patriarchal and western-centered aesthetics and systems of representation — the liberation which was pivotal to pluralism and recognition of the oppressed and marginalized producers of culture (i.e., women, and minority groups of non-western origins), many artists and theorists see post-modernism as negative.

According to Sandler (2003), post-modernists emphasized subject matter and disregarded the form-content synthesis, as well as they ". . . substituted relevance for novelty — the emblem of the avant-garde prized by modernists.

Thus post-modernist art produced "the shock of recognition instead of the shock of the new" (DeAk cited in Sandler, 2002, p. 210).

Kuspit (2000) criticizes post-modernism as the Hollywoodization of art, arguing that post-modern art has become a form of *perverse replication,* which, according to him, starts with pop-art of Warhol and culminates with the appropriation art of Mike Bidlo, Cindy Sherman and Sherrie Levine. Moreover, Kuspit, argues that post-modern art has lost its subjective (human) value which celebrates the individualism and originality of the artist, and turned into a "theoretical enterprise".

> It [art] has become so much of a theoretical question that it has lost human interest. It has been bifurcated – objectified – into material and idea, losing its character as a sign and expression of the subject in the process. (p. 149)

There are two concepts that appear to be central to the theoretical enterprise of post-modern art: deconstruction and appropriation.

Within the specific context of post-structuralism, deconstruction at the simplest level presents a mode of analysis-reading of texts, which sees its objective in uncovering how meaning is organized through language, and what function and power structures that organization serves (Usher and Edwards, 1994). Deconstruction finds its roots in the writing of Jacques Derrida, in his influential paper, *Structure, sign and play* (1966), as well as his book, *Of grammatology* (1967). The overall objective of deconstruction in art is to

"destabilize" or subvert the traditional and accepted meaning postulating that there is no such thing as fixed or transcendental meaning determined by artist/author (Klepac, 1994). Many post-modern theorists such as Craig Owens, Rosalind Krauss and Douglas Crimp adapted deconstruction and poststructuralists' linguistic concepts as philosophical underpinnings for their discourses on post-modern art making. However, Foster (1984) informs us that strategies of deconstruction and appropriation do not originate with post-modernism. According to him, "Picasso, Pollock and Smithson all destructure modes of signification that they inherit. Magritte, Johns, and Laurie Anderson all pose forms of rhetorical interference. They cannot all be recouped as postmodernist or proto-postmodernist. The strategy of appropriation, as seen in Duchamp and again in Rauschenberg, is modernist in origin, as is the deconstructive impulse...." (p. 199). Nonetheless, the deconstructive impulse of post-modern art is in many ways different from the self-referential practices of modernist art. Unlike the self-referential tendencies of modernism that focused on the autonomy and purity of the medium as advocated by Greenberg, the post-modernist deconstructive tendencies lead ultimately to allegorical art[7] of the 'impure meaning' — art that relies on ". . .a web of references, not necessarily located in any one form, medium, or site" (Foster, 1984, p. 196). With this focus on referencing and the discursive interpretation of references, art work is seen as text, and the viewer is

[7] Craig Owens' (1983) distinguishes between symbolic paradigm of modernism and allegorical paradigm of post-modernism. See *The allegorical impulse: Toward a theory of postmodernism.* In B. Wallis, and M. Tucker (Eds.), *Art after modernism: Rethinking representation* (pp. 203 - 237). New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art.

expected to take a role of a reader, decoder, or simply, a weaver of its meaning. And the meaning is seen as polysemic and always open to new interpretations. Barthes (1977) pointed out, "the text is a process of demonstration, speaks according to certain rules (or against certain rules): the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of a discourse..." (p. 170). Klepac (1994) writes that one of the main characteristics of postmodernist art is *discursiveness*.

> It is almost an inevitable by-product of the postmodernist brand of deconstruction. . . By its very nature, it eschews even the possibility of the single truth or the single, all encompassing meaning that resolves all internal ambiguities and ties up all loose ends in a given work. Structurally, it enables work to change (its meaning) in and through time: it insures an open-endedness to the work that permits the spectator continually to add something new or different to the work. The very notion of discursiveness implies that the spectator has, in effect, become a reader rather than a viewer and that art has become a text to be read rather than an object to be looked at or contemplated in the isolation of a museum or gallery space. (Klepac, 1994, p. 266 - 267)

Sandler (2002) sees appropriation as one of the main strategies of post-modern art making. He points out that in post-modernism many young artists appropriate and recycle images and forms from past art and the mass media. He sees this recycling as essentially provocative, suggesting that on one side,

appropriation signals a negation of originality and authenticity claimed by modernists, while on the other it offers various possibilities for re-inventing reactionary and critical art making. Many artists and theorists see these interests in deconstruction, discursiveness, and appropriation as attacks on humanistic principles of individual creativity, authenticity and originality in art, and interpret post-modernism as the end of creative imagination, end of aesthetic experience, end of avant-garde, or simply the end of art.

> But provocation was no longer equated with newness, as it had been when the idea of the avant-garde was still credible. Questions were soon raised about appropriations. Were they not mannerist and academic? Did the quoted fragments reveal ironically and even perversely that humanism was in tatters. Did this scavenging not prove that art was at an end, dead, in a zero zone? (Sandler, 2002, p. 213)

In this light post-modernism might be seen also as a major crisis in art. In the following section I would like to introduce post-modern discourse on painting in specific relation to the issue of the death-of-painting.

1.12 The Death and Rebirth of Painting in Post-Modernism

> "From today painting is dead": it is now nearly a century and a half since Paul Delaroche is said to have pronounced that sentence in the face of the overwhelming evidence of Daguerre's invention. But even though the death warrant has been periodically reissued throughout the era of

modernism, no one seems to have been entirely willing to execute it; life on death row lingered to longevity. (Crimp, 1981, p. 92)

There are two things that need to be clarified at the onset of this section. First, there has never been a moment in the history of art that painting ceased to be produced. Second, the issue of the death of painting discussed in this section does not originate with post-modernism. As suggested in the opening quotation borrowed from Douglas Crimp (1981), the death of painting was first stated by a painter Paul Delaroche in 1839, as a remark to his report on the invention of Daguerreotype to the French government. In this sense, the issue of death of painting finds its roots in modernity, or more precisely, in the aftermath of the technological invention of photography, which many painters at the time saw as a threat to painting and art in general.[8]

There seem to be two main premises for making the statement painting is dead today. One has to do with the collapse of the modernist conventions (i.e., autonomy, purity, originality and authenticity of art) which found their ultimate end in Greenberg's ideas, while the other has to do with the seemingly marginal position of painting today in relation to other contemporary forms of art such as photography, video, film, digital art as well as various forms of printing means for

[8] The initial arguments against photography culminated in 1862, with the petition of artists led by Ingres in the seminal Mayer and Pierson case. "Whereas photography consists of a series of completely manual operations which no doubt require some skill in the manipulations involved, but never resulting in works which could in any *circumstance* ever be compared with those works which are the fruits of intelligence and the study of art — on these grounds, the undersigned artists protest against any comparison which might be made between photography and art". Cited in Mayer, M. (1996). Digressions toward an art history of video. In *Being and time: The emergence of video projects.* Buffalo: Albright-Knox Gallery. (pp. 19).

image making (Storr, 2003). If the first premise implies that the death of painting parallels the death of modernism, the second one alludes to certain obsolescence of painting as a medium in the contemporary artworld and culture which seem very much inclined towards technological art. The speculations about the obsolescence of painting have been echoed by Barbara Rose (1979) in her curatorial essay *American painting: The eighties*, which coincidentally was introduced to me in my introductory painting class. These are Rose's opening words:

> Ten years ago, the question ". . . is painting dead?" . . . was seriously being raised as artist after artist left the illusory world of the canvas for the "real" world of three dimensional objects, performances in actual time, or the second-hand duplications of reality in mechanically reproduced images of video, film and photography. The traditional activity of painting, especially hand painting with brush on canvas, as it had been practiced in the West since oil painting replaced manuscript illumination and frescoed murals, seemed to offer no possibility for innovation, no potential for novelty so startling it could compete with the popular culture for attention or with the capacity of factory for mass production, or the power of political movements to make history and change men and women's minds. (Rose, 1979, p. 1)

While addressing the issue of the death of painting in the 2003 double issue of Artforum dedicated to the art of the 1980s, Danto (2003) points out that

the death of painting was particularly discussed during that decade. This is in many ways paradoxical considering that during the '80s painting had experienced a great deal of resurgence and popularity on the art market, particularly with the emergence of Neo-Expressionism. In Danto's (2003) view, "the death of painting was a heavily over-determined thesis, having less by far to do with the state of the art circa 1980 — let us not forget that the return of painting was what was making headlines in those years — than with a heavy atmosphere of postmodern theory" (p. 207). But one may argue that it is exactly this fact that painting was making headlines, as well as its popularity and marketability, that many post-modern art theorists such as Benjamin Buchloh and Douglas Crimp saw as one of the biggest problems with painting, or simply, as its ultimate submission to the bourgeois establishment of art.

For example, Buchloh (1984) argues that figurative tendencies in the work of European (German and Italian) Neo-Expressionist painters (Penck, Baselitz, Immendorff, Clemente, Chia, Salvo) of the 1980s exhibit the urgency to *return to order* in a similar fashion as it was the case in the work of modern avant-garde artists, among them Picasso, Beckman, Severini, Carra, Malevich, and Rodchenko. According to Buchloh, the work of Neo-Expressionists does not present a new avant-garde spirit, as it was "marketed" in the art world, but a regressive mockery of familiar and acceptable norms of expressionist figurative imagery. For him, Neo-Expressionist work embodies conservatism, cynicism, male heroism, and desire for affirmation of European national identity, which he

investigates as analogous to fascism. One of the objectives of Buchloh (1984) was to point out the ultimate subservience of Neo-Expressionist painting to the demands and ideologies of the dominant political and art establishments.

> The mock avant-garde of contemporary European painters now benefits from the ignorance and arrogance of a racket of cultural parvenus who perceive it as their mission to reaffirm the politics of a rigid conservatism through cultural legitimation. . . .These paintings then function as the perfect image (and herein lies the secret of their attraction and success): they assure us that, in a period of conservatism and defunding, the arts are flourishing, and that those who rule are generous in their support of the arts (if it abides by their standards). They tell us that even in the realm of culture the old means of production are still the most viable since they (after all) produce affluence and excellence. (Buchloh, 1984, p. 132 –133)

Undoubtedly, Buchloh's criticism had an enormous impact on many painters, and was seen as an epitome of post-modern "incredulity" towards painting. Anyhow, the fact is that a decade of 1980s was characterized by an incredible expansion of museums and corporate collections. Brandon Taylor (1995) documents this fact by listing all new major museum spaces opened in the '80s. These include, new spaces at the Museum of Modern art in New York (1984); the Whitechapel (1985) and the Saatchi Gallery (1985) in London; the new Liverpool Tate Gallery (1988), New Museum of Contemporary Art (1986) and the Temporary Contemporary (1983) in Los Angeles; and the Museum of

Contemporary Art in Tokyo (1987). "While private galleries boomed and then bust towards the end of the decade, the public museums were increasingly to encourage and simultaneously to meet the growing demand for works of the avant-garde" (Taylor, 1995, p. 105). In this context, the Neo-Expressionist work that involved big canvases, heroic imagery and a great deal of curatorial fuss around its European heritage presented a perfect synthesis of an avant-garde spirit within a secure form of museum scale commodity.

Douglas Crimp's (1981) essay, *The end of painting*, from which I borrowed the quotation that opens this section was particularly influential, leaving many painters with a feeling that painting has been under threat of post-modernism, and its theoretical discourse. In this essay Crimp formulated the end of painting upon the following three points. First, he uncovered the bourgeois and dominant role of painting as high art within a conservative museum establishment, referencing the distastefulness of Barbara Rose, the curator of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, who was in charge of the two influential exhibitions *Eight Contemporary Artists* in 1974, and *American painting: The Eighties* in 1979. Crimps' criticism of Rose bears following connotations:

> For Rose, then, painting is a high art, a universal art, a liberal art, an art through which we can achieve transcendence and catharsis. Painting has an essence, and that essence is illusionism, the capacity to render images conjured up by the boundless human imagination. Painting is a great unbroken tradition that encompasses the entire known history of man.

> Painting is, above all, human. All of this stands in direct opposition to the art of the previous two decades, for which I'm using Daniel Buren's work as the example, that sought to contest the myths of high art, to declare art, like all other forms of endeavor, to be contingent upon the material, historical world. (p. 91 – 92)

Second, drawing upon Walter Benjamin's prophetic view of art's loss of its aura in the age of mechanical reproduction, Crimp revisited the contentious relationship between painting and photography. Thus, he compared the aura of painting and its "human" investment in metaphysical and tactile qualities with photography, which according to him was invented in 1839, but it was only "discovered" in 1970s as it became integral to conceptual art practices. As a matter of fact, the advent of post-modern art has been discussed also with respect to the growing popularity of photographic interventions in art, and which reached its climax with Crimp's curatorial project *Pictures* (1977) that included the work of Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo and Philip Smith. Thus, Crimp recognized the role of photography in undermining the privileged position of painting in the modernist paradigm founded upon the principles of artistic individuality and authenticity.

> But if the art of the 1960s and the 1970s contested the myth of man with an open assault on the artist as unique creator, there was another phenomenon that had initiated that assault in the visual arts at the founding moment of modernism, a phenomenon from which painting had

been in retreat since the mid-nineteenth century. That phenomenon is, of course, photography. (p. 92)

Third, Crimp suggests that the demise of painting instigated by the invention of photography, was in fact perpetuated further by painters. Thus Crimp, sees the beginning of the end of painting in the conceptually based painting practices of the 1960s, led by the "last paintings" of Ad Reinhardt on one side, and Daniel Buren's refusal to make and exhibit conventional paintings on the other. Yet, Buren's work had been more exhibited than that of any other artist. In the 1960s Buren turned his paintings into installation projects of neutral and flatly painted stripes applied directly on the walls. Crimp notes that in 1965, "Buren decided to make only works in situ, always using 8.7 centimeter-wide vertical stripes, alternating colored with white or transparent" (p. 103). In 1967, at the *Salon de Jeune Peinture* held at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, Buren and his contemporaries Oliver Mosset, Niele Toroni, and Michel Parmentier refused to show their paintings. Fogle (2001) provides a detailed account of this event in his curatorial essay for the exhibition *Painting at the edge of the world,* held in 2001 at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.[9]

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[9] Fogle borrows these facts from Jeffrey Deitch, Daniel Buren: Painting degree zero. *Arts Magazine, 51*(2), p. 88. In addition, Fogle presents the content of the flyer handed out by four young painters, listing the following reasons for their refusal of exhibiting their work at the Salon de Jeune Peinture in 1967: "Because painting is a game. Because painting is the application (consciously or otherwise) of the rules of composition, Because painting is the freezing of movement, Because painting is the representation (or interpretation or appropriation or disputation or presentation) of objects, Because painting is a springboard for the imagination, Because painting is spiritual illustration, Because painting is justification, Because painting serves an end, Because to paint is to give aesthetic value to flowers, women, eroticism, the daily environment, art, Dadaism, and the war in Vietnam, We are not painters" In Fogle (2001). The trouble with painting. *Painting at the edge of the world,* Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

> Working in the gallery space, the artists fabricated their own reductive individual motifs on a series of canvases of equal size. Buren employed his own characteristic vertical red and white stripes; Mosset painted black circles on a white ground; Parmentier painted horizontal bands of gray and white; and Toroni painted square blue marks on a white ground. At the end of the day, their work was withdrawn from the gallery except for an empty sign reading "Buren, Mosset, Parmentier, and Toroni are not exhibiting. (Fogle, 2001, p. 15)

Furthermore, Crimp points out, that unlike Duchamp, who abandoned the visual realm of painting, Buren insisted that the critical meaning of his work rests upon on its visibility as painting. Crimp asserts that once Buren's painted stripes are recognized as painting, the historical code between painting and the viewer will be broken, and the painting, will be ultimately seen as a "pure idiocy"[10] at its end. The code that Crimp's statement alludes to and elaborates at great length in his essay pertains to the historical relationship of convention that allow us to interpret both the cave drawings of Altamira and Pollock's drips and splatters of paint as painting. But let us also remember that even Lyotard's map of the avant-garde, that accompanies his idea that post-modernism precedes modernism, discussed earlier in this chapter, stops with the work of Buren.

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[10] Here Crimp references Gerhard Richter's perspective that "one must really be engaged in order to be a painter. Once obsessed by it, one eventually gets to the point where one thinks that humanity could be changed by painting. But when that passion deserts you, there is nothing else left to do. Then it is better to stop altogether. Because basically painting is a pure idiocy" Gerhard Richter, in conversation with Irmeline Lebber. Cited in Crimp (1983) The end of painting. *On the museum's ruins*. (pp. 88). Boston: MIT Press.

Canadian art historian and curator, Dennis Reid (1988) dedicates the last chapter of his book *A concise history of Canadian painting* to the death and rebirth of painting in Canada. Reid suggests that in the politically complex climate of the 1960s and with the proliferation of television culture, as well as film and video as new media for artists, painting, and especially abstract painting, was no longer seen as a viable medium for dealing with contemporary issues.

> Addressing only one sense, it [painting] seemed unable to encompass social issues. Messy, cumbersome, and tied to a system of property value based on the charade of rarity, paintings were hopelessly anachronistic. Most remarkable about the widespread belief that painting had died is the speed with which the news was conveyed, and the artists' haste to adapt to the new order. (p. 316)

One of the most valuable aspects of Reid's art historical analysis is that it provides a great deal of insight into the Canadian art world in the 1960s and '70s. For example Reid notes that during the 'sixties, British and American art magazines started to be available in Canada. In spite of the popularity of painting and the movements of Pop-Art, Post-Painterly Abstraction, Optical Art, Minimal Art, Color Field painting and New Realism which dominated the pages of art magazines, the debates on painting persisted. In fact, Reid provides a list of art anthologies and exhibitions in Canada which were informed by these debates. Particularly important were anthologies on art, written by the influential New York critics, Gregory Battcock and Nicolas Calas. These include: *The new art* (1966),

Minimal art (1968), *Art in the age of risk* (1968), *Icons and images of the sixties* (1971), and *Idea art* (1973). Reid also lists a number of art exhibitions held at Canadian art galleries which were dedicated to painting: *Post-painterly abstraction* (1964), Art Gallery of Ontario; *London: The new scene* (1967), Art Gallery of Ontario, Vancouver Art Gallery and National Gallery of Canada; *Dine, Oldenburg and Segal* (1967),Art Gallery of Ontario; *James Rosenquist* (1968), National Gallery of Canada; *Los Angeles 6* (1968), Vancouver Art Gallery; *New York 13* (1969) at the Vancouver Art Gallery; and *The new alchemy* (1969) Art Gallery of Ontario.

Nevertheless, Reid suggests that by the end of the 1960s, younger artists started to shift towards other forms of arts making such as sculpture, photography, conceptual art, performance and installation art. In addition, Reid contextualizes the problematic position of painting by stating that by the mid-1970s, and with the emergence of artist-run centers, (parallel galleries) funded through Canada Council and linked together by ANPAC (Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centers), painting had become irrelevant to the vanguard. However, Reid concludes that in spite of repeated and sometimes exaggerated proclamations of its death, painting never ceased to be produced. He believes that theoretical debates on art in fact inspired many new approaches to painting, which included both conceptually based and the process-oriented practices of painting.

The concerns about the overall meaning of painting today inspired the recent panel "*Painting on the verge of a nervous breakdown*" held at the Toronto's Power Plant Gallery in 2001. Contemporary Canadian painter John Armstrong (2001) writes that,

> Reading though painting's visual, metaphorical and often poetic structures to identify reflections of contemporaneity is an activity now less often practiced in our culture. Now, in fact, part of art's critical apparatus regards painting as a kind of perpetual Lazarus. No sooner are they finished with the internment that the coffin lid springs unpredictably open again. (p. R1)

In addition, Armstrong points out the absence and marginal position of painting at the prestigious exhibit *Elusive Paradise,* held in year 2000 at the National Gallery of Canada. In this show ten Canadian and international artists were competing for the $50.000 Millennium prize. "Only one of the competitors could be termed a painter (Pakistani artist Shahazia Sikander, who incorporates miniature painting in conjunction with her installations)" (Armstrong, 2001, p. R1).

Given that it is formalist abstract painting that had been seen as particularly emblematic of modernism and Greenberg's ideas, one may assume that it is abstraction that has been particularly under scrutiny and declared dead in post-modernism. But it is important to note here that even Greenberg also recognized a certain feeling of exhaustion in abstract painting. In his curatorial essay *Post-Painterly Abstraction,* Greenberg (1964) notes that abstract

expressionist (painterly abstraction) in spite of its achievements turned into a "set of mannerisms" by the end of 1950s. In fact, Greenberg was the first to criticize certain repetitive and predictable painterly qualities (trickles and specks of paint, broad strokes, and blotches of paint), seeing these not only as signs of exhaustion of abstract painting but also as out of fashion. "Painterly abstraction became a fashion, and now it has fallen out of fashion, to be replaced by another fashion – Pop Art – but also continued, as well as replaced, by something as genuinely new and independent as Painterly Abstraction itself was ten or twenty years ago" (p. 3).

Schwabsky (1997) writes that the position of abstract painting today needs to be regarded within the polarization between *topical* and *formal* contemporary art making. For him, the former deals with content which embodies the issues of cultural and political intervention and questioning of the inherited modernist systems of representation. The latter ". . . not necessarily "formalist" can be called "formal" because it sees that its primary means for producing meaning is to work on the elements of artistic form" (p. 5). Schwabsky suggests that this polarization leads further to a chasm between abstraction (painting), and representational art forms (conceptual art and photography). Yet, the paintings of Peter Halley, one of the most influential abstract painters of post-modernism, reminds us that abstract form can also operate conceptually and topically as well. His painted cells and conduits respond to modernist flatness of the picture plane

while adopting the theoretical ideas of Foucault (theory of prison) and Baudrillard theory of simulacrum as their content.

In his essay, *Pandora's painting: From abstract fallacies to Heroic travesties;* Buchloh (1996) directs his critique particularly towards abstraction. According to Buchloh, abstract painting since its inception in 1912 with the all-over compositional watercolors of Kandinsky, employed a number of fallacies such as pursuit of universality, authorial presence, and subjectivity, which, with the collapse of modernism, collapsed themselves into random and endless repetitions of the past practices. Although he finds some hope for abstract painting in the work of Gerhard Richter, Buchloh writes that,

> . . . Richter has made the quixotic decision to identify with the medium of painting itself, a medium that is generally considered obsolete in terms of its capacities to contribute significantly to the contemporary discussions within artistic practice as much as it is considered useless to the total instrumentalization of culture (at least in terms of culture industry's evaluation). (p. 48)

It is this kind of tone that earned Buchloh a reputation of being one of the most notorious post-modern critics of painting. And it is due to this kind of discourse on painting, that many painters, including myself, see post-modernism as antagonistic to their practice. I would like to turn now to Yve-Alain Bois's (1990) seminal essay *Painting: The Task of Mourning*, which provides the most comprehensive insight into the issue of the death of painting that I have come

across in my research. However, is not this persistence on my part, to learn more about this issue, also what prevents me from reassuring myself that painting can never die, and that the mercurial process of its making, as well as its history continue to attract many new generations of painters? Yet it is the history of painting that has been particularly under scrutiny in post-modernism, as exemplified in Bois's essay that I review in the following section.

1. 13 The Task of Mourning

> Nothing seems to be more common in our present situation than a millenarianist feeling of closure. Whether celebratory (what I will call manic) or melancholic one hears endless diagnoses of death: death of ideologies (Lyotard); of industrial society (Bell); of the real (Baudrillard); of authorship (Barthes); of man (Foucault); of history (Kojeve) and, of course, of modernism (all of us when we use the word postmodern). "Yet what does all of this mean? From what point of view are these affirmations of death being proclaimed? (Yve-Alain Bois, 1990, p. 229)

Bois (1990) opens his analysis by reminding us of the numerous proclamations of death presented by western theorists and philosophers which usually tend to be associated with post-modernism. However, it must be clarified that Bois does not identify either one of these theorists as post-modern. In fact, he states that the tone of their writings is very different and that it would be misguiding to try and connect, let us say Barthes to Baudrillard, Foucault to Bell, Lyotard to

Kojeve. Nevertheless, he points out that such linking is done in the theoretical potpourri of "flashy" art magazines.

Bois examines the meaning of the death of painting, or more specifically the death of abstract painting with reference to two historical circumstances. The first one has to do with the notion that the entire history of abstract painting can be understood as longing for its death. The second has to do with the advent of neo-abstract painters, Peter Halley, Phillip Taaffe, Ross Bleckner and Sherrie Levine, who have been "marketed" in the art world as the mourners of the death of painting[11].

With respect to the first circumstance Bois suggests that the feeling of the end had been integral to the vision of modernist abstract painters, who saw their raison d'etre in seeking the essence of their art. "Freed from all extrinsic conventions, abstract painting was meant to bring forth the pure *parousia* [italics in text] of its own essence, to tell the final truth and thereby terminate its course" (p. 230). Indeed, the work of Malevich, Mondrian, Rodchenko, and Ad Reinhardt epitomizes this attitude. However, Bois states that the feeling of the end is not only a result of the essentialist aspirations in the work of modern artists. It is also an outcome of the larger historical crisis— industrialization, which in the realm of

[11] Yve-Alain Bois wrote this essay for the 1986 exhibition *Endgame* held at Boston's ICA, and included the work of "new abstract painters", Peter Halley, Ross Bleckner, Philip Taaffe ad Sherrie Levine. It is also interesting to know that in spite of his negative perception of the work of these artists, the curators David Joselit and Elisabeth Sussman invited Bois to write this essay. See The mourning after. *Artforum*, March 2003, 207 – 208.

art has been associated with mass production and advent of photography. And these two had been discussed as the main causes of the end of painting.

> Challenged by the mechanical apparatus of photography, and by the mass-produced, painting had to redefine its status, to reclaim a specific domain (much in the way this was done during the Renaissance, when painting was posited as one of the "liberal arts" as opposed to the "mechanical arts"). (p. 231)

Bois notes that industrialization has led modernist painters to put an emphasis on process and sensuous qualities of the medium. In addition, his essay informs us that industrialization had also led some painters to incorporate the mechanical within the realm of painting, which ultimately led to a questioning (deconstruction) of the traditional values associated with the process of making a painting. Bois sees the work of Seurat and Ryman as prime examples of these tendencies in modernist painting. While analyzing the significance of Robert Ryman's work, Bois sheds some light on the meaning of deconstruction in painting.

> Ryman's deconstruction has nothing to do with a negation (contrary to what most of its readers think, what is called deconstruction has very little to do with negation per se. Instead, it elaborates a kind of negativity that is not trapped in the dialectical vector of affirmation, negation, and sublation). (p. 232)

Bois makes an important point by saying that there is a tendency in America to believe that Greenberg was the first advocate of modernism. Yet modernism, and the "beginning of the end" embedded in it were first recognized by Charles Beaudelaire, who ". . . conceived history as a chain along which each individual art gradually approached its essence" (p. 233). Furthermore, he advises that it was Walter Benjamin who articulated first the threat of industrialization perceived initially by Baudelaire, as well as the fetishistic nature of art as a commodity perceived by both Baudelaire and Marx. With reference to the work of Baudelaire and the Italian essayist Giorgio Agamben, Bois points out that in spite of its claims to avant-garde, modernist painting turned into a fetishistic bourgeois commodity. One of the first artists that mounted resistance to the bourgeois establishment of art was Courbet, who refused to show his eleven paintings at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855 due to his dissatisfaction with the way paintings were hung at the show. Courbet built his own bungalow next to the Beaux-Arts section of this exhibition, displaying about forty of his paintings during the five months of the exhibit. Courbet's famous dictum "I conquer freedom, I save the independence of art" according to Bois, presented the very first act of avant-garde art (Courbet cited in Bois, p. 234).

Bois informs us that the production of modern art and specifically abstract painting, must be considered also in relation to the transformations of the art market prior to the World War I. Although he states that it would be "foolish" to trace the origins of such changes by listing more specific events, he addresses

two major events that are important to his own understanding of such transformation—the famous sale of the *Peau d'Ours*, held on March 2, 1914, and Marcel Duchamp's invention of the readymade which happened around the same time. The sale of the *Peau d'Ours* presented an event in which the work of early modernist artists were sold as antiquities, turning the art of modern masters into both commodity and investment.

> Not only works by Gauguin, Vuillard, or Redon were sold at very high prices, but also paintings by Matisse and Picasso. It was discovered, in short, that investment in contemporary painting was much more profitable than the typical investments of the time, including gold and real estate. Needless to say, the speculative logic that emerged from this sale (buy today the Van Goghs of tomorrow because the new will become antiquity) was to shape the entire history of the twentieth century art market. (p. 236)

On the other hand, Bois writes that Duchamp's readymades (e.g., Fountain, 1917, and Cheque Tzank of 1919) presented not only the criticism of artworks as commodities, but also the criticism of authenticity as a theoretical construct upon which the art network was founded. Bois sees Duchamp's work as the major influence on contemporary artists such as Daniel Burren, Cindy Sherman, Sherrie Levine. Their work carried further a negation of authenticity instigated by Duchamp and it has been associated with the deconstructive tendency of post-modernism. I agree with Bois that the work of these artists presents a form of explication and radicalization of Duchamp's negation of authenticity. Moreover,

Bois points out that Duchamp and his heirs had deconstructed the imaginary or fetishistic aspect of painting.

By alluding metaphorically to Lacanian terminology, Bois writes that alongside the imaginary, there are two other aspects of painting that had been deconstructed: the real and symbolic. These two aspects of painting were first put into question by modernist painters Alexander Rodchenko and Piet Mondrian.

Prior to his analysis of the work of these two seminal modernist painters, Bois indicates that both the Peau d'Ours and Duchamp's readymades led many modern artists who were initially concerned with newness and avant-garde resistance to adopt a kind of cynical conservatism and return to the order of more traditional values of figurative painting. This order, according to Bois, was inaugurated by Picasso's *Portrait of Max Jacob* in 1915 and became fully established with Italian metaphysical painters and Neu Sachlichkeit painters in Germany. It is important to note that European Neo-Expressionists work of the '1980s has been seen as the recurrence of this return to figuration, which has been pointed out by Buchloh (1984). In fact, Bois praises Buchloh's analysis, and identifies the work of Neo-Expressionists with the neo-conservative brand of post-modernism.

Further, Bois writes that a feeling of the end was also present in the revolutionary aesthetics and the climate of the October revolution. It is in this climate that Soviet avant-garde artist Alexander Rodchenko realized the end of painting and produced his monochrome canvases in 1921. What Rodchenko

wanted to present is the status of painting as the real (non-imaginary) object. This, in Bois's view, exemplifies another form of deconstruction which was further elaborated by minimalists in the 1960s. If Duchamp deconstructed (negated) the imaginary, and Rodchenko deconstructed the real aspect of painting, then its symbolic aspect, according to Bois, was ultimately deconstructed by Mondrian. In Mondrian's work, the formal elements are abstracted to such extent that painted form became not only emptied of its symbolic meaning, but also reduced to a matter of pure plastic language.

> Hence the complicated task that Mondrian assigns the painter is destruction of all the elements on which the particularity of his art is based: the destruction of colored planes by lines; of lines by repetition; and of the optical illusion of depth by the sculptural weave of the painterly surface. Each destructive act follows the previous one and amounts to the abolition of the figure/ground opposition that is the perceptual limitation at the base of our imprisoned vision, and of the whole enterprise of painting. (p. 240)

The question is, what do these historical and deconstructive practices of Duchamp, Rodchenko and Mondrian suggest then? Has painting reached its end?

> To say no (painting is still alive, just look at the galleries) is undoubtedly an act of denial, for it has never been more evident that most paintings one sees have abandoned the task that historically belonged to modern painting (that, precisely, of working through the end of painting) and are

> simply artifacts created for the market and by the market (absolutely interchangeable artifacts created by interchangeable producers). To say yes, however, that the end has come, is to give in to a historicist conception of history as both linear and total (i.e., one cannot paint after Duchamp, Rodchenko, Mondrian; their work has rendered paintings unnecessary, or: one cannot paint anymore in the era of the mass media, computer games, and the simulacrum). (p. 241)

By trying to resolve this dilemma and find a way out of this "paralyzing trap" for painting, Bois employs Hubert Damisch' theory of game. Thus he proposes that the end of painting could be understood by juxtaposing the concept of the *game* to that of the *match*. He suggests that if the match of "modernist painting" is finished, it does not necessarily mean that the game of 'painting' is finished. However, instead of stopping at this proposition, Bois points out that it would be a mistake to think that the end of painting embedded in modernist painting (the match which is now finished) should no longer be of a concern to us. "To claim that "end of painting" is finished is to claim that this historical situation is no longer ours, and who would be naïve enough to make this claim when it appears that reproducibility and fetishization have permeated all aspects of life: have become our "natural" world?" (p. 242).

According to Bois, the work of neo-abstract painters Peter Halley, Sherrie Levine, Philip Taaffe and Ross Bleckner exemplifies that the end has come, and that even the end of the end is over. What the work of these artists proposes is

another match that is mediated by Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum and post-modern strategies of appropriation and deconstruction. In addition, he criticizes the work of these artists as subservient to the needs of the art market, which following the exhaustion of Neo-Expressionism, was ready for another style. Perhaps what Bois finds most problematic about these artists, is that instead of working through the end of painting, which modernist abstractionists saw as their *raison d'etre*, their work appropriates and simulates it, turning painting ultimately into hyper fetishistic commodities. As Foster (1986) writes "simulation together with the old regime of disciplinary surveillance constitutes a principal means of deterrence in our society (for how can one intervene politically in events when they are so often simulated or immediately replaced by pseudo-events)" (p. 91). Thus Bois identifies the work of these artists with so called manic mourning[12], and the appropriation art that is pathological and melancholic in its spirit.

In my view, Taaffe, Bleckner, Halley and Levine exploit rather than explore the death of modernism and the death of painting. In their work and philosophy these are treated as *readymades* both invented and recognized by the post-modern art world. It is this kind of approach that allows them to present painting as capable of participating in the dominant conceptually-based and deconstructive endgames of post-modernism, the endgames which find their roots in the work of Duchamp and their most genuine form in the work of Daniel

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[12] Bois refers to Melanie Klein's concept of manic mourning, See *Mourning and its relation to manic-depressive states.* In *Contributions to psychoanalysis 1921-1945.* London: Hogart Press, 1950.

Buren. I agree with Bois that painting has to find a way out of this kind of simulation and fetishistic manic mourning, and that the difficult task of mourning (working through the feeling of the end) that has been at the core of painting of the twentieth century should not be abandoned but taken further. According to Bois, this might be possible through another kind of deconstruction, which puts into question the imaginary, the real and the symbolic aspects of painting as interdependent. I also agree with Bois' that the other possibility for revitalizing painting might be in pursuing those practices that are not necessarily driven by the needs of the market.

> Painting might not be dead. Its vitality will only be tested once we are cured of our mania and our melancholy, and we believe again in our ability to act in history: accepting our project of working through the end again, rather than evading it through increasingly elaborate mechanisms of defense (this is what mania and melancholy are about) and settling our historical task: the difficult task of mourning. It will not be easier than before, but my bet is that the potential for painting will emerge in the conjunctive deconstruction of three instances that modernist painting has dissociated (the imaginary, the real, and the symbolic). But predictions are made to be wrong. Let us simply say that the desire for painting remains, and that this desire is not entirely programmed or subsumed by the market: this desire is the sole factor of a future possibility of painting, that is of a nonpathological mourning. (p. 243 - 244)

Following Bois's analysis, one may say that the death of painting has now earned the status of a critical issue whose meaning and underlying discourse are of concern to both art theorists and contemporary painters. This leads to an assumption that being a painter in the post-modern world entails not only the necessity of being familiar with this issue but also taking a position against it. Thus it is logical to ask of what concern post-modernism and the death of painting are to artist-teachers of painting, or more specifically, if they communicate these issues in their teaching. But before I introduce methodology and field research that allowed me to explore these concerns, let us look first at the literature that introduces modern and post-modern orientations in the teaching of art.

CHAPTER 2: Modernist and Post-Modernist Teaching of Art

This chapter presents various pedagogical values that pertain to modernist and post-modernist orientations in the teaching of art. Modernist teaching of art is discussed in relation to the legacy of Bauhaus and pedagogical formalism. The shift from a modernist to post-modernist orientation in the teaching of art is presented with reference to the views of Becker (1996, 1999), Elkins (2001), Goldstein (1996), and Singerman (1999). Additional emphasis is placed on uncovering the problematic position of painting in an era of critical theory (Nadaner, 1998). Finally, I point out some shortcomings in the existing texts that deal with the post-secondary teaching of art, arguing for more field research that exemplifies the views of artist-teachers, and that engages these practitioners in reflection on their teaching philosophies. In this sense, this chapter offers not only a rationale for my field research but also a useful theoretical background for interpreting teaching philosophies of artists-teachers acquired in the field component of this study.

2. 1 A Vision of Modernist Teaching

Let us look first at some of the core values of modernist teaching of art with respect to the shift in designation from "fine arts" to "visual arts". Singerman (1999) notes that historically, the term fine arts has been used to distinguish between *artists* trained in the figurative and antique tradition of Beaux-Arts and *artisans* trained in specific techniques and material art processes as was the case in the *Arts et Metier* tradition. In addition, the "fine arts" represented also an alignment of arts and art history with academic humanities, literature, poetry and music. On the other side, Singerman sees the term "visual arts" as essentially linked to the modernist focus on science and vision – the latter implying at once both, vision of the better world and vision as analogous to perfection of seeing and form. As it was stated by the committee on Visual Arts at Harvard

> To be art the objects must be man created. They must also be ordered. It is with the ordering of the visible attributes—color, line, and mass—that the visual arts are concerned, whether we approach them in historical or in theoretical or in creative terms. (cited in Singerman, 1999, p. 69)

Singerman (1999) points out two main concepts embedded in the modernist commitment to visuality: "innocent eye" and "trained eye". If the former identified the intrinsic aspects of vision and seeing before knowing, the latter identified a notion of 'seeing everything in relationship'[13]. The idea of the

[13] The phrase "seeing everything in relationship" was coined by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy. See Moholy-Nagy's *Vision in motion* (1956). Chicago: Paul Theobald and Company. "If the same methodology were used generally in all fields, we would have the key to our age—seeing everything in relationship" (In Singerman, 1999, p. 101).

"innocent eye" that sees the world afresh was introduced by John Ruskin (1886) in his *Elements of Drawing*, and according to Singerman, it was later popularized by Cezanne. It is important to underline that in the modernist paradigm, "innocent eye " does not only parallel "the trained eye", it is seen as its prerequisite. The "innocent eye" also finds its origin in the nineteenth century childhood-kindergarten psychology and work of Swiss educational reformers Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel.[14] They insisted on the importance of drawing in the general education of the child and its significance to cognition and visual understanding of the world.

The concept of "trained eye" finds its roots in formalism, in the work of Clive Bell and Roger Fry, and its ultimate application in Bauhaus teaching. The trained eye embodies also an insistence on objectivity and rationalization of the aesthetic experience of art. Cary (1998) writes that modernism in art had two central tenets. First, art objects were seen as auto-telic, that means self-referential and autonomous from the extra-aesthetic strictures such as usefulness, tradition, everyday culture, and content that deals with political and social stipulations. The second tenet of modernism implies that "the aesthetic

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[14] Johan Pestalozzi was one of the most prominent nineteenth century educational reformers. According to Singerman (1999), many American schools and educators adopted Pestalozzi's methods. Alongside his "object teaching" that implied introducing children to various natural objects and materials such as minerals and flowers, Pestalozzi stressed the importance of drawing as a part of their general education. Singerman points out that his exercises in drawing and dividing lines, and in dividing and re-dividing squares had provided foundation to Bauhaus grid structured exercises which were formulated later by Itten and Albers. Friedrich Froebel was a follower of Pestalozzi, and he established the first Kindergarten in Germany in 1837. "The goal of the Froebelian classroom, like that of Pestalozzi's drawing, was not to make artists but to order an innocent vision and to produce the world as a world of forms" (Singerman, 1999, p. 103 - 104).

value and aesthetic experience should be objectively verifiable and subject to the logic of cause and effect" (Cary, 1998, p. 334).

I argue that the modernist teaching of art draws upon two premises: formalism and the Bauhaus teaching. As a matter of fact, both of these seem to exemplify an insistence on cultivating vision. As well, they overlap whenever the issue of aesthetic objectivity in art was at stake. Thus, in the next section I will sketch briefly the practices of formalist teaching and the practices of Bauhaus.

2.2 Formalist Teaching of Art

Efland (1995) looks at the formalist approach as foundational to the cognitive model of art teaching. The knowledge or the cognitive structures are determined through the recognition of the "right" arrangements, relationships and principles in the visual form. In the cognitive model, the value of such knowledge is seen as intrinsic, self-referential; it is used for its own sake, excluding other purposes such as economic, moral, social, etc. The studio pedagogy that relied on the formalist's approach saw its objective in "training" students to gain visual understanding of art and further their studio work by focusing on the mastering of form, and formal relationships in their work.

> Teaching methods should facilitate student inquiry by discovery and experiment. . . . Evaluation should be done in terms of concepts attained. This includes a knowledge of the forming processes used to make art. For example, a student might know the fact that warm colors advance and cool colors recede, but one should evaluate to see if the learner can apply this knowledge to interpret the meaning of painting, or use this

understanding to create a specific effect in a work of art, and so on. (Efland, 1995, p. 34)

Feldman (1992) identifies pedagogical formalism as a main doctrine in the modernist teaching of art, which implies that the 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" (p. 122). In general, the objective of pedagogical formalism was not only in instilling in students a heightened sense of visual sensitivity to surface and the formal compositional design, but also in promoting visual excellence in art making.

The first formalist art curriculum in North America was introduced in 1899, by Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922). In stride with the modernist commitment to scientific reductionism, Dow was keen to reduce the multilayered value structure of art to a more simple yet universally applicable formal set of principles such as opposition, transition, subordination, repetition and symmetry. In his book *Composition,* published in 1899, Dow discussed the significance of these fundamental principles of form in painting, and their application within the given parameters of the rectangular picture plane and the relationship between form and the frame of painting. "Painting is merely the cutting up of space by line, and the adding color. . . Draw little squares or rather rectangles and sketch into them some scenes" (cited in Singerman, 1999, p. 109). According to Singerman, Dow's insistence on formal fundamentals finds its roots in the ideas of Charles

Blanc' and his *Grammaires,* and John Ruskin's *Elements of Drawing.* "Blanc's five "inevitable elements", offered in 1882 as "general laws of ornament"—repetition, alternation, symmetry, progression, and confusion—are quite close to Dow's principles of composition" (Singerman, 1999, p. 109). In addition, Dow's formalist concerns were epitomized in the teaching of Hans Hofmann and the Bauhaus legacy of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who insisted that the "key to our age was seeing everything in relationship" (Moholy-Nagy, 1956, p. 10).

One of the most prolific modernist formalist teachers of art was Hans Hofmann (1880-1966). Hofmann influenced a number of American artists including, Helen Frankenthaler, Red Grooms, Louise Nevelson, Lee Krasner, and Larry Rivers. He was also a friend of Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock. In fact he was one of the instigators of American Abstract Expressionism. Throughout his teaching career Hofmann stressed the importance of seeing, which he saw as the key to learning about art. His teaching methods also exemplified the focus on plastic/formal relationships in painting, particularly that of color and light. Unlike Mondrian, for example, who sought "pure plasticity," by eliminating the "painterly qualities" and reduced painting to linear design and primary colors, Hofmann was determined to acknowledge plasticity and purity in painterly expression. In addition, he insisted that form in painting rests upon a set of visual tensions between movement and counter-movement, pushing and pulling, rhythm and counter-rhythm, as well as force and counter-force. In his teaching Hofmann encouraged students not only to

experiment with these optical aspects of visual form but also to seek the balance between them within a meaningful whole. Thus, on one side, Hofmann's teaching drew upon formalist rigor, while on the other it denied the prescriptive and quasi-scientific approaches of Bauhaus teaching by stressing the intuitive and sensuous aspects of painting. In addition, Hofmann's teaching also promoted the expressionist approach, stressing the importance of individual gesture, the intuition, the accident and the mystery of creativity. It is important to note that Bauhaus teacher and painter, Josef Albers, saw these as impossible to be taught. Hofmann believed that "art can be taught only upon the basis of highly developed sensitivity for quality" or more specifically, a sensitivity to formal qualities. In his book, *The search for the real*, Hofmann (1960) stated that,

> The aim of art is to vitalize form. This vitality arises as the result of organic relationships between the formal elements, which in turn arise through the separation and relation of qualities inherent in the medium—in short, color and light integrated into planes. . . .Creation is dominated by the three absolutely different factors: first, nature, which affects us by its laws; second, the artist who creates a spiritual contact with nature and with his materials; and third, the medium of expression through which the artists translates his inner world. (p. 60 - 61)

What makes Hofmann's formalist approach quite unique is that it embraced both sides of modernism: *rationality* of the visual formal organization as exemplified in Mondrian's work, and *spirituality* in the creative act as demonstrated by Pollock.

The problem with the formalist teaching of art is that it deliberately excludes a whole spectrum of cultural and social values involved in art making. Thus the meaning of artwork is presented as exclusively visual and consequently anti-iconic or iconophobic. Feldman (1992) reminds us that "form in art is almost always a servant of magical, religious, moralistic, narrative, and/or political purposes. To art historians, the refusal of formalists to attend seriously to these purposes is a grievous offense" (p. 123). Over the last thirty years, post-modernists have challenged formalist discourse and exposed its claims to universality of form and allusions to spirituality as false, western centered and male-dominated. Even though there are certain formal aspects (color, brushwork) and principles of artwork (symmetry, balance, repetition) that could be traced trans-culturally, it is absurd to confine the meaning of painting exclusively to the properties of form. In addition, some feminist theorists have seen the formalist insistence on perfection of visual form as a dehumanizing idea that epitomizes the male-constructed gaze and discipline.[15] However, the problem with post-modern criticism of formalism is that it presents formalist concerns and the perfection of form as exclusively emblematic of the modernist legacy associated with purity and aesthetic excellence. Rarely is formalist criticism discussed with respect to historical and cultural contexts in which it emerged. In the studio

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[15] Congdon (1991) writes that feminist approaches to art circumvent the quest for perfect form. She adds that "the idea of perfection can be dehumanizing; it can restrict and reject artistic forms in a pluralistic society" (p. 18). See Feminist approaches in art criticism. In D. Blandy & K.G. Congdon (Eds.), *Pluralistic approaches to art criticism* (pp. 15 - 23). Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

teaching of traditional disciplines such as painting, reflecting on and analyzing form, its visual/perceptual properties, is pivotal to the process of art making. In my master's thesis, *Beyond the Anti-Aesthetic* (1998), I have argued that in the context of teaching art, the post-modernist (anti-aesthetic) focus on content and discourse on the issues of representation not only disregards formal concerns but also neglects the importance of addressing the interplay between form and content. Yet, asking students to interpret how content (their ideas and conceptual intents) are materialized in the medium and negotiated with respect to formal and stylistic aspects of their work is essential to their understanding of the process of art making and the meaning of their work. To close this section I would like to borrow a quotation from Duncan (1993), which epitomizes the significance of addressing the invisible dimensions of the interplay between form and content in studio teaching as they pertain to expression.

> 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 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'. (p. 69)

2.3 The Legacy of Bauhaus

Alongside formalism, modernist teaching of art finds its roots also in the Bauhaus curriculum and the pedagogical consciousness of Walter Gropius, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Johanes Itten, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers. Their

ideas reflect not only a strong linkage between art and the modern world of industrialization, technology and scientific experimentation, but also a reaction against the tradition of the classical art academy. Goldstein (1996) writes that

> . . . the modernist rejection of classical norms therefore was not a repudiation of the cultural apparatus in which these norms were embedded but rather an attempt to gain control of this apparatus in order to assume the authority hitherto reserved for the tradition alone, an authority that, once usurped, it exercised with no fewer prohibitions. (p. 296)

In addition, the Bauhaus idea of the artist involved the shift from the role of *artist-artisan* to that of *conceiver-projector* who conceives visual art in order to project the new ideas of culture.[16]

> Throughout the length of their common modernist history, architects, even painters, and especially designers, vehemently denied that they were artists at the same time that they demanded for themselves the highest prerogatives of art: to create something new, to found a new language, to build a new culture. . . . From coffee spoons to urbanism and landscaping, the *Gestaltung* would diffuse through the whole of society artistic attitudes and requirements even as the specific trade and identity of the artist would have to disappear. (De Duve in Singerman, 1999, p. 74)

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[16] This idea is elaborated by De Duve, (1990) in his Resonances of Duchamp's visit to Munich. In R. E. Kuenzli & F. M. Naumann. (Eds.). *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the century.* (pp. 57). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Even though the Bauhaus, as Goldstein (1996) notes, was an institution based on an uneasy alliance of fiercely independent personalities, the idea that art cannot be taught and learned was shared by all of its members. Walter Gropius who was one of the founders of Bauhaus and who served as the school director at both Weimar and Dessau, argued that art can not be taught, learned or mastered by study[17]. Further by insisting that art is not a profession, Gropius' conceptualization of Bauhaus opposed the classical academy in which representational drawing, and principles of perspective and chiaroscuro were taught as a means that one should follow (learn) in order to become a painter. Further, Gropius insisted on replacing techniques of traditional academic drawing by methods that focused on objects, materials and technical aspects of craftsmanship. This notion has been accepted widely by American art educators and artists who have taught in university art departments. "By 1951 it was 'widely held opinion' in the pages of the *College Art Journal* that all one can teach are techniques, but that artistry is completely a matter of endowment and self-induced personal growth" (Singerman. 1999, p. 7).

According to Singerman (1999), the concept of *Gestaltung* presents a pinnacle of the Bauhaus curriculum. Even though design is the most common translation of this word,

> . . . Gestaltung is not the imagining and then finding of "preexisting" forms that carry the name and the likeness of the objects, but the projection of

[17] See W. Gropius (1938). The theory and organization of the Bauhaus. In H. Bayer, W. Gropius, & I. Gropius *Bauhaus, 1919-1928.* New York: Museum of Modern Art.

> form into the world; what preexists is the grid, the drive to form, the aesthetic as an a priori category. (Singerman, 1999, p. 76)

The term *Gestaltung* borrows from gestalt psychology (Rudolph Arnheim translates the word as "formation") and nineteenth century German aesthetic theory, both stressing the importance of holistic perception and formal relationships. Therefore by drawing upon *Gestaltung* principles, Bauhaus teaching defined itself primarily as visual education—the training of the eye to discern the formal qualities in the process of working with various media and materials. In this sense, its underlying pedagogical discourse was predominantly formalist in its character.

Initially, Bauhaus teaching involved exercises that allowed students to gain an understanding of the formal structure of grid and rectangle. These exercises also replaced the human figure that stood at the center of the traditional academic training in fine arts. The Preliminary Course (Vorkurs) defined by Johnaness Itten, presented the foundation of Bauhaus teaching. Its objective was to encourage students to develop a *feeling* for materials such as wood, glass, feathers, metal, stones, etc. Taking over Itten's work, Moholy-Nagy and Albers carried on in the same direction, although they insisted on 'objective' assessment of the properties of materials used in form. Moholy-Nagy concentrated on sheet metal, wire, wood and synthetic materials, while Albers focused on paper. "Each of these artist-teachers carried out his investigation in his own way, in classroom and studio, but all were versions of an interrogation of the agreed-to universal or

"pure" means of creativity" (Goldstein, 1996, p. 274). These means were meant to be realized in formal relationships. Paul Klee developed a theory of form focusing mainly on the diagrammatic conception of line and color relationships emphasizing rhythm, mass and weight. Kandinsky, on the other hand, tried to implement "objective" principles in dealing with line, plane and color, which he also saw as restraining (Goldstein, 1996).

The Bauhaus reaction to the tradition of Beaux-Arts implied also an abandonment of traditional approaches to figuration. For example, Itten tried to reformulate the purpose of life drawing classes by focusing his assignments on capturing rhythm and gesture of the pose. His exercises in gestural drawing emphasized a scribbled line approach employed in capturing mass, and were often accompanied by music. Oskar Schlemmer addressed the figure in a diagrammatic, schematic way suggesting the integration of figure with systems of lines and planes as well as surrounding space. Singerman writes that Bauhaus teachers such as Wassily Kandisky, Lyonel Feininger, Oskar Schlemmer and Paul Klee, never truly taught painting as a medium or professional practice. As a matter of fact, until 1928 there was no workshop in easel painting (free-painting) at Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany. For example, Klee and Kandinsky taught painting as a theory of perception, or simply as a means for analyzing form and space within a rectilinear structure of the picture plane. In both Gyorgy Kepes' (1994) *Language of Vision* and Moholy-Nagy's (1956) *Vision in Motion*, painting was treated as a form of scientific research in studio-laboratory.

In her book, *The optical unconscious*, post-modern theorist Rosalind Krauss (1993), identifies the modernist vision of design with so-called redoubled vision of seeing and knowing, "a kind of cogito of vision". She sees Mondrian's work as a rationalization of painting upon the laws of color theory and psychological optics within the two isomorphic planes: that of the retinal field and that of the picture (flatness).

Goldstein (1996) states that Bauhaus teaching cannot be considered outside of the history of modernism. In fact, "without this history Bauhaus teaching could not have existed" (p. 277). Thus, with respect to modernist abstract painting, Bauhaus teachers developed various assignments that referenced geometrical abstraction. They drew upon the examples of cubists, constructivists, neo-plasticists and the work of Mondrian, Malevich, and Theo van Doesburg. By observing the abstract practices of these artists, Bauhaus teachers formulated grid and checkerboard exercises. In the preliminary course, students were asked to arrange samples of various materials on grids and checkerboards and examine the similarities and contrasts of their texture, visual and tactile relationships. Klee used grid and checkerboards to emphasize the rhythm of colors. Albers was one of the most committed teachers to colored grid and checkerboards; as well, he was one of the first to implement this approach in the American university-based teaching of art. Albers's methods had an enormous impact on other teachers of art as well as his former students Noland, Anuskiewicz, and Rauschenberg. The grid and checkerboards assignments

presented not only a clue to an understanding of modernist abstract practices but also another way of defining Bauhaus' opposition to the naturalistic and mimetic figurative tradition of the old academy[18]. Anyhow, the influences of Bauhaus teaching were enormous. With the rise of Nazism in Germany, most Bauhaus teachers immigrated to America, bringing their experiences and lessons to the American modernists. Gropius came to teach at Harvard in 1937; Moholy-Nagy established the New Bauhaus in Chicago, Gyorgy Kepes taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at the New Bauhaus, while Josef Albers was hired as a chair of painting and sculpture at Yale School of Art and taught also at Black Mountain College. Singerman (1999) points out that the teaching by Bauhaus teachers in the United States from the 1940s to 1960s was different from their practice at Weimar and Dessau. The purpose of the Bauhaus preliminary course, ". . . or Vorkurs, in America as in Germany, was to unify art and the branches of industrial design. On college campuses, however, the course's design experiments and material investigations pointed, not toward tubular steel and product design, but toward painting, conducted in departments that continued to offer only the historical, personal media that had been the fine arts" (p. 68). It was with the arrival of Bauhaus teachers in United States that the idea of teaching 'fine arts' vis-à-vis traditional academic approaches to

[18] The American critic Harold Rosenberg was one of the first to express reservations about Albers' grid and checkerboard teaching at the university. He saw them as unnecessary academization of art through predictable methods. See H. Rosenberg (1973). Educating artists. In G, Battcock (Ed.). *New ideas in art education.* New York: E,P. Dutton.

observational studies, beauty and representation had been replaced by 'visual arts'.

2.4 Post-Modernism and the Need for a New Academy

One of the most visible effects of post-modernism on the education of artists is that it changes how and what artists choose to study and specialize in (Becker, 1996). With post-modernism students' interests gravitate not only towards traditional disciplines of painting, printmaking and sculpture, but also towards new media (multi-media, video, and digital art). Lovejoy (1997) links post-modernism to the advent of technological art and the emergence of interdisciplinary and multi-media art programs.

According to Goldstein (1996), post-modernism presents the ongoing movement within modernism (its critique) that signals the crisis of the authority of Western culture. Even though a post-modern critique of modernism has been pursued from various views and perspectives, it has ". . . taught one lesson above all others: that the Western tradition, modern as well as Renaissance, has been ethnocentric and anti-feminist, marginalizing the cultures of non-Western people and women" (Goldstein, 1996, p. 295). However, Goldstein criticizes post-modernists as hesitant to provide constructive answers and accept an authoritative voice in their critique of the past. He argues that due to this fact the visual arts today find themselves in the midst of a cultural war. One of the questions is, then, what values (if not traditional-Western) should provide a foundation for the studio teaching of art?

Goldstein associates post-modernism also with the ongoing discussions on art curriculum and questions such as what to teach, how to teach and to whom art should be taught. He notes that post-modernism in Britain also led to a certain crisis of 'old disciplines'—painting and drawing have been displaced by photography and video; and the value of art has been discussed in reference to commercial success rather than formal/aesthetic criteria. Goldstein points out that in response to post-modern commercialism and hasty recognition of new media in Britain, there has evolved a need for new academy and studio teaching that returns to the tradition of classical drawing from the cast and human figure, and studies of anatomy and perspective. On one side, this insistence on a new academy might be perceived as a reaction to post-modernism. On the other, this return to traditional and, if you will, pre-modern models and techniques of art making might be seen as a post-modern trend. With reference to Jencks' hyphenated post-modernism, I have suggested in the previous chapter that post-modernism in painting implies a return to traditional technique and stylistic elements within a contemporary production. However, Goldstein writes that one of the problems with the new Academy model is that the ideals of Western art continue to be the dominant values in studio teaching. What seems to be interesting about Goldstein's analysis of post-modernist tendencies, is that it includes also some quotations of British artist-teachers, obtained in the 1982 questionnaire study in which artist-teachers were asked to comment on how their teaching changed. With reference to these, Goldstein points out that most artist-

teachers continue to teach "formally" either via modernist or traditional approaches, often confusing one with the other.

> Many teachers continue to think in terms of the old opposition between tradition and modernism and opt for the first, which they interpret, paradoxically, according to the second, in a fashion similar to that say, of the Bauhaus: in other words, the traditional figure and works are emptied of content and treated as, or as consisting of, so many formal elements and devices, both, of course, respecting the appearance of the actual figure in space. (Goldstein, 1996, p. 298)

With respect to art teaching in Britain, Goldstein notes that in recent years, there has been a tendency to teach post-modern "trends" as opposed to teaching 'high' techniques of painting and drawing. Thus, he insists on so-called "remedial instruction" that focuses on development of formal skills. And I would agree with Goldstein that those values can never be learned enough. As well, they underline both Renaissance and Modernist approaches to the teaching of art. However, it seems to me that Goldstein sees these values as timeless and universal to studio teaching. In this context, he argues that "postmodernism, presents just one more political trend that, once having lost its novelty, will find itself in the dustbin of history" (p. 299).

2.5 Problems with the Post-Modern Art Curriculum

James Elkins (2001) suggests that art teaching today appears disconnected from rather than connected to the past. He points out that art teaching lacks certain curricular structure and rationale, which, for example, was present in Bauhaus teaching. As a matter of fact, he identifies post-modernism in the context of teaching of art with a post-Bauhaus mentality. As opposed to Bauhaus that aimed to prepare artists and designers to respond to the practical needs of society, a post-Bauhaus mentality emphasizes social concerns, turning the art making into "sociological experiments"

> I've seen postmodern exercises intended to demonstrate how *little* [italics in text] can be understood about art: that's certainly a post-Bauhaus mentality. The Bauhaus that exists today has itself adopted a post-Bauhaus curriculum; students design "sociological experiments"—essentially public installations and performances—and take courses to build whatever skills they may need. (Elkins, 2001, p. 39)

Like Goldstein, Elkins is also concerned about the meaning of teaching traditional disciplines such as drawing and painting today. He suggests that both modernism and post-modernism have brought radical changes in the teaching of art and that with these changes many of the traditional techniques, including oil painting have not simply evolved but rather have been lost. Thus he states,

> Painting has died—its central techniques have been lost—four times in the history of Western art: once when the Greek paintings and textbooks were lost, again in the sixteenth century when Jan Van Eyck's method was lost, again in the late eighteenth century when Venetian Renaissance technique was forgotten, and a fourth time in the early twentieth century when *all prima* (wet in wet) definitely replaced the more systematic Baroque techniques. (Elkins, 2001, p. 72)

However, Elkins does not elaborate on reasons and causes that underlie those historical instances. Rather, he insists that there is no reason why some of the old techniques such as tempera painting, marble sculpting without the air drill, or technical photography (the zone system and so forth) are not taught today.

Further, Elkins sees multimedia as the main direction of post-modernism, which allows students to go from one department to another and explore interdisciplinary approaches to art. Although he identifies post-modernism loosely with a growing popularity of multimedia art, interdisciplinarity, and the theoretical discourses adopted from the fields of literary theory, philosophy, anthropology, architecture, etc, Elkins does not explain how it became so influential in art teaching, and how those theoretical discourses were brought in the context of teaching art. Nonetheless, he sees post-modernist art pedagogy as the main tendency in teaching of art today, and blames it as one of the main reasons for current disorganization of art curriculae. "By and large, art schools and departments remain disorganized because postmodern pedagogy has made it

seem as if systems of the arts are irrelevant or even pernicious" (Elkins, 2001, p. 46). However, it is still unclear what constitutes such pedagogy, and how do artists who teach, interpret post-modernism. These are some questions that I address also in my field research.

Speaking of the implication of theory in art curriculum, Elkins notes that in the 1990s texts of Lacan, Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida, Heideger, Deleuze, Irigaray, Fanon, Benjamin, Helene Cixous, bell hooks, Judith Butler, Martin Jay, Rosalind Krauss, and Hall Foster have replaced traditional texts of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Dante, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Ariosto, Cervantes, Montaigne, Milton, Lavoisier, Pope, Kant, Keats, Frege, Joyce and even Pynchon. Further, he is critical of how the texts and ideas of these authors are adapted in art teaching, and brought in studio critiques.

> They are not usually unproblematic adaptations or applications of primary texts. Instead they are like provincial dialects: from the point of view of the original philosophers, film theory and architectural theory (among others) can appear misguided or just incomprehensible. That means that as a student, even if you take the trouble to study Lacan or Derrida, you may not be able to understand your advisor. (Elkins, 2001, p. 143)

The fact is that post-modern art theory has become integral in both undergraduate and graduate curriculae. In fact, we can look at post-modernism in the teaching of art as an umbrella term that encapsulates a body of theory, also referred to as post-modern, critical, or applied theory, and that replaced formalist

criticism. Morgan (1996) perceives postmodernism "on a more academic level", as a body of applied theory that emerged in the 1970s alongside conceptual art, and that replaced formalist aesthetics and criticism in the M.F.A. programs. This body of theory has been appropriated from various disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, anthropology and psychoanalysis. As well, it has accommodated discourses of feminism, post-colonialism, film and architectural theories.

Becker (1996) reminds us that the implication of post-modern theory in art teaching has become a problem to some members of faculties of Fine Arts, ". . . some of whom are comfortable working with such constructs and with difficult theoretical texts, some whom are not "(p. 98). The problem is not just one of knowledge acquisition. It is also a matter of temperament that has created a gap between "modernist" and "post-modernist" faculty. The problem is that this situation has left many students confused and unsure how to approach their art work and whose guidance to follow (Spicanovic, 2000). However, Becker's writing does not exemplify what artist-teachers think about post-modernism and how their teaching philosophies respond to post-modern theoretical concepts.

Anyhow, I would agree with Becker (1996) that with post-modernism there has been a significant shift from the traditional formalist concerns with the medium towards ideas and their articulation. "Even the notion of making a specific piece of art oneself has evolved. Appropriation, collaboration, and technological advances have transformed the romantic hands-on/lone-artist model of production" (p. 98). Many of my colleagues have argued that with post-

modernism dominated by deconstruction and appropriation, the focus has been placed on the conceptualization and discourse of art rather than on the medium and its mastery. Concomitantly with current trends in the art world, appropriation has become one of the most popular strategies explored by art students. Looking upon examples of David Salle, Ida Applebroog, Leon Golub, and Marcus Harvey, young painters today explore appropriation and collage-based shifting and juxtaposing of different ideas, images, and found materials to painted marks. In addition, collage courses have been reformulated and re-introduced within undergraduate studio programs. Katherine Hoffman (1989) writes that "collage methods in our time are used not only technically and physically, but also metaphorically and conceptually, in the arrangement and rearrangement of ideas and images in a variety of contexts" (p. 27). In fact, collage today might be seen as a metaphor for interpreting post-modern art making that embraces the eclectic use of materials, fragmentation, juxtaposition and narrative. It also invites the issues of everyday culture such as media, consumerism and kitsch as much as it echoes the tradition of constructivism, cubism, dadaists and pop-artists. The popularity of collage methods in contemporary painting has been also exemplified in the recent exhibition *As painting: Division and displacement*, held at the Wexner Center for the Arts in 2001. This exhibition, for example, focused on the issues of medium, language, and materiality in painting, with particular emphasis on how methods of collage, folding, and weaving, all being methods of division, push the boundaries of painting.

2.6 Post-Modernism and the Language of Art Teaching

Singerman (1999) examines specifically the meaning of post-modernism in the graduate teaching of art. According to him, from the late 1940s through the mid 1960s, university-based graduate art teaching experienced a rapid expansion, which was accompanied by debates and language — more specifically an academic language that most artist-teachers were not familiar with. As a matter of fact, Singerman sees this focus on language as somewhat detrimental to both the traditional commitment to the teaching craft and to artists who teach. He points out that these debates re-emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s epitomizing now familiar categories of "modernism" and "post-modernism". In addition, Singerman notes that in the texts of Rosalind Krauss, Douglas Crimp and Craig Owens, whom he sees as the most prolific theorists of post-modernism, language remains central, and it is directed primarily towards a critique of modernism.

> Deployed as the power to fissure and evacuate the whole and singular work of art, language — or its image and its effects: absence, difference, repetition — dictates the attributes of a critical, knowing postmodernist art as it unravels the blindnesses and fictions of modernism. (p. 155)

Singerman sees university art departments as the main patron and stage for the emergence of alternative art practices of the 1960s and '70s, (i.e., conceptual art, installation, performance, film and video art) — the practices that signal the emergence of post-modernism in art. According to him, the university

departments of art provided space, technology and community audience required for the institutionalization of video, film and performance art.

> The art department provides equipment, pays a salary to artists who make work that cannot be sold, and offers a place to exhibit – or screen or read or install such work. Most important, it seems to me now, through stipends and fees for visiting artists and lecturers, it gives artists a venue to exhibit themselves. (p. 157)

Singerman writes that in keeping with the commitment of university to the advancement of knowledge and research articulated through language, in art departments, art making has been interpreted as research while art criticism has been seen as a form of social science. And, this process of systematic knowledge production, and its institutionalization is not necessarily characteristic of post-modernism but rather rooted in the cultural tradition of modernism. Thus in the university, which, according to Singerman, is a truly modern institution, post-modernism might be seen as the force of its modernization through language.

> The university in which both the theory and practice of postmodernism in the visual arts emerge is a fully modern institution. And the language postmodernism imagines as critique and as method, is the agent of modernization. (p. 156)

Singerman points out that, today, speech has become a requirement for the M.F.A., the degree that does not result either in mastery of materials (craft) or

histories. I would like to add here that it is with post-modernism that art teaching became more oriented towards language and speech, leading to an open work that according to Singerman,

> . . . is always on its way to somewhere else, to being something else. It exists as a place marker, and only in relation to another work produced offstage, or rather, off a number of stages. Each presentation must begin from the last work and from where the discussions around it paused. It must be significantly and narratively different from, but still like, the last. But that is only one of the narrative relations from which student works takes its meaning. In addition, to this plotting along the diachronic axis, each work is positioned by the student and then by the faculty according to their maps of the art world. In the stock of questions of the student crit—"Have you seen? Have you read? Have you tried"? — work is not corrected; it is not made whole and more like itself. Rather, it is continued, extended, and completed elsewhere according to what is recognized in it — and what it can, therefore be positioned against. There will always be position for it. (p. 179)

I perceive this insistence on contextualizing and positioning work through referencing and with respect to the art world[19] as one of the main characteristics of post-modern orientation in the teaching of art. It results in development of a

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[19] Danto (1964) defined artworld in the following manner: "to see something as art requires something that eye cannot decry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an art world. (p. 575). See Danto (1964) The artworld, Journal of Philosophy, October 1964, 571 –584.

certain sense of self-consciousness (reflexivity) in students about the meaning of their work. And students' understanding of post-modernism and their familiarity with its underlying issues, terminologies, and texts is one of the main prerequisites for the positioning of their work. It is supported through courses that deal with post-modernism (i.e., course in critical/contemporary issues) and that involve critical analyses of texts that epitomize various theoretical frameworks such as semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism, post-colonialism, etc., as well as the examples of art which reference these frameworks/texts in an allegorical fashion.

Further, the insistence on speech and discourse on art has been also paralleled by an insistence on writing — art students today are expected to write artist statements, research and project proposals, and in their last year of studies develop a thesis-based body of work that is usually accompanied by a written paper. These kinds of practices have been common at both undergraduate and graduate programs. As well, many studio courses include written assignments. Also, due to post-modernism, we now have more specific writing courses designed for artists. The objective of these courses is to help students develop writing and presentational skills, required in the art world.

Drawing upon the sociological perspective of Magali Sarfatti Larson, and Morris Cogan, Singerman questions the links between professionalism in art and university education. He says that university education and degree certification are linked to a production of a particular kind of language that legitimizes art as a

discipline and artists as its practitioners; i.e., professionals. In the art department, as the pioneer of the M.F.A. in studio art, University of Iowa's Lester Longman (1941) argued once , "art is taught for the sake of art"; as a discipline (in Singerman, 1999, p. 199). The art department is also linked to other institutions such as galleries, museums, granting agencies, journals, etc. They are all involved in the production and dissemination of language which confers the status of professional artist and his/her work as different from that of the *amateurs* — the category, which according to Singerman, includes cowboy artists, community art center artists, shopping mall or state fair artists, portrait painters, landscapists, watercolorists, maritime painters, etc. And the presence of post-modernism in the university art departments promotes both critique of such language and its modernization.

2. 7 Gap Between Painting and Critical Theory

> By making an analogy between painting and language and then by conflating painting with language, critical theory has created a body of discourse that is both useful and overtly convenient, It is useful because it has raised consciousness about texts and subtexts of power relations that pervade the creation, dissemination, and viewing of art. But it is overtly convenient because it is addressed only to places that are well lit (i.e., that connect easily to existing discourse in the literary realm). There is a wider field that needs illuminating. (Nadaner, 1998, p. 172)

As stated earlier, with the emergence of post-modernism the discourse of critical theory replaced formalist art criticism and became inseparable from the teaching

of art in B.F.A. and M.F.A. programs. Art students are expected to contextualize the position and the meaning of their work through discourse, referencing the terminology and the texts of critical theory. Art educator Dan Nadaner (1998) notes that critical theory has become a center of attention in visual arts. He defines it as a cluster of different theoretical frameworks including psychoanalytic, semiotic, and structuralist theory. In addition, he finds the work of Irigaray, Lacan, Jameson and Lyotard particularly influential in an overall critique of the modernist tradition and in promoting an awareness of social context and power relations embedded in artistic production. It is interesting that Nadaner avoids use of the term post-modernism in his essay, even though the insistence on critical theory in regard to language and representation, as well the work of authors that he lists might be easily categorized as post-modern.

Nadaner points out that since the 1970s, critical theory has paralleled the emergence of "new forms" including language-based art, conceptual art, and installation art; the practices that, according to him, directly speak to critical theory. In that climate, he sees painting, or more specifically its visual/pictorial nature, as being disregarded rather than interpreted and included into the existing discourse of critical theory.

Drawing upon the views of Jameson (1982) and Owens (1982), Nadaner asserts that ". . .one of the central arguments of critical theory is that art is not a 'figuration', that is transparent to either the world or our experience of it" (p. 169). He notes that with the influence of Lacan's (1977) ideas, the traditional roles of

painting as a window on the world and as a window on experience have lost their credibility. As well, the signification based on the interplay between the signifier and signified has been seen as problematic. "Communication through paint (the signifier) is problematic because the paint masks the word" (p. 169). Further, Nadaner points out that the attention of critical theory has been placed on language, and that signification based on language is arbitrary, contextual, and socially constructed rather than authentic and universal. Moreover, he suggests that with these orientations, the modernist interest in seeking the deeper levels of human experience in art through seeing and interpreting visual form and its intrinsic relationships is no longer viable.

> An arrangement of forms by Kandinsky becomes a construction of signification within a particular social context and world view rather than, as Kandinsky had hoped, a language for conveying the vibrations of the soul. (Nadaner, 1998, p. 169)

Nadaner writes that with an approach to art-as-arbitrary rather than art-as-experience, various speculations about the meaning and validity of painting have been instigated. He suggests that artists who have read texts of Lacan, Lyotard and Derrida, assume that the theoretical ideas of these thinkers suggest a need for major changes in art making, including an insistence on language and interrogation of the nature of representation. "If representational forms mask social constructions, then the artist deconstructs representation so as to disclose underlying content" (p. 169). Nadaner sees this interest employed in the work of

Rosler, Kosuth, Haacke, Burgin, and Syrop, and says that their work, generally speaking, exemplifies the use of language in questioning the arbitrary nature of art as signifier, and situates its meaning (signified) within the socioeconomic and institutional contexts of art. In addition, Nadaner notes the work of the Harrison and Wood (Art and Language Group) for their use of language and texts in questioning the links between perception, representation, and social positioning. I would agree with Nadaner that these trends in art and critical theory which focus on language and marginalize the meaning of subjectivity in plastic expression put painting in a problematic position. "The ideals that make painters want to paint — e.g., the notion that painting must belong to its time — also make it difficult for a painter to avoid the theories that argue for the exhaustion of painting or the vitality of other forms" (p. 170).

Nadaner argues that there is a lack of contemporary texts on painting that would provide alternatives to Lacanian and Derridian theories of interpretation. According to him, almost all of the great studio discourses, including the writing of Hawthorne (1938), Henri (1923), Hofmann (1948), Kandinsky (1947), Klee (1953) and Nicolaides (1941), emerged in the first half of the 20th Century. They belong to a modernist legacy. Due to this lack of contemporary studio discourses on painting, Nadaner points out that "contemporary painters are likely to find themselves positioned somewhere between the poles of critical discourse, studio discourse, and personal ideas and intuitions. At times there seems to be little

contact between these poles. Often the disjuncture between discourses is not only implied but demanded" (p. 170)

Nadaner debates the Lacanian idea that language lies at the center of cognition. His position finds support in the psychological studies of Arnheim (1969), Kosslyn (1977) and Paivio (1971) that address the relationship between cognition and mental imagery. Thus he points out that there is evidence in psycholinguistics that concepts are created in mind non-verbally, before they are translated into linguistic form. Nadaner writes also that many semioticians such as Barthes (1977), Eco (1976), Bryson (1983) and Elkins, (1995) have demonstrated their reservations about the dependence of semiotic theory on language. Drawing upon Elkins' (1995) study of marks and traces in painting which put into question the reducibility of visual form to language, Nadaner asserts that "critical theory must look at all elements of the picture, not only its identifiable subject, but its less easily identifiable marks, traces, and orli (shimmering auras) as well "(p. 171).

Let me point out here that Nadaner does not deny the importance of critical theory. As a matter of fact, he states that critical theory has created discourse that is both useful and overtly convenient. It is useful because it has promoted our awareness of texts and subtexts which uncover power relations that underlie production, popularization and presentation of art. And it is overtly convenient because it has linked art with the existing discourses of the literary realm. Nevertheless, he writes that there are many other aspects of painting that

need to be addressed. These include the idea of visual form as visual form — marks and surfaces that are often deliberately made by painters to be unrecognizable, as exemplified in the work of Richard Diebenkorn. Also, Nadaner suggests that the relationship of visual form to human experience particularly needs to be addressed. He believes that interpretation of human experience in painting must go beyond the notion that the correspondence between signs and referents is arbitrary, which finds its roots in Saussure's (1966) concept of arbitrary signification. The question is "how does one account for the numerous and diverse indications that painting is motivated by experience in the world, and that painting expresses lived experience?" (Nadaner, 1998, p. 172).

Nadaner does not reject the arguments of critical theory. Rather he argues for the positive and constructive relationship between painting and critical theory. In order to establish such a relationship, he insists on re-interpreting some concepts proposed by Derrida, Lacan, and Lyotard, which he sees as pertinent to the visual nature of painting and its experience. According to Nadaner, Derrida's (1987) view of the floating quality of both signifier and signified is very much applicable to the nature of painting. In fact, he advises that critical theory has not only ignored how painting reflects the concept of floating signifier, but also refused to admit that this concept cannot be even understood without reference to painting. "A brushtroke by De Kooning can float as a signifier between the brush strokes of sign painting, classic Hals, and graffiti, and it can float as signified between the references of a roller coaster, an emotional crisis turned

inside out and numerous other things." (p. 173). I see the notion of the painted mark and surface as floating signifiers in Per Kirkeby's *Untitled* paintings from the late 1970s, as well as in the work of contemporary Canadian painter John Kissick.

Further, Nadaner states that although the Lacanian (1977) idea that signification occurs metonymically through adjacent terms rather than metaphorically has been very much accepted in the interpretation of pictures, the ability of painting to convey meaning through ambiguous juxtapositions and the relationships of ineffable formal elements has not been addressed. Nadaner finds this unique quality of painting in the work of late Californian painters Joan Brown and Richard Diebenkorn.

Finally, Nadaner points out that Lyotard's (1971) interpretation of painting and poetry as "incommensurable events", is also important in addressing the meaning of painting outside discourse. In Nadaner's view Philip Guston's late carreer paintings which include whimsically stylized machine-like and cartoon like forms, (two paintings come to my mind, *Desert,* 1974, and *Red Sky,* 1978) present figuration that lie outside of discourse, capturing Lyotard's notion of the incommensurability of art. Further, Nadaner lists other concepts that could be employed in understanding painting and linking its meaning to experience. These include: non-semiotic analysis of Elkins (1995), stressed passages of Caws (1989), and Linker's (1984) eluding definition, transgression and negation. According to Nadaner each of these concepts can help us understand painting as

painting – "the events of canvas"[20] whose meaning is constructed in the process of painting.

Undoubtedly, the critical theory that has been developed over the last few decades has informed the practice of many painters, providing theoretical framework for their conceptually based inquiries. It has certainly changed ". . .the landscape in which painting is created and discussed" which, according to Nadaner, is now overtly textual and discursive.

> Text is privileged over vision; discourse is privileged over presentation. Claims of self-expression, authenticity, truth to the emotions, and spiritual discovery either are not permitted or not believed. It is a no-nonsense place, and along with the absence of nonsense there is a very little mystery or invention as well" (p. 179)

My concerns as a painter and a teacher of painting are very similar to those of Nadaner. I also see the visual qualities of painting as being marginalized within the textual and discursive climate of critical theory and post-modernism, rather than praised for offering a truly unique means for understanding human experience. Nadaner argues that in order for painting to continue to play a significant role in education and culture at large, the teachers of painting must engage students with both practical and theoretical concerns that pertain to the medium of painting, as well as its underlying philosophical and critical issues. He

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[20] Nadaner references Richard Diebenkorn's work and his interest in the events of canvas. See Ashton, D. (1985). *Richard Diebenkorn: Small paintings from Ocean Park*. Houston: Hine Inc. and Houston Fine Art Press

argues for integration of creative studio-based practices with inquiries of critical theory, and insists that art teachers must encourage students to take risks in working with the medium of painting, allowing the unexpected to emerge in the process of art making.

Even though the ideas brought forward in Nadaner's essay contribute to the theoretical background of my research, and parallel my concerns about the problematic position of painting in post-modernism, they do not provide a sufficient insight into the rationale for studio teaching of painting today. I maintain that there is a dearth of research that addresses the teaching philosophies of studio teachers and that uncovers their critical positions and pedagogical concerns with respect to post-modernism. Thus, in order to explore my research questions and contribute to the expansion of educational knowledge, I decided to pursue a field research that engages other artists-teachers involved in the post-secondary teaching of painting. Going in this direction means not only learning about how these practitioners, who are also my colleagues, interpret post-modernism and its underlying speculations on the validity of painting, but also to illuminate their contemporary pedagogical orientations, values and objectives. I see this process also as an opportunity to develop further my own teaching philosophy. In the next chapter, I introduce the research methodology and design of my field work and clarify its objectives.

CHAPTER 3: Qualitative Research Methodology

As stated earlier, this thesis draws also upon interviews with artist-teachers who teach painting at the post-secondary level. Most existing texts that deal with post-modernism and the studio teaching of painting at B.F.A. and M.F.A. levels do not introduce the critical and pedagogical views of artist-teachers. The field work that I pursued as a part of this thesis then might be seen not only as an attempt to give voice to these practitioners, but also as an attempt to propose another direction for art educational research. As a painter and a teacher of painting, I am interested in knowing of what concern post-modernism might be to fellow painters who teach, given that its art theoretical discourse puts into question the validity of painting as a contemporary artistic practice. I thought that one of the most effective ways to explore these concerns would be to develop qualitative interviewing methodology that engages studio teachers of painting in reflection on this topic, uncovering also pedagogical and critical issues involved in their studio teaching philosophies.

In this chapter I discuss the field research methodology that underlies this interview study. I conducted the interviews from the spring 2001 to the summer of 2002. I interviewed five artist-teachers from Montreal and Toronto who teach painting at the post-secondary level. Prior to an in-depth discussion of my research design, a brief historical review of the qualitative research paradigm is

followed by a discussion of my methodological choice/position and objectives of my research. My objective in this chapter is not simply to explain "how" I went about doing interviews with respect to the interviewing method, but also to address epistemological and ethical concerns embedded in the process of field research. In respect to epistemological concerns, it is logical to question to what extent the interviews present a means to *verify* what existing literature says about post-modernism and the studio teaching of painting. When do they present a means to explore the topic beyond what is known, suggesting direction for future inquiries? How does my field work *accept* (rely upon) and how does it *resist* the theoretical background that precedes it? This means also looking closely at how my subjectivity, including my feelings and anxieties about being a painter in the post-modern era, affects my research and production of knowledge. Mehra (2002) reminds us that in qualitative research,

> The researcher can't separate himself or herself from the topic/people he or she is studying, it is in the interaction between researcher and researched that the knowledge is created. So the researcher's bias enters into the picture even if the researcher tries to stay out of it. (p. 7)

Addressing these epistemological questions implies adopting reflexivity, which means addressing openly the implications of my own subjectivity and bias in the research. The objective of such self-awareness on my part is not simply to uncover the contents of my own personal "baggage" (Scheurich, 1997) but to understand better my role as an interviewer and consequently the limits in my

research design and approach. As a novice qualitative researcher, I see this process as integral to my development and as a possibility for self-discovery as well. Finally, in this chapter, I introduce and review the analytic strategies and categories employed in the transcription and analysis of data.

3.1 Formulating Research Design and Research Paradigms

The formulation of research design tends to be preceded by the selection of topic and research paradigm (Creswell, 1994; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Silverman, 2000). Drawing upon my initial assumption that many painters, including myself, perceive post-modernism as antagonistic to painting, and my perception that debates on the death of painting have also become a part of studio teaching, the topic of my inquiry, generally speaking, addresses post-modernism in the studio teaching of painting. More specifically, there were two main research questions that provided the initial framework for this thesis: How do artist-teachers involved in post-secondary studio teaching, interpret post-modernism and its underlying speculations on the validity of painting? What might be the implications of post-modernism on the teaching philosophies of artist-teachers? The next step was to formulate research methodology that would allow me to engage myself in dialogue and pedagogical reflection with other practitioners, my colleagues, and raise new questions and ideas pertinent to the teaching of painting today.

There are two major research paradigms that continue to inform the methodologies of researchers in the social sciences and humanities: the quantitative and qualitative. Each of these paradigms encapsulates not only an

extensive body of research theory and methods but also specific assumptions, values and belief-systems that guide researchers and serve as epistemological parameters for production of knowledge (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Crabtree & Miller (1992) define paradigm as a ". . . patterned set of assumptions concerning reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology), and the particular ways of knowing about that reality (methodology)" (p. 8). In *The structure of scientific revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn (1962) has suggested that a great deal of scientific knowledge has been based upon theoretical and paradigmatic presuppositions rather than on empirical research. Heartney (2002) writes that Kuhn's thesis that the history of science presents ". . . a series of ruptures, or paradigms, which swept away the assumptions of the previous regimes", had the most impact on development of post-modern theory (p. 8). Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to elaborate more on Kuhn's seminal interpretation of the history of science, it is important to note that his criticism had been directed towards both positivist and naturalist presuppositions, which have provided background for the development of quantitative and qualitative studies.

There is a long history of debates on the ontological, epistemological and methodological differences between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Presumably, the researcher is expected to understand these differences, take a position and contextualize his/her research questions and objectives within either one of these two paradigms. As Crabtree & Miller (1992) suggest, "each

investigator must decide what assumptions are acceptable and appropriate for the topic of interest and then use methods consistent with the selected paradigm" (p. 8). This "rule" leads to a realization that the work (knowledge) that the researcher produces is also negotiated through an acceptance of and resistance to existing paradigmatic presuppositions.

> Paradigms are normative, they tell the practitioner what to do without the necessity of long existential or epistemological considerations. But it is this aspect of a paradigm that constitutes both its strength and its weakness—its strength in that which makes action possible, its weakness in that the very reason for action is hidden in the unquestioned assumptions of the paradigm. (Patton, 1990, p. 3)

The quantitative research paradigm finds its roots in the empiricist and positivistic[21] traditions, and the work of Comte, Mill, Durkheim, Newton and Locke (Creswell, 1994). On the other hand, the qualitative paradigm draws upon constructivist, naturalistic, and interpretive approaches, as well as post-positivistic, phenomenological and postmodern perspectives (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Most researchers recognize the clash between the two paradigms and their competing philosophical positions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) point out that "wars" between positivistic/empiricist and

[21] Silverman (2000) warns that "positivism is a very slippery and emotive term not only difficult to define but also not acceptable by most contemporary researchers" (p. 5). Although most quantitative researchers today do not see their methodologies as embedded in the legacy of positivism, quantitative research continues to be criticized (mostly by qualitative researchers) as positivistic in its fundamental nature. Silverman, D. (2000). *Interpreting qualitative data*: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction. Sage.

constructivist/phenomenological orientations continue to rage in the social and behavioral sciences. These wars usually exemplify arguments for the superiority of one research paradigm over the other, arguments that I find generally unproductive. The participants in these debates are often referred to as *wrestlers* or *warriors* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

> These paradigm wars have been fought across several "battlefields" concerning important conceptual issues, such as the "nature of reality" or "the possibility of causal linkages". No discipline in the social and behavioral sciences has avoided manifestations of these paradigm wars. (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 4)

Given that I was committed to an interviewing methodology that would allow participants to reflect on and formulate their perspectives on post-modernism and teaching of art, freely and in their own language, I decided to situate my methodology within the realm of qualitative research. Another reason for going in this direction is that I was also thinking of interviewing methodology that would allow me to reflect critically on my own voice and language used in asking questions. The answers to those questions can be obtained only through interviewing methodologies that encourage dialogue and reflexivity of both researcher and researched. In the next section I will sketch briefly the origins of the qualitative research paradigm and address its ties to naturalism and the theory of reflexivity.

3.2 The Qualitative Research Paradigm

Silverman (2000) points out that there is no one single doctrine that informs qualitative research. "Instead, there are many 'isms' that appear to lie behind qualitative methods— for example interactionism, feminism, postmodernism, and ethomethodology" (p. 8). Generally speaking, qualitative research refers to " . . . any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 17). As opposed to numbers that derive mainly from quantitative research, the findings obtained in qualitative research depend on words. Hence the meaning(s) in qualitative research is (are) seen as primarily descriptive, as exemplified in grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, life histories, and conversational analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For Guba & Lincoln (1994) qualitative research is defined at the level of paradigm (i.e., naturalistic, phenomenological) rather than method. They insist that knowledge and meaning(s) should be seen as constructed with respect to lived human experience and social actions.

Cary (1998) suggests that all qualitative research methodologies share a more or less phenomenological orientation, which entails that ". . . the meaning of knowledge and truth are relative and depend on the particular perspective of the individual" (p. 241). Phenomenology, as a sub-discipline of philosophy concerned with investigation of human experience, finds its roots in the work of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Their ideas have been further developed by ethno-methodologists in sociology, the French existentialist school, Gestalt and

symbolic interactionist schools of social psychology (Cary, 1998). The concept of *Verstehen* is foundational to understanding the relationship between phenomenology and qualitative research. It refers to knowledge that draws upon the meaning of human experience constructed in social interaction—meaning that is highly interpretative and open-ended. The qualitative researcher working from a phenomenological approach is concerned with meaning more than proof, with rigor more than relevance, and with process more than outcome. The data that qualitative researchers focus on are their subjects' own perspectives, thoughts, world views, assumptions, and ". . . all aspects of their lived experiences relative to the phenomena under study (Cary, 1998, p. 248). In addition, phenomenology-based qualitative investigation is seen as in the process of constant change, gradually evolving and progressing. As Creswell (1994), suggests, "a qualitative researcher makes sense of the investigated phenomena gradually by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying the object of study" (p. 161). In doing so the researcher recognizes the implication of his/her subjectivity, bias and judgment as well as qualitative nuances in formulating descriptions and tacit knowledge.

3.3 Naturalist Legacy

Qualitative research does not share the positivist tenets of *uniformity* and *neutrality* [22]or reliance upon standards of *validity* and *reliability*. Rather, it draws

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[22] Rubin & Rubin (1995) point out there are two main tenets of positivism: *uniformity* and *neutrality* and they are linked to objectivity. The uniformity refers to the uniform rules of investigation such as those exemplified in survey interviewing. For example, the researcher involved in survey

upon the critique of the positivist ontological and epistemological rationale. "One important point in the critique of positivism is its reliance on naïve realism—that is, the belief that there is a tangible reality "out there", separate from the individual, awaiting discovery and analysis" (p. 245). Conversely, qualitative research draws upon a notion that there are multiple realities and truths meant to be explored and interpreted rather than discovered. These are inseparable from the people's stories, subjective positions and social actions. Thus what the qualitative researcher attempts to do is not to discover one single reality that pertains to the researched phenomena but to produce knowledge that includes multiple interpretations of reality. As Bresler, (1996) sums up,

> Most qualitative researchers maintain that knowledge is a human construction. The aim of qualitative research is not to discover reality, for by constructivists' reasoning this is impossible, but to focus on different interpretations of that reality by constructing a clearer experiential memory which helps us obtain a more sophisticated account of things. (p. 1)

The criticism and decline of positivism as a philosophy of science started to be more evident after the Second World War, and especially in the social and behavioral sciences during the 1950s and 1960s. This led to the development of the post-positivistic logic which demanded more flexible approaches towards

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interviewing employs uniformed questionnaire: each participant is asked the same questions. The objectivity is not only promoted by uniformity in research design but also by the researcher's neutrality. For example, in quantitative survey interviews; the interviewer is expected to be neutral and not to interact with the respondents. As a matter of fact, s/he approaches the respondents as interchangeable parts with no particular individuality, except on background characteristics. See Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I.S. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing.* Sage.

value/theory-ladeness of inquiry and ontology. The post-positivist logic finds its roots in naturalism which has presented a main counterforce to positivism and an initial philosophical background for establishing qualitative scholarship. As opposed to positivists who conceptualized their method on the examples of 20th century physics, naturalists drew upon the examples of 19th century biology (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The main goal of naturalistic study is to describe phenomena as it appears in its natural state, undisturbed by the researcher. Thus, research should take place in a natural, as opposed to controlled setting. This naturalist presupposition is echoed in Eisner's (1991) statement that "qualitative researchers observe, interview, record, describe, interpret and appraise settings as they are " (p. 330). Further, by drawing upon symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, naturalists adopted the distinction between the socio-cultural and physical phenomena (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). These perspectives suggested that the social world cannot be understood simply in terms of causal relationships and universal laws. The accounts of the social world demand more descriptive in-depth accounts of people's experiences, actions, values and beliefs. According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995), naturalism had been also greatly influenced by nineteenth century hermeneutics and the work of Dilthey who outlined the differences between understanding socio-cultural and physical phenomena through textual interpretation. This was further developed by twentieth century philosophical

hermeneutics which also put into question the assumptions and prejudices of the researcher/interpreter.

> Interpretation of texts, and by extension understanding of the social world too, could no longer be seen as a matter of capturing social meanings in their own terms; the accounts produced were regarded as inevitably reflecting the socio-historical position of the researcher. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 13)

Even though naturalism presented an important counter-movement to positivism, and provided an important background for ethnographic field work in anthropology and sociology, Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) point out that initially, naturalists shared a similar commitment of positivists to the production of knowledge that is independent from the values of the researcher and his/her social and political determinations. In spite of acknowledgement that research is always affected by the values of the researcher, early naturalist methodologies insisted on minimizing the implication of the researcher's subjectivity and values. According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995), both naturalism and positivism initially failed to recognize that social researchers are inseparable from the researched and that their value orientations inevitably influence their research designs and objectives.

Hammersley & Atkinson also state that this axiological orientation has been widely criticized in recent years from many different perspectives, including feminism, post-structuralism (deconstruction) and openly ideological research. All

of these perspectives suggested a need for more reflexive approaches to social research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995):

> Reflexivity thus implies that the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them. What this represents is a rejection of the idea that social research is or can be, carried out in some autonomous realm that is insulated from the wider society and from the particular biography of the researcher, in such a way that its finding can be unaffected by social processes and personal characteristics. (p. 16)

In their view, the commitment to reflexivity does not ultimately mean rejection of naturalism and positivism, but an abandonment of those presuppositions that promote ideas of politically neutral and objective knowledge—"naïve forms of realism". Hammersley & Atkinson remind us that being reflexive does not mean that we have to abandon our political orientations and practical interests, but that we should try to minimize the implication of these factors in production of knowledge. One then might also associate reflexivity with a concern for objectivity of knowledge. In addition, the concept of reflexivity in qualitative research is also associated with the researcher's biography, his/her personal and subjective characteristics as well as his/her own theoretical assumptions and prejudices. In my view, being reflexive means also being self-conscious of doing research and able to reflect self-critically on the implication of

these factors in both research methodology and epistemology. Fraser (2002) suggests that "revealing self is also troubling to many because it involves exposing the subjective experience behind our work to respondents, colleagues and research audiences" (in Mehra, 2002, p. 1). According to Mehra (2002), "self-discovery is essential to learning about qualitative research" and that novice and young researchers must be particularly encouraged to talk about how their subjectivity and bias shape their research designs (p. 2). Thus, I see reflexivity also as an interest in addressing self, and evaluating one's values, beliefs and assumptions, in the process of doing research. And "the self is viewed not as static, but rather as a multiplicity of complex, often contradictory, fragmented or plural identities. In such a content, the self is always in flux" (King, 1996, p. 175). Moreover, reflexivity allows us not only to acknowledge the personal and affective dimensions of research, but also to reflect on these philosophically in order to develop insights that would provide better understanding of epistemological and ethical concerns. I see this understanding as pivotal in formulating research designs for future research and scholarship.

As opposed to criteria of uniformity and neutrality pertinent to the quantitative survey interviews, qualitative interview methodologies employ criteria of transparency, consistency (coherence) and communicability (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). For Rubin & Rubin, *transparency* implies that the reader of a qualitative research report should be able to understand clearly the processes of data collection as well as to evaluate the intellectual strengths and weaknesses, the

biases, and the consciousness of the interviewer. *Consistency* refers to a researcher's ability to check out the ideas and responses that may appear to be inconsistent. The goal is not simply to eliminate inconsistencies but to explain why they happened. This notion might be tied to *coherence*, in explaining why apparent contradictions in the themes occurred and what they mean. Silverman (2000) writes that the overall credibility of qualitative research is increased when the researcher can demonstrate and communicate that main concepts and themes occur consistently in a variety of cases (interviews) and in different settings.

Qualitative research is not immune to criticism and this criticism comes not only come from quantitative researchers. Silverman (2000) notes that the criticism of qualitative research usually evolves around the issues of reliability and validity, which most qualitative researchers continue to see as positivist concerns. Qualitative research usually results in vast volumes of notes and transcripts that cannot be all presented in the report. What is actually presented are the extracts of data (i.e., interview excerpts) leaving out a great body of material. The doubt is not only in asking why some quotations or encounters are presented and discussed over the others, but how reliable the findings would be, if, let us say, the entire body of acquired data is made accessible to the reader. Silverman (2000) cautions that, ". . . even when people's activities are tape-recorded and transcribed, the reliability of the interpretation of transcripts may be gravely weakened by a failure to record apparently trivial, but often crucial,

pauses and overlaps" (p. 10). A second major criticism of qualitative research pertains to the issue of validity, which, according to Silverman, presents another word for truth. One of the weaknesses of qualitative research is that of *anectdotalism.* The term suggests that ". . . research reports sometimes appeal to a few, telling 'examples' of some apparent phenomenon, without any attempt to analyze less clear (or even contradictory) data" (Silverman, 2000, p. 10). Thus validity is at stake when the researcher fails to elaborate on how and why certain themes and concepts were chosen from the data and when the researcher fails to take into account data that might be contradictory to his/her understanding of findings (Silverman, 2000).

3.4 Rationale for Qualitative Interviewing

In the previous sections I have introduced briefly both quantitative and qualitative research considerations and some of their underlying theoretical presuppositions with respect to the legacies of positivism and naturalism. I have also suggested that the qualitative research paradigm provides a more suitable background for both the exploratory and reflexive objectives of my research. In the following paragraphs, I will outline some parallels between qualitative interviewing and the objectives of my research.

Holstein & Gubrium (2002) point out that ninety per cent of all social science investigations include interviews and that interviewing is ". . . undoubtedly the most widely applied technique for conducting systematic social inquiry, as sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, psychiatrists, clinicians,

administrators, politicians and pollsters treat interviews as their "windows on the world" (p. 112). Interviewing allows us to look through these windows, and learn about the world. I see interviewing as a truly unique learning process that unravels itself in conversation between the interviewer and interviewee(s). One of the main reasons why I adopted interviewing methodology is that it elicits dialogue and meaning making. The meaning itself is qualitative and it " . . . is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondent's replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002, p. 113). The knowledge constructed in such an encounter is discursive, situational and conditional (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Holstein & Gubrium (2002), discuss the production of knowledge in qualitative interviews, as an outcome of the correlation between *hows* and *whats* in the meaning making. Their focus on the relationship between *hows* and *whats* does not necessarily suggest a deconstructionist analysis, but an extended interpretation of data that refers specifically to the interaction between interviewer and interviewee.

> The *hows* of interviewing, of course, refer to the interactional, narrative procedures of knowledge production, not merely to interview techniques. The *whats* pertain to the issues guiding the interview, the content of questions, and the substantive information communicated by the respondents. A dual interest in the *hows* and *whats* of meaning production goes hand in hand with an appreciation of the constitutive activeness of

the interview process. [italics in the text]. (Holstein & Gubrium, 2002, p. 113)

As an artist, I see many similarities between art and qualitative research. Eisner (1979; 1991) states that there is no domain of human inquiry that epitomizes the qualitative more than what artists do in their work (in Watrin, 1999). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) discuss qualitative research as *bricolage* and the role of a qualitative researcher as that of a *bricoleur,* involved in ". . . working with pieces of information, juxtaposing them with each other and with the researcher's constructed knowledge finding new relationships" (Bowen, 2002, p. 14).This view seems to parallel that of Kearney (1988), who while referencing Lyotard (1984), describes a post-modern artist as *bricoleur.* One may even look at the qualitative interview reports as *bricolage* structures assembled of quotations obtained in different interviews by different people, and constructed by the interviewer/researcher. Like art, qualitative research refers to lived experiences embracing subjectivity and intuition of the researcher. Like artists, qualitative researchers are interested in the process of describing and interpreting those experiences. Watrin (1999) states that,

> Qualitative research, like art, describes and interprets details of lived experience. Descriptive writing, like artwork, cuts through surface appearances and penetrates into the meaning of events, places, people, or processes. The artist and researcher strive for integrity in their work

wherein rich descriptions and interpretations unlock experiences in such a way as to facilitate fuller understanding. (Watrin, 1999, p. 94)

Qualitative interviews are mostly carried out as open-ended or in-depth interviews varying in their structure and in the latitude allowed to the participants in formulating their responses (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). They usually allow people being interviewed to use their own language and words in order to represent best what they want to say (Patton, 1990). The idea of qualitative open-ended interviewing " . . . is not to put things in someone's mind (for example, the interviewer's preconceived categories for organizing the world) but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Although qualitative interviews have a lot in common with ordinary conversations in terms of the natural character of the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee, they require a much greater level of concentration and attentive listening. Most qualitative researchers look at qualitative interviewing as an "art of listening" (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1991; Silverman, 2000). Seidman (1991) insists that researchers must be aware of the following three levels of listening involved in qualitative interviews: a) listening to what participant is saying; b) listening to an inner voice as opposed to an outer public voice; and c) while listening, the interviewers must pay attention to the process (i.e., time, participant's energy, nonverbal cues, etc.,) as much as to what has been said.

Rubin & Rubin (1995) distinguish between unstructured and semi-structured (focused) interviews. In the unstructured interviews, the interviewer

suggests the subject for discussion with a few specific questions, and allows for unexpected topics to emerge. In the semi-structured (focused) interviews, the interviewer introduces a specific topic of inquiry and guides the discussion by asking more specific questions. Neither one of these approaches imposes a set of pre-determined answer categories such as *agree* or *disagree*, *yes* or *no*, as well as variations on these, which are usually employed in traditional quantitative questionnaires.

Patton (1990) distinguishes three basic approaches to qualitative interviewing: *a) the informal conversational interviews; b) the general interview guide approach; and c) the standardized open-ended interview.* Even though all three approaches share an open-ended format that allows participants to express their views freely in their own words, they also ". . . differ in the extent to which interview questions are determined and standardized before the interview occurs" (Patton, 1990, p. 280). Moreover, Patton suggests the possibility of combining these approaches.

3.5 Research Design

Rubin & Rubin (1996) write that in qualitative interview research, the research design evolves gradually and in correlation with the researcher's reflection on his/her experiences in the field. Also, they suggest that qualitative interviewing design should be flexible, iterative and continuous rather than fixed and predetermined.

I will start discussing my research design by addressing first the issue of participant selection. I would like to elaborate on who was interviewed, how participants were recruited and selected. As well, I will discuss the links between the rationale that I employed in participant selection and the purpose of my research. Perhaps the most important methodological questions involved in designing qualitative interview studies are those pertaining to participant selection such as: Who should be interviewed and how many participants does one need to interview? Rubin & Rubin (1995) state simply that ". . . who you choose to interview should match how you have defined the subject of your research" (p. 65). They state that interviewees should satisfy at least three basic requirements. First, the interviewees should be knowledgeable about the cultural arena and the investigated phenomenon being studied. Second, they should be willing to talk; and the third, the interviewees should represent a range of points of view. As opposed to quantitative surveys and questionnaires where subjects are usually selected randomly, participant selection in qualitative research allows the researcher to select participants whose backgrounds, occupations and social roles are related to the topic of his/her inquiry. However, this appears to be a far more unpredictable and difficult process because it involves recruiting, which consists of meeting and talking to potential participants on an individual basis. The researcher hopes that a participant will find the research proposal interesting and consent to participation. I must say that I had a chance to introduce my research and talk to many more people than I actually interviewed. Also, finding

and recruiting professionals from different institutions and geographical locations required a great deal of time and resources.

Given that I was keen to learn what post-modernism means to artists who teach painting at the post-secondary level, and its implications on their teaching philosophies, I decided to interview artist-teachers involved in the post-secondary teaching of painting. This focus on a specific group of people in qualitative research has also been described as a *purposeful sampling* (Seidman, 1991). Seidman (1991) insists on the importance of seeking maximum variation within this approach, which means finding and involving a range of subjects and sites representative of a larger population. According to him, sample variation should also provide various possibilities for readers to connect to the study. In order to promote such variety, I thought that it would be important to be sensitive to the following issues that pertain to participant selection: *(a) Age and gender of participants; (b) their artistic practice; (c) academic status of participants; and d) geographic location.* The one fixed criteria that I employed in the participant selection is that all participants have to be artists who teach painting at the post-secondary level. I was hoping that some of them, like myself, would be engaged in teaching both theory and studio. Fortunately, I was able to interview two people who meet that criteria.

Although I was familiar with the artistic practice of most people I interviewed, I did not know any of them personally prior to this field work. As stated earlier, finding people and establishing the first contact has been both a

time consuming and intriguing process. Sometimes, a friend or a colleague would suggest the name of a person, and sometimes such information would come from the interviewees themselves. One of the things that I wanted to be sensitive to was to have an equal number of male and female participants involved in this study. This sensitivity to gender in participant selection is due to my critical awareness of the feminist discourses in art and art education (Congdon 1991; Becker 1996), which suggest that, in spite of the feminist critique, most fine arts faculties continue to include predominantly male artist-teachers. In fact, I interviewed five people, three female and two male artists who teach. I must say that I had a much harder time talking to and recruiting male than female artist-teachers of painting. My perception was that women practitioners I talked to were more eager to talk about post-modernism and to get involved in research. However, it is important to underscore here that different researchers have different experiences in finding and recruiting their subjects. Sometimes it is the overall appearance and presentation of the researcher that makes one agree or disagree to participate in a study.

Also, I was trying to be sensitive to participants' ages. I expected that by having participants of various ages I would have a greater variety of perspectives about post-modernism and teaching. One of the assumptions that I inherited from my interaction with colleagues and students, as well as from the related literature is that most faculties of art continue to be divided between those who are comfortable in dealing with the issues of post-modernism and those who are not.

The reality is that this division also tends to be generalized further and ascribed also to the stereotypical distinction between young and old faculty members. The people that I interviewed are artist-teachers in their late thirties, forties and fifties.

Another way to provide more variety within this group was to be more sensitive to the studio orientations of participants. Thus, I was interested to have participants who come from both representational and non-representational genres of painting. I was interested to know also how their studio orientations might have informed their pedagogies, and how they position their studio practice in the context of post-modernism. One of my interview questions particularly addressed this latter concern. Here I would like to say also that most of the interviews took place in the participants' studios, allowing me to also to see their artwork.

Also, I have taken into consideration the institutions from which participants come and their academic status. Given that I have taught and lived in both Toronto and Montreal, it appeared logical to me to look for participants from these two cities. Although, I have made many attempts to recruit people from other areas such as Nova Scotia and other parts of Ontario, ultimately, all of my participants were from Montreal and Toronto. Obviously, this could be seen as one of the limitations of this study. Finally, I decided to interview both part-time (sessional) and full-time (tenure-track) faculty members, since my professional experiences made me aware not only of polarization between these two groups, but also of the marginalized presence of the former in the faculties where I

taught. Simply stated, I wanted to include voices from both sides because they equally participate in an overall project of educating artists.

Even though qualitative researchers claim that the number of participants involved is not so important as in quantitative research, the duration, number of places (sites) visited and people interviewed continue to play important roles in determining the credibility of the study. Most graduate research studies tend to be limited because of the program and time constraints, funding and resources available to a student conducting field research. Kvale (1996) suggests to qualitative interviewers, ". . . interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know " (p. 101). Seidman's (1991) talks about a "snowballing process", which implies that new participants are added as the study progresses. Thus one participant leads to another. In this sense the number of participants is never determined prior to the study, but by reflecting on the criteria of *saturation* and *sufficiency* of data obtained in the field. In interview research, *saturation* means that a researcher must keep on interviewing people until the realization that further interviews bring little new knowledge, and repetition in statements by different participants becomes obvious (Kvale, 1997). The criteria of *sufficiency* means that a sufficient number of participants is the one that represents fairly the wider population addressed by the study. However, "the criteria of sufficiency and saturation are useful, but practical exigencies of time, money, and other resources also play a role, especially in doctoral research" (Seidman, 1991, p. 45).

As stated earlier, I was able to interview five artists who teach painting at the post-secondary level. Following the fifth set of interviews, and after many times of listening to tapes and reading the interview transcripts, I noticed a certain shift in my commitment. My interest in reading and reflecting on what I acquired in interviews seemed much greater than my interest to recruit new participants. Also, I realized that I was exceeding the time frame of my studies as well. While listening and reading data, I started to notice certain repetitions and themes in the statements of participants. I also became aware of a certain predictability in my questions, tone and intonation in my own voice. It was time to stop interviewing and start the analysis of data that I had gathered.

3.6 Informed Consent

Obtaining an informed consent from the participants is both ethically and methodologically desirable (Seidman, 1991). On a methodological level, the purpose of the informed consent is to inform participants about the purpose and design of the study as well as about potential risks and benefits involved. I would agree with Kvale (1996) that ". . . full information about design and purpose rules out any deception of the subjects" (p. 113). On the ethical level, the informed consent is supposed to assure participants that research will be conducted ethically, respecting their confidentiality, privacy, dignity, and status within their institutions. In spite of its rigid written format, the informed consent assured participants of the trustworthiness of research and their own rights. As Glesne & Peshkin (1992) write, ". . . although informed consent neither precludes the

abuse of research findings nor creates a symmetrical relationship between researcher and researched, it can contribute to the empowering of the researched" (p. 111).

In developing the written consent form for this study, I have drawn in particular upon Seidman's (1991) model. Therefore, I have developed a form that reflected the following issues: (a) It informed participants about my identity and affiliations as well as about the purpose and method of the study, (b) It informed participants about potential risks and benefits involved, (c) It assured participants of their rights in process, such as the right to withdraw from the study without prejudice at any point, (d) It informed participants that their privacy and confidentiality would be respected, that their names and identity will not be disclosed but replaced with fictional ones, e) It indicated how results of the study will be reported, (f) It underlined that the participant's consent is indicated by his/her signature on the consent form. The copy of the consent form is presented at the end of the thesis, as part of the appendix that includes the certificate of ethics for research involving human subjects.

In order to obtain consent from participants, each participant was provided also with a concise summary of my research project and the written consent form prior to the first interview session. The conditions underlined in the consent form were read and discussed during the briefing period, before the first interview. Most participants found the consent form too formal, objecting also to the fact that their identities (names) would be kept confidential. On a couple of occasions,

I was required to explain this matter by referring specifically to the guidelines for research involving human subjects. Finally, each participant was provided with a copy of a signed consent form. Even though informed consent presents an important component of the ethical framework of the research, there is a need to elaborate further on the methodological and ethical issues involved in the method of my inquiry and my role of the interviewer. In the next section, I will introduce my interviewing approach and address its rationale and limitations with reference to both research theory and my experiences in the field. I will also address the manifestations of my own assumptions, bias and subjectivity in my methodology and my role of an interviewer.

3. 7 Gathering Data

All interviews in this study were audio recorded. I used a portable mini-disc recorder with an external mono microphone. This device provides digital audio recording and stores data on an eighty-minute mini-disc format. I chose to use this device primarily because of its fast tracking mechanism and an option to record interviews in segments (files). I thought these features would allow me to retrieve specific passages faster. In addition, the device provides an excellent digital audio quality and the mini-disc format is far more durable than compact disc or the analogue audiotape. However, the limitations of this portable piece of high technology are that it does not provide an input for using an external foot pedal-tracking system. As well it does not provide a slow-speed playing mode.

Having these features would have made transcription a far easier and less time consuming process.

Each participant was interviewed twice, and each interview session was approximately 90 minutes in length. The time between the two sessions varied from a month to three months. Scheduling interviews with working professionals and with respect to my full-time (at the time I was teaching at the University of Windsor), and long distance traveling to Toronto and Montreal was more difficult than I expected, and in fact, it took more time than I anticipated. As suggested, all interviews were audio recorded. In addition, I collected some written field notes during the interviews. I must say that I have never felt comfortable taking notes in the interview situation. In the context of audio recorded qualitative interviews, note taking has been used to document in-audible yet potentially important data such as body movements, facial expressions, information about the setting as well as to scribble down emerging thoughts, ideas and questions. Some researchers suggest that interviewing itself is already stressful and intimidating for interviewees, so that additional note taking might be avoided (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Kvale, 1996). Indeed, whenever I was writing notes down, I felt a bit nervous about doing it, as well as I sensed a bit of discomfort in participants' behaviour. I was afraid that participants would feel as though they were being interrogated, and their behaviour and statements scrutinized. Although useful, note taking should be sporadic and casual rather than systematic, in order to maintain the natural and conversational dynamics of qualitative interviewing. The

written notes that I collected were also categorized and considered in the analysis of data.

Although most qualitative researchers suggest that interview designs should be flexible and shape gradually with respect to the researcher's sensitivity to the interview encounters with participants, and to what has been said, as a novice interviewer I decided to enter the field with a more structured interviewing approach. Drawing upon Patton's (1990) outline of approaches to qualitative interviewing, I decided to adopt a general interview guide. "The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (p. 283). Patton suggests also that the purpose of following an interview guide is to make data collection more systematic and comprehensive and provide some structure for the initial categorization of data. As a novice interviewer for whom English is a second language, I saw the interview guide as both useful in maintaining the focus of my inquiry and in providing a certain structure to my questions and role as an interviewer. My interview guide included an outline of the following topics:

A) Post-Modernism

What does post-modernism mean to artists who teach painting at the post-secondary level? What encounters with antagonism towards painting did they have a) in their own art training; b) teaching/art world. Additional focus: Feelings of painting as being under threat.

B) The Meaning and Validity of Painting in Post-Modern Era

Of what concern is the statement 'painting is dead' to artist-teachers? How do they interpret the meaning of painting as artistic practice?

C) Teaching Philosophies

What issues underlie the studio teaching philosophies of artist-teachers?

Focus: a) Teaching objectives; b) Pedagogical concerns and methods c) Modernist and Post-Modernist Orientations

D) Envisioning Teaching Art to Artists

How do artist-teachers envision teaching of art and the education of artists in the future?

Focus: a) Dialogue b) Collegiality c) Objectives.

Adopting and following such an interview guide meant also that the same subject areas were introduced to and addressed by all participants. Patton (1990) suggests that the ". . . interviewer's flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses from different perspectives, thus reducing the comparability of responses" (p. 288). Initially, my plan was to introduce all areas from the interview guide in the first session and then to explore further some emerging concepts and statements in the subsequent interview session. I decided to provide participants with the transcripts and a descriptive summary of their profile prior to the second interview session. In this way they had a chance to reflect on their statements as well as on my overall perception of their teaching philosophies, and views on the topic. I

thought that this approach would also promote the overall trustworthiness of my research design.

Although most of the actual interview questions were formulated spontaneously in the interview interaction, there were a few open-ended questions that I tended to ask participants in a standardized fashion. What does postmodernism mean to you? What are the objectives of your teaching? What does the statement "painting is dead" mean to you? Where do you think it (this statement) came from? In conjunction with the interview guide, these questions provided a foundation to the first interview session allowing participants to choose freely the direction of their answers and to start introducing their perspectives in their own ways. These opening questions resulted in usually lengthy and rather general answers leading to additional questions, the wording of which varied from participant to participant and from situation to situation. These subsequent questions seemed to be much more specific in terms of clarification, as well as probing/exploring initial statements of participants.

3.8 Critical Reflection: Reflexive voice

Many qualitative researchers look at the knowledge of qualitative research as highly dependent on the language employed in formulating questions, description and interpretation of findings as well as the language used in the process of writing reports. We ask questions in ways that reflect not only our interest in learning about the topic but also our personal voice, subjectivity, bias and assumptions. Scheurich (1997) adds that the researcher's interpretation of

findings is not only determined by the form and style of language used, but also by her/his personal "baggage" that consists of personal assumptions, orientations, training, inclinations, conscious and unconscious feelings. Each individual bears her/his own "unique" baggage. "This plethora of baggage, in the guise of the interviewer, interacts with an interviewee, who of course, brings her/his own baggage to the interaction" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 74). Following the transcription of the first couple of interviews, I became much more conscious of my own "baggage". I started to become aware of certain connotations and anxiety present in my questions. My voice sometimes carried impatience and assumptions about post-modernism, painting and teaching. As a matter of fact, I began to realize that my "baggage" is also present in my interview guide and in my commitment to follow it. Seidman (1991) warns that,

> If interviewers decide to use an interview 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 the participant has said. Interviewers must try to avoid imposing their own interests on the experience of the participants. . . Interview guides can be useful but must be used with caution. (p. 70)

At some moments, I felt that I was not open enough (in an exploratory sense of being open) to abandon the interview guide on certain occasions, and pursue some emerging issues outside of the topic of my investigation. By

listening to tapes and reading transcripts I started to reflect on my own voice, questions that I asked, their wording and underlying connotations. It became clear to me that my voice resonated with a certain anxiety emulating from my own assumption and prejudices about post-modernism being antagonistic to painting. Sometimes in the very course of the interviews, when instead of asking short and simple questions, my questions were followed by brief explanations or qualifications of my own views on post-modernism. I was aware of my voice in particular when I asked questions about the *death of painting,* and the meaning of this issue in studio teaching. It became obvious to me that post-modernism is not simply the topic of my research. It is something that I personally internalized as a painter. It was clear to me that by being involved in this study, I was learning not only from people, who I consider to be my colleagues, but also about myself, uncovering my own strengths and weaknesses as a novice qualitative researcher and interviewer. One might ask what exactly does this kind of introspection and personal realizations on the part of the researcher suggest here: Researcher's "inability" to bracket his own subjectivity and personal baggage from the investigation; Researcher's reflexivity which testifies to the inseparability of researcher from the researched, and which ultimately exposes the struggle between subjectivity and the commitment to objectivity in qualitative research; Or, simply an assumption that it is this process of becoming self-conscious and

feeling trapped in the labyrinth of looking-glasses what makes one ultimately post-modern.[23]

Since the first interview session felt more structured and dominated by the questions from the interview guide, in the second session I tried to open-up and make interviews much more conversational and spontaneous. As a matter of fact it is in the second session that I felt that I was getting beyond what I know and feel as a painter and teacher about post-modernism. I felt that I was getting to know my participants better and starting to learn about how they go about their teaching.

A great deal of theorizing about qualitative interviews has been dedicated to making researchers aware of the different kinds of questions (i.e., open-ended, leading, thematic, probing, follow up, retrospective, etc.) as well as the different ethical concerns associated with them. Kvale (1996) advises that within an interview guide, each question should be evaluated with respect to both a thematic and a dynamic dimension — thematically in relation to the research theme, and dynamically in respect to the actual conversational dynamics of the interview and the interpersonal relationship (rapport) between the interviewer and interviewees. According to him "a good interview question should contribute

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[23] I borrow the metaphor of a *labyrinth of looking-glasses* from Kearney (1988), who ascribes it to the 'parodic' and the reflexive paradigm of post-modernism. Further, Kearney identifies the 'mimetic' pre-modern paradigm with the referential figure of the *mirror*, and the 'productive' modern paradigm with the expressive figure of the *lamp*. See Kearney, J. (1988). Introduction: Imagination now. *In the wake of imagination: Toward a postmodern culture* (pp. 1 - 33). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promoting a good interview interaction" (Kvale, 1996, p. 129).

There are two rules with respect to asking questions, to be shared by all qualitative researchers: (a) focus on asking open-ended questions and (b) avoid asking leading questions. As opposed to an open-ended question, which does not presume a direction towards a specific answer, a leading question is " . . . the one that influences the direction the response will take. Sometimes the lead is in the intonation of the question: the tone implies an expectation. Sometimes it is in the wording, syntax, and intonation of the question" (Seidman, 1991, p. 62). In order to avoid leading questions, the interviewer should encourage participants to tell the stories, follow up and try not to interrupt participants while they talk. Kvale (1996) suggests that an interviewer should also avoid asking *dichotomous* questions which result in affirmative answers such as yes or no. Another useful tip from Seidman that I was trying to be sensitive to was to avoid reinforcing participants' responses. The reinforcement is obvious in the interviewer's habit " . . . of saying "uh huh", "O.K. ", or "yes" or some other short affirmative response to almost every statement from the participant" (p. 67). In everyday conversations we tend to be unaware of these idiosyncrasies and speech mannerisms. Seidman argues that such reinforcing of participants' responses might lead to a distortion of their responses. Although I was aware of Seidman's tips, my "uh huhs", OKs and "yes" were still part of my conversational interaction with participants.

Another important thing that I encountered in all interviews is the presence of laughter. Seidman (1991) reminds interviewers to explore the meaning of laughter. Sometimes laughter is a sign of nervousness, sometimes it signals sarcasm about something, and sometimes it is just a sign that participants are relaxed about being interviewed. Seidman suggests that interviewers should also learn to tolerate *silence* – noticeably longer pauses that sometimes follow questions create silence between two people that often feels awkward to be in. I must say that I had a harder time tolerating such moments than I expected. Sometimes I would rush to ask another question or paraphrase the initial one rather than wait, and respect the space of the participant's reflection.

> Thoughtfulness takes time; if interviewers can learn to tolerate either the silence that sometimes follows a question or a pause within a participant's reconstruction, they may hear things they would never have heard if they had leapt in with another question to break the silence. (Seidman, 1991, p. 70)

A great deal of data was obtained by asking retrospective and probing questions. The retrospective questions were directed specifically towards the participants' backgrounds and past experiences (i.e., their education and initial encounters of post-modernism while they were art students in the 1970s, 1980s and 90s). *When did you first time hear about post-modernism? Would you tell me more about the overall climate towards painting while you studied at . . .?* On the other hand, I asked probing questions whenever a new concept emerged or

when I was trying to make sure that I understood correctly what had been said. I include here a sample of a few probing questions from the interviews. *Would you elaborate on your concept of mobility in studio teaching? If I understood correctly, you say that both modernism and post-modernism are over and that we are in an entirely new phase. What would that phase be about? Could you tell me more about the gap between art historians and studio faculty that you noticed in your department?* Seidman (1991) argues that interviewers should explore and not probe what participants say. In his view probing, ". . . conveys a sense of the powerful interviewer treating the participant as an object" (p. 61).

3.9 Interviewer: Skills, Roles and Responsibilities

In spite of being reflexive about different kinds of questions involved in qualitative interviewing and their epistemological ramifications, qualitative interviewing still implies an asymmetrical relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. As an interviewer I was the one who asked questions, introduced topics and steered conversation. In this section, I would like to review my role as the interviewer and point out some ethical concerns that are pertinent to that role.

Establishing and maintaining *rapport* is pivotal to qualitative interviews. The term refers to the character of the field relationship and the researcher's sense to maintain it as natural, relaxed and trustworthy. Thus as a qualitative interviewer, I was primarily concerned with establishing an interview context in which participants could feel both comfortable and confident in sharing their

ideas. Seidman (1991) raises a cautionary note about how far an interviewer should go in promoting rapport. He perceives a potential problem in the idea of "We" and the ". . . relationship in which the questions of whose experience is being related and whose meaning is being made is critically confounded" (p. 73). He insists that the interviewer must be careful in "selling" the benefits of research to participants. This concern might be linked to the ethical issue of reciprocity. Glazer (1982) defines reciprocity as ". . . the exchange of favors and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community" (In Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 122). Patton (1990) links reciprocity to the question as to why the interviewees should participate in the study as well as accept the promises made by the interviewer. "Don't make promises lightly, such as promising a copy of the report. If you make promises keep them" (Patton, 1990, p. 356).

King (1996) states that there should be some degree of social and intellectual distance between the interviewer and participants, and that it is this distance (space) that creates the opportunity for analytical work; and where the reflexive 'self-as-instrument' process takes place. As an interviewer I was interested in finding that 'happy medium' between total disclosure and total detachment.

According to Kvale (1996) ". . . a good interviewer is an expert in the topic of the interview as well as in human interaction" (p. 147). However, he fails to explain what makes one expert in the topic and human interaction. Although I

spent many years studying and teaching about post-modernism, I have never seen myself as an expert on this topic. At the time, I have seen myself as an artist-teacher involved in educational research rather than as an expert of any kind, and the role of a qualitative interviewer was entirely new to me.

Although there are no specific methodological standards for the interviewer's qualifications, Kvale (1996) lists ten important criteria upon which a novice interviewer may envision his/her role. These include: *(1) Being knowledgeable; (2) Structuring; (3) Clear; (4) Gentle; (5) Sensitive; (6) Open; (7) Steering; (8) Critical; (9) Remembering; and (10) Interpreting.*

Being knowledgeable means having a thorough knowledge of the research topic however without trying "to shine" and impose his/her knowledge on participants.

Structuring pertains to the interviewer's ability to introduce the purpose of the study, outline and briefly articulate what is learned in conversation and " . . . asking whether the interviewee has any questions concerning the situation" (p. 148).

Being *clear* refers to posing clear, simple and short questions free of jargon and academic language.

Gentle means allowing participants to finish their stories and answer at their own pace, tolerating short pauses, unconventional or provocative opinions and accepting emotional issues.

Sensitivity refers to the depth of listening and the interviewer's empathy[24], and his/her ability not only to hear what is said, but to trace nuances of how something is said, while noticing also what is not said. It is in this attention to listening and focus on both syntactic and semantic nuances that distinguish the qualitative from quantitative interviewer.

Openness implies allowing an additional focus on the ideas that seem to be important to the interviewees, yet that might not be so related to the topic of inquiry. According to Kvale, openness refers also to the interviewer's curiosity to follow up sometimes unexpected yet potentially significant ideas.

Steering refers to the interviewer's ability to guide the course of the interview respecting the objectives of the study and not being afraid to interrupt digression from the interviewee.

This is linked also to being *critical,* which means being able to reflect on what is said and probe the reliability and validity of the statements, searching for the logical coherence of the interview as a whole. The challenges here are not to ask leading questions in probing statements and how to make probing questions appear least interrogatory.

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[24] "Empathy, as differentiated from sympathy, is specific and requires that the interviewer should be sensitive from moment to moment to the changing experience of the interviewee, be able to enter the other person's world as far as is possible, and to be able to communicate that understanding to the interviewee" (p. 184). In King, E. (1996). The use of the self in qualitative research. In J. T. E. Richardson (Ed.,) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences.* (pp. 175 – 189). Leicester, UK: The British Psychological Society.

Remembering refers to an interviewer's ability to remember what is said and ask for additional elaboration in order to make links.

Finally, *interpreting* pertains to the interviewer's ability to interpret and reinterpret (clarify and extend) the meaning of a participant's statements ". . . which may then be disconfirmed and confirmed by the interviewee" (Kvale, 1996, p. 149).

Although, Kvale's qualification criteria for the qualitative interviewers cannot be simply adopted as a recipe for becoming a good interviewer, they helped me understand better the issues and sensibilities that underlie my role of the interviewer.

Rubin & Rubin (1995) state that a researcher's empathy, sensitivity, humour, and sincerity present important tools for the research. I agree with their view that "researchers' biases, angers, fears, and enthusiasms influence their questioning style and how they interpret what they hear" (p. 18). Qualitative interviewing is not a faceless empirical dialogue, thus one must not underestimate personal and interpersonal dimensions of qualitative interviewing. In fact, many researchers recognize that qualitative inquiries may be more intrusive and involve greater reaction among participants than surveys, tests and other more personally detached quantitative approaches. Beside asking open-ended questions and trying to be a sensitive listener, I was trying to be tactful, patient and above all, to respect participants' views.

In the qualitative paradigm, the researcher is regarded as the key instrument of research, thus what research is supposed to generate is not just knowledge that represents the views of people being interviewed with respect to the topic of inquiry but also knowledge about the researcher him/herself. In recent years there has been an insistence on adopting more reflexive methodologies which may draw from a variety of perspectives (post-modernism, post-structuralism, deconstructionist, etc). I hope that throughout this chapter I have been able to demonstrate reflexivity and discuss my methodology without suppressing the concerns that allude to the struggle between the subjectivity and objectivity of my research. In the next section I will discuss the rationale and structure employed in the transcription and analysis of interview data. I will introduce the categories that helped me organize data and re-address the objectives of my research.

3.10 Transcription

The transcription of audio-recorded interviews is the most time consuming part of the research. One hour of interview usually results in about twenty pages of single-spaced text, and it might take between four and six hours to transcribe a nine-minute tape (Seidman, 1991). I transcribed all interviews myself. I spent much more time transcribing interviews than I expected, mostly due to my poor typing skills and the limitations of the recording device that I used (i.e., lack of slow speed playing mode and a foot pedal-based tracking system). Simply said, to transcribe audio-recorded interviews means to translate recorded conversation

into written text, and this ". . . text is further analyzed and coded in order to support or develop some generalization or theory" (Scheurich, 1997. p. 67).

Since I decided to provide each participant with the transcripts of the first interview and the descriptive written profile before the second interview session, I saw transcribing as part of the analysis. While transcribing interviews I was reflecting on my voice and questions that I asked, becoming aware also of the questions that I did not ask. All interviews were completely transcribed including the indications of pauses, emotional state(s) of the participants and of speech mannerisms such as uhhhns, mmms, y' knows, etc. One thing that I was not sure about was what format the transcripts should take? How much editing, in terms of formatting verbally communicated information needs to be there? Unlike some qualitative interviewers, Elkins (2001) suggests that this editing of transcripts that involves typological refining of sentences with commas, semi-colons, hyphens, does not necessarily affect the overall meaning of what is said. Also, all participants brought a wide scope of references (i.e., names of their former professors, artists, writers, texts, exhibitions), some of them unfamiliar to me. As well, they used specific words and phrases that reflected their views and personalities. Asking participants to comment on the overall accuracy of the transcripts also contributed to enhancing the overall trustworthiness of my research. All transcripts were saved on the hard disc of my computer and two hard copies were printed for each interview session.

3.11 Analyzing Qualitative Data

The analysis of qualitative interviews requires methodological and systematic organization of data that involves analytic files, categories, coding and systematic interpretation of meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 1992). Most qualitative researchers see analysis as continuous with data gathering, and urge better integration between the two. Rubin & Rubin (1995) suggest that data analysis should begin while the interviewing is still under way. Conversely, Seidman (1991) argues that one should start a detailed analysis after collecting all data in order to avoid imposing the concepts and meanings obtained from one participant/session onto the next one. The ultimate objective of qualitative analysis is to provide so-called "thick description" of the investigated phenomena. This implies an integration of ". . . the themes and concepts into a theory that offers an accurate, detailed, yet subtle interpretation of [the] research arena" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 227).

Silverman (2000) outlines two main traditions that have informed the analysis of transcripts of tapes; conversational analysis (CA) and discourse analysis (DA). The former is concerned with analyzing conversational interaction, ". . . looking at the way language is designed to produce effects, and produces effects—how meaning and actions are produced and negotiated by participants in an interaction" (cited in the qualitative research glossary). The latter implies a simultaneous analysis of discourse (i.e., interview transcripts) and its context, for

example, where and when interaction took place. As well, more subtle aspects of the interaction that might have affected participants' orientations.

Patton (1990) draws an important distinction between description and interpretation in qualitative research. The former addresses the "what" or the content of research findings, while the latter elaborates "why" particular statements were selected, stressing the significance of their underlying meaning within the overall context of inquiry. Thus to describe means simply to shed light on what the individual perspectives are about, while to interpret means to explain the findings vis-à-vis *why* questions ". . . attaching significance to particular results, and putting patterns into an analytic framework" (Patton, 1990, p. 375).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) distinguish between theory and description in qualitative research. According to them theory is defined by concepts that are "related by means of statements of relationship", while description implies the organization of data mainly according to themes (p. 29). Further, "the themes may be conceptualizations of data, but are more likely to be a précis or summaries of words taken directly from the data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 29).

It is also important to distinguish between theory and hypotheses. Usually, hypotheses are meant to be tested in research (Silverman, 2000). However, unlike in quantitative research in which hypotheses provide a specific direction for research and are then acted upon, in qualitative research hypotheses are obtained (induced) in the early stages of research. "In any event, unlike theories,

hypotheses can, and should be, tested. Therefore we assess a hypothesis by its validity or truth" (Silverman, 2000, p. 79).

Even though my field research is preceded by an extensive review of theory pertaining to post-modernism, painting and post-secondary teaching of art, there were no specific hypotheses formulated at the outset of this study. As I stated initially, the purpose of this interview study has been mainly to explore participants' views about the topic and gain insight into their teaching philosophies rather than to verify any particular hypothesis. However, it is important to be clear that theory introduced in the previous chapters provided a background for understanding and contextualization of concepts and themes that emerged in the interviews. I think that the studio teaching of art at the post-secondary level exemplifies a whole spectrum of individual pedagogical approaches rather than a response to specifically developed curricula and art educational theories. What this thesis offers in its simplest form is a record of pedagogical reflections of both participants and researcher, which could be of practical assistance to other practitioners in their reflection and further development of their teaching philosophies with respect to post-modernism. Moreover, the objective of my analysis is to raise new questions and ideas and suggest directions for future research into the post-secondary studio teaching of painting.

Before I review the structure and rationale employed in coding and categorization of data, let me state that I decided to present views of four instead

of five participants. The first set of interviews is intentionally omitted from the report because I saw it as a pilot model. Also, I was hoping that by presenting four profiles including two male and two female participants, I would be able to have a more balanced structure for pursuing a comparative analysis of data. The analysis involved the following phases: (a) an in-depth reading of interview transcripts; (b) marking/coding of *interesting* passages; (c) opening a separate file with categories for each participant, (d) cutting, shifting and grouping statements into the categories; (e) identifying salient concepts and themes within each category and within each file (for each participant), (f) underlining similarities and differences among participants' perspectives; g) description and interpretation of these concepts and themes (h) writing of a research report; and (i) peer review which included participants. Let me discuss now each of these phases and point out some of the ethical concerns that emerged within the process of analysis.

Following the transcription, I concentrated on reading the transcripts more carefully. The interview guide helped in determining initial categories. Patton (1990) suggests that,

> With an interview guide approach, answers from different people can be grouped by topics from the guide, but the relevant data won't be found in the same place in each interview. The interview guide actually constitutes a descriptive analytic framework for analysis. (p. 376)

I started marking/coding certain passages by using different color highlight markers for each category. This led further to cutting and pasting/grouping of certain passages of data within the formulated categories. A specific file was opened for each participant and each file included the same categories. Here is a list of initial categories, which were formulated following the first set of interviews.

A) POST-MODERNISM code: **po-mo** 1 & 2 (indicating session)
color: blue

B) DEATH AND REBIRTH OF PAINTING code: **debirth** 1 & 2
color: red

C) STUDIO TEACHING code: **steac*h*** 1 & 2
color: orange

D) PAINTING IN ART WORLD code: **partwo** 1 & 2
color: green

E) EDUCATION OF ARTISTS code: **edart** 1 & 2
color:

F) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS code: **quest** 1 & 2
color: violet

G) BEYOND TOPIC code: beto
color: pink

The first and rather general category POST-MODERNISM included passages that dealt specifically with the participants' interpretations of the term and the meaning of post-modernism.

The second category, DEATH AND REBIRTH OF PAINTING, compiled passages that exemplified participants' positions towards the statement "painting is dead" and speculations about the death of painting.

The third category STUDIO TEACHING consisted of information pertaining to participants' teaching experiences, pedagogical concerns and objectives as well as teaching methods.

The fourth category PAINTING IN ART WORLD included participants' views of painting today and their concerns about its validity in the art world, including references to their studio practice and experiences.

The fifth category EDUCATION OF ARTISTS included statements that refer to participants' ideas about the meaning of education of artists today. Following the completion of the first set of interviews, I decided not to investigate further issues within this category.

The sixth category INTERVIEW QUESTIONS comprised of various questions that I asked in the interviews, distinguishing between those that were qualitative and open-ended in nature and those that seemed to reflect the implication of my own subjectivity and personal assumptions about post-modernism.

Finally, the seventh category, BEYOND TOPIC included new ideas that clearly suggested departure from the topic, some of which were explored further in the second interview session.

Further reading and reflection within these categories led me to identify more specific concepts pertinent to participants' individual views. Rubin & Rubin (1995) suggest two valuable tips that are helpful in identifying concepts. One implies looking for strange "words" unfamiliar to the interviewer yet important to the interviewee in explaining his/her perspective. The other way of noticing concepts implies looking for ". . . noun phrases that are repeated frequently and seem to be expressing an important idea. . .(p. 230). Rubin & Rubin also suggest looking for passages where participants used the word "because" or other close synonyms as well as for those instances when participants made wrap-up statements. The analysis of data from the first interview and concepts that I identified provided background for writing a descriptive profile for each participant. Each participant was provided with transcripts and the written profile prior to the second interview. This document comprised of concise descriptions of participants' background, and perspectives. The actual quotations from the interview transcripts were not included. The purpose of writing such a document was to provide a background for subsequent interview(s) and obtain feedback from participants on the overall accuracy of my perceptions, writing. This also contributed to the overall trustworthiness of study.

Following the second set of interviews, my analysis led to expansion of existing categories (sub-categorization) and formulation of new categories. Here is the detailed list of all categories and subcategories that were formed in this process.

A) EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Art training

Time frame '70s, '80s, '90s

Climate towards painting

Studio instruction (critical reflections)

B) POST-MODERNISM

- Introduction to post-modernism
- The meaning of post-modernism

Positive & negative meaning(s)

Personal vs. theory-based interpretations

Texts, theorists, painters, exhibitions

C) LEGACY OF MODERNISM

- Formalism
- Greenberg's legacy
- Painting as language

D) DEATH AND REBIRTH OF PAINTING

- Statement: Painting is dead?

Origins

Critical position(s)

Recurrences due to post-modernism

- Validity of painting today
- Addressing the death of painting in studio instruction

E) PAINTING IN ART WORLD

Popularity / Criticism

Post-modern painting

F) STUDIO TEACHING

- Teaching background & experiences
- Objectives
- Initial formulations
- Contemporary concerns
- Teaching methods

Skills, art history, and art theory in studio

Slide presentations, projects, research

Painting as language

G) POST-MODERNISM IN STUDIO TEACHING

- Self-consciousness vs. Self-expression
- Positioning
- Questioning validity of painting
- Contemporary Awareness

H) QUESTIONS

- Interview guide
- Open-ended

- Thematic – Dynamic
- Subjective
    - Leading
    - Dichotomous
- Affirmative Answers

I) BEYOND TOPIC

- New media and technology
- Multiculturalism
- The role of a studio teacher

Following the categorization of all data, my analysis turned towards identifying and distilling the most prominent concepts and themes within each category and for each participant. Rubin & Rubin (1995) suggest that as the interviewers re-read the interviews, they should look for responses that answer the question "Why?" "Such responses suggest themes to follow up on, but their wording may be indirect. . . . Finally themes can become apparent when interviewees make wrap-up statements" (p. 166). The second session brought a great body of new data which required further categorization. Rubin & Rubin (1995) remind us that,

> In the final stages of analysis, you organize the data in ways that help you formulate themes, refine concepts, and link them together to create a clear description or explanation of a culture or a topic. This material is then

interpreted in terms of literature and theories in the researcher's field. (p. 251)

Thus, in the next chapter I introduce individual perspectives of participants and identify the concepts and central themes that emerged in their responses. In addition, I explain why particular statements (quotations) were selected and how they were generated in conversation. As Kvale (1997) points out, "it should not be up to the reader to guess why this specific statement was presented and what the researcher might have found so interesting about it" (p. 266). The report also includes reflection on the meaning of some of my own questions. Additional attention has to be placed on the length of selected quotations and balance between quotations and accompanying descriptions. Many researchers suggest that interviewers should be aiming for shorter and explicit quotations that should not make up more than a half of the text. Kvale (1997) warns that this approach should be considered particularly when quotations come from multiple subjects. Finally, I identified some overarching (cross-interview) concepts and identified some similarities and differences among participants' perspectives. These were further theorized thematically in the last chapter this thesis. The objective of such theorizing is not to argue how painting is or should be taught in the post-modern era, but rather to point out some issues and challenges that post-modernism poses to post-secondary studio teachers of painting, including myself, as well as to outline some direction for future research.

The very last step of my analysis was to provide all participants with the final draft of their written individual profiles comprised in the next chapter of this thesis. The objective of this methodological choice was not only to show to participants what quotations I have selected from our interviews, but also to ask them for feedback regarding the overall accuracy and presentational format of the selected quotations and my interpretations of their perspectives on the topic of inquiry and teaching philosophies. I see this part of analysis as an important step in supporting the overall trustworthiness of this research.

CHAPTER 4: Interviews

In this chapter I introduce and analyze the individual perspectives of four artist-teachers who teach painting at the post-secondary level. In keeping with my research project, I focus on their interpretations of post-modernism and its implications on their studio teaching philosophies. Before I introduce findings, let me clarify briefly the objectives, analytical rationale and reporting format employed in this chapter. In order to capture the breadth of participants' critical, artistic and teaching orientations, as well as to pursue a reflexive analysis, I have allocated a separate profile section for each participant. In the analysis of qualitative interview data, the researcher tries not only to identify and contextualize the concepts and themes that emerge in the fieldwork with respect to the framework of research question(s), but also to explain how these have emerged in the interview context and why certain passages (quotations) were selected. My intent has been to keep this report transparent and accessible to a wide audience of practitioners involved in post-secondary teaching of painting

and graduate students in visual arts who envision their formation also within the domain of studio teaching.

The qualitative descriptions, which precede and follow selected quotations, derive from my own reflection following the categorization and numerous readings of the acquired data. In order to promote the conversational flow of the narrative I have intentionally withdrawn headings and subheadings from the individual profile sections. An initial emphasis is placed on participants' backgrounds including their critical reflections on their own art training. This provides an insight into the cultural and educational climate of the 1970s and 1980s, the decades within which these participants acquired their artistic formations, the concept of post-modernism came to fruition, and the practice of painting was most vociferously scrutinized. I hope that this emphasis will enable the reader to understand better not only where these artist-teachers come from but also to trace the development of their teaching philosophies. Participants' reflection on the statement "painting is dead" which is emblematic of the issue of the death of painting takes central place in each profile section.

Alongside participants' perspectives, I also address my own role as a qualitative researcher, uncovering on one side the implications of my own prejudices and assumptions about the topic in the qualitative interview context, and evaluating my questions and methodology on the other. I see this commitment to reflexivity and self-criticism in the process of constructing knowledge as necessary to my own development as a researcher. It must be

noted here that participants' anonymity and confidentiality are preserved throughout this chapter. In order to identify their individual voices I have employed pseudonyms (i.e., Catherine, Mira, Marcus, and Patrick). Also, I have withdrawn information that pertains to the institutions that they have been associated with, such as the names of the art schools they attended or worked at. Adopting this approach, which I must say most of the participants were not very fond of, is necessary in order to protect their identities within artistic and educational communities and to prevent any potential consequences that might be caused by the critical statements that they make. As my reporting progresses from one participant to the other, I point out similarities and differences in participants' perspectives. These lead to the formulation of thematic patterns and the links between findings and underlying theoretical background, as well as my own critical concerns as a painter and art educator. Finally, this chapter closes with a report table that sums up key concepts and ideas of participants.

4.1 Catherine

> My introduction to post-modernism was basically one of feeling attacked and taking a defensive posture in relation to arguments and theories of post-modernism, because it seems to be a wholesale critique of painting...

Catherine obtained her undergraduate degree in visual arts in 1985, and an M.F.A in painting in 1987. She started teaching shortly after graduate school, and from 1987 to 1999 taught mainly introductory courses in painting and drawing. Currently she teaches painting in Montreal.

> I actually graduated from the M.F.A. program without thinking about post-modernism at all...Theory was not very much talked about. There was no discussion of feminist or post-modernist theory in the painting program that I attended.

Given that post-modern theoretical debates on validity of painting were very much in circulation in the 1980s, as stated in the first chapter of this thesis, I was a bit puzzled by Catherine's opening statement regarding the overall absence of post-modern theory in her graduate program. I asked Catherine to tell me more about the M.F.A. program she attended.

> Well, it was about having forty painters from all over the country...It was about a community of painters...all operating on the same philosophy...I could say that there were theory courses but all of them were committed to painting...And I was protected from the kinds of questions about painting that we are being asked outside the school.

It is obvious that Catherine saw her graduate school environment as very positive and protective of painting. The questions that I did not ask and that certainly could have been worthy of asking are: What might be some of those questions about painting that she thinks are raised outside of the art school? As well, what kind of philosophy were her peers (other graduate students) operating on at the time? Anyhow, it will appear later that this notion of building and promoting the community of painters is something that Catherine tries to establish in her studio teaching as well.

> I came up against strong anti-modernist sentiment and a strong push towards theory, particularly feminist and post-modernist theories and an anti-painting notion. I had to re-educate myself because it was a very complex political environment that I entered there in which there was a very little support for me as a young female faculty member.

During her first university teaching appointment, Catherine became aware not only of the gap among her fellow faculty members with respect to modernist tradition, but also of strong anti-modernist and anti-painting sentiments, which were expressed in particular by art historians who advocated post-modern art theory and feminist criticism. "For them painting was representing modernism. . . .As a painter, I did not think of myself as a modernist in particular, but I operated within modernism. . . It was like trying to create a position within modernism, but they [art historians] just wanted to throw the whole thing out".

As our conversation progressed, I started to realize that these anti-painting/anti-modernist sentiments of art historians were part of a backlash to the dominance of abstraction. In Catherine's view many artists in the community in which she worked belonged to so-called "club" of modernist painters. She pointed out that she was not accepted and received in that club ". . . probably for number of different reasons; being young, being female, being from outside, but also painting in a way that was not pure enough and that didn't have the look of the high modernist aesthetics".

In our first interview, Catherine mentioned an important influence of American modernists on Canadian artists in the community she worked, which led me to do some additional art historical research. Particularly influential were visits of American modernists and Clement Greenberg to Emma Lake summer school workshops in Saskatchewan, which were run by the Regina Arts College

of the University of Saskatchewan from 1955 to 1973. In 1955, at the suggestion of Kenneth Lochhead, an annual two-week summer workshop for artists was established. This included a number of American and Canadian artists such as Jack Shadbolt, Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, and Jules Olitski, as well as renowned art critic Clement Greenberg. Reid (1988) notes that during his visit to Emma Lake in 1962, Greenberg encouraged Regina Five painters in the same manner as he encouraged *Painters Eleven* in Toronto [25] ". . . to abandon even the last vestiges of Abstract-Expressionist mannerisms evident in their work in order to seek a more direct expression through the configuration of simple forms of colour" (p. 283).

I was curious about Catherine's position towards modernism and formalism in particular given that she associated her introduction to post-modernism with a feeling of being attacked as a painter. On one hand, she associated modernism with the acquisition and analysis of the language of painting. On the other, she pointed out the limitations of modernism, referring to its exclusivist character and unwillingness to address extra-aesthetic concerns in painting.

> One thing about modernism is that it looks at the language of painting as something that you have to learn and analyze. It's a language that you can also use to communicate ideas. I mean where modernism seems to stop

[25] The *Regina Five* included Ken Lochhead, Arthur McKay, Ronald Bloore, Ted Godwin, and Doug Morton. *Painters Eleven* included: Jack Bush, Oscar Cahén, Hortense Gordon, Tom Hodgson, Alexandra Luke, Jock Macdonald, Ray Mead, Kazuo Nakamura, William Ronald, Harold Town, and Walter Yarwood. See Reid, D. (1988). *A concise history of Canadian painting.* Oxford University Press.

> for me is that it does not look outside itself as much. I mean it's more inward looking, more pure. It doesn't seem to address what else is going on in painting.

Catherine's view of modernism, as inward looking and pure, alludes to Greenberg's ideas. Let us remember that according to Greenberg (1963), "modernism criticizes from the inside, through the procedures themselves of that which is being criticized . . . Thereby each art would be rendered 'pure', and in its purity find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence" (p. 12 – 13). Nonetheless, Catherine sees modernism as an important foundation to painters. "So to me modernism is not essentially good, but it seems necessary to someone who wants to be a painter, to learn and understand the language of painting"

In the first interview session, I asked Catherine to tell me how she initially developed her teaching philosophy. She said that in the beginning her teaching drew mainly upon the same values she was taught which pertain to the organizational principles of two-dimensional form and the visual language of painting. As our interview progressed, it became quite obvious to me that she does not dismiss formalist concerns as academic and obsolete. As a matter of fact, in her teaching she draws upon a formalist approach and tries to make students aware that ideas and the meaning of their work are ultimately affected by the formal/compositional choices that they make.

> I'm not uncomfortable in terms of teaching a modernist formalist approach as an entry point, as a beginning, and then conceptual aspects enter

> almost simultaneously...So I want students to address the meaning of the image that they are actually constructing. But in order to analyze it, I usually start by asking them to reflect on what they have done formally and how that has implications...

Catherine's position left me with an impression that one of the main values of her studio teaching philosophy lies in promoting students' understanding of the interplay between form and content. But this statement suggests also a certain predisposition on my part, because I have argued in this thesis that it is this interplay that tends to be neglected by both modernists and post-modernists. In addition, I have suggested that there is a general unwillingness on the part of art teachers today to acknowledge the significance of the formalist questions and re-contextualize the meaning of formalism. Nevertheless, as our interview progressed, I started to realize that Catherine's teaching philosophy lies outside of both modernist and post-modernist orientations.

I note also that Catherine's acknowledgement of the formalist approach in her instruction was immediately followed by her criticism of post-modern theory, or more precisely, how and when this theory is introduced to students. It is interesting that at this juncture she referred back to the protective (safe) environment that she had as a graduate student, hinting that many painting students today find themselves in an environment that is not so supportive of painting.

> Painting and drawing media are slow media to learn and what was happening sometimes to students is that they were getting hit by post-modern theory before they had a chance to learn the language [of painting] that they were trying to use and experiment with it. And in that

> context they almost became paralyzed. So they were not protected and they did not have the safe environment that I had.

Although I missed an opportunity to ask Catherine to elaborate on how post-modern theory is introduced to students, my understanding is that she is skeptical about students' engagement with art theory in general.

Further, I steered our conversation towards the central topic, asking Catherine what does post-modernism mean to her. She immediately associated the term with the feeling of being attacked as a painter. Catherine heard of post-modernism before she started teaching, and she said that she never really paid attention to it because she was simply busy painting. In her view, post-modernism has a two-fold meaning, a positive and a negative one. On the positive side, she sees it as an important force of liberation from the modernist male-dominated canon and an aid to the recognition of female artists. In fact, her initial response suggests that post-modernism has to do also with feminist theory and criticism. On the negative side, she identifies post-modernism with confusion and the overall loss of faith in art and painting in particular.

> Well I think it [post-modernism] has a kind of double meaning. It has positive meaning in my mind because it represents certain kinds of permissions and freedoms that I'm glad for what they meant to women artists. I think a lot of theory that was developed, the anti-patriarchal part of it, was quite useful, and then the other part has a negative meaning. It represents kind of confusion, or sense of loss, loss of faith in art and in painting in particular. It represents the demotion of painting to secondary or tertiary status . . .

There are a few things that I could have addressed more specifically in the interview with Catherine, such as her perception of the relationship between

feminism and post-modernism, which certainly has been of concern to many writers such as Barzman (1994), Owens (1983), and Schor (1997), as well as what anti-patriarchal part of theory she saw as useful to women artists. In the second session, I asked Catherine to elaborate on the negative meaning of post-modernism in specific relation to painting. She started referencing her experiences as an artist, saying that she did not really pay that much attention to the politics of post-modernism until she moved to Canada. At this point, she drew an interesting comparison between the American and Canadian art world.

> I learned about it through personal experiences when I entered the Canadian art world. It's a small country. There are not that many artists. It seemed to me that everybody was doing installation art. I came from this very strong painting culture into a world where there were not that many painters. And that was my introduction and how I learned about post-modernism, by learning about the Canadian art world, which seemed to be more theory-based. What I sort of gleaned about the U.S. is that the art world there was much more diverse and it seemed like you could do anything there, and nobody ever said you cannot be painter.

Catherine's view of the Canadian art world as more inclined towards theorizing as well as more critical of painting made me wonder if my own attitudes toward post-modernism might be also a result of studying painting in Canada.

In the second session, I wanted to know more specifically how Catherine's experiences and understanding of post-modernism might have influenced her teaching philosophy. At first, she pointed out that while learning about post-modernism she became actually more aware of her teaching, its objectives, methodology, and the context. However, later she changed this position by saying that developing a heightened sense of pedagogical responsibility is not

necessarily an effect of her exposure to post-modern theoretical texts, but rather an integral aspect of being an academic as well. I questioned Catherine's position further, trying to find out more about the theories and texts that she read and how these might have influenced her teaching.

> VS. You also said that you spent time reading some theories of art. What are some of those theories and what impact they had on your teaching?
>
> Catherine: Well, I would say, they impacted my teaching indirectly, more in terms of occupying the specific position of a teacher. I sort of felt like that I was serving the purpose just by occupying a position of difference from both the formalist school and post-modernist *new history* [added italics]...So, just by being there and by speaking from that position, I felt that was benefiting the teaching because I was articulating a different position. I don't know if I did consciously read all the texts you were supposed to read, but I was very aware that others were doing so.

There is a problem here with my question(s), pertaining to its formulation. Instead of asking a short and simple open-ended question, as suggested by Seidman (1991), I asked a *double question*; one addressing the theories that she read and the other, their impact on her teaching. The result of this approach is that Catherine never really clarified what are some of those theoretical texts that she read and that her peers were reading as well. However, there are two things that are particularly significant in Catherine's response. One has to do with her attempt to situate her position as being different from both the formalist and post-modernist studio teaching orientations. And the other is her linkage of post-modernism to some kind of a "new history" within which painting does not have a privileged role.

Let us look now at how Catherine interprets the statement 'painting is dead', which epitomizes the issue of death of painting.

> I hear it as a political statement because obviously people are painting, showing and selling their work of course... [laugh]. What it means to me is that painting has lost its power in the art world. It used to be a king and now that's not the case. Now people make videos and work in new media. Painting is not the media of currency. It's really hard to do painting that doesn't look dated and yet there are so many painters...I also think it's not that useful as a statement and I don't know why people keep saying it over and over again. I guess the statement is a rationalization for people who are abandoning painting.

Although the presence of laugh in Catherine's response downplays a bit ironically the significance of this issue, as she affirms that painting continues to be exhibited and sold, it is obvious that she is skeptical regarding the relevance of painting as a contemporary practice. And this skepticism might be something that Catherine inherited from post-modernism. With reference to Storr (2003), I have suggested in the first chapter that there are two main premises for making the statement, "painting is dead" today. One has to do with the collapse of modernism. The other has to do with the current marginal position of painting in the art world dominated by other more technologically inclined forms of art making such as photography, film, video art, and new media (digital and computer art). The fact is that in the contemporary culture driven by media and technology, the hand-made enterprise of painting is often seen as an old fashioned and obsolete medium of art. Yet as Catherine said there are so many painters. At the institution where I teach, the enrollments in drawing and painting are higher than in any other department of art.

But it must be clarified here that even though she is aware that new media and technological art now occupy the center of attention, Catherine does not

necessarily associate these trends with the death of painting. What seems to be most significant about Catherine's view on this issue is that she considers the possibility that a certain kind of painting has died, or more precisely, the painting "as it was", [male-dominated practice entrenched in formalist abstraction] is dead.

> VS. Where do you think this statement comes from? Is it a theoretical thing or...
>
> Catherine: I'm sure it's political for different interests, groups and reasons. I'm very aware now that focus is on the new media and technologies which is not what I was really associating with painting being dead before...I guess painting as it was is dead, you know the way it used to be...

On my next question as to whether she introduces the issue of death of painting to her students, Catherine surprised me by saying that the issue rarely comes up in her undergraduate classes.

> Catherine: It so rarely comes up...This is something that I find quite interesting.
>
> VS. Not even at the graduate level...
>
> Catherine: Oh no, it does come up at the graduate level, like some sort of premise for questioning. Like, I believe in painting and I'm going to paint but there is this talk about it, that it is dead, or not really relevant and fashionable, and so on. You should have discussions about that, but I think that these issues are not that relevant to people necessarily. I certainly have been preoccupied with them as an artist and not so much as a teacher...

It is still unclear to me why Catherine would find the lack of discussions on the death of painting in her undergraduate classes interesting. Is it because students are not talking about it as if they were supposed to, or because

discussing the death of painting is pointless and no longer important to young painters? Or perhaps these students have yet to be introduced to this issue. Nevertheless, Catherine suggested that discussions about the death of painting arise in her graduate classes. Although she has been concerned with this issue as a painter, she does not seem to be dealing with it that much in her teaching. Further, Catherine distinguished between popularity, or marketability of painting on the art market and its marginal presence within academia, critical theory and major contemporary art events.

> I think one of the things about painting today is that it is on the sidelines now. It's very much an outsider art and I'm sure that there are people who would disagree with this view, because painting still holds the central place in the market. But in terms of critical theory and academia it is on the sidelines. It does not have a big presence even within the art magazines and exhibitions. At the Venice Biennial this summer, or at the Millennium show that was in Ottawa, there was almost no painting. But when there was painting at the Biennale, everybody was commenting how it was their favorite part of the show. I was stunned because painting seemed like novelty, and it's been re-contextualized by the fact of having hardly any of it. I think something interesting is happening when painting is not central.

In the first chapter I brought up the view of Armstrong (2001) who also pointed out the marginal presence of painting at the Millennium show, *Elusive Paradise*, held four years ago at the National Gallery in Ottawa. However, Catherine's response indicates that this marginal, or outsider position of painting presents also an opportunity to re-invent painting and do more unconventional work. A similar idea is presented by contemporary painter, Terry Winters (2003), who states that painting's current position as a "minor" art within the art world

gives it ". . . new efficacy and an increased ability to say something radical" (p. 240).[26]

Catherine's teaching has not really changed that much because of post-modernism. However, she suggests that post-modernism, generally speaking, has to do with promoting students' understanding of context (i.e., modernism, post-modernism). According to her this is what makes students ultimately self-conscious about their work and what allows them to become critical and push their artistic development beyond their preconceived notions about painting. I agree with Catherine that many students have romantic views on painting that include also certain clichés and stereotypes about this practice of art.

> I am not actually sure if my teaching changed dramatically as a result of post-modernism because I was never really a high modernist and I didn't really teach that way either. Post-modernism has to do with making students understand the context of modernism and post-modernism; at least to understand that there is a historical context, because a lot of students are just terribly sincere about painting as if they were living in another time. You want them to enjoy that but also to gain awareness that there is certain level of cliché about painting itself...So they have to become self-conscious.

In the second interview session, I asked Catherine more specifically how does she address post-modernism in her teaching. She said that she used to have specific in-class presentations on modernism and post-modernism. Most importantly, she stated that post-modernism enters her classes when she tries to *de-romanticize* painting.

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[26] See Winters in *Thick and thin* (a panel discussion on death of painting in the 1980s, introduced by Robert Storr). *Artforum*, April 2003.

> But a lot of times they [students] have a romantic idea about painting. Still post-modernism usually enters the classroom when I'm trying to de-romanticize painting.... I do actually see it that way in terms of teaching because painting has a lot of history and because of that baggage it is linked to romantic ideas....

The question now is not if this approach makes Catherine a post-modernist, but whether we should look at post-modernism, or more specifically discussions about it, as a means to challenging students and making them more self-conscious about the meaning and validity of the work they do. How this is actually realized in her studio instruction is something that would require another research project. Perhaps the best way to examine how and when the topic of post-modernism enters Catherine's studio instruction would be to observe her classes. But I must add here that Catherine stated also that what matters to her as a teacher is that students learn how to paint and engage in research, and that ". . . post-modernism is in the air and communicates itself anyway".

When I asked her in the second interview to identify some challenges in her teaching, the ideas of de-romanticizing painting and making students aware of historical and contemporary contexts surfaced again.

> I put one to de-romanticize painting and getting students to learn about painting in the historical and contemporary context...I think one of the main challenges is how to make painting that is relevant today. How do you make paintings that have some sort of currency in the contemporary world and in contemporary terms? . . .I don't think that there is any particularly fashionable kind of painting.

Catherine's doubt regarding the relevance of painting as artistic practice today is obvious. In my view, it is not only a consequence of her exposure to

post-modernism, and her feelings of being attacked as a painter in Canadian art world, but also a sign of her own personal struggle as an artist-teacher accepting and resisting the marginal position of painting.

Finally, Catherine stated that one of the main objectives of her teaching lies in promoting a sense of community in her studio class — a community that is, above all, positive and conducive to art making, similar to the community of painters that she was a part of in her graduate studies. The following quotation also suggests that she places an emphasis on students' learning and freedom in doing their research. It is interesting that she sees this freedom also as a way of making students realize their own responsibility in the self-directed process of art making, and develop their own studio work ethic. Lastly, she wonders if this focus on students' learning might be linked to post-modernism, since she perceives this approach as different from the more traditional idea of the authoritative and didactic role of a modernist teacher.

> So one of the biggest issues that I focus on is how to create a sense of community in the classroom, and focus more on students' learning than on my teaching. As opposed to coming in with some content that I'm going to deliver which used to put pressure on me, and I would focus on students' research. So I'm sort of shifting away from that model and more towards letting students to do different things, which puts more responsibility on them. I'm not sure if you could say that there is some post-modernist implication to that. I was just wondering maybe if it does reflect post-modernism, because the modernist or old school style of delivery is the one where the teacher was the wise one, the one who emits important information and lecture.

4.2 Mira

> The worst of post-modernism is that it can be incredibly academic and that also it can be incredibly text-based and the visual object becomes secondary and dematerialized, and it can get to the point where all work is driven by certain ideologies, so the ideas come first and the work comes second. I work completely in the opposite way. I do not want that to happen. I'm not trying to get students to write their ideas first and have their work come out of it. I really want them to write after their work...to make the work first and then try to pull out and see what is it that is underlying their work and that can direct them towards certain ideas and art histories...

The interviews with Mira took place in her studio in Toronto. The first session was held a month after the September eleventh events. Mira obtained her B.F.A in 1986 and an M.F.A. in painting in 1992. She currently teaches painting and art theory in Toronto. She stated that during her graduate studies, she "defended" painting, stating that she was the only painter in the program at the time. Like Catherine, she also expressed her feelings of being attacked and marginalized as a painter. So I asked Mira to tell me more about what made her take a defensive stance during her graduate studies.

> I could say that I even took an offensive stance, [laugh], particularly when I read Benjamin Buchloh's essay [Figures of Authority: Ciphers of Regression]. His ideas completely put my head in a tail spin. . . I went through a crisis, and really truly questioned if he was coming from the Marxist position of economics and talking about painting as being the ultimate capitalist venture. I truly had to start questioning what that was about and if I as a painter was just participating in a big machine of capitalism.

Mira told me that she learned about post-modernism initially in her graduate contemporary issues class and also on her own, by reading texts of Jacques Derrida, Thomas Lawson, Roland Barthes, and Yve-Alain Bois. In fact, she sees the work of these writers as major influences on her understanding of post-modernism and on her own position as a painter.

As an undergraduate student Mira sensed a gap between faculty involved in high modernist abstraction and those involved in conceptual art making. In addition, she pointed out that discourse on abstraction and modernism/formalism was completely dismissed in the conceptual climate of art school where she did her undergraduate education.

> Abstraction was never talked about. We never talked about abstract painting and we never talked about modernism. I was never introduced to Greenberg's modernism or formalism, or simply that was never talked about in the school I went to. What we talked about was Duchamp, and his statement "stupid like a painter". The point was that you had to have the strategy behind your work and this issue of strategy was very important. Everybody was very conscious about developing strategy and that happened whether you're in painting, photo-based work or in sculpture studio.

Mira's response suggests to me not only that students were encouraged to adopt conceptual strategies of art making but that the legacy of Duchamp's criticism of painting and his statement "stupid like a painter"[27] has been presented

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[27] Duchamp's famous dictum "stupid like a painter" epitomizes his critique of the *retinal* art (painting), which had dominated the art of nineteenth century. Duchamp (1946) concudes his essay, *Painting...at the service of the mind*, by saying, "my ideal library would have contained all Roussel's writings—Brisset, perhaps Lautreamont and Mallarme. Mallarme was a great figure. This is the direction art should turn: to an intellectual expression, rather than to an animal expression. I am sick of the expression "*bete comme un peintre*—stupid as a painter". From Marcel Duchamp (1946), "Painting...at the service of the mind". *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics* by Herschel B. Chipp. Kuspit (2000) points out that Duchamp said less

to students as some kind of foundation for understanding the necessity of strategizing art. I realize now that I could have been more curious and asked Mira how this statement was discussed with respect to its original context.

Due to being a part of such conceptual and critical climate in her undergraduate training, Mira developed conceptually based approaches to painting. As our conversation progressed, she pointed out that her studio practice has been influenced by post-modernism, as she tends to work both with and against it. She said that in graduate school she developed an extreme self-consciousness about her work, which she sees also as an outcome of her engagement with post-modern theoretical debates on painting.

However, while reflecting on her recent work, she stated that her interest in the issues of post-modernism and representation shifted towards more intuitive approaches in dealing with the painterly qualities of surface. She sees this new sensibility in her work also as a sign of maturity and a certain confidence that she can paint "freely", which was not the case when she was in graduate school.

> I wouldn't say that I completely abandoned post-modern sensibility. I feel that I have more confidence now in my painting practice...I don't feel like I need to justify my work in the same way that was instilled upon me when I

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theoretically and more emotionally: "'Stupid like a painter'. The painter was considered stupid, but the poet and the writer were intelligent. I wanted to be intelligent. It is nothing to do with what your father did. It is nothing to be another Cezanne. In my visual period there is a little of that stupidity of the painter. All my work in the period before the Nude (1912) was visual painting. Then I came to the idea. I thought the ideatic formulation a way to get away from influences" (pp. X). Quoted in Ursula Meyer, ed., Conceptual Art. New York: Dutton. One of the most intriguing analysis of Duchamp's opposition to painting is offered by D. Kuspit (2000) In the introduction of his book, *Death and rebirth of painting in the late twentieth century*. According to Kuspit, Duchamp's revolt against painting presents also a revolt against the artistic tradition of his native country France; and against the musem (i. e., Louvre) that privileged painting. Kuspit asserts that Duchamp's revolt culminated by his move to America where ". . .technology, not art ruled: it was a place where inventions were more important, innovative, and intelligent—and certainly more useful—than any art were being made" (p. 225).

> was a graduate student, that extreme self-consciousness that happens to you in a graduate school, when you are asked to articulate every element in your work...

On my general interview-guide question of post-modernism, Mira responded personally and immediately identified a like/hate relationship with the term. A bit abruptly, she stated that both post-modernism and modernism might be over or will be over soon, suggesting that we are now in a new phase.

> Well, I will respond completely on a personal level because I have a like/hate relationship with the term and the whole notion of post-modernism...Even though it still exists and it's been talked about, I think it's really over, or it's going to be over really soon. I think we are in a modern period, which I would like to talk about as well. I was thinking two months ago that we were still in modernism: and that post-modernism was just a self-conscious phase, or all of modernism is over and we are in a completely new phase because of political incidence and this political world that we are now in.

As our first interview progressed, I started to realize that September eleventh events had a great impact on Mira. In fact, we spent some time reflecting on the impact of this event on artists. The second interview allowed me to explore further Mira's assumption that post-modernism might be over. I was also eager to clarify her view that post-modernism presents a self-conscious phase in her development as a painter. Mira sees art making today as much more open and inclusive than in the late 1980s and early 1990s when she was an art student. Even though she acknowledges that the post-modern critique is still around, she was very keen to point out that she sees a new kind of sensibility and freedom in the work of her students and in the art world.

> If I look around what's going on in the international world, and what I feel is going on in my studio in relationship to the art world, and if I look at what my students are doing and think about, I don't see that extreme self-consciousness any more. . . .People are doing work now that would be considered completely embarrassing ten, twenty years ago. People believe and are doing things that are funny, as well as things that are spiritually motivated. People are talking about sublime and beauty, and it's OK now to work all over the place. You know, the post-modern critique is going on with some people but there is an invigoration that is going on as well. There has been *brute*[28] art like that of Damien Hirst and the Chapman Brothers but there has been *reverence* also [my italics].

Mira's response suggests that artists today are making work that circumvents the post-modern self-consciousness, returning to the more traditional issues of spirituality, the sublime, and beauty. The interest in these issues, and *reverence*, was also echoed in the recent exhibition, "*Reverence: Concepts of the Sacred in Contemporary Art*" (2002) held at the Art Gallery of Hamilton.

I find the following quotation particularly interesting because Mira puts into question, openly in front of her students, the relevance of teaching post-modernism today. Moreover, she questions her own position as a teacher and the impact of her generation of artist-teachers (entrenched in the self-consciousness of post-modernism) on art students.

> I always ask them [students] whenever I bring up the issue of post-modernism: Does this mean anything to you or this is just a wasting of time. Do you think that my generation is trying to kill all of your instincts?

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[28] I also find a certain brute quality in the work of Damien Hirst, and Jake & Dino Chapman, particularly in the Hirst's piece *A thousand years* (1990), and Chapman Brothers' *Great deeds against the dead* (1994) which were part of the *Sensation* show held in 1999 at the Brooklyn Museum of Art. See *Sensation: Young British artists from the Saatchi collection.* London: Thames & Hudson.

> And some of them say "yes" and some of them say "no"...And then they feel like they want to learn about all that. Last year, I saw, and I still see the real optimism amongst my students. They can do anything, they don't feel hindered, and they don't feel self-conscious in the same way when I was going to [art school].

On one hand, one may see this kind of reflexivity demonstrated by Mira as reminiscent of post-modern pedagogy, which involves questioning of content and the role and responsibility of instructor as its transmitter. On the other, Mira's position suggests her own doubt, as she no longer believes that being self-conscious in a post-modern way is important to students today. I will address the meaning of post-modern self-consciousness in art in the last chapter of this thesis. But one may ask, is not this kind of scenario, in which post-modernism is presented to students as a crisis between old and new, self-conscious and instinctual, death and rebirth of painting, internalized by the instructor, exactly what makes it so interesting to teach, and what ultimately mobilizes students to take a critical position and become self-conscious themselves.

According to Mira, learning about post-modernism implies also an acceptance of the fact that painting is no longer the privileged medium of expression. Like Catherine, she associates the term with doubt in painting and art in general. In addition, Mira relates this doubt to the climate of anything goes, and the notion that there is no such thing as fixed meaning, as exemplified in the work of American Neo-Expressionist painter David Salle. In the second session I asked Mira to expand specifically on this notion of doubt. Her answer suggests to me that post-modernism also implies a break from the traditional ways of looking

at art which focus on its visual aspects, and breaking of the modernist linear succession of art movements.

> Mira. Major doubt...including breaking open of a sort of linear progression of things. I know this is a kind of textbook talking about modernism vs. post-modernism. . . . I see modernism as this sort of linear stream or progression of one movement to another, while post-modernism is this sort of blowing open traditional ways of looking at art...
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> VS. What could be the implications of this doubt in painting... the doubt that you associated with post-modernism?
>
> Mira: It leads to a kind of cynicism. I think that David Salle cashed in on that cynical aspect when there is no meaning, and when anything goes, and there is no structure anymore to a certain extent...There is deadness, that's how everything becomes....
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> VS. You mean the death of the author, death of painting...
>
> Mira: Yes, another part of the definition of post-modernism is the death of the original mark, the death of genius, the death of author and all of those issues...

Something needs to be said here about the implication of my own assumptions at this stage. In the previous passage, my affirmation of what Mira has said and adding that post-modernism implies also the death of the author (Barthes) and the death of painting (Danto) might have influenced Mira to a certain extent, to state that post-modernism also implies the death of the original mark, and the death of genius.

As our dialogue progressed, Mira went back to her initial hypothesis about the end of post-modernism. This time she was linking the term to globalization, multiculturalism, pluralism, and relativism. Once again I was aware that she was deeply affected by what was happening in the world, as she referred to the clash

between Islam and Christianity. In fact, she started contemplating the historical origins of this clash, wondering if it is also a part of the new phase, and the beginning of the end of post-modernism.

> Post-modernism has to do also with pluralism and multiculturalism and the relativity of positions in relationship to what you believe. It is certainly one of the effects of globalization. I don't know how to look now at globalization in relationship to this war that's going on. You know the fight between American domination and seeing the Islamic position, that's an actually really old history, Christianity against Islam. Seriously, I don't know how to decipher that right now and whether that could be linked to this new phase, I was talking about, or whether that's just more of the same...

Given that she also associated post-modernism with feminism, I asked Mira to tell me how she feels as a painter about feminist criticism of painting. On one hand, Mira is a painter who respects the high modernist abstraction of Reinhardt, Newman and Rothko. On the other, she acknowledged the importance of the feminist critique in the recognition of female painters, alluding to the symbolic killing of the male genius painter. And the "death" of the male genius painter has been also interpreted as the "birth" of spectatorship, which implies also certain gendering of this polarity.[29] My understanding is that Mira is a conceptual painter who has been working by accepting and challenging modernist conventions of painting (i.e., hard edge, monochrome ground, etc.). The following quotation provides an insight into her studio methodology of the 1990s, as well as the implication of feminist critique in her work. It is interesting

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[29] The contemporary art curator David Joselit (2003) says that ". . . if we accept that the "death" of genius was also a "birth" of spectatorship, both in the person of the artist and in the person of the viewer, then we must, it is true, attend to the gendering of this polarity, on the level of theory (which aligns "genius" with masculinity, and its witnessing with femininity) and in the dimension of practice (given that the '80s were a moment when women gained a much higher profile in the art world)." Joselit (2003), (pp. 210). In The mourning after. *Artforum*, March 2003, (pp. 210).

that she identifies her work of that period with *infecting* of the modernist/minimalist pictorial canon. However, she is also critical of feminist criticism, stating that the latter might also lead to a ghettoizing of female artists, which worries her as a painter.

> VS. How do you feel as a painter about the feminist criticism of painting?
>
> Mira: I think it was good that it [feminist criticism] killed the idea of the male genius painter and allowed some of the women into the room. But you know my relationship to that has always been tenuous as well. I particularly enjoy the most heroic paintings especially the ones from abstract Expressionism and minimalist painting, Barnett Newman's, Ad Reinhardt, and Rothko's, and all of that kind of personal heroic painting, even Pollock...I love all that stuff, but it's been important to understand what the debate is, and my work especially in the mid '90s had a very strong feminist edge. I was painting sort of minimalist paintings, flat color fields with representational elements that were referencing representational aesthetics of household products. . . .And so I was infecting this minimalist canon with feminism. . . What I can't stand is ghettoizing of female artists. I want my work to stand right beside all the other work and I don't believe that I can't paint because I'm female. I sometimes worry about feminists seeing it this way. I do find there is this sort of messing up of the canon, from the point of view of female painters that I think is very important, although I just worry about ghettoizing....

Mira heard for the first time of the death of painting in her introductory painting class. Although, she acknowledged the importance of the debates on the death of painting, suggesting also that they are still in circulation, she has pointed out that painting can never die. On one hand, she alluded to the "innate relationship" that people have with painting and its history. On the other, she is aware of the troublesome position of painting as being the central commodity of the art market.

> It's still important and people are still talking about it, it's incredible but I don't think painting can ever be dead. I think painting will never die just because there is this innate relationship that we have to have with it. And also, it has this incredible history as well. But I think the biggest critiques of painting happens, and a huge thing that affects art is economics and the Marxist debate or the Marxist critique that is leveled against painting as commodity being a part of consumer culture, in and out of consumer culture, being high art and consumer culture at the same time. I think that's where painting gets into most trouble, by the fact that it is so easily bought and sold. When the market is good, when the economy is good painting seems to come to its biggest resurgence and that's when probably the biggest critiques are being leveled against it.... But you know, it's probably good to have the question hanging around there, because it just stops [painters] from being uncritical. It is still good to maintain some kind of position of questioning.

I agree with Mira that the biggest criticism of painting is usually mounted when painting becomes marketable, as it was the case in the 1980s following the emergence of Neo-Expressionism. Mira's response does not suggest that we abandon the issue of the death of painting, but rather to accept it as a part of questioning which might be useful in preventing painters from becoming uncritical. The question is to what extent this questioning needs to be brought up in the context of studio teaching, and when painting students are supposed to enter the debates regarding the vitality and fatality of the medium that they try to learn.

Unlike Catherine, Mira brings the issue of death of painting to her undergraduate students, and particularly in her studio/seminar classes. She assumes that most students are already familiar with the issue, however it is unclear how they heard about it. My understanding is that she introduces the

concept of the death of painting also when she feels a need to challenge students whose work seems to be entrenched in self-expression.

> VS. You said that you had a chance to discuss the statement "painting is dead" with your students.
>
> Mira: Oh yes, I bring it up all the time.
>
> VS. So how do students respond to it?
>
> Mira: Well, I am not the first person to talk about it. Most of the them heard of it as an issue. . .Usually it comes up in discussing certain kinds of work that would spark those issues. The specific kind of work that usually spark those issues is when students are... maybe I have a bias, like when they're making paintings simply to express themselves
>
> VS. I suppose you are alluding to self-expression...
>
> Mira: Yeah and the whole place of it, as the self-contained practice that they are doing, that's usually when the idea of "painting is dead" comes up and the issue of post-modernism, of being able to articulate your work, where is your work coming from....Being critical means that you are not coming from nowhere and that painting is participating in a larger cultural practice. That is when it usually comes up...

Mira's approach in bringing the death of painting in her classes suggests that this issue is inseparable from her teaching of post-modernism. Moreover, making students aware of painting as a contemporary practice and promoting their critical thinking about the meaning and position of their work within a larger cultural matrix is one of the main objectives of Mira's teaching.

Let me sketch briefly the main aspects of Mira's teaching philosophy. Mira pointed out that in the beginning her teaching was focused primarily on addressing the issues of picture plane and promoting students' art making. One of the objectives that was at the core of her early teaching was to make students'

not only engaged in the process of art making but also aware of the relationship between painting (the physical act of materializing ideas in the plastic medium) and speaking about it, as well as a balance between these two.

> Through the process of teaching it became quite apparent to me what objectives of my teaching were... One of the major things was the balance between this sort of physical, sensual and skill involvement with the medium in relationship to being able to articulate what is it that you are doing... teaching students actually how to speak about their work...

While reflecting on her teaching, Mira reflected first on her own education, and on what was taught and was not when she was in art school. Her view is that art teaching in the late 1980s and early 1990s was unstructured in terms of how painting was taught, and that she had to learn various technical skills and approaches to representation on her own. One may relate this substantive lack of technical training in Mira's education to an overall dominating conceptual climate of the art school(s) she went to.

> So I went to school during the time while it was a big-free-for-all, and personally I developed my personal work quite specifically in relationship to skills. I had to teach myself about representation. I had to teach myself about moving paint around, about color and those things and it's actually good...I was not taught about pushing and pulling the picture plane, I was taught sort of very basic things about composition. But you know, when people are talking about issues around formalism I didn't even understand what that meant. It was just about doing things in relationship to your ideas. So as my work started developing certain streams of representation, I just did the exercises on my own and practiced representing from real life and from photography.

It is interesting that Mira did not see these experiences of studying painting on her own as necessarily negative, perhaps because learning art is primarily self-directed process. As a matter of fact, she demonstrated criticism of

didactic and prescriptive approaches to teaching skills. In addition, she said that she challenges students who seem to be focused only on acquiring technical skills pertinent to more traditional figurative work. Mira believes that students need to develop skills in relation to their conceptual ideas (content), and that she as an instructor is supposed to provide direction for students' further development.

> I believe that the majority of students want the guide-book on how to develop those skills. They want ABC, on how to go through that and then how to make the perfect figure painting. If I have students like that I work against that. I believe that you have to find out through the medium what you want to do, and that it should be driven more by the conceptual ideas, and then you have to find out how to convey them through the medium. And I'm there to sort of direct the students in directions where they need to go in relationship to their ideas...

It seems to me that Mira perceives her role as a painting teacher, in a similar manner to Catherine's. And this role implies a deliberate withdrawal of the authoritative self of a teacher. She believes that students should be allowed to learn freely, and as most painters do, on their own and through research driven by their own individual interests and conceptual curiosity.

The second interview allowed me to identify specifically concerns that underlie Mira's teaching philosophy. I have identified three major concerns: first, she insists on the importance of developing the student's work ethic through art making; second, she stresses the significance of dialogue about art in the studio context; and third, she tries to keep students informed about contemporary art making. The dialogue that she encourages in her studio classes pertains not only to group critiques and discussions that accompany slide presentations, but also

to the dialogue amongst students. Moreover, I perceived Mira's interest in building such dialogue in her classroom as very similar to Catherine's idea of a community of painters.

> One of the things that I still do even at the advanced level is that I want my students to be working...I want them to be making as much stuff in class as they possibly can and talk about that. Having that relationship of seeing something develop and talking back and forth amongst the group and myself, building a group dialogue where I'm not necessarily the authority in class where I'm there to facilitate discussion, and dialogue is extremely important.

In slide presentations Mira tries to introduce students to both historical and contemporary artists. Students' understanding of the difference between the point of view of a painter and that of an art historian is also important to Mira. She believes that it is important for students to hear her voice as a practicing artist.

> I try to expose students to as much art as possible, talking about either historical things or a bringing in as many contemporary artists as I can. And hearing me talk compared to hearing an art historian talk. Talking from a point of view of being a painter and why I love something and why I hate something and then, throwing it open to the class...

I see Mira's attempt to "personalize" her instruction also as a way of mobilizing students into taking a critical position. In addition, she sees the studio critiques as a premise not only for promoting students' contemporary and historical awareness, but also their critical awareness of the world in general. My understanding is that Mira tries to establish through her teaching the notion that being a painter today does not

simply mean working in seclusion of a studio space, but also being critically engaged.

Further, the written assignments such as project proposals and artists' statements (in the past) are also included in her teaching. I see these as an extension of her objective of engaging students to articulate and discuss their work openly and critically.

> In relationship to painting that we may be critiquing, you can sort of spin off into larger issues to what is going on in the world, what are contemporary or historical issues in relationship to that work. It's a balance of how and when to allow it and get into that, and keep it on track so that we can get to everybody's work. But I really work very hard to get everybody talking and try to step back and have people debating things...Also I have them write proposals for work and seeing whether they can follow through on that proposal for this term. I had them write statements in the past.

One of the things that I wanted to know more about is how she perceives the meaning of students' writing (proposals, statements, etc.) in the studio context.

> VS. I just wanted to ask you of what significance is writing in the context of teaching painting...
>
> Mira: It makes students come closer to articulating their ideas...
>
> VS. Is it necessary?
>
> Mira. Yes, it builds self-awareness, I'm not expecting them to become post-modern philosophers [laugh]... but writing helps them to articulate their ideas and it helps them to relate their practice to art history as well. It puts them somewhere, positions them, and they start to understand how their work may be positioned. I think that's important...

In the second chapter, I have identified this insistence on speaking and writing within the studio context as an effect of post-modernism on art teaching. Mira's response suggests most significantly that engaging students in writing enables them not only to articulate their ideas in their work, but also to position their practice within both contemporary and historical contexts. In teaching art today this notion of positioning and contextualizing work is a requirement that ultimately results in students' self-consciousness. Let me remark here on my question "is it necessary" (with reference to students' writing) in the previous quotation. This follow-up question appears to be problematic because it perpetuates certain dichotomous answering with either yes or no, as well as restricts the participant's formulation of the answer.

Mira does not want her teaching to be characterized as conceptually driven, or self-consciously post-modern. In fact, she is concerned about post-modernism as being ideological to artists, and leading to an overt theorizing and conceptualizing of art. My understanding is that Mira sees post-modernism also as potentially detrimental to the object of painting, and the learning of painting through its sensuous and material-based process of making. This is very similar to my initial perceptions of post-modernism, which were often accompanied by a feeling that due to post-modernism, painting might lose its body, become dematerialized, or more precisely, turn into discourse. This feeling has also provided an impetus for my research, as well as it has been embedded in my development as a painter.

4.3 Marcus

The interviews with Marcus took place in his Montreal studio. Marcus obtained his B.F.A. in 1976 and his M.F.A. in 1979. Shortly after completion of his graduate work, he started teaching at the post-secondary level. His teaching experience includes a variety of different courses in painting, drawing, design fundamentals, color theory and aesthetics and art criticism. Currently, he teaches painting in Montreal.

Marcus thinks that art teachers usually develop their teaching first by looking back and reflecting on what they liked and lacked in their own art training. While reflecting on his undergraduate education, he pointed out that art instruction in the school where he did his undergraduate degree was quite loosely structured, suggesting that there was an overall lack of direction and objectives in terms of how painting was taught. He identified this period (1972 - 76) also as the eve of post-modernism or late modernism. Moreover, he used the term *pedagogical confusion* to identify this situation, underlining that as a painting student in the school he went to, he received very little instruction that was dedicated to teaching skills and techniques of painting. Also, Marcus compared the curriculum of the school he went to with practices at the Ontario College of Art and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design — institutions known for their experimental and conceptually based approaches to art teaching in the late 1960s and '70s.

> When I went to school...I think we could call it the eve of post-modernism or Late Modernism...there was a general confusion, pedagogical

> confusion that I sensed among people who taught.... It was not a school that opted for radical kind of curriculum, the way NSCAD did or the way OCA did for a brief period in the late 60s and 70s. Nor did they feel confident enough to do traditional kind of grounding with drawing from the model and observational work. That did not happen either. So what happened instead was what I would call a relatively soft kind of formation with a lot of latitude if you will. Basically, the thing that was instilled in us was really a work ethic. It was made clear to us that to become an artist you have to clock in the hours...But in terms of curriculum, I learned how to develop photographs and I learned how to do etchings and things like that but in terms of painting did very little in terms of techniques with paint.

Marcus also pointed out that when he was an undergraduate student, Greenberg's writings, (*Art & culture: Critical essays*, 1961), were presented to students as required reading. At this point, Marcus stated his own position towards Greenberg's ideas, which he perceived as both "limited and limiting" to what he was committed to investigate through the language of painting.

> ...When I did go to art school required reading was in fact Greenberg's collection of essays on art and culture. I knew he was an intelligent man with obviously clear and provocative ideas, and I began to understand the doctrine, I guess modernist doctrine and late Modernist notions of American-type painting etc...The notion "keep it flat Jack", and stuff like that. However much I admired it, it did not feel suitable to me. It didn't feel like my language or the language [of painting] that I was interested in...

At first, I thought that the phrase "keep it flat Jack" belongs to Greenberg, and his comments about the work of Jackson Pollock, and Jack Bush. It was pointed out to me later that this phrase actually comes from Tom Wolfe's (1975) book, *The painted word,* in which the author takes a critical look at the era of abstract expressionism. In spite his criticism of Greenberg's exclusivist and dogmatic approach to art, Marcus considers Greenberg's ideas to be an

important foundation for students' understanding of both modernism and post-modernism.

Further, by reflecting on his art training and his early teaching jobs during our first interview, Marcus outlined a couple of main objectives of his early teaching philosophy. One was to encourage students to make art and develop their own work ethic, with respect to giving them freedom to explore ideas that are of interest to them. The other objective was to provide students with valuable technical skills, which were not offered to him as a painting student in the '70s.

> So I suppose if I want to use the term post-modernism and if I want to reflect on my early teaching jobs and especially my early jobs teaching painting, I felt that it was important to (a) instill in students that they need to clock in the hours and work hard, and (b) that there had to be a degree of openness which I appreciated...the kind of latitude they gave us, but I also felt that there needed to be some kind of a technical formation and I always felt that there was nothing wrong with [value] giving technical formation...

Marcus' initial use of the term 'post-modernism', as demonstrated in both previous quotations, was unclear to me. I was not sure if he was trying to situate his experiences as taking place in the cultural climate of post-modernism (or late modernism), or if he was using the term to identify his interest in a more structured approach to the teaching of painting, which included teaching skills.

Marcus stated initially that before he became aware of post-modernism, he became aware of the new stylistic trends in painting of the late 1970s and early '80s; New Image painting, Neo-Expressionism, and Transavant-garde. According to him many painting shows in the late 1970s started to signal a

departure from Greenberg's ideas, and a *new* interest in content, representation, feminism, and contemporary issues. Unlike Catherine and Mira who immediately associated post-modernism with feelings of being attacked as painters, Marcus perceives post-modernism as a positive current in both teaching and art making, which allows painters to go back to the past and revisit pre-modern models of painting, as well as to employ these in the contemporary art making.

> In its simplest terms, I guess I approach it as a visual artist, I use the term...in ways that are perhaps relatively simple-minded. I use the term the way Charles Jencks would use the term in architecture and I use the term the way Alfred Leslie uses the term, who is someone I'm doing research on, meaning that post-modernism on its simplest level implies willingness to go back to pre-modernist models to do your work. ...If I was to begin to think of painters that interested me while I was student, I would think of people like R.B. Kitaj, Alfred Leslie, Philip Guston. These are the artists who I was aware of, and who in their research were quite free wheeling in terms of historical referencing...They did not feel nailed down to Late Modernist aesthetics. I'm aware that post-modernism has other kinds of baggage in terms of philosophy and in terms of theory. Although I read some of that stuff, it probably has tended to go one way or the other, I see it as a kind of *mobility* between historical models for an artist, and at that level I see it as a very positive thing both in the classroom and in the studio...

Even though Marcus is aware that post-modernism finds its roots in theory, his interpretation of post-modernism draws primarily upon his familiarity with painting practices and methodologies that epitomize historical referencing, exemplified in the work of Guston, Leslie, and Kitaj. We will see later that Marcus's concept of *mobility* presents a philosophical rationale that underlies both his views on painting and the objectives of his contemporary studio teaching.

My understanding is that the death of painting is not of a major concern to Marcus, because he is a painter who seems assured by the vitality of his own studio practice — the practice that draws upon collage, literature, music and cinematic connotations, as well as that relishes the history of painting. Marcus pointed out that there has never been a moment in history when painting died. In his view, painting was prominent even during the 1970's and '80s when its "death" was most frequently proclaimed, which is something that was also pointed out by Danto (2003) in *Artforum, last year.* My feeling is that Marcus sees the statement 'painting is dead' as just another rhetorical argument that comes and goes as the pendulum of the art world swings, and that particularly serves artists who find solace in abandoning painting for more fashionable and technology-based forms of art. These realizations made me feel somewhat uncomfortable, because I was the one stressing the issue of the death of painting, rather than making events on canvas alive.

VS. What does the statement "painting is dead" mean to you?

Marcus: I heard it so many times. It's just like "What is art?". There are certain questions that I find...So when people create positions like painting is dead and what is art, what is painting as opposed to drawing, you know I tend to tune out. I see this as an unanswerable question. I tend to see the whole enterprise of painting as relatively fluid...If people want to say painting is dead because it strengthens their position as multimedia artists or conceptual or performance artists then I find the notion amusing...I think the facts belie it immediately. I just don't think that there has ever been a moment where painting was not alive...and in fact in the periods of time when that phrase was the most current, these are probably the eras when the most exciting painting took place...

VS. When was that?

> Marcus: The 1970s, the '80s you know. People tend to see the '70s as this wasteland for painting but clearly it was not at all, and we are aware of that. We know that painting of '70s was the most exciting period of production for people like Philip Guston, Kiefer, Polke, all the Germans, Freud, Kitaj, Auerbach. They were perhaps at the height of their career in the '70s as painters.

I asked Marcus where the statement "painting is dead" comes from. Marcus looked back again at his own education. He told me that as an undergraduate student, he realized that painting was not promoted in the eminent art magazines such as *Artforum*, and *Art in America*.. He recalls that during his school visits to New York in the '70s, he became aware that very little painting was present in the contemporary art galleries, and that most exhibitions at the time exemplified conceptually-based practices, such as the work of Walter de Maria and Gordon Matta-Clark[30]. He pointed out that absence of painting was also obvious in Canadian galleries in the '70s, or more specifically, at the *parallel* artist-run centers, such as *Vehicule* in Montreal and *A- Space* in Toronto.

> Artforum in the '70s was considered kind of mandatory reading material for an artist. It was a kind of bible for certain kinds of fast breaking avant-garde. So I was aware that there was not a lot of painting in the pages of Artforum... So I guess that was the first indication that painting was dead. I was aware that painting if not dead was not promoted in the supreme art journal of the time. I was also aware that when we went to New York which we did each year as class trips, and we went to Soho and 112 Green Street and all the kinds of spaces which every art student obviously

[30] Influenced by the site-specific sculptural practices in the open land by Michael Heizer, Walter de Maria created *Earth Room* in 1968, at Heiner Friedrich Gallery in Munich. The piece involved covering of the gallery floor with three feet of dirt. In 1977, de Maria recreated this installation at the New York loft owned by Dia Art Foundation. The installation consisted of 250 cubic yards of black soil, that was 22 inches deep and covered the floor of 3.600 square-foot floor loft. Marcus also notes the work of late photographer Gordon Matta Clark, known for his *anarchitecture* site-critique projects such as *Splitting: Four Corners* (1974), and *Bronx Floors: Floor above, Ceiling Bellow*, (1973). See Fineberg, J. (1995). *Art since 1940: Strategies of being.* New York: Harry N. Abrams.

> wants to go to.... You wouldn't see paintings, you would see Walter de Maria's *Earth Room* or you would see Gordon Matta-Clark's whatever he happens to be doing. And I suppose elsewhere — in Toronto's A-Space, Vehicule in Montreal, the equivalents elsewhere...

Also, let me add here that the mandate of the *parallel* galleries (now called artist-run centers) such as *Vehicule* and *A Space*, since their inception in the 1960s, had been geared primarily towards promotion of the interdisciplinary and multimedia art practices that could not earn recognition within the commercial gallery system.[31]

Most importantly, Marcus said that when he was an undergraduate student, some of his professors started to move away from painting, and to get involved in photography and print-based image making.

> So from the artworld I was getting that sense that painting was not valorized and from my teachers I was getting a sense that if it wasn't valorized. It wasn't being taught either. Interestingly enough at the time the people who were trained in painting and supposed to be teaching painting were moving into other areas. They were making prints and they were doing photography. There was this dual sense both from my instructors at school and that was going on at the art centers that painting was not dead but that something weird was going on...

Thus, I asked him to tell me what impact this situation had on students. On one side, Marcus suggested that this situation might have led many students into disarray. On the other, he said that many students carried on with painting, and that painting had been seen also as an oasis for more conservative painters who

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[31] For the historical and critical overview of the mandate of parallel galleries (artist-run centers) in Canada, see Nemiroff, D. (1994). Par-al-el. In J. Bradley and L. Johnstone (Eds.) *Sightlines: Reading in contemporary Canadian art.* (pp. 180 - 189). Artextes.

seemed to be entrenched in more traditional and stereotypical approaches to painting.

VS. What impact did this situation have on students?

Marcus: I think it confused a lot of students, I think a lot of students continued to paint because some of them were conservative and painting has often been seen as a kind of last bastion for conservative minds and they can sit back in this sort of warm bath of tradition and make pictures of apples and landscapes...

I was curious to know if Marcus discusses the issue of the death of painting with his students. Marcus suggested that he does not bring this issue in his introductory classes, and that at those levels he tries to provide students with technical skills and a positive atmosphere that promotes their interest in painting. His answer suggests that he brings critical issues to students gradually and with respect to students' maturity. Nevertheless, he said that the questions pertaining to the validity of painting usually come up in his intermediate and advanced classes, when students start to be more philosophically and theoretically inclined. At that point he sees also the larger subject of post-modernism entering his teaching and discussions with students.

Obviously, I don't present it [the death of painting] at the introductory level class. I mean, for me the idea is to make painting alive and create an atmosphere and give the students enough of technical know-how, so that they can feel how much alive painting is, and prove it to themselves by making paintings. I suppose at the university level in the second and third year as the things begin to advance a bit more and you begin to get into more philosophical positioning as a painter, you begin to look at historical models. You begin to read interesting critical texts on painting. That is the point when discussions enter the classroom and that is the point also when the idea of post-modernism enters the classroom at least in my classroom. I felt it's a bit too soon to start to promote those ideas at the

> earlier stages and that is when we talk about painting as an *outmoded* enterprise and what do people think about that and why they are painting even when there are these other options opened to them in regards to video, computer [art] etc...

My understanding is that Marcus challenges his students by presenting them the idea that painting has been perceived also as an "outmoded" artistic practice. As well, by asking them to reflect on other technological media of art, he encourages students to reassess their own motives for painting. This reminds me of Catherine's concerns for painting as an outsider medium in relation to current popularity of new media in art world.

According to Marcus, being a painter today implies not only being a skillful craftsman but also being a philosopher. In order to promote students' learning of painting as craft, Marcus does two things. First, he tries to familiarize students with different methods and materials of painting, making sure that they are familiar with different approaches in using the medium. In this sense, he gives to his students values that he missed in his art training. Second, he tries to make them aware that the craft of painting and the choices that they make in terms of using certain approaches have historical roots. I see this insistence on linking the craft of painting to its history in keeping with Marcus's initial interpretation of post-modernism.

> A big part of my teaching and it is also a big part of post-modernism, is to go back, to not be afraid of going back to pre-modern historical circumstances, to use pre-modern historical models in your teaching. So if you want to talk about oil paint there was nothing wrong about talking about Rembrandt, Caravaggio or Van Eyck if you want to go back to a kind of source of oil paint. So that is a part of my teaching right from the beginning, I suspect. The first, almost always when I teach a painting

> class and I would even say even at the advanced undergraduate level, not in graduate school, I usually begin the first class with a lot of stuff on the table; tubes of paint, bottles of guck, chunks of wax, sometimes a couple of eggs, and I do a kitchen thing...So a part of my teaching is to let students know what their options are in terms of media, because I felt that I did not know what my options were as an undergraduate student....So I suppose that is central to my teaching; to link technique to the kind of historical baggage...

Marcus' qualification of his in-class demonstrations as a "kitchen-thing" makes me think of painting as a process similar to cooking, as much as it reminds of Elkins' (1999) comparison of painting with alchemy, and his poetic statement that "paint is water and stone, and it is also liquid thought" (p. 6).

The second interview allowed me to investigate Marcus's commitment to teaching the craft of painting further. At this juncture, he pointed out that instead of letting students look at painting simply as self-expression, he points out to them that painting is a fiction. Moreover, Marcus argues that students' explorations of such construct should not be constrained by their lack of technical skills.

> I think the craft is important. I mean, what I say to them is that, and we talked about this somewhere in here when we talked about painting as self-expression, sometimes people just think it's a thing as opposed to a fiction. Painting is a fiction. It's a fictive construction on a piece of paper, on a canvas, and the choreography or the organization of those elements can go lots of different ways but the way it goes shouldn't be inhibited by students' lack of craft.

One of my assumptions has been that the post-modern criticism of painting has been also geared towards deconstructing the western history of painting, as Eurocentric and male-dominated. It is interesting how this

assumption emerged when I asked Marcus, in the second interview, to reflect on how post-modern criticism affected his teaching philosophy, given that he has a great deal of respect for the history of painting.

> VS. One thing that I wanted to ask you and that seems to be a major question today is, I understand that post-modernism and the post-modern criticism is directed particularly towards the history of painting . . .trying to deconstruct the history in order to come up with some new kind of history, and a truth about what is painting...Anyway, I know that you respect the history of painting as much as I do, but I would like to know how those so called post-modern truths that painting is or was male dominated, Western-centered practice, how those kind of truths, or if you will accusations affected your teaching philosophy. How do you respond to that kind of criticism...

This was by far the longest and the most convoluted question that I asked in this study, and obviously an epitome of both my own personal baggage and awkwardness in asking question. Marcus sensed my prejudices about post-modernism, responding rather calmly, by recognizing first the significance of having the plurality of perspectives within art historical framework. However, he is concerned about the ramifications of post-modern criticism in the teaching of western culture and art history.

> Marcus: I think it's healthy. I think intellectual cycles are healthy and the idea of looking at art history from a woman's perspective, from a black's perspective or from a Latin American perspective, I think these are healthy and good things. And I think a lot can be learned by doing that, and there is a lot of new literature and a lot of things out there. I have no problem with it, it's just more to look at and think about as a painter...The problem I guess, I face as a teacher, is that in the past students would have the basic grounding, what they call a survey course, but because there is a kind of fear of teaching an old style survey course of western culture course, I find that sometimes the students just have really marginal small little ghetto education about art.

Further, Marcus and I talked about the reluctance of art historians today to teach survey courses, and a new trend in teaching courses that focus on specific aspects in the work and life of certain artists. We agreed that this "new" trend in teaching art history does not provide students with a comprehensive understanding of art history that would allow them to understand how certain painters such as Degas, for example, contributed to the evolution of picture making with respect to organization and rendering of pictorial space.

> There are certain painters that are key to teaching for me and Degas was one of them, certainly when I talk about the relationship between painting and photography, if I talk about the relationship between painting and cinema, point of view, figure-ground, depth of field, focus, degrees of focus, finish against openness of painting. I mean you can't find a better example than Degas to discuss those things.

Since students' lack of knowledge of art history is a problem that I also encountered in my own teaching, I was curious to know how he goes about bringing art history into studio teaching. Marcus introduced to me a truly unique assignment that involves students to construct the genealogy of painters. While introducing this assignment to me, he demonstrated sensitivity to the pertinence of this assignment in relation to both level of instruction and the multicultural background of his students.

> One of the things that I've been doing is that I created a genealogy of painters, kind of a family tree of painters and I have it on two big sheets of paper, and then I ask the students to tape two other sheets of empty paper to it at the beginning of a school year. And this is for my intermediate and senior students and we use it. I've got two hundred years, I've got from 1800 to now, from Neoclassicism, Romanticism, and I go through it...and there are hundreds and hundreds of artists on my two pages, just all the people that would come to mind. Then they have to add, on the bottom sheet of a paper, more contemporary or esoteric kinds of things, things

that I might not know about, maybe Korean painters if they're Korean, or Ukrainian painters.

Alongside his idea of painting as fiction, Marcus interprets painting also as an activity that allows one to locate him/herself within both an art historical and cultural matrix. According to Marcus, painting involves mark making— it is an activity (painting-the-verb) of using the body to locate oneself physically on the surface. And the result of this activity is not simply a visual object (painting-the-noun)[32], it is also a statement that reflects painter's position within social and cultural contexts, as well as contemporary moment.

> When I talk about painting and I'm asked on occasion to do overview lectures and talk about painting to people who are non-painters or when I just deal with painters in my painting class, I tend to do two things probably simultaneously. One is to establish the idea that painting is and always has been, like any other art form, a way for human beings to say: here I am now.. I'm here, and at the same time bring up the idea where are we, what is this historical moment. So in other words, you are locating yourself when you paint always and I think painters have always located themselves. There is something interesting about painting vis-à-vis other arts, in it you are literally locating yourself. You are using your body to make a mark on the surface. So there is a physical location going on, but obviously there is a cultural one going on in time. So I suppose all of my teaching evolves around this notion that there is this personal location and that it immediately opens up into a social-cultural location which immediately opens up into the idea that is all very mobile, that cultural model notion of what we are as a society and what we are as people at this stage of the game are extremely mobile. When I talk about the mobility, I am trying to let the students know or engage in questioning what our society is, is it stable, or is it mobile...What is Zeitgeist about the look or kind of language—visual language that is a-pro pos of a kind of world and life that we live in.

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[32] I borrow the distinction between painting-the-noun and painting-the-verb from Schwabsky (2002). See Schwabsky, B. (2002). Painting in the interrogative mode. In *Vitamin P* (pp. 5 – 10). London: Phaidon

In my view, it is Marcus's insistence on defining painting with respect to the notion of mobility, and motivating students to reflect on the spirit and the visual language of contemporary time that makes his teaching ultimately contemporary. But Marcus does not present and impose his notion of mobility on students as some kind of a doctrine that must be followed, and as the only way to participate as a contemporary artist. When he identifies students whose works reflect passivity and more conventional approaches to painting, Marcus responds by introducing them to examples of artists who work in a similar manner, and theoretical ideas that would strengthen their position within more conventional framework of pictorial representation.

> I suppose in my teaching I try not to be doctrinaire and I try not to establish a single position as a value position...I try to make them aware of notions of post-modernism and its relationship to picture making and painting in particular...But I'm also not a kind of teacher who will bewilder someone who wants to hang onto a traditional approach and traditional mind set...I will try to pump up their position by showing them writing by people like Robert Hughes, showing them paintings by people like Phillip Pearlstein or Lucian Freud or Paul Feniak or Marion Wagshal, people who have and continue to invest in tradition and traditional models of painting; portraiture, landscape, still life, with credibility at the turn of the 21st century...

Let me close Marcus's profile by addressing his position towards art theory. Although he believes that art students are most satisfied when theory is taught separately from studio, Marcus states that in his classes, theoretical concerns are raised with respect to students' painterly concerns rather than through analysis of complex theoretical texts written by theorists such as Donald Crimp and Rosalind Krauss. He underlines that students need to be aware of both modernism and post-modernism, suggesting once again that the latter

implies criticism of Greenberg's essentialist and medium-centered approaches to painting. In addition, he refers to Frank Stella's influential book *Working Space* (1986) as a resource of ideas that epitomize the willingness of a painter to go back to the history of painting in order to re-invent ways of doing contemporary work. Finally, Marcus presents theory to students as something that is integral to their development as philosophers/craftsmen.

> They [students] need to be aware of, let's say, Greenberg's notion of flatness and fundamentals of craft and reducing any medium to its fundamentals is a kind of a modernist position...They need to know that there have been attacks on that position. We can also call it post-modernism and Stella's book is a good example of someone who was saying, hey let's go back and look at Rubens' Descent from the Cross, or Caravaggio's St. Mathieu and use that. That is how I try to get theory involved in classroom through particular painterly preoccupations. I try not to give them a straight theoretical text, like Rosalind Krauss or Douglas Crimp, or people like that. I think it's important to establish to students the idea that theory should not be something they should be afraid of, that in fact they are establishing an intellectual position every time they paint. They are philosophers as well as craftsmen...

4.4 Patrick

> I think that any instructor in any institution must by necessity be dynamic, and you must help your students, you must take your students to look at shows and talk about what you're seeing and...talk about all kinds of exhibitions that are happening and what is the role of painting, and what does it mean that there were two painters in the last Documenta? And...what does it mean that they are both American, what does it mean that their productions might be what we call expressions of otherness, outside of our perceived mainstream?

Patrick was the last person I interviewed in this study. Mira suggested his name to me, since he has been also involved in writing and curatorial projects on contemporary painting. As a matter of fact, one of his recent essays also addressed the recurring issue of the death of painting.

4.4 Patrick

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Patrick completed his undergraduate degree in 1978, and he obtained an M.A. in painting in 1980. Currently, he teaches painting and art history in Toronto. Like Marcus, Patrick also pointed out that art teachers usually start developing their teaching philosophies by looking back at their own education.

> It's funny how when you start teaching of course you start by replicating the way in which you were taught, which I did in some measure. Or you provide often times sort of a counter-strategy to things you didn't like. ...So I think, in my own education, I mean that's what I brought in my own teaching too, hopefully some breadth and some understanding of ways of making art that are different from my own...

Like Catherine and Marcus, Patrick also sees painting as a language, which according to him, operates outside of conventions of spoken and written language. However, unlike Catherine, he does not necessarily links the language of painting with the modernist pictorial paradigm. Patrick sees painting as a

studio practice that is not necessarily driven by theory, but rather by the experiences of contemporary living.

Patrick remembers that during his undergraduate studies he noticed that, the faculty was divided and not very supportive of painting. Also, ". . . there were faculty who didn't paint actively and promoted the notion that painting was not a good idea". He also stated that during the 1970s, art teaching was loosely structured, suggesting that unlike today, there was an overall lack of interest in reflecting on teaching and the pedagogical concerns and responsibilities of teachers towards students.

> Well, the instructors didn't do a lot of preparation in studio. Most of my instructors were practicing artists and they would come to class and advise you on how you're doing with your painting, but classes were very unstructured. The painting departments where I studied as an undergraduate and then graduate student, hadn't gelled in any kind of sense of self-consciousness, or in a political way. I don't think there was much of an overall sub-discipline philosophy. It was an interesting period because it was very different from the way post-secondary departments work now. There was very little interrogation of teaching and approaches to *andragogy* [italics added] that now we have more of, including a sense of responsibility on the part of faculty towards their students.

The question now is should we look at this new focus on structuring and philosophical rationalizing of approaches to art teaching as an implication of post-modernism, given that post-modern thinking in education involves questioning what we teach, how we teach and for whom we teach?[33] Also, Patrick's use of the term *andragogy* as opposed to more popular term *pedagogy* deserves a brief

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[33] For an insightful analysis of post-modernism in art education with respect to these questions see Keith, F. C. (1995). Politics, art and education: The positive postmodern challenges to aesthetics and traditional western education. *Canadian Review of Art Education, 22*(1), 40 – 55.

clarification. The word pedagogy refers to the art and science of teaching as the process of transmission of knowledge (content) from teacher to student. Although it has been associated particularly with teaching children and non-adult learning, the word pedagogy has been also used within adult education (i.e., adult pedagogy). On the other hand, the term *andragogy* (or androgogy) has been popularized by Malcolm Knowles (1968), who used it to distinguish the objectives of adult learning from that of children. In addition, Knowles pointed out that andragogy pertains to the actual methods of facilitating the acquisition of content which promote student-centered instruction and self-directed learning. Thus, Patrick's use of the term andragogy might be indeed more appropriate when talking about art teaching, and students' learning through research. We will see later that this interest in promoting students' research and self-directed learning lies at the core of Patrick's teaching philosophy.

Like Marcus, Patrick was also critical about the overall absence of teaching skills and techniques of painting in his art training. In addition, he pointed out the overall ambiguity of the conceptually based approaches to the teaching of painting promulgated by his instructors in the '70s.

> Well I think the big thing now is a more structured approach to skill acquisition and traditional material practices particularly in the first year...In the 1970s you wouldn't have taught these. I actually demonstrated gouache painting and egg tempera whereas back then people would have been opposed to it because generally people used acrylic paint, roplex and gel mediums and things of that nature with sand and plaster. There was a very particular and limited palette of materials that people would use, and also there were some devilishly marvelous problems that instructors set to us in the 1970s for which there was no ultimate answer. These were conceptually based obscurant questions. I

> think we were kind of prompted to consider a big book, *Silence* by John Cage that a number of my profs had us read, which is a wonderful book, very anecdotal and in many ways very down to earth. But to a painting student it wasn't immediately helpful in terms of grappling with observational transcription of reality into pigment and two-dimensional surface.

It was new to me that painting students in the 1970s were encouraged to read John Cage's seminal book *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (1961). Cage was an avant-garde composer who sought to break down the barrier between "art" and "nonart," particularly within the realm of sound. He argued that all sounds are of interest to him including the so-called "nonmusical sounds" of nature and the sound of silence itself. In my teaching I sometimes remind my students of Cage's observation: "When you are working, everybody is in your studio – the past, your friends, the art world, and above all your own ideas – all are there. But as you continue painting, they start leaving, one by one, and you are left completely alone. Then if you are lucky, even you leave" (Cage quoted in Elliott, 2002). Nonetheless, Patrick's concern regarding the pertinence of Cage's *Silence* to pictorial investigations and development of painting students, suggests that he sees painting as craft, and that painting students need to be provided with more specific and practical ideas that should assist them in handling the medium of painting and mastering pictorial organization. As a matter of fact, I see his interest to demonstrate more traditional techniques (i.e., gouache, tempera) in his classes in keeping with Marcus's interest in teaching the mechanics of painting.

However, unlike Marcus, Patrick does not necessarily link this return to teaching skills and traditional techniques of painting to post-modernism.

By looking at what has been said in the previous interviews, I began to realize that in the conceptual climate of the 1970s, many painting students had to learn methods and materials of painting on their own. Today, however, there are more specific courses in materials and methods that are offered to students in B.F.A. programs. I will address the significance of this return to the teaching techniques and skills of painting with respect to post-modernism in the last chapter of this thesis.

There are many things in common between Patrick and Marcus. For example, Patrick's teaching also demonstrates a sense of urgency in making students aware of the history of painting.

> I always show slides to my students. It's important to me that they know who Corot was or who Cezanne was, or who Manet was, or who David or Milne was. I mean these are all historical figures obviously, and I have a range of people who I'm interested in as contemporary artists too.

While reflecting further on his teaching in our first interview, Patrick stated that the overall objective of his teaching is to help students to articulate their understanding of the world in painting, and to demonstrate to them that an artist operates both critically and creatively. The latter commitment parallels that of Mira. Further, Patrick underlined the importance of seeking a fine balance between what he thinks is relevant to students' development and what students' needs and personal interests are. The following quotation epitomizes Patrick's

philosophical rationale to the teaching of painting and his sensitivity to student-centered instruction.

> I'm teaching them how to articulate their vision of the world in painting, and so it has to all go through them and what it is that they are up to. I will bring the experiences that I just had, when it's appropriate to do so. So there is always a degree of appropriateness, and I think to run a good painting class you do have to focus on the paintings that they do. I mean you have to inform them and show them how one functions critically and creatively. But you also have to bring it through their activities so that they think they're getting somewhere. It's not about applying some script to their work, although we all do have scripts. You have to strike a balance and you have to respect them, and ultimately as a teacher you've got your relationship with your colleagues.

Supporting students' research is of particular concern to Patrick. Thus he directs students to explore their personal experiences and look at the work of other artists who work in similar ways. My understanding is that instead of introducing the theoretical texts to the whole class, he introduces theory to students with respect to their individual painterly and critical concerns.

> I try to get them to draw upon their experiences and their artwork. I try to get them to make it personal. I don't have an idea what their art work might look like...I want to find out what they are interested in and once I found it, I would say these are possible things you may think of about researching technically. These are some artists who have worked possibly in a parallel way, or this is something you might do and these are things you might read. I've had students that I've given Benjamin Buchloh, but as I say I try not to have a script per se in terms of theory and reading, although, of course, we all do have our values.

One thing that I could have asked Patrick is what particular kind of students' work or attitudes make him draw their attention, for example, to the writings of Benjamin Buchloh? Another important aspect of Patrick's approach is

that within the context of group critiques, he attempts to withdraw his own authoritative voice of a teacher. The ". . . other big goal in the painting 3 and 4 is to not hear my voice, to get them to do work in the critiques.... I am more of a catalyst". I found this position to be congruent with Catherine's focus on students' learning rather than on following her own content of teaching.

While I was steering our conversation towards the central topic of post-modernism, Patrick stated that in the late '70s and early '80s, many students and teachers worked within a Greenberg's modernist framework. In fact, he said that he studied painting with one of the Greenberg's "acolytes" (the term that I found appropriate in referencing Greenberg's dogmatic and exclusivist approaches to art). Moreover, Patrick pointed out that as a student he perceived Greenberg's ideas as rather limiting. He also remembers that as he introduced some figurative elements in painting during his graduate studies, he encountered the opposition from other students. By asking Patrick to elaborate on these experiences, our conversation shifted to the topic of post-modernism.

> I had introduced some figurative and representational elements into my painting. That's when I started working with the roses, and they [his classmates] held that this was an anathema to contemporary art, that all art should be resolutely abstractionist in nature...So there was a certain rigidity in the 1970s, and post-modernism opened up the idea that one could *infect* [my italics] this straight-jacket of painterly pictorial incident with other kinds of ideas that derived from conceptual artists, and from other ways of art making, that there wasn't necessarily one technical approach that guaranteed certain serious art...

Similarly to Mira who described her work as a way of infecting modernist and minimalist pictorial conventions with feminism, Patrick used the word *infect*

to identify a post-modern critique of modernism. It appears in the previous quotation that he perceives post-modernism as being both: (a) a critique that subverts modernist pictorial paradigm of self-referentiality; and (b) a recognition of pluralism in art. As I asked Patrick more specifically what post-modernism means to him, he said that

> Postmodernism is a very loose thing. It's hard to find exactly what postmodernism is. ... I mean in the late 'seventies people were thinking of art practice as a kind of endgame strategy and they were looking that through the lens of Duchamp...

As suggested in the first chapter, post-modernism is a slippery term that refers to many things at once. It can be used to identify a way of thinking (condition of self-reflexivity), stylistic innovations and ironic representation in art, as well as the various facets of the late capitalist society, as discussed by Jameson (1983), Lyotard (1984) and Zizek (2000). My understanding is that Patrick sees the roots of post-modernism in the endgame strategies of art making, which find their impetus in the early twentieth century art of Malevich, Rodchenko and Duchamp, and which culminate in the 1960s, in the work of Reinhardt, Buren, Kosuth, as well as the appropriation painting of Levine, and Halley in 1980s.

Patrick learned about post-modernism mainly on his own, in the mid '80s as he started teaching, and by reading Artforum. He mentioned in particular the debates of Canadian artists Ian Carr-Harris and Liz Magor in Vanguard magazine, and the reviews of the Canadian art critic John Bentley Mays as

important to his understanding of post-modernism. When I asked Patrick to tell me what does post-modernism mean to him as a painter, he said:

> Well I think certainly in the early '80s there were artists who were emblematic of what people thought as the stylistic moment ... So there is this idea of heterogeneous painting, which could combine many things.. so who would come to mind, somebody like David Salle, you know. But you scratch the surface and you find Francis Picabia. But nevertheless there was ...this idea that you could have all these disconnected experiences on the canvas and . . .I think there was a questioning of style, as a kind of homogenizing label. And certainly in the 1970s as a student you were looking for your signature style. Your teachers had signature style something you were looking for...And in the 1980s and 1990s you look for the gimmick, the intellectual caprice, the ironic...
>
> VS. Are those also part of post-modernism?
>
> Patrick: I don't know, I think that post-modernism is a hard thing to pin down. It's certainly about a critical look at the strictures of modernity, but when you look at modernity I mean, it's not a unified field...

The fact that he identified the origins of David Salle's pictorial heterogeneity in the work of modernist avant-garde artist Francis Picabia suggests that he perceives certain continuity between modernism and post-modernism rather than a break between them. It is interesting to note that that Mira has also referred to Salle's work as post-modern and cynical. Further, Patrick associated post-modernism also with the arrival of French theory to North America. In the second interview session, he said that while he lived in France, he read Neo-Freudian psychoanalytic and French theory. He sees the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the structuralist and post-structuralist theory as particularly influential, saying that they became integral to both

universities and the artistic investigations of the 1970s[34] Also, on many occasions during both interviews, Patrick pointed out that French theoretical texts were poorly translated into English. I missed the opportunity to ask Patrick in what respect he saw these translations as bad. But the important issue is that he sees the implication of the theoretical language in art making as positive and an important factor in promoting pluralism and the recognition of differences among artists and their studio methodologies.

> In many ways it goes back to Saussure, I mean I haven't formally taken courses in structuralism and post-structuralism but certainly I think that there are parallels between contemporary art practice and the intellectual life of universities, so you can look at many of the reduced programmatic and structured practices of artists of 1970s, and you can compare them to Roland Barthes' analysis of fashion or something like that. In the 1970s, they applied structuralism to contemporary art practice and historical artists, and tried to look at it through that deliberative and neatly tidy lens...In the 1980s there was an attempt, although I say often using language that was just a bad French translation, there was an attempt to account for difference in one's background and frame of reference and I think this was tremendously liberating...

As we progressed towards addressing the death of painting", Patrick indicated that painting continues to be a central commodity of the art market, and that he became aware of the problematic position of painting as commodity in the first year of his undergraduate studies.

> Patrick: I mean most contemporary galleries show painting. Most art that is sold is painting. I mean the bread and butter of most galleries, maybe not all galleries in New York, is painting...

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[34] Bois (2003) notes also that French theory and post-structuralism in particular had been adopted within both academic and artistic circles in North America. "The fashion-driven pressure to transform complex texts into sound bites was so strong that even the best translation could not have prevented the hodgepodge that became the lingua franca of the art world for a few seasons" (Bois, 2003, p. 267). In The Mourning After. *Artforum*, March 2003

VS. Do you think that that's maybe one of the reasons why painting is so criticized, because it's such a commodity?

Patrick: Absolutely, which was pointed out to me when I was in the first year of university.

According to Patrick, it is not only painting that has been declared dead in post-modernism; the film and the novel have found themselves in a similar position. As in all previous interviews, this is the moment when my questions start to reflect my own assumptions about post-modernism. This time however, I alluded to the death of chemical photography, which one of my colleagues from the photography department pointed out to me recently.

VS. Why do you think painting is usually declared dead ...

Patrick: Well, the film has that honor, the novel has that honor as well

VS. Chemical photography perhaps...

Patrick: I suppose in a certain way, but that's more of a technology question. I guess people do say that. Paul Delaroche said in 1830 that painting was dead because of the technical innovation of photography....

Like other participants, Patrick heard about the death of painting as an undergraduate student in the 1970s, mainly from his liberal arts and philosophy professors. He said that he was never moved by these debates because he was aware that painting was produced, and he was also assured of his own personal interests as a painter. Further, Patrick does not seem to be keen on discussing the death of painting with his students, although he knows that sometimes they hear about it from other faculty. In fact, he argues that when debates on the

validity of painting are turned into bickering and sub-discipline rivalries their outcome is unhealthy for both students' development and collegiality among faculty.

> People are making it, people have made it for a long time. It's a visual medium and it has various languages that exist outside of written and spoken language ...To contest the validity of painting in the larger cultural matrix is a wonderful thing to do, or even to have an art historian or cultural theorist saying something is also interesting but to have a colleague in another sub-discipline saying this practice is better than that practice, that is a problem.

When I asked him if the death of painting has to do particularly with the history of painting, our dialogue ended up picking up certain tension. Patrick believes that there is no one single capital "H" history of painting, which I was referring to. Besides acknowledging more pluralistic tendencies in the art world with respect to the more inclusive programs of museums and art galleries in the past few decades, Patrick pointed out that one of the main problems with painting lies in its "popularity and accessibility", which might be ascribed to photography as well. His response suggests that the history of painting might be also a burden to a contemporary painter.

> VS. Do you think that it [the statement: painting is dead] has to do with the history of painting?
>
> Patrick: A history of painting or "the history painting"...?
>
> VS. The history of painting...
>
> Patrick: But of course there isn't a history of painting...there are histories of painting that are attached to certain movements.

VS. But isn't there also a capital H, history of painting that encompasses all those histories?

Patrick: I think if you look at what's on view in the Museum of Modern Art or what's on view in the National Gallery of Canada, what's on view at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia twenty years ago, and what's on view now, I mean, they are drawing on the same collections but there is. . . For example, there is an interest in articulating what the history of the production of women within painting might be...I mean painting is interesting in that way. One of painting's problems which is also true of photography is its immense popularity and accessibility. I think this is more problematic than an official history of painting, which can be also a millstone around the neck of the contemporary artist.

However, it is significant that while we were talking about the death of painting, Patrick suggested that most painting students at their early stages relish more popularized models of artists. Thus, he pointed out that one of the objectives of his teaching is to *deprogram* students at the initial stages of their development and make them aware of other more contemporary examples of painting.

The students come in and the models that they wish to emulate are very specific and the way in which they want to learn painting is very specific. So they're interested in perhaps Robert Bateman, they're interested in Andrew Wyeth. These figures are surprisingly persistent and only now we're starting to get some students who come in and they are now doing abstract art...But I mean the thing is that you have to *deprogram* [my italics] them in the first year and challenge them in various ways, and to encourage them to think of painting as an expressive medium directed towards certain ends...And usually quite quickly, they begin to understand that there are many ways to go about painting.

Although Patrick does not necessarily link his notion of *deprogramming* students to post-modernism, I found his tone to be similar to that of Catherine, who brings post-modernism in her teaching as a means to *deromanticize* painting

and clichés that students have about it. What I would like to suggest here is that one of the objectives of Patrick's teaching, as well as of all four artist-teachers interviewed in this study, is to challenge students' romantic ideas about painting, and to engage them in critical thinking about the meaning and position of their work with respect to contemporary issues. This cannot be addressed without stepping out of the realm of self-expression and grappling with theoretical and critical arguments pertaining to the validity of painting. And introducing students to post-modernism presents a point of departure for such inquiries. Before I proceed with further analysis of the findings, let us look at first at the report table that sums up the key concepts and ideas that emerged in participants' perspectives with respect to the five main categories of data.

MAIN CATEGORIES	CATHERINE	MIRA	MARCUS	PATRICK
Educational Background - Art training - Time frame - Climate towards painting Critical reflections tudio instruction)	BFA 1985; MFA 1987 *Positive graduate school experiences – community of painters * Focus on painting * Absence of questioning validity of painting & post-modern theory	BFA 1986; MFA 1992 * Loosely structured undergraduate instruction - focus on conceptual strategies – disregard for modernism & abstraction. *Defended painting as a MFA student.	BFA 1976; MFA 1979 *Loosely structured education of the late 1970s * Lack of teaching techniques & skills of painting *Focus on developing work ethic & openness to students' idea	BFA 1978; MA 1980 * Loosely structured instruction in the '70s & '80s * Absence of political self-consciousness in painting departments & interrogation of approaches to teaching / andragogy * Lack of teaching techniques of painting
Legacy of Modernism - Formalism - Greenberg's legacy - Painting as language	* Language of painting * Critical of the exclusivity of modernism/formalism * American modernists in Canada / Emma Lake summer workshops	* Modernist heroic painting: (Rothko, Newman, Reinhardt, Pollock) *Infecting modernist/minimalist cannon	* Greenberg's collection of essays on art & culture as required reading * Limitation of Greenberg's ideas	* Dominance of Greenberg's ideas and abstraction in the 1970s. * Encountered opposition from other graduate students due to his interest in representational painting
Post-Modernism - Intro to Po-Mo - Positive & Negative meaning - Personal vs. theory-based interpretations 'exts, theorists, painters, exhibitions	*Wholesale critique of painting *Feeling attacked as a painter *Canadian art world as more theoretical & critical of painting *Anti-modernist / anti-painting sentiments (gap between art historians & studio faculty) * Learned about po-mo on her own by reading theory (texts ?) *Positive and negative meaning of post-modernism (+) Liberation from the modernist canon, recognition of women artists (-) Loss of faith in art & demotion of painting * Opposed to early introduction of post-modern theory to students	* Doubt in painting, cynicism, (i.e., painting of David Salle) * Theoretical references: Derrida, Barthes, Buchloh, Lawson, Bois * Post-modernism as a self-conscious phase * The end of postmodernism? (post 9-11 feelings) *Pluralism, globalization multiculturalism * Brute art & reverence *Killing of the male genius painter * Feminism (positive & negative effects for painting) * Concerns about ghettoizing of female artists	*Neo-Expressionism/New Image painting *Departure from Greenberg's ideas *Invitation to feminism, personal and social content * Historical mobility: Willingness to go back to the past, (i.e., Leslie, Jencks, Kitaj, Stella) * Positive for both studio and classroom * Change of orientation in the teaching of art history: From surveys to the aspects	* Hard to pin point * Liberation from the strictures of modernity * Recognition of differences * Neo –Expressionism * Gimmickry & intellectual caprice (i.e., David Salle's work) *Infecting modernist canon *French theory (i.e., Barthes, Saussere) *Critical view on English translations of French texts * Multiple histories of painting *Continuity between the two movements: From Picabia to Salle * More inclusive museum and gallery programs
eath & Rebirth of Painting *Painting is dead?" Origins - Critical position Recurrences due to post-modernism - Validity of painting today Addressing the death of painting in studio instruction	* Political statement. * Rationale for people leaving painting * Popularity of the new media *Painting as an outsider & unfashionable medium. *Marginal position of painting in major contemporary shows * Painting as it was might be dead * The issue rarely comes up in ugrad. classes but comes up at the graduate level. *Premise for questioning the validity of painting	* The criticism of painting as commodity *The importance of questioning validity of painting * Post-modernism - the death of the original mark, the death of the genius, the death of the author *Academic & text based nature of post-modernism *Brings the issue in her classes in relation to post-modernism * Challenging students whose work is entrenched in self-expression	*Aware of the speculations on the death of painting *The absence and unpopularity of painting in the '70s (magazines, galleries, artist run centres, NYC & Canada) & the vitality of painting (Auerbach, Kitaj, Freud, Guston) * Faculty who were abandoning painting * Discussed in class in relation to post-modernism, not at the intro. levels, yes at the intermediate & advanced levels.	*From Delaroche to death of novel and film *Became aware of the issue & the criticism of painting as commodity in the 1st year of his ugrad. studies. *Problems with popularity and accessibility of painting – similar to photography * The history of painting as a burden * Critical of bickering & sub-discipline rivalries among faculty *Not discussing issue in his classes.
tudio Teaching Teaching background & experiences - Objectives - Initial formulations - Contemporary concerns - Teaching methods Skills, art history, art theory in studio - Slide presentations project, research Painting as language	*Formalist analysis as entry point * Initial focus on the language of painting in relation to ideas * Form-Content- meaning * Post-modernism & contextual awareness *Post-modernism vis-à-vis de-romanticizing students' ideas & clichés about painting * "They have to become self-conscious" * Focus on students' research and learning as opposed to content delivery *Withdrawing authoritative voice of a teacher * Challenge of making paintings that don't look dated * Insistence on dialogue, students' learning and community of painters.	*Emphasis on art making * Balancing making with speaking about art * Encuraging dialogue among students * Promoting critical & contemporary and historical awareness *Written assignments in studio teaching (i.e., project proposals, artist statement and critical reviews) *Making precedes ideas * Challenging self-expression * *Dilemma about teaching po-mo today & instilling self-consciousness * Teaching technical skills in relation to ideas * Personal position and a point of view of a painter who speaks	*Open- minded approach to teaching & students' ideas * Focus on skill acquisition & the craft of painting *Linking craft to historical baggage * Genealogy of painters (art history in studio) * Painting as fiction * Mobility as philosophical rationale *Painting as location Intellectual/Philosophical positioning *Contemporary artist as a craftsman and a philosopher * Bringing theory in studio vis-à-vis students' projects and painterly concerns (R. Hughes) * Greenberg's ideas as a foundation for understanding modernism & post-modernism	* Encouraging approaches to art making different from his own * The importance of not having one single approach to teaching * Expressing the understanding of the world through painting * Brings historical & contemporary examples of art in slide presentations * In-class demonstrations of traditional techniques (gouache and tempera) * Attentiveness to students' interests * Teacher as a catalyst * Brings theory in relation to students' individual interests (Buchloh) * The importance of deprogramming students at the initial stages

Chapter 5: Pedagogical Reflections

In this chapter, participants' perspectives and their underlying concepts are further interpreted and analyzed with more specific reference to the two research questions that provided the initial framework for this study. *How do artist-teachers involved in post-secondary studio teaching, interpret post-modernism and its underlying speculations on the validity of painting? What might be the implications of post-modernism on the teaching philosophies of artist-teachers?* The chapter exemplifies philosophical reflection that illuminates some issues and challenges that post-modernism presents to studio teachers of painting. It also proposes some new directions for future research. The ideas and questions raised in this chapter do not present an attempt to generalize how painting is or should be taught in the post-modern era. Rather, they offer a background for further reflection and inquiries into values that underlie the studio teaching of painting today.

5.1 Reinterpreting the Meaning of Post-modernism

Let me look back first at the participants' views of post-modernism, which is inevitably a slippery term that refers to many things at once. It is certainly the term that I used in this study frequently.

Catherine's perceives the double meaning of post-modernism as being both positive and negative. On the positive side, she associates the term with certain permissions and freedoms from the modernist male-dominated canon,

and an important force in recognition of women artists. In addition, she suggests that these objectives find their impetus in theory, underlining in particular the significance of anti-patriarchal (i.e., feminist) theory. The feminist discourse on art ". . . centers on one or more of the following issues: 1) the recognition and establishment of women's art history; 2) the existence of gender differentiated approaches to artistic practices, products and aesthetic response; and 3) the development of non-hierarchical approaches to understanding and appreciating art which is sensitive to women's world views with respectful regard to age, race, and class" (Congdon, 1991, p. 15). On the negative side, she associates post-modernism in a manner similar to my initial position, with a loss of faith in art and the downfall of painting.

Similarly to Catherine, Mira associates post-modernism with major doubt in art, cynicism, the death of the original mark, the death of genius, etc. She points out that she has a like/hate relationship with post-modernism, which she also interprets as a self-conscious phase in both her development as an artist and modernism at large. Mira speculates whether post-modernism has come to an end, and whether we are now in a new phase (i.e., modernism, post post-modernism). I will address later in this chapter both the notion of being self-conscious in a post-modern way, and the end of post-modernism, which has been suggested by some art theorists (Becker, 1999, Bois, 2003, Heartney, 2002, Foster, 1996).

Marcus interprets the meaning of post-modernism vis-à-vis willingness to go back to the past and bring pre-modern approaches to painting and the teaching of art. My understanding is that the objective of such *mobility* which involves referencing, cutting and pasting of various stylistic and semantic elements and shifting through different historical contexts and models of representation is to re-invent contemporary production. In addition, Marcus's interpretation of post-modernism implies also an interest in linking painting practices to contemporary art issues and reflection on the pertinence of visual language to *Zeitgeist* [35]. With respect to Marcus's view we may look at post-modernism as synonymous with contemporainity. Many theorists and artists feel more comfortable using the term contemporary than post-modern. In fact, "one can be post-modern without self-consciously wearing the label" (Pearse, 2002, p. 12). Anyway, unlike Mira and Catherine, Marcus sees post-modernism as a positive thing in both classroom and studio.

Patrick states that, "post-modernism is hard to pin down". One might agree after reading the first chapter of this thesis. Perhaps we also need to acknowledge that any attempt to establish a fixed definition of post-modernism is antithetical to the nature of its critique that stands against totalizations and fixed

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[35] In the first of the twelve lectures on *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985), Habermas traces the origin of the word *Zeitgeist* which refers to the spirit of the age in the work of Hegel. According to Habermas, this word is pivotal to a conception of modernity as specific time consciousness, which has been elaborated also by Bergson. According to Habermas *Zeitgeist* ". . . characterizes the present as a transition that is consumed in the consciousness of speeding up and in the expectation of the differentness of the future" (p. 6). In the preface to his *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel writes, "the spirit has broken with what was hitherto the world of its existence and imagination and is about to submerge all this in the past; it is at work giving itself a new form" (cited in Habermas, 1985, p. 6)). Original source: G.W.F. Hegel, The Preface to the Phenomenology, in W. Kaufmann (1966) (Ed.), *Texts and Commentary*, New York, p. 20.

concepts. It was modernism that was about fixed definitions, disciplines, and interpretations of its timeless ideals such as aesthetic experience, the sublime, as well as modernist painting (i.e., Greenberg). Patrick simply associates post-modernism with questioning the strictures of modernity, which, according to him, have been a liberating and important process in accounting for the differences in artists' backgrounds and frames of references employed in their work.

My initial assumption was that due to the increased speculations on the validity of painting as artistic practice, as well as repeated proclamations of its death, many painters, including myself, perceived post-modernism as a cultural and discursive climate that is antagonistic to the practice of painting. Although, Mira's and Catherine's interpretations of it support this assumption rather than those of Marcus's and Patrick's, it is obvious from the findings that all four participants interviewed in this study, became aware of a certain antagonism and criticism of painting either in their art training or in their early professional practice and teaching.

Catherine stated that her introduction to post-modernism was a feeling of being attacked as a painter and taking a defensive posture. In fact she pointed out that post-modernism presents a wholesale critique of painting. I found Catherine's view of the Canadian art world as more theoretical and critical of painting, in comparison with the American art world, truly intriguing. But let me point out two things here. First, the discourse on the issue of the death of painting presented in this thesis encompasses the perspectives of both American and

Canadian artists and theorists. Second, I never heard of death of painting until I started my undergraduate studies in Canada. With respect to Catherine's critical view, I would suggest that formulating and pursuing some sort of a comparative research project that addresses the position and relevance of painting with respect to the two neighboring art worlds, Canadian and American, might lead to some interesting insights uncovering the underlying politics of the two art worlds. But such a project would also require clarification of what constitutes the relevance of an artistic practice: a) its popularity on the art market, b) its ability to instigate critical discourse and challenge our assumptions about art, c) its potential to operate as a spectacle worthy of representing a country at the Venice Biennial, or d) its ability to convey the human condition in ways that cannot be conveyed by any other media operative in contemporary culture. I encourage my students to reflect critically on examples of art that reflect these propositions, as well as on other ones when stressing the validity of painting as a contemporary practice.

Like Catherine, Mira also states that she felt attacked as a painter, arguing that while she was in the graduate school, in the early '90s, she had to take a defensive stance with respect to the theoretical arguments and debates on painting.

Marcus points out that as an undergraduate student in the 1970s, he became aware of the absence of painting in art magazines (i.e., Artforum, Art in America), New York art galleries, and artist-run centers in Canada, and that

during that time, people who were trained and supposed to teach painting were actually abandoning it and doing work in other media.

Patrick has said, that the issue of the death of painting was pointed out to him initially by some liberal arts and philosophy professors, and that he was also informed about the problematic position of painting as a commodity in the first year of his undergraduate studies.

The point of revisiting these anecdotal experiences of participants is not to state that post-modernism is antagonistic to painting. At the final stages of this study, I see that I was drawing upon an overtly general assumption. Rather, I would say that the participants' experiences and feelings about painting being under attack, and painting being ostracized and under scrutiny are very much part of their artistic development. I suspect now that such experiences are a part of the process of becoming a painter in the post-modern era. They are also intensified by the post-modern discourse on painting and bickering among artists, faculty and students, which is something that I was also aware of in my undergraduate training in the 1990s. Having those kinds of experiences and contemplating on the fact that painting participates now in culture that is dictated by technology and the media's *seductive* visual images, painting might well be seen as obsolete. This might lead one also to doubt and cynicism regarding the purpose of being a painter today. And these realizations are certainly capable of inhibiting one's creative vision. However, overcoming these is not simply a matter of ignoring them, by seeking seclusion in the process of making art and indulging

the "warm bath of tradition" (Marcus). Nor is their overcoming a matter of mimicking what is presented at the commercial galleries and glossy pages of art magazines. The worst strategy for overcoming post-modern doubt in painting is to turn it into some kind of a simulated subject matter without understanding the historical "task of mourning". This task, as Bois (1990) suggested, has contributed to the history of modern painting. As all participants in this study have noted, being a contemporary painter means also being critically engaged. This involves reflection on contemporary culture, history, and discourses on painting alongside art making.

5.2 Questioning the Validity of Painting in Studio Teaching

If we agree that introducing students to speculations pertaining to the validity of painting, including the issue of the death of painting, are integral to their development, then it is also important to ask at what stage in their education would this introduction be appropriate. When should students begin to consider that the medium they invest in has been perceived also as unfashionable, outmoded, or simply proclaimed dead, in spite of its history and the fact that there are so many painters today?

The death of painting is rarely discussed in Catherine's undergraduate classes, but it comes up at the graduate level as some sort of philosophical premise for interrogating the meaning of painting today. Mira's response

suggests that she brings this issue to her teaching when she tries to challenge students whose work seems to be entrenched in a form of self-expression disconnected from contemporary concerns. She sees questioning the validity of painting as useful in promoting the criticality of young painters. Marcus makes an important point that he does not to address the death of painting in his introductory classes. His position is that, at those levels, students need to develop a sense of work ethic and find out how alive painting is and learn about its different expressive possibilities. Thus, involving students in discussions about the validity of painting should take place only at the senior levels, when they start to develop interest in reading theoretical texts and philosophical positioning.

In my teaching the issue of the death of painting is mostly brought up in the studio-seminar courses that deal with contemporary issues. The objective of these courses is to promote students' understanding of various theoretical issues that inform contemporary art makers, and to promote students' critical thinking, research skills, as well as their abilities to articulate the meaning of their work in both oral and written form. In the teaching of contemporary issues to painters, the death of painting is addressed within the wider topic of post-modernism, and in the presentation of my own work.

I agree with Catherine and Patrick that most painting students come to art school with preconceived and "romantic" ideas about painting. Sometimes I wonder what might some of those ideas be. How are they different from ones that

I once had as a student, and what have they to do with traditional stereotypes about painters as bohemian, eccentric, and manic personalities working in the seclusion of their studios? I also ask my students to tell me how they perceive the troublesome personalities of Kahlo, Pollock, Basquiat and Picasso, which have been also of concern to Hollywood movie makers, and how these cinematic renderings popularize and exoticize the role of an artist. Elkins (1999) writes that the ". . . postmodern doctrine has given up on the old notion that artists are melancholic geniuses prone to manic depression and beyond the reach of ordinary common sense" (p. 147).

I found Catherine's statement that post-modernism usually enters her classes when she tries to de-romanticize students' ideas about painting as particularly interesting. In that sense discourse on post-modernism might be seen as a pedagogical tool used for challenging students. I suppose the objective of such challenging is to make students more open-minded about painting and how different ideas inform its making. Patrick suggests that most painting students at their initial stages relish the technical virtuosity of painters such as Andrew Wyeth and Robert Bateman. I would add also the figures of Dali, Kahlo, and Chagall. Patrick notes the persistent recurrence of these figures in students' minds, stating that students have to be *de-programmed* at the initial stages of their development. In my view, his notion of de-programming resembles Catherine's notion of de-romanticizing students' clichés about painting. But let me also clarify that Patrick does not necessarily see his objective as being influenced by post-

modernism. I would suggest here that using post-modernism to challenge students might be seen also as a way of making them more self-conscious about their work. As Catherine states students "have to become self-conscious". And Catherine's view parallels Mira's initial observation that post-modernism has to do with being self-conscious, which is something that she inherited in her education. The question that now comes to my mind is what does it mean to be self-conscious as a painter, and what might be the links between self-consciousness and post-modernism?

5.3. From Self-Consciousness to the End of Post-Modernism

In my view, being self-conscious as a painter involves, first and foremost, being aware that painting is not simply an individual practice geared towards self-expression. It is a historical and cultural practice as well. Thus, being self-conscious means also being aware of the different historical and cultural conventions that pertain to painting as a language of representation. One of the basic conventions is that painting is a framed object that presents both a window on the world and a window to experience. The other one is that painting is an activity that results in a picture that is made of paint and on a two-dimensional surface. Being self-conscious as a painter implies also being familiar with various practices and discourses on painting (both historical and contemporary) in which those conventions have been elaborated into more specific ones (i.e., flat space, linear perspective, Baroque space, illusionistic space, abstraction, monochrome,

readymade, etc.,), providing the parameters for different pictorial investigations driven primarily by ideas which a painter develops in his/her encounters with culture. In modernism, as advocated by Greenberg, pictorial investigations are seen as primarily optical and self-referential, and they were pursued in order to secure the unique and autonomous status of painting from both, other disciplines of art and the visual objects found in everyday reality and culture. With post-modernism, pictorial investigations are freed from such pretenses which ultimately stressed a painter's concerns with painting's syntax (the organization of aesthetic and formal properties) and his/her aspirations towards purity, originality, and authenticity of his/her artistic expression. And with this new sense of freedom the self-consciousness of artist evolved as well.

Walter Klepac (1994) points out that twentieth century art had been always a self-conscious enterprise. He states that with the emergence of the conceptually based art practices in the 1960s, which epitomized the strategies of appropriation, site-specificity, impermanence, accumulation, discursivity, and hybridization, and which are also the strategies that had been ascribed to post-modern art (Owens, 1984), the art making shifted from the self-referential concerns with purity and medium-specificity to semantics.

> That is, the art of the "anxious" or the problematic art object gave way to an art in which the object was conceived of as a vehicle for investigating and revealing the fundamental episteme of the artist/viewer — the

assumptions, cognitive habits, and network of associations upon which the artist's and viewer's conception of the world is based. (Klepac, 1994, p. 114)

Sturken and Cartwright (2001) associate post-modern art making with reflexivity suggesting that "self awareness of one's inevitable immersion in everyday and popular culture has led some post-modern artists to produce works which reflexively examine their own position in relation to the artwork's institutional context" (p. 254). I see these interests in questioning the status of art as an object in the world as well as reflexivity and positioning with respect to art work's institutional context as characteristics of post-modern self-consciousness in art. And the key to the meaningful engagements of such self-consciousness lies in referencing. As Klepac writes,

> . . .[R]eference becomes an overriding and central issue when you feel that you can no longer take the things you see and read at "face value" i.e., in and for themselves. The very idea that some particular object or image in the world has an intrinsic nature, meaning, or value no longer seems to be credible or valid. All this idea reflects is a highly developed and extremely self-conscious awareness of the fact that human knowledge and the language used to communicate it are, in the last analysis, artificial constructs, i.e., both are human-centered. The primary focus of intellectual and creative activity would, by this light, seem to be that of deciphering,

decoding, or appropriating rather than discovering " the nature of thing" (Klepac, 1994, p. 262)

Thus, being self-conscious in a post-modern way implies not only being aware of various references upon which the meaning of artwork is constructed and points to, but also being aware that art is now dependent upon something that the artist him/herself has not created. What I would like to suggest here is that being self-conscious in a post-modern way implies also a certain disbelief in originality and uniqueness of artistic expression. As stated in the theoretical review, post-modernism has been associated also with the end of individualism, appropriation, and the absence of aesthetic criteria, all of which perpetuated the notion that anything goes and that anything could be art. Mira identifies post-modernism with the death of the original mark, the death of genius, the death of author, and doubt in painting which, according to her, leads to cynicism. Indeed many of my second year students are familiar with these ideas, and in class discussions they often identify art with pessimism, skepticism, and cynicism.

In his book *Why art cannot be taught: a handbook for art students*, Elkins (2001) provides an insightful distinction between skepticism and pessimism. Although he does not interpret these with respect to post-modernism, Elkins writes that "pessimism, unlike skepticism, is a modern doctrine, and it essentially has two meanings: in everyday use, it denotes a belief that most things will come out badly, and in philosophy, it signifies the conviction that the world is essentially evil" (p. 110).

Morgan (1996) distinguishes between skepticism and cynicism in post-modern art.

> To be skeptical is to have necessary aesthetic distance in relation to one's production as an artist. To be cynical is a severe detachment in relation to one's experience with a work of art. In so doing, art is negatively transformed into a system of politicized representations. Cynicism assumes privilege as the condition of art without ever confronting the effect of privilege in relation to content. Privilege often disguises itself through arrogance and projection (p. 76).

Morgan argues that the future of art lies in the hands of an inner-directed artist who accepts skepticism rather than cynicism, and who see his/her ultimate challenge in trying to bring back the aura in art. The recent work of Canadian abstract painter John Kissick, comes to my mind as a prime example of contemporary painting that accepts the historical conventions of the language of painting (abstraction) without fading into didactic and self-conscious referencing. In his artist' statement, Kissick (2004) writes,

> Yet in the end, the central issue of my painting remains intact: how does one make abstract paintings that appear knowing, without succumbing to easy cynicism, or visually enticing without collapsing into feigned sentiment. I suppose I want my works to speak awkwardly, to wrestle with the historical predicament of abstract painting today without ever conceding endgame. (Kissick, 2004)

While reflecting on the issue of the death of painting, Storr (2003) suggests that one of the most interesting aspects of recent painting is that many painters today such as Lisa Yuskavage, Jonathan Lasker, Carroll Dunham and Helmut Federle, have decided to confront the tradition. He notes that these painters employ the conventions of painting neither in order to outrun the history, nor in order to provide its critique and pastiche. What is at stake in their work is commitment to reinvent the dialogue with the viewer, which according to Storr, signifies the end of self-consciousness.

> It's a matter of accepting the fact that one is working with a set of conventions; the point is to get the maximum out of those conventions. Rather than trying to predict or outrun history, and rather than *pastiching* or *"critiquing"* [my italics] history, such work [Dunham, Federle, Lasker, Yuskavage] takes historical precedents and techniques more or less in stride and uses them to a particular purpose. What replaces it [self-consciousness] is a certain candor that allows—or demands—a similar candor on the part of the viewer. In the encounter that a picture sets up, it's as if the artist and viewer met and said, "Here we are speaking painting. You grew up speaking it, I learned it at Berlitz; so what do we have to say in that language? And now that we really know it, how much can we play with it for the sake of pleasure, and for the sake of breaking free from the rote formulas according to which it is usually used?" (p. 240)

If those painting practices that tried to predict or outrun history represent modern self-consciousness, referencing also Barthes' notion that to be modern is to know that which is not possible anymore" (quoted in Bois, 1990 p. 243), then those interests in pastiche and critiquing the historical conventions signify post-modern self-consciousness. But if we take Storr's observation for granted, assuming that there are some painters today who are already seeking a new raison d'etre within the notion of going back to tradition, then being self-conscious might no longer be important. Why should then students "have to" become self-conscious, as Catherine suggested.

This brings me back to Mira's doubts regarding the meaning of teaching post-modernism. She said that she sees real optimism among her students as they no longer feel hindered, and self-conscious in the same way she once was. She also sees herself as a painter moving away from referencing and conceptual strategies, by embracing more painterly concerns that pertain to surface and the sensuous aspects of the medium. Moreover, Mira was the only participant to suggest that post-modernism itself might be over, and that we might be in a new historical phase. In my view, her assumption has to do a lot with the impact of September Eleven, although I might be criticized for not addressing this further. Anyhow, the question is, has post-modernism come to an end? To say yes, would be to rejoice once again the killing of the dead — and to leave the door open to cynicism that has spirited much of the late twentieth century art and its discourse. To say no, and insist that students have to learn about post-

modernism and become self-conscious in the same manner as their teachers once were might lead one to perceive the former as ideological to the teaching of art.

Indeed, some theorists have suggested that we have reached the end of post-modernism, and that we have entered post-postmodern era. In fact they propose that post-modernism altogether should be abolished (Bois, 2003) and that the term is now démodé (Foster, 1996) due to its popularity (Heartney, 2002). Their ideas allude to the return of the avant-garde, return of the real, or simply, revival of modernism in art. As well, they praise art for its renewed interest in the body, nature, tradition, religion, beauty and the self (Heartney, 2002). What seems to be ironic is that some of these theorists advocated vociferously what now they try to overturn. Carol Becker states (1999) that:

> We are in a moment of post postmodernism, conscious of all that has come before, tired of deconstruction, uncertain about the future, teetering on a paradigm shift, but convinced that there is no turning back. I agree with Stuart Hall that the use of post, in postmodern and post postmodern, means that we have extended, not abandoned, the terrain, of past philosophical work. (p. 66)

I am not sure that adding another "post", to identify a new moment, style of thought, or mode of analysis in art and philosophy, is necessarily productive. Before we accept the new assumptions of theorists there is a need to map out

what might have been learned from post-modernism, and how it has changed our understanding of art and the world in which we live. As an artist-teacher, I see this process as an important part in understanding the objectives of my own future inquiries within both art and education, and this thesis as the beginning of that process.

5.3. Theory in Studio Teaching

Catherine's concern that students are sometimes introduced to post-modern theory too early in their studies, which, according to her, might "paralyze" their learning and formal experimentations with the language of painting, made me reflect also on the meaning of bringing theory in studio teaching.

I would agree with Marcus that students are generally happier when these two are taught separately. Marcus suggests that it is important to inform students that they are establishing an intellectual position every time they paint, and that theory is not something that they should be afraid of. In fact, the responses of Marcus and Patrick suggest that they bring theoretical texts in their instruction, however in relation to students' individual interests and their painterly preoccupations. Marcus states that he does not give to his students straight theoretical texts written by post-modern theorists such as Rosalind Krauss or Douglas Crimp. However, he notes, that he would bring the writing of Robert Hughes, for example, to support students' interests that gravitate towards more conventional representational models of painting. Patrick underlines that although he has given the texts of Benjamin Buchloh to some students, he tries to avoid imposing scripts in his instruction. Another direction for future research may be to

focus on investigating what constitutes theory in studio teaching, as well as to address how is it brought to instruction. It would be also interesting to observe in the studio context what examples of students' work and their painterly preoccupations make artist-teachers direct some students (as opposed to others) to certain theoretical texts, such as those of Buchloh (Patrick). As well, what theoretical concepts underlie studio projects of artist-teachers? Uncovering these might provide insights that support the integration of theory in studio teaching. It could be seen also a part of an overall attempt to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of art.

Let me revisit briefly participants' positions towards Greenberg's theoretical ideas, which, as discussed earlier, influenced greatly not only modernist art and teaching, but also provided a point of departure for post-modern criticism of painting. Although, Mira and Catherine did not state their views of Greenberg's ideas, both Patrick and Marcus stated openly that as art students, they found those indoctrinating and limiting. I agree with Marcus that Greenberg's ideas still present an important foundation for students' understanding of both modernism and post-modernism. I would add here that comparing Greenberg's notion of *flatness* with Steinberg's notion of the *flatbed* picture plane presents another way of making students tap into the evolution of pictorial space and the visual language of painting from the optical-pictorial homogeneity of modernism to the operational-contextual heterogeneity of post-modernism.

Further, if students are encouraged to accept the notion that they are taking an intellectual position every time they paint, as suggested by Marcus, then it should be clarified to them that part of one's intellectual positioning has to do also with reflection on the process of art making. Not that often teachers of painting encourage their students to write about the process of making a painting, and to use language to describe their methods, ideas, and feelings. That kind of activity would probably uncover a whole spectrum of references, which might illuminate also students' experiences of contemporary living and a strata of culture that teachers of art might not be familiar with.

Moving from teacher-centered instruction towards studio teaching that engages students in research and self-directed projects is another implication of post-modernism in the teaching philosophies of the practitioners who participated in this study. Yet, I must note that very little attention has been placed on training students how to do research, and providing them with a more concrete understanding of research skills and methods employed by contemporary artists. Stressing these then presents another direction for future inquiries into the teaching of art. Moreover, such research should provide a better understanding of what constitutes the notion of art as research, which as Singerman (1999) points out, is particularly exemplified within the context of teaching art in university art departments.

5.4 Vitality of Painting and The Particularity of the Medium

With the exception of Catherine who has not objected to the lack of teaching skills and techniques in her training, Mira, Marcus and Patrick state that art

instruction in the 1970s and '80s was loosely structured, and that very little attention was placed on the actual teaching of skills and techniques of painting. In my view, neither the high modernist framework or the insistence on conceptual strategizing of art, the two dominating orientations in art teaching of the 1970s and 1980s noted by participants, were able to provide painting students with a comprehensive understanding of the medium of painting and its working knowledge — the language of painting. If the high modernist framework spirited by Greenberg's ideas privileged formalist abstraction and excluded more traditional concerns with representation and figuration, then the conceptual strategies omitted the significance of a sensuous understanding of the medium of paint. My understanding is also that all four participants are critically aware of both of these traditions, yet without privileging one tradition over the other.

For example, although critical of modernism and its exclusivist approaches that privileged intrinsic aspects of art, Catherine uses formalist questions as an entry point for her instruction. She encourages students to address how meaning of their work is constructed and affected by the formal (compositional) decisions that they make. I identified Catherine' orientation with a value pertaining to the interplay between form and content. In my previous work, I argued that both modernists and post-modernists failed to recognize this interplay. Yet, form and content are inseparable, and encouraging students to reflect on this point is pivotal to their development and understanding of their studio practices. As a matter of fact, I believe that questioning how content is expressed in form is

foundation to visual art instruction (Spicanovic, 1998). Bannard (2003) reminds us that

> Form always comes in company with content, and artistic value – Modernist or Postmodernist – must be a matter of form and content working together. Any construction of meaning and value of art must embrace formal considerations, and therefore must allow that this meaning or value resides in formal considerations. Real conviction in art can never be carried by content alone. It resides in form, which alone gives life to content. (p. 217)

Let me also point out that unlike Catherine and Mira whose perspectives demonstrate a certain reservation about teaching the more traditional techniques of painting, Marcus and Patrick seem more committed to teaching the so-called *mechanics of painting*. For Marcus, teaching the craft of painting and linking it to its historical baggage, as well as being open-minded about going back to pre-modern models of art making is what post-modernism is about. Patrick has noted that he demonstrated gouache painting and egg tempera technique, which were not taught when he was an art student. He also pointed out that the "big thing now is a more structured approach to skill acquisition and traditional material practices". Thus, there is a need to investigate further if indeed this more structured approach to teaching skills and technique represents an implication of post-modernism.

By looking at participants' interests in stressing the acquisition of the language of painting (Catherine), linking the craft of painting to its historical baggage (Marcus), demonstrations of the traditional techniques such as gouache and egg tempera (Patrick), or a stance that the process of making should precede ideas (Mira), I arrive at the conclusion that making students aware of the particularity of the medium of painting is very much of concern to these practitioners. This leads me to reflect first on what constitutes the medium of painting?

By medium of painting I mean not only physical and perceptual qualities that pertain to the materiality of paint, support, and chromatic aspects of color but methods and methodologies as well, the technical *know-hows* which allow a painter to explore and employ those qualities in order to support the content and subject matter of his/her work. In addition, there is also the history to the medium of painting. This history includes certain norms that present an evidence to both the evolution of pictorial space and particularity of painting as a discipline[36]. In addition, there is no one history to the medium, every painter has her/his own history, which is expanded with every new painting that he/she makes. What makes painting different from other visual art practices is not simply the flatness of its picture plane as Greenberg suggested, but the fact that the visual image is both made of and modeled in paint. And "paint is a cast made of the painter's

[36] De Duve (1996) sheds some light on the meaning of the medium and its significance in modernist paradigm. "The medium in its specificity is not simply a matter of physical constituents; it comprises technical know-how, cultural habits, working procedures and disciplines—all the conventions of a given art whose definition is throughout historical—even more so that the self-critical (or self-referential, but better called reflexive) tendency of modernism is to take those conventions for subject matter as to test their artistic validity". (p. 210)

movements, a portrait of the painter's body and thoughts" (Elkins, 1999, p. 7). Contemporary painter Jonathan Lasker (1996) writes,

> The painted world enjoys the sensuousness of being able to perceive the material world through matter. Painting, unlike the bodiless images of photography, never leaves the world of things. The sunflowers of Van Gogh are at once a depiction of nature itself – the physicality of existing materials like ochre and burnt sienna. Painting always refers back to its own constituent materials. As such, it is as close as culture ever gets to nature. (p. 11)

I do not find Lasker's characterization of photography productive. There are so many contemporary painters whose work draws upon photographs, as well as who paint on photographs. And there are so many photographers whose work is full of physicality and body, among them, James Casabere, Ed Burtynsky, and the recent work of Andrea Szilasi. Nonetheless, Lasker's description of physicality and sensuousness of Van Gogh's sunflowers says a lot about the particularity of painting as a medium.

By looking at the landscape of contemporary painting and the work of my students, I would say that many painters today see the medium of painting as their subject matter. At first glance, there appear to be three main streams of painting with respect to this notion. The first concentrates on reformulating the unique graphic nature of painting with respect to various image sources of visual culture and digital aesthetics. It often results in imagery that emulates the slick

and smooth presences of the computer generated and digitally manipulated images, alluding also to virtual spaces of computer monitors and the TV screens. The work of David Reed, Fiona Rae, and Kevin Appel has been particularly regarded as influential. The second stream embraces practices committed to the expansion of the traditional rectangular picture plane, turning the object of painting into site-specific installations. Here I think in particular of the work of Fabian Marcaccio and Al Held. Finally, the third stream celebrates the more traditional values of painting and expressive techniques which pertain to figuration and portraiture. This is exemplified in the work of John Currin, Vincent Desiderio, Marlene Dumas, and Janet Werner.

Sketching briefly these streams, however, does not do justice in presenting the plurality of practices that characterize painting today. There are so many painters whose works do not belong to any one of the three streams that I touched upon, or that shift freely and playfully between them, refusing to be categorized. One may ask what about the collage-based stream, photo and digital media-based tendencies, and graffiti painting? I see now that what I tried to do in this thesis alongside investigating my research questions is also to reaffirm my own faith in painting. However, doing so through discourse is far more awkward than trying to reaffirm such faith through the practice of materializing chromatic glimmers in paint. That is certainly one of my next destinations. Nonetheless, painting today is more vital than ever before. In my view, its future vitality lies in those practices that deliberately exemplify the

particularity of the medium of painting. However, this does not necessarily mean returning to formalism. Rather, it means addressing those aspects of painting that celebrate the hand and the skill of a painter dedicated to making the different realities of the human condition tangible, and in ways that could not be captured by any other media. A great deal of such vitality rests upon the commitment of artist-teachers to inspire their students and provide them with the knowledge and skills (technical and critical), as well as with an atmosphere in which students can explore their ideas freely. There is no doubt in my mind that in the teaching philosophies of artist-teachers presented in this study, that commitment resonates with both a sense of urgency and clarity regarding its purpose.

Conclusion

This section provides a synthesis of ideas that point to some implications of post-modernism in the post-secondary studio teaching of painting. These, however, should not be seen as fixed and didactic. Rather, they are provisional, which means that their validation requires further investigation.

Contesting the validity of painting and proclaiming its "death" have been around for more than 150 years. Such speculation has been integral to the history of painting, or more specifically, that of modern painting. What is perhaps most ironic is that starting with Delaroche, the death of painting was also proclaimed by painters. Yet the fact is that there is no such thing as the "actual death of painting". As stated in this study at various junctures, there has never been a moment in the history of art that painting ceased to be produced. Rather,

there is a feeling that painting might be under threat, and "this feeling is as old as modernity, [and] it is still with us" (De Duve 2003, p. 211). With respect to this feeling which lies in the realm of the personal rather than the collective consciousness of painters, post-modernism signals not only its intensification due to the decline of modernism in which painting had a dominant role, but also a discursive climate in which speculations on the validity of painting are instigated, elaborated and ultimately institutionalized. With such speculations, this feeling has been elaborated into a critical discourse that is of pedagogical concern to post-secondary studio teachers. As matter of fact, it is inseparable from teaching the larger issue of post-modernism to painters.

Addressing post-modernism in studio teaching is invaluable to students' development. It is through learning about it that young artists learn also about the politics of representation, issues of identity, body, technology, audience, etc. It is a key concept to students' introduction to art theory and different theoretical frameworks that have informed the practices of many artists. Moreover, studying post-modernism uncovers the strictures and the fallacies of modernism. Let's not forget that inclusiveness and pluralism are the most significant characteristics of post-modernism. By stressing these characteristics, students learn what it means to be open-minded and think in open-ended ways that are sensitive to differences.

Introducing students to arguments that put into question the validity of painting as contemporary practice and that uncover the historical issue of the

death of painting is an important aspect of their critical development. In conjunction with post-modernism, it promotes students' contextual awareness and the positioning of their work within the larger historical and contemporary matrix of painting. However, in the context that is supposed to nurture the vitality of this practice, such introduction may easily slip into cynicism and pessimism. Thus it is important to consider the appropriateness of this issue to the level of instruction and sensitivity to students' critical and philosophical maturity.

The teaching philosophies of artist-teachers presented in this study do not endorse doctrines but rather open-mindedness towards students' ideas, research, and contemporary and critical dialogue on painting. This presents a value that might be seen as one of the main implications of post-modernism in the post-secondary studio teaching of painting. The meaning of pedagogical responsibility in instruction that is student-centered and that advocates open-mindedness needs to be investigated further.

The studio teaching of painting at BFA and MFA levels is an educational enterprise that we still know very little about. To engage artist-teachers in research in which they can reflect on their teaching philosophies is one of the ways to learn more about the post-secondary teaching of painting. I would go further and recommend research that addresses the actual instruction in the context of studio classes. Pursuing participant observation in combination with more concise interviews that would include voices of both students and teachers is another way of doing research. It offers an opportunity to explore how certain

pedagogical objectives and approaches are brought in practice, and how they affect students' development. It also offers an opportunity to learn more about various projects, assignments, as well as the dynamics of interaction between students and teachers. I hope the ideas and questions brought in this thesis illuminate not only issues and challenges that pertain to the teaching of painting in the post-modern era, but also various points of departures for future educational inquiries.

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Note: This is an amended proposal.

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MCGILL UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF EDUCATION

STATEMENT OF ETHICS OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

It is assumed that the responses to the questions below reflect the author's (or authors') familiarity with the ethical guidelines for funded and non funded research with human subjects that have been adopted by the Faculty of Education and that responses conform to and respect the Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (1998).

1. Informed Consent of Subjects

Explain how you propose to seek informed consent from each of your subjects (or should they be minors, from their parents or guardian). Informed consent includes comprehension of the nature, procedures, purposes, risks, and benefits of the research in which subjects are participating. Please append to this statement a copy of the consent form that you intend to use. Each subject will be provided with a written consent form that will inform her/him about the purpose and design of the study, potential risks and benefits involved, her/his rights as well as the use and dissemination of data. Also, I will discuss both project and consent form in detail with each participant individually.

2. Subject Recruitment

2.1 Are the subjects a "captive population" (e.g., residents of a rehabilitation centre, students in a class, inmates in a penal establishment)?

The subjects in this study are painter-teachers who teach art at the post-secondary level and they will be chosen from the University Faculties or Colleges of art (i.e. Concordia University, Faculty of Fine Art). They do not present a "captive population".

2.2 Explain how institutional or social pressures will not be applied to encourage participation. (See attached guidelines) Participation in this study is not an academic requirement hence it will not effect the professional position and status of participants within their institutions. All subjects will be assured of this fact.

2.3 What is the nature of any inducement you intend to present to prospective subjects to persuade them to participate in your study?

By participating in this study subjects will have a chance to; a) to reflect critically on values and issues that underline their teaching philosophies, and b) to contribute to the production of knowledge that would be of assistance to other practitioners in the field and promote the research in this area of education.

2.4 How will you help prospective participants understand that they may freely withdraw from the study at their own discretion and for any reason?

In accordance with the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects of the Faculty of Education, subjects will be assured in both verbal and written form that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at their own discretion for any reason at any time time and without prejudice. Also, during the study they will be reminded of this right.

3. Subject Risk and Well-being

What assurance can you provide this committee (as well as the subjects) that the risks, physical and/or psychological, that are inherent to this study are either minimal or fully justifiable given the benefits that these same subjects can reasonably expect to receive?

There are no any physical or psychological risks involved because there are no specific tasks or requirements that subjects are expected to perform and that may endanger their well being. I perceive qualitative interviewing as conversation between two partners on the theme of mutual interest, in this case, postmodernism and teaching of art.

4. Deception of Subjects

4.1 Will the research design necessitate any deception to the subjects?

The study does not involve any deception of subjects. Full information about the design and purpose of the study will be provided and reaffirmed in in the consent form.

4.2 If so, what assurance can you provide this committee that no alternative methodology is adequate?

N/A

4.3 If deception is used, how do you intend to nullify any negative consequences of the deception?

N/A

5. Privacy of Subjects

How will this study respect the subjects' right to privacy, that is, their right to refuse you access to any information which falls within the private domain?

The study does not pertain to information that reflects the private domain of subjects such as their addresses, personal records and affiliations. Moreover, I will not intentionally ask participants to disclose information which they consider private and inform them that they need not to do so.

6. Confidentiality/Anonymity

6.1 How will this study ensure that (a) the identity of the subjects will be concealed and (b) the confidentiality of the information, which they will furnish to the researchers or their surrogates will be safeguarded? (See guidelines on confidentiality/anonymity section).

Respecting the right to confidentiality / anonymity, the identity of subjects will be fully concealed. Their names or identities will not be mentioned to other researchers and practitioners in the field. In order to demarcate subject's individual voice in written report, fictitious names will be used and chosen in in consultation with subjects.

Please see adjoined memo.

CONSENT FORM

What have we learned from postmodernism? A qualitative interview study of painter-teachers' views

Dear Ms/Mr.,

Relying on the perspectives of art instructor and painter, my research addresses the impact of postmodernism on the teaching philosophies of painter-teachers. In order to complete my dissertation I will pursue a qualitative interview study of painter-teachers who teach at the post-secondary level. Hence, I am using this consent form to ask for your voluntary participation in this study.

There are two benefits of participating. First, you will have a chance to reflect critically on values and issues that underline your own teaching philosophies. Second, by participating you will have a chance to contribute to the production of knowledge that will be of assistance to other practitioners in the field and that will promote the importance of research in this area of education.

There are no physical or psychological risks involved. In accordance with the ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects adopted by the Faculty of Education, McGill University, you will be granted full confidentiality respecting your privacy and professional position at the institutions you represent. Therefore, your participation will be anonymous and your identity will not be disclosed in the final report or to other researchers. You may decide to chose a fictitious name that will demarcate your voice in written report.

There will be two interview sessions and each one will last about 90 minutes. During the first session, we will address the topics outlined in the interview guide. Please consult adjoined interview guide at the bottom of this form about the issues that will be covered. You will be provided with complete transcripts and a preliminary interview report. In the second session you will have a chance to reflect