EDITORIAL
INTRODUCTION TO 'DIVARIFICATIONS: AESTHETICS, ART EDUCATION, AND CULTURE'

L. Holmes and A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul

The contributions in this issue are derived from many fields or areas of thought, and the influences, relationships and connections reflected in them are as varied as in any area of human thought. One way to approach them is via one such influential field, and to seek thematic connections that are shared, not only by the authors, but also by the theorists on whom they base their work. Structuralism, with its emphasis on difference and relationships is a suitable platform, and those elements became manifest even in the collective editing processes. The editors had different readings of the texts and diverse relationships to intellectual traditions and key figures.

Particularly when discussing this introduction and the assumptions made in it, we debated concepts such as 'indebtedness to', 'inheritance of', and 'engagement with' thoughts and concepts present in the intellectual environment of a given writer. What do we owe to individual thinkers and intellectual fields, and how is this relationship of tradition and revolt best described? Can individual thinkers represent a 'movement', and are they in control of their own categorisation? Can a movement be 'dead'? Or is it perhaps more useful to think about periods of growth and stagnation – ins and outs of intellectual fashions, perhaps – where development might not be visible but still taking place.

This debate has persuaded us that it might be important to issue a warning: we do not regard structuralism as the master discourse of these essays, but to relate them to structuralism seemed a viable point of convergence, the theme that seemed best suited to draw together seemingly diverse treatments of diverse subject matters.

In 1996, Edith Kurzweil's *The Age of Structuralism: From Lévi-Strauss to Foucault* was reprinted, sixteen years after its first publication in 1980. In the new introduction, Kurzweil explains that the reason for first writing the book was to introduce 'unfamiliar French thinking to America.', and that she hadn't realised at that time 'how unknown these figures were over here' (ix). With regard to this unfamiliarity, she identifies an important difference between the American and European universities, namely the American tendency for narrow disciplinary studies as opposed to European countries, where, for example the French intellectuals 'have so much to say to people from other fields of endeavor, and are familiar with work that might be quite remote from their own' (x). Writing in 1996, Kurzweil points to the continued relevance of these French theories,

> because professors and students who expect to understand any of these more recent (or in any way connected) theories – extensions of semiotics, poststructuralism, deconstruction, postmodernism, post-postmodernism, and whatever else may follow – will need to grapple with structuralism in order to grasp the ideas and premises of the French giants upon whose shoulders they, too, expect to stand (ibid).

In New Zealand, both students and teachers in the social sciences, humanities and the arts have taken an interest in these theories through the usual academic channels of research and courses. Because there was no structuralist period in New Zealand, for many academics the more recent theories that Kurzweil refers to, seem at worst as European fashionable nonsense, at best a few hours reading some critical interpretations of postmodernism. The papers in this issue of *Access* are in certain ways indebted to structuralism. First, structuralism took up the linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson for its analysis of systems and how their structures determine meaning through relationship and difference. Second, structuralism used these findings to criticise previous approaches in the West which looked for substantive explanations of meaning, representation and culture. In doing so, it developed various theories for understanding and interpreting social life. François Dosse's comprehensive work, *History of Structuralism*, includes a thorough examination of structuralism's success epitomised in Lévi-Strauss's work, with its critique of humanist and existentialist theoretical frameworks and search for new models (1997: xix-xx). In the early forties, Lévi-Strauss combined his research on kinship with Jakobson's phonological work on sound and meaning. By using the laws of language to understand unconscious structures in society, structural anthropology was able to show how systems of kinship can be analysed as a system of representation, analogous to what Saussure did with the sign. For Saussure, the sign was an arbitrary system of representation and Jakobson considered it more important to study the relationships between signs rather than signs as discrete units. Jakobson's linguistics was structuralist by emphasising the system of phonemes which generates meaning. The laws of this system of language, provides an understanding of unconscious structures in culture (16-22).

Lévi-Strauss looked at the incest taboo, and instead of analysing its different and specific qualities in various societies, he approached it through the structuralist tenet that a term only acquires meaning in and through relationships. Thus, the incest taboo only becomes meaningful when integrated into a system in which it is circulated and exchanged. This made it possible to find the meeting place between nature and culture. The universal fact of the incest taboo becomes integrated into each society through a system of codes, thus demonstrating the way arbitrary signs are used unconsciously as substitutes for the natural order. At the border of nature and culture, Lévi-Strauss placed the human body as a sign of nature and a cultural fact, as a subject subjected to the signifier's law. Influenced by Saussurean linguistics, structural anthropology defined the signifier as a structure, and thus it is only through language and its systems that we reach the 'unconscious at the heart of the body' (28-9).

Lévi-Strauss found that social systems, such as stories, representations or family relations, made for both misunderstandings and traversals between different codes in those systems. One conclusion of this was the view that Western thinking could not take on anthropology until it recognised its own misperceptions about alterity. On these terms, structural anthropology rejected that branch of historical teleology of Western philosophy that considered technological progress to be the yardstick of social value. Binarism of terms in the structures were used to point towards a mediation *between* terms rather than traditional splits or oppositions (126ff). For Lévi-Strauss, the oppositions between pairs in the cultural systems of myth and eating provided an understanding of the borderline between nature and culture, where human life organised itself with and against nature (256). In this way structural anthropology infused a dialectical approach to the relationship of nature and

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page ii

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page iii

culture through linguistic and psychoanalysis. Through language, Lévi-Strauss saw the unconscious, which is not on the side of nature or culture. Rather it is engendered via the relationship between nature and culture, within the split and the mediation of 'corporeal operations' (259-60).

Both Marx and Freud discovered an area in human life where, collectively and individually, there is a fundamental, structural level of illusion and misrecognition. Lévi-Strauss's binarism was a method for discovering cultures' unmarked terms. In fact, as Zizek explains, there are always two structures, and not a single totalising structure, in structuralism (1997: 82): the marked, explicit structure and the unmarked, concealed structure. Lacanian psychoanalysis, which always paid its dues to Lévi-Strauss, finds that this hidden structure holds a truth about the two complementary terms. Thus from structural anthropology, Lacan retains the idea of social structure as a symbolic fiction (which Barthes emphasised in his work on mythology and ideology) that as the explicit structure, is made up of complementary and commonsensical oppositional pairs. This balancing act of the fictional symbolic order, is an attempt to smooth over the real antagonisms of a society, in other words, binary oppositions are the way the symbolic order represents and represses economic, political, sexual, and cultural imbalances and disturbances. Like dreams, parapraxis and symptoms, the symbolic order is also a system of repression that can be psycho-analysed through paying attention to the functions and effects of signification.

Two main tenets of Lacan's psychoanalysis are to be found in structuralism: the priority of the synchronic over the diachronic, and the emphasis on the structure rather than the individual human subject.[1] The synchronic signifying structure for Saussure is based on arbitrariness and differentiation. Lévi-Strauss applied this concept to cultural structures of food, mythology, and living spaces which, because organised like a language, are determinative of reality. Both Saussure and Lévi-Strauss have been criticised for neglecting the subject in their emphasis on structures. But as Samuel Weber (1976: 936-7) shows, for Saussure it is point of view and perspective, as a position of temporality, that provides a historical perspective in semiology, a theory which is often criticised for its non-diachronic approach. Similarly, Lévi-Strauss's materialism included an understanding of the subject as blurring the boundaries between nature and culture, and consequently symbolic fictions (e.g., myths) represent how human subjectivity makes 'use of the world of which it is a part.'[2]

Lacan does not take the structuralist position of an historical subject or a concrete, substantial subject. Neither does Lacan take a poststructuralist approach of putting truth into question, instead psychoanalysis finds significance in truth rather than reality.[3] Lacan's subject takes place only when there is a gap in the synchronous chain. For example, the period of courtly love exemplifies the manifest contradiction between the harsh life of women and the position and representation of the Lady points to an inconsistency in the symbolic order. That this form of romantic love is extremely prevalent in today's mass culture, as it has also been at various times throughout history, supports the structuralist priority of structure over history. It also supports the differential system over the linearity of cause and effect, where what once for long periods had no relevance or meaning, comes to mean something in later times. Contemporary fantasies of relations between the sexes often apply to the codes of courtly love, and this is why for Lacan the subject is positioned at the heart of the contradiction within the symbolic order. This is not a historical subject, one that remembers its past or

improves upon past errors, but a subject who through its perceptions and representations displays in art, be it twelfth or twentieth century, embodiments of real (sexual) antagonisms.

As Zizek (1991: 198-222) explains, these real antagonisms are over-determined because they are determined twice, once from the past, and now as a contemporary trauma with the advent of a symbolic space in which it cannot be fully integrated. The binarism in the way the sexes relate, or when civilisation is linked with Western technical advancement, or by Marx's exposure of the capitalist myth of primitive accumulation, are all various antagonisms which refer to a unmarked kernel of what Lacan calls the Real, with echoes of the constant underlying the manifest structure in structural anthropology. For Lacan the symbolic, social reality is the barrier to the Real, and the fantasy of romantic love is one kind of fetishistic defence against the trauma of radical alterity. The fantasies articulated in the symbolic, like the codes of courtly love or the pleasure of ornament in design, are manifestations not of some reality of sexual difference or aesthetic pleasure, but are representational systems that are a truth of society (202). From this perspective, we can understand Zizek's (1997: 86) definition of psychoanalysis as 'a kind of modernist meta-theory of the impasse of modernity.' The issues for psychoanalysis are the social and individual misperceptions, imbalances and contradictions. Through these, structuralism and psychoanalysis discovered ways to study and expose ideological structures which have endured the historical changes in science, reason and the Enlightenment projects. Lacan took the structuralist endeavour towards another direction to that of Lévi-Strauss; while yet still maintaining the anthropologist's concerns for the subject's freedom and oppression in the symbolic network.[4]

Oppression is structural for Iris Young, who in her book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* conceives of oppression as involving relations between groups. These networks of relations, which are neither conscious nor intentional, precede the individual subject (Young, 1990: 41 & 45). Young's project is influenced by authors such as Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault, Kristeva, Lacan, Adorno and Irigaray (7, 45 & 98). In Young's theory, justice is obtained through exposing how binary oppositions are reduced to a unity, and, secondly, by privileging difference between terms rather than the identity of terms. Young employs Derrida's strategy of deconstruction and notion of différance for its deconstruction of a historical totality for a multitude of different histories. But différance goes against the limitations of static structures outside of history (Derrida, 1981: 27, 28 & 58). Where Lacan saw in the fixity of the structure the very position and possibility of the subject, Derrida found an absence within the structuralist tenet of meaning generated by the difference between terms. Différance points to the way meaning is deferred in the chain of signifiers, while also encompassing the common, structuralist understanding of meaning through difference. For Derrida, structuralism constructed its binarism between speech or phonology, and writing or textuality, and fixed this binary opposition on the side of presence, the voice and being. In Western metaphysics, truth is in the delusion of a full and present being. Because truth was seen as embodied in the voice, structuralist anthropology valued speech rather than writing for being closer to nature and therefore original. However, in the term différance, the sound of the word does not convey its different spelling. It is only in its textual and visual aspect that we step outside of phonocentrism. The point is, rather than the structuralist emphasis on static structures that enable meaning to be articulated, deconstruction is concerned with the play of elements in order to deconstruct the static and centred structure.

Although Derrida deconstructs structure and structuralist texts, his philosophy is in many ways influenced by structuralist thinking. For Christopher Norris, in his book *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (1982: 54), deconstruction is a gauge for the aims of structuralism, and works so as to expose and 'avoid the traps laid down by its seductive concepts of method.' Rather than negating structuralism, deconstruction employs the self-critical aspect of structuralist thought without which 'Derrida could hardly have broached the questions that animate his writing' (ibid). The influence of structuralism on Derrida's work has enabled many structuralist semiologists to use the method of deconstruction as 'a type of structuralist approach, which is to say transforming and simplifying a complicated text in order to make it legible, reducing it to oppositions and dysfunctions' (Dosse, 1997a: 20).[5] In the first chapter of *Writing and Difference*, Derrida (1978: 4 & 3) emphasises the importance of structuralism for his work, maintaining that 'we take nourishment from the fecundity of structuralism', which he defines as 'an adventure of vision, a conversion of the way of putting questions to any object posed before us.' In another yet similar sense, Derrida's philosophy is akin to structuralism through its criticism of Western reason and progress. The two world wars and the movements for decolonisation had put into question the primacy of European society as a pinnacle of civilised achievement. The postmodern conception of the modern era is to recognise, as psychoanalysis does, that progress is not an effect of reason. Instead, the Lacanian proposal is to find in the logic of reason an understanding of enjoyment (Zizek, 1989: 79-84). Lacan's approach diverges from the postmodern and deconstructive decentring of humanism and its criticism of Western narratives, metaphysics and hierarchies which endow a biased legitimacy. The important point here is not that deconstruction and postmodernism are equivalent, but rather that both are influenced by French structuralism which had always proposed a deconstruction of ideological structures that distort reality. Isn't the postmodern goal of listening to other voices, rather than accepting one consensual ideology, also to be found in the poststructuralist concept of a proliferation of signs referring not to a stabilised, fixed meaning, but to yet more signs? Postmodernism identifies and advocates a multitude of competing ideologies, which have disrupted any one ruling ideology. Poststructuralism concludes that this means there is no metalanguage because any assertion of truth can always be exposed as the appearance of truth.

Bourdieu traces the transmission of dominant culture as the maintenance of a system of power and thus highlights the unevenness of the terrain on which the signifiers play. He maintains that power relations are concealed as long as their epistemologies are naturalised, which is one of the reasons he has attacked Derrida (Bourdieu, 1984: 494ff).[6] While Bourdieu initially embraced the structuralist legacy and methods of interpretation, he moved away from structuralist paradigms after 1975, criticising, for example, Lévi-Strauss for assuming that the rules and categories devised in reference to principles of phonology were representative of an innate mental structure of the natives themselves (Schneider, 1998: 220). Similarly, while adopting the view of the coexistence of economy and ideology (and of the world and human beings) from Althusserian structural-Marxism, he also criticised this version of structuralism for its elitism and the elimination of acting social subjects, who were 'reduced to the application of systems of rules' (Dosse, 1997: 301; see also Schneider, 1998: 221). Bourdieu subsequently endeavours to synthesise two scientific approaches: the subject-based perspective, which by itself is in danger to remain blind and uncritical, and the objectivist, structural one, which neglects the role played by concrete individuals who realise and vitalise structures. His notion of *habitus*[7] serves to reconnect the subject and the system, where the *habitus* and the *intellectual field*[8] (the structured social space within which it is

constituted) are interdependent (Cronin, 1996: 65). Both the *habitus* and the *doxa*[9] of the intellectual field remain largely unconscious, and it is only in crisis, when the 'immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures' is broken, that a critique can bring 'the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation' whereby 'the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon' (Bourdieu, 1989: 169). A theory of practice must question the theoretical and social conditions under which knowledge is made possible (4).

All contributions in this issue deal in one way or another with what is absent from the structures of representations that form individual and collective identities. Categories such as gender or ethnicity are not only natural conditions but also cultural symbols. In the papers by Martin, Mansfield, Engels-Schwarzpaul, and Grierson, the question is how to formulate or articulate those hitherto non-marked terms of social orders, since too great an emphasis on reason and rationality has restricted epistemology (in art, design, or cultural relations) and ontology (the subject in relation to reality). Grierson, Mansfield and Engels-Schwarzpaul look at questions of legitimation in art and design theory, practice and education. From within, they reach out and explore various theoretical angles with a view of unsettling the status quo. Holmes employs psychoanalytical concepts to be used as interpretative procedures for students to gain an understanding about the production and reception of art. Two authors, Martin and Chueh, maintain to a larger degree the distance of theory from practice by interrogating the very basics of theoretical assumptions which directly or indirectly contribute to the framing of knowledge informing educational practice.[10]

Students come to the educational scene with their own experiences and memories, which can be likened to personal myths, in which subjects express their biographies from their present position. They order and make sense of past experiences, evaluate and explain them – as it fits the present situation (Arnold & Siebert, 1995: 110-1). These differences have to be not only acknowledged and validated, but also interrogated within a framework that is accessible to all participants, connecting personal accounts to social histories and structures. The recognition of such differences will shed light on the way in which 'identity, subjectivity and "otherness" are shaped' (Grierson). Engels-Schwarzpaul refers to positions of New Constructivism, which claim that mutual foreignness must not only be accepted in educational situations but rendered productive. The interrogation of one's own cultural patterns, which are usually deeply engrained but not conscious, is greatly assisted through the understanding not only of differences but also of overlaps with those of others. Such investigative praxis can lead out of the vicious circle of the sneaking transition from the model of reality to the reality of the model' (Bourdieu quoted in Arnold & Siebert, 1995: 143).

Grierson views *praxis* as constantly re-engaging theory and practice 'in a continuously self-informing process of inquiry.'[11] She hopes that art, as *praxis* would acknowledge the contingency of knowledge, validating critical and political aspects of art theory and practice, and the differences that emerge when different and competing narratives are brought into the open. At present, however, she believes that the art academy's legitimations include an 'institutionally inscribed, historical divide of theory and practice' where neither interrogates the other. In spite of this division, a similar canonisation of values and standards is maintained both in theory and practice, which upholds binary oppositions such as 'art-design, practice-theory … abstract-figurative, civilised-primitive, white-black, identity-difference.'

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page vi

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page vii

Such codifications result in the exclusion of indeterminate states and in the devaluation of one of the values of the oppositional pairs. A *theory of practice* could help unsettle such inherited unproblematic traditions and received attitudes about art, which – as long as they do not question their own authority and the assumptions they promulgate – will oppress students rather than inform them. Grierson queries where those questions will be asked, if not in art schools, 'away from the heat of the art market' (Kosuth quoted in Grierson).[12] Artists struggle to 'present the unpresentable', to deal with things unknowable and indeterminate that lie beyond the cognitive.[13] This struggle is severely aggravated in a situation where a supposedly shared reality is 'already categorised and institutionally inscribed through inherited "rules" of art', which have been at least in part formulated by theorists rather than practitioners of art.[14]

Similar to Bourdieu, Grierson advocates a re-interpretation of the relationships between theory and practice to overcome the gulf 'between artists' and art historians' making-of-meaning.' While 'claims for meaning and judgement are made increasingly without attention to the rules' acting on such meaning, it is precisely the currently enshrined rules that need to be declared and interrogated, and exposed as just 'some of the many possible stories of art.' Grierson wants to include *gnosis* within *praxis* which, to her, is the '"other" to the mainstream of reason', that which is beyond the known or knowable. Gnosis can serve to disturb the certainty with which institutions (conceptualised as promoting idealised 'value-free' knowledge) consider themselves to be capable of 'observing, comparing, ordering, and measuring in order to arrive at evidence sufficient to make valid inferences' (West quoted in Grierson). Grierson privileges the notion of paralogy for its instability and indeterminacy, deconstructing certain frameworks of knowledge, art and ideology.[15]

Mansfield draws our attention to the way the art curriculum imposes formalistic and prescriptive criteria upon art education, and makes universalising claims to be able to assess works of art.[16] Ways of making and understanding art that are different from those criteria are excluded from practice in art education. In tracing the genealogy of the central principles underpinning curriculum documents, she discusses notions of artistic autonomy, the self-referentiality of the work of art, formalist/universalist standards, and artistic development, with reference to liberal, humanistic and modern discourses. The centrality of the individual artist or the art work, in the New Zealand curriculum documents until the late 1980s, has thwarted any connection between social and artistic concerns. For example, the 1989 *Art Syllabus* introduces the notion of relationships 'in cultures and societies' but retains its focus on the development of particular technical and formal skills (which are nevertheless regarded as universal). Mansfield holds that these criteria work to sanitise art education, denying students from different backgrounds the engagement with wider parameters of artistic production and consumption. Art education in New Zealand oscillates between the furthering of individual artistic development, and the promotion of enlightened art consumption.

In Mansfield's view, an alternative art education would engage with questions such as how the 'other' is represented in the discourses of dominant culture, and how 'views of gender, race, class are socially organised through media representation' (art being one of those media).[17] An exploration of the politics of representation would enable students to conceive of themselves not as contemplating aesthetically, but as actively participating in constructing and interpreting a work of art. With the demise of a stable canon of knowledges and artistic values, the hierarchical distinction between 'high art' and 'popular art', which developed in the wake of mainstream modernism, becomes as dysfunctional as the idea that art is transhistorical and transcultural. In New Zealand in particular, art education must assist students to examine how visual representations have constructed a 'colonial corridor', in which not only cultural relationships were framed, tidied up and pruned. Indigenous culture was simultaneously appropriated to serve, as decorative motifs on chattels, 'pictorial, aesthetic, … colonial and imperial desires.' Interrogating representations as 'complex historical references' or 'visual stereotypes' would go some way to liberating art education from its isolated 'modern', Western, 'high art' framework, and to engage students in active interpretations not only of works of art, but also of their conditions of production.[18]

The contingency of any discursive framework is highlighted in Engels-Schwarzpaul's account of her re-framing of concepts and methods in relation to theoretical propositions. Academic discourse has always privileged some subjects over others, and created hierarchies of values. The topic of her own research, the relationship of ornamental meaning and practice, has been traditionally assigned a low rank. However, such positions need to be interrogated and rendered problematic. The danger of imposing assumptions about the respective values of theories and practices is particularly pressing in research projects dealing with interculturality. Western concepts, for example, do not easily translate into Maori epistemology and vice versa.[19] Power differentials between cultures render any attempt to frame knowledge in the vocabulary of the dominant culture even more problematic.

The marginalisation of ornament in art history and criticism since the middle of the 19th century exemplifies a problem persisting in many areas that are 'not-yet-accepted' by the institutional canon, not yet "normalised"' (Grierson). While official discourses have increasingly vilified ornament, they did not extinguish its ongoing use and practice. Today, students find it often difficult to discursively justify their ornamental practices, since they are in conflict with the established institutional canons. Much of creative practice is not, or only imperfectly, transmissible to discursive reasoning, art as significant form being 'articulate but non-discursive', and artistic expressions often over-determined.[20] 'Applied arts' in particular, like architecture and design, are too much bound up with the productive sphere, not to promote rational and discursive reasoning at the expense of 'utopian capacities to dream', which might prevent rationality from slipping into its own type of irrationality (Buck-Morss, 1989: 120).[21] Ornament can be understood as a utopian element of 'historical fantasy' and 'social memory', and thus as part of collective knowledge. Lorenzer's concept of the desymbolisation of knowledges might explain why students of art and design currently struggle with the ruptures resulting from the repression of socially unaccepted desires and practices.[22] When it comes to the investigation and illumination of 'collectively rejected patterns of behaviour' all participants are similarly 'prisoners of social delusion.' This has serious implication for the role of educators, limiting their epistemological advantage over their students. Epistemological modesty demands that 'knowledge' is not served up as objective, but as historicised and positioned accounts, which enable both writer and reader to engage in further discussion nourished by a critical scepticism in which differences can be rendered productive.

Whereas Grierson, Mansfield and Engels-Schwarzpaul take their point of departure from their observations of how established and unquestioned canons of knowledge and art forms are enacted to exclude certain types of knowledge in educational practice, Holmes brings the theories of Freud and Lacan on sublimation to the educational situation. She demonstrates

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page viii

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page ix

how psychoanalytic theories can be used as interpretative procedures in art education, connecting subjective experience with issues that concern society at large, and its cultural productions.

According to Freud, sublimation takes place when an instinct cannot be acted upon because it conflicts with social expectations. In order to satisfy the instinct nevertheless, she can express it in a socially more acceptable way, for example in the creation of art. In the process of sublimation, the original object of libidinal instinct may be exchanged for one that is not considered sexual, the choice of artistic activity ranging widely. Lacan pointed out that, while sublimation does have a substitutive element and the substitutions that provide satisfaction are more socially acceptable than the original object of desire, this perspective does not account for the socially disturbing aspects of much art nor for the fact that artists in their lifetime might be rejected or undervalued by the social group who represents those values. An individual's first relationship with an object-other – the shift from ego-libido to object-libido – is an imaginary one and, thereafter, relationships of desire always contain an element of fantasy, never quite equating to the real situation. This discrepancy prevents the complete fulfilment of desire and produces a 'movement which continually circles around a loss that initiates sublimation and endows art with its ever elusive appeal.' Artistic representations which are deemed significant in a society correspond to the society's imaginary scheme. Lacan's account of the art of courtly love in the 12th to 15th century Europe is an example for a social imaginary which produced a particular type of art. Enshrined in the scheme of courtly love is the woman as master and her lover as her willing slave. While some women actively participated in the creation of art and ruled over their own courts, the social reality of most women at the time was one of subjection and submission. Holmes points to the discrepancy in the representation of woman in the art of courtly love, and the overarching social constellation. 'Courtly love is the template for all relations between the sexes by portraying in art that it is not the actual woman that the lover desires but rather his fantasy of what Woman is.' This fantasy relates to all that which cannot be understood in the relationship to others. This absence or 'beyond' of signification, the Thing, is what pleasure and unpleasure refer to, and which motivates desire and its representation. The Thing has no substance of its own and 'exists nowhere in reality and only in fantasy. Courtly love – and art in general – is one of the socially acceptable means for articulating the Thing.' In agreement with Zizek, Holmes accounts for the art of courtly love as a way of dealing with the antagonism between the sexes, representing the 'non-symbolised surplus' of the society.[23]

Chueh's paper deals with the structuralist anthropology of Lévi-Strauss and issues of cultural difference. She critically examines his argument that binary oppositions can be useful tools in coming to understand cultures. Lévi-Strauss saw binarism as a necessary foundation of (Western) social sciences, and part of the material and tools Western social sciences are confined to. In order to check and balance this condition – where the narrative structure of research imposes itself on observations – Lévi-Strauss proffers the procedures used by the *bricoleur* who assesses, re-arranges, substitutes and re-configures existing materials and tools. She thus opens up alternative possibilities of relationships and interpretations (which are always seen as conditional and provisional). The method is also to some degree arbitrary: the potential substitution, permutation or transformation of elements leads to a situation where there may be several, even conflicting, discourses at the same time. Each of those potential discourses represents only one possible interpretation of a culture. Therefore, not

being able to escape her heritage in terms of thinking and conceptualising, the social scientist is required to caution herself when using inherited tools and materials, and to exclude totalising explanations.

However, Chueh points to another fallacy in Lévi-Strauss' approach where, at the start, a hypothesis of a 'universal possibility of binary oppositional terms as distinctive features in cultures' is put forward on the basis of induction from a small sample, which is then verified through empirical testing on a large sample. The question remains which methodological or political decisions informed this procedure. The universalisation of Western models brings with it the danger that only elements that are defined on the axes of binary oppositions will be recognised. Therefore, research based on this concept is likely to ignore 'intrinsic characteristics of the relationships within cultures' and to impose one 'possible discourse' of many onto the culture observed and one 'in which the subject is inserted.' Since Lévi-Strauss, the idea that *the human mind* thinks on the basis of binary oppositions generally has lost much of its plausibility. Imposing relationships based on binary oppositions onto cultures which might be organised by different principles will lead to misrecognition.[24] Young also uses binary oppositional terms as a basis for cultural analysis. However, she adopts an approach where cultural differences are 'viewed as variations' which are 'preserved and affirmed' rather than resolved. While Lévi-Strauss operates on those differences, Young leaves them 'entangled' as relational and variational. She does not escape, however, the implicit problematics of binary oppositions which – as abstractions – ignore 'all but the distinctive function[s] of a culture.' Chueh concludes that the very intention to 'verify' differences and distinctions framed by binary oppositions prevents such an approach from providing 'social scientists with a better understanding of cultural difference.'

Martin applies Irigaray's discussion of the continuous and reciprocal relationship between material conditions and symbolic orders, regarding the position and identity of women, to New Zealand society. The denial of difference by the dominant symbolic order to women can be observed in an analogous manner in the relationship of the settler society with Maori culture. Missionaries, traders and bureaucrats introduced a binary oppositional system based on Western, male symbols and values.[25] Irigaray's metaphor of the growing desert resulting from an imposition of the will to power without sharing, materialised not only in the deforestation and transformation of the landscape in Aotearoa but, according to Martin, also in the realm of human relationships. Western metaphysics ignored Maori spirituality and their different conceptualisation of time, origin and association. There might have been a time of fecundity for cultural difference, as long as Maori hospitality allowed for relationships of equality based on difference. Ultimately, however, the Western symbolic order replaced the more complex and varied indigenous cultural relationships. To overcome the mastery of the Western/male symbolic order, and its corresponding material expressions, different spaces and different symbols need to be conceptualised (not in alterity to, but autonomous from, the dominant symbolic order).

Representation of woman in feminine terms requires a different conception of the symbolic order than is rendered in classical psychoanalysis. In this economy, castration (the lack of the phallus) equates to non-symbolisation. Woman thereby becomes the other of symbolisation and is denied entry into culture, as much as the possibility of identity, since non-symbolisation in language effects a loss of origin.[26] A sexual economy based on one sex produces oppositional dualisms, defining one at the expense of the other. The 'well-known

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page x

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page xi

assignations of rationality, autonomy, action, spirit, mind as attributes of the masculine, with emotion/passion, dependence, passivity, body, matter as the inferior others constituting the feminine' have to be reconstituted into a rationality that includes both reason and passion.[27] Then the exchange between two different but equal genders becomes possible, leaving behind the 'systems of exchange of property, propriety and commodification.' In her *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Irigaray enacts distance by placing her woman as anterior to history, and into a place symbolised as water. Water is not part of Nietzsche's account of Zarathustra's contemplation of heights and it has its own dimension of depth. From this distance, woman articulates in her own terms an invitation for love. In Aotearoa, such distance would allow for the acknowledgement of two genealogies and support both gendered/ethnic subjectivities. It might create an interval that marks, and allows for, difference in the relations of Maori and Pakeha. The affirmation of cultural and gendered difference can, says Martin, lead to a situation where 'we might become "more human" …, more relational … and fecund.'

Finding ways of articulating difference takes many forms in the contributions to this issue, and on the surface there may not be much the authors share concretely. What they do seem to share, though, is an un-ease with the 'immediate fit' of the prevailing paradigms within theory and practice of education in New Zealand, a common concern to bring 'the undiscussed into discussion, the unformulated into formulation' so that 'the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon', and the desire to unsettle 'biased legitimacies' and 'ideological structures that distort reality.'

Systems of philosophy and theory always have the possibility for distortion and bias, and such ideological structures are to be found in education and its discourse of knowledge. One way for any discipline to question its theoretical position is to continually stretch and span, to divaricate: to diverge and at the same time to encompass and rely upon.[28]

In New Zealand there are over 50 species of divaricating plants, which are plants where the branches spread out in widely divergent directions, for example the Raukaua anomalus[29], Coprosma rhamnoides and the Pittosporum divaricatum, and of which no other country has such a variety. The importance of this dominance of divaricating plant growth crosses into disciplines other than botany, such as geology and biology, and asks significant questions about evolution and the relationship of New Zealand to the world context. This special feature of New Zealand's biota is metaphorically contained in the following approaches to education where the 'branches [are] at wide angles, [and] many growing points are therefore "inside" the shrub.'[30]
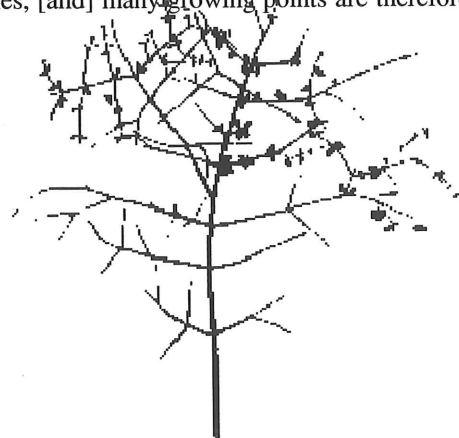
NOTES

1. Lacan's analysis of courtly love has this structuralist flavour.
2. Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 341, cited in Dosse, 1997: 260.
3. Zizek, 1991: 202, with reference to Lacan's *Ecrits*, p. 48.
4. Lacan defined subjectivity in the terms of a ternary structure. The Imaginary, Symbolic and the Real defines the Lacanian subject as: on the Imaginary level, oscillating between identification and alienation in terms of an ideal unity of the self; in the symbolic order of fictions and ideologies; and, the Real which the subject, never successfully, represses as a traumatic Thing in order to experience reality. The subject appears at the point where, in each level, a disturbance impedes the flow of events, relations, identities or meanings. (Zizek, 1997: 93-5). The Lacanian subject of exaggeration and discontinuity is a subject of negation, a negation in the usual, proper flow of events that snags and tears at the fictions in the symbolic reality (Zizek, 1994: 190-1).
5. Dosse quotes from an interview with Philippe Hamon, a linguist and professor at Paris III.
6. For preserving, rather than exposing, the assumptions buried in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (496).
7. 'As an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted, the habitus engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and not others. … Because the habitus is an endless capacity to engender products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it secures is as remote from a creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings' (Bourdieu, 1989: 95). Since the habitus encodes implicit cultural knowledge, the interpretations and actions it generates cannot be explained in isolation from the social world. They contain social meanings beyond the conscious intentions of the individual, relative to the history of the social world (Cronin, 1996: 67).
8. The intellectual field is the historically specific and systematic 'structure of orthodoxies and heterodoxies, a structure of discourse that imposes choices not always logically apparent to those who argue within its range' (McCole, 1993: 24). It is the 'locus of the confrontation of competing discourses', 'the sum total of the theses tacitly posited on the hither side of all inquiry, which appear as such only retrospectively, when they come to be suspended practically' (Bourdieu, 1989: 168).
9. As the 'shared belief system on which symbolic power rests', the doxa is in turn a 'structuring principle of the habitus' (Cronin, 1996: 66).
10. According to Giroux (1983), theory has the goal of emancipatory practice, but he maintains that for it to be able to interrogate practice, it requires a certain distance from its object of interrogation. 'Theory and practice represent a particular alliance, not a unity in which one dissolves into the other' (21). Theory ought to determine the problematics governing the characteristics of social inquiry. 'Its real value lies in its ability to provide the reflexivity needed to interpret the concrete experience that is the object of research (99).
11. There might, however, also be a danger in the notion of self-informing practice as long as the inquiry does not step out of the parameters inscribed historically in theory and practice, particularly if they are not rendered conscious (cf. endnote 10).
12. The negotiation and regulation of values, and their proper treatment, is influenced by different discourses which often co-exist without having much bearing on each other. At other times they might exist in a type of tension which leads to creative reinterpretation. 'Sometimes, however, a choice of one discourse will result in a suppression of rights granted under another, with a net effect of pain or distress caused to one or other group within society' (McDonald, 1997: 14).

13. Her contention is supported by Bourdieu who contends that artistic production is also 'a *mimesis*, a sort of symbolic gymnastics, like the rite and the dance', so that treating a work of art in a Saussurian type of linguistics leads critics and theorists 'to forget that the work of art always contains something *ineffable*, ... something which speaks ... on the hither side of words or concepts' (2). The ineffable element of art is never completely contained in the product of art making, but also resides in its praxis.

14. Bourdieu criticises conventional art history as a typical example of unreflective theorising, 'superbly indifferent to the question of the social conditions in which works are produced and circulated' (1989: 1). All too often, art history and theory focus mainly of the *opus operatum*, neglecting the *modus operandi*, and thereby repressing 'the question of artistic production under the concept of the 'objective intention' of the work' (ibid). – The problem that students currently have in design education with what cannot be said is also addressed in Engels-Schwarzpaul's account of the practices of and communication about ornament 'Here lies a student's dilemma' (p. 81).

15. Here lies one similarity in postmodernism and poststructuralism.

16. Cf Grierson 'via truth claims of consensual knowledge...' (p. 5).

17. Cf Martin 'binary brought from the imperial distance the division of body and soul...' (p. 68).

18. Cf Holmes 'significant in society...' (p. 41).

19. Cf Chueh 'discourse is isolated on the basis of a functional argument...' (p. 58).

20. This echoes Grierson's notion of the artist struggling to 'present the unpresentable.' (p. 4).

21. Cf Martin 're-organisation of rationality that includes both reason and passion...' (p. 65).

22. Cf Holmes 'reduces the critical and disturbing aspects of art...' (p. 40).

23. Cf Martin 'and non-representation of origin...' (p. 64).

24. ' ... approaching non-Western systems of thought from a Western construct becomes a colonising act in itself, rendering the non-Western system subordinate to the Western.' (Davis, M. 1996 'Competing knowledges? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Western Scientific Discourse?' unpublished conference paper presented at *Science and Other Knowledge Traditions*, James Cook University, Cairns, 23-27 August quoted in McDonald, 1997: 1).

25. Cf Chueh on binary oppositions 'ontological perspective of binarism...' (p. 49), and Grierson 'art-design, practice-theory...' (p. 7).

26. Cf Engels-Schwarzpaul about desymbolisation of knowledge 'DESYMBOLISATION OF KNOWLEDGES' (p. 80).

27. Cf Engels-Schwarzpaul, 'rationality can be redeemed from its own irrationality' (p. 82).

28. In an essay on Freud's theoretical procedures, Samuel Weber (1977: 1-27) discusses how Freud's conception of his theory changed, with his work on dreams (1900-1) and narcissism (1914), to an acknowledgement of the unknown, tangled aspect of all speculation and perception. In Chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud (1986: 671-672) discusses the navel of the dream, which is described as net-like and as the hard kernel that resists interpretation. It is a place where the known meets the unknown, where the dream-thoughts 'branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought.'

29. The Raukaua anomalus is a shrub, growing to 3 metres, with densely divaricating branchlets and minute green flowers. Its distribution is on the three main islands, growing in the forest margins and lowland scrub. See Heads, M. et al. (1997). 'Reinstatement of *Raukaua*, a genus of the Araliaceae centred in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of Botany*, 35, pp. 309-315.

30. PIOPIO COLLEGE (1999). 'Convergent Evolution in Divaricating Plants', available on-line: http://piopio.school.nz/converge.htm

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ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page xiv

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Cultural and Policy Studies in Education
18(1) 1999, page xv