1997

Reading the fine print

Graeme Cornwell
University of Wollongong

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reading the fine print

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Graeme Cornwell, BFA, MFA(University of Auckland), Dip.Ed.(Sydney College of Advanced Education)

School of Creative Arts
1997
This thesis is dedicated to Nicole, Jiam, Irene and Gordon
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I am very grateful to my supervisor, Richard Hook, who has always been encouraging and has offered valuable advice.

I am also grateful to Earl Baken, Rose Vickers, George Baker, and Diana Davidson for allowing me to interview them and for providing valuable insight into the formative stages of the development of printmaking in Sydney.
A survey of literature on Australian printmaking from 1960-1990 presents an interesting phenomenon in that despite there being few acknowledgments of the influence of American printmaking - acknowledgment has given precedence to a European influence - Australian printmaking and the way its histories are written strongly suggest the impingement of an Anglo-American inheritance. This thesis addresses the need to acknowledge the American influence and position Australian printmaking within the context of the intrusion of American Abstract Expressionism: the dominant discourse which shaped modern American printmaking. This involves an examination of the dominant discourse - American Abstract Expressionism - and its underpinning philosophical tenets: a concept of immediacy brought about by a strategic denial and refusal of a concept of the technological discerned printmaking. This 'collision' between American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking had consequences for American printmaking which later significantly influenced Australian printmaking in hitherto undocumented ways. This thesis is not only a study of the formation of American printmaking as an autonomous creative discipline based on a "truth to materials" and medium specificity but also an examination of the philosophical constructs created by the impingement of a dominant discourse that refused and denied a concept of technology in order to extend and justify its major tenets and underpinning philosophical basis. But, most importantly, this study is about the significant impact of a dominant discourse - American Abstract Expressionism - and its underlying philosophical construction: the refusal and denial of the technological - on the psyche underlying Australian printmaking, whose consequences, despite some being examined here, are still to be realised.
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<td>W.C.A.</td>
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Introduction

Contradictions in the Advertisement for the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ Exhibition:


. . . The rejection of printmaking - and of lithography in particular - stemmed in part from a rejection of the nationalist art and politics of the social realist painters, and in part from the rejection of the necessarily indirect technical methods which were intrinsic to printmaking. The New York painters did not perceive that in the proper circumstances lithography was capable of providing precisely the immediacy they sought. . . with the result that in the post war years printmaking and painting took widely divergent paths. . .

Although Adams concerned himself specifically with the rejection of lithography he also convincingly argued that the abstract expressionists rejected all printmaking during the height of American Abstract Expressionist era (1944-1960), quoting several abstract expressionist artists in the course of his dissertation. So it came as a surprise to learn in 1986, from an advertisement published in the Australian print journal,

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Australian National Gallery
International Prints, Posters and Illustrated Books
co-ordinating Curator: Pat Gilmour
The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era
6 June - 13 September 1987
The first retrospective to be held anywhere in the world of European and American Prints of the Abstract Expressionist Era, a style which dominated contemporary art for more than a decade and eventually spread to Australia, Canada, South Africa and Japan.
Imprint, for the exhibition entitled: 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' held in the Australian National Gallery -hereafter referred to as the A.N.G - during 1987) that it was a 'myth' that abstract expressionists did not make prints. So, the question arose, could both authorities be correct?

These contradictions led to an inquiry both of Adams's assertions and those of the A.N.G. This immediately led to problems of definition. Who were the abstract expressionists and the 'New York School' that Adams refers to and were these different from those included in the more general term 'abstract expressionists' used by the A.N.G.

It is not clear from Adams's writing specifically who he considered to be an American Abstract Expressionist except that he excluded European abstract expressionists (Tachists and Ecole de Paris) and second generation abstract expressionists when he indicated that these artists were New York

One of the Myths that surrounded this legendary style is that Abstract Expressionist artists did not make prints. In fact they made a great number of lithographs, etchings and illustrated books. Among the works featured in the Spontaneous Gesture are many by the most famous artists of the post war period including Pollock, de Kooning, Wols, Soulages, Hartung, Jorn, Alechinsky, Krasner, Sonderborg, Scumcher, Childls, Francis, Tobey, Hayter, Frankenthaler, Jenkins, Tapies, Vedova, and Yunkers.

About 125 Prints will be on display. They are drawn from the gallery's own holdings which include one of the worlds most comprehensive collections of prints in this international style.

3 Imprint (supported by the Print Council of Australia), Volume 22, No. 1-2, June 1986, p.28; Imprint is the Australian Print Council's Printmaking Bulletin which commenced publication in 1966.

4 This exhibition came with a catalogue with the same title: Lanier F. Graham, Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, Australian National Art Gallery, 1987

5 Alan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass, Stephen Trombley, The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, Fontana Press, 1988, defines Abstract Expressionism as:

... A term first used in 1919, in Germany and Russia to describe the painting of Wassily Kandinsky, and again in that context in 1929 by Alfred Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. It was subsequently applied by the New Yorker critic Robert Coates in 1946 to the emerging post- W.W.II - American painting, both abstract and figurative. Stylistically, the term implies loose, rapid paint handling, indistinct shapes, large rhythms, broken colour, uneven saturation of the canvas, and pronounced brushwork, as found in the work of de Kooning, Pollock, Kline and Gorky; it also includes more reductive painters (e.g. Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, and Ad Reinhardt) who focus on single centralised images expressed in terms of large areas or fields of colour - hence the term colour field painting subsequently applied to such painters. The term has been extended to cover several sculptors stylistically related to the painters...
painters. It is likely that he meant Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, Franz Kline, Adolph Gottlieb, Willem de Kooning, Hans Hofmann, and Barnett Newman. It is also more than likely that Adams's notion of American Abstract Expressionist artists was similar to (and may even be based on) the art critic Clement Greenberg's notion expressed in the journal *Partisan Review*, in an article entitled 'American-type Painting':

... It is practised by a group of painters who came to notice in New York about a dozen years ago, and have since become known as the 'abstract expressionists', or less widely, as 'action painters'. (I think Robert Coates of the New Yorker coined the first term, which is not altogether accurate. Harold Rosenberg, in *Art News*, concocted the second, but restricted it by implication to but three or four of the artists the public knows under the first term. In London, the kind of art in question is sometimes called 'American-type' painting)....

Greenberg goes on to name several of the artists: Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Hans Hofmann, Jackson Pollock, Mark Tobey, Clyfford Still, Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko.

As with Adams, Rosenberg, Coates and Greenberg, abstract expressionism, according to the *Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*, is the name which has come to be most generally current for the work done by artists of the New York School and includes only fifteen artists: Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Ad Reinhardt, Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Hans Hofmann, Baziotes, Ashile Gorky, Clyfford Still, Philip Guston, James Brookes and Bradely Walker Tomlin.

David and Cecile Shapiro, in *Abstract Expressionism: A Critical Record*, claim that there were six 'leading exponents' of abstract expressionism:

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Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. However they also included Ashile Gorky, William Baziotes, Robert Motherwell, James Brookes, Philip Guston, Clyfford Still, Ad Reinhardt and Hans Hoffman.\(^{10}\)


Of these artists only Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Philip Guston and Adolph Gottlieb were previously considered as American Abstract Expressionists by Greenberg, Rosenberg and David and Cecile Shapiro. This suggests that the curators of ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ included other artists - European abstract expressionists (École de Paris or Tachisme), and second and even third generation abstract expressionists under the abstract expressionist umbrella in order to stake their claim and to elongate the abstract expressionist period. It should also be noted that of the New York painters - the original abstract expressionists - of these artists, only Pollock is credited with making prints before 1960.\(^{11}\) One in 1945, three in 1951. To compound matters even further, six of Pollock’s prints included in the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ were printed in 1967 several years after Pollock's death. Out of 125 prints included in this exhibition only four prints were by a major American Abstract Expressionist (Pollock) and only these four were printed prior to 1960. (The year 1960 is a pivotal date. It marks the beginning of the Pop movement in American art and the end of the American Abstract

\(^{10}\) ibid.

\(^{11}\) Refer to Appendices: ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’.
Expressionist era. The definition of originality of prints was agreed to at the Third International Congress of the Arts, held in Vienna in September of 1960,\textsuperscript{12} and was published by the American Print Council and issued by the International Association of Art in 1963.\textsuperscript{13}

The total number of prints produced in this exhibition by abstract expressionists (including Tachists, 
\textit{Ecole de Paris}, second and third generation American Abstract Expressionists as well as the recognised American Abstract Expressionists) prior to 1959 - the two decades of the post-war period (the height of the period of American Abstract Expressionism) - is 23 from out of 125 (less than 20%). By far the greatest output was after 1960, not before. This suggests that certain historical facts had been distorted by the A.N.G in order to 'fit' an ideology. Why should the A.N.G and the Print Council of Australia (through \textit{Imprint}) - suggest that abstract expressionists did not reject printmaking when clearly they did? And why promote the abstract expressionists' rejection of printmaking as myth when clearly it was not? But beyond these questions is the realisation that printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism must be linked together in order to provoke such contradictory claims and counter claims. This leads us to ask certain questions: What is the motivation behind such claims? How are printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism coupled?

When certain lines of investigation were probed an ideological theme began to emerge. Consequently the advertisement is a window which opens onto certain ideologies which in turn can be analysed. The contradiction itself is a point of leverage into a theory of the American Abstract Expressionism - printmaking configuration.

This thesis sets out to link American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking together and to re-interpret them as a conceptual configuration. It describes how these two seemingly independent systems have emerged from the immediate, unreflective experience of the period; in fact, how this scheme was arranged. This thesis shows how these systems break up, disappear or are reshaped in new ways, how ideas and themes move from one domain, one period, to another and demonstrates that printmaking and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} ibid.
\end{itemize}
American Abstract Expressionism are articulated one upon the other and are dominated by three major themes: genesis, continuity and totalisation.

Since the advertisement contradicted the archive, it seemed that the only strategy left available was to approach and examine these questions through the archive, how it was written, what was emphasised or even left out. Such an inquiry implies a distrust of the archive. However this apparent negativity reveals how the archive can be treated as a resource.

It was Nietzsche who showed how the project of absolute knowledge was deluded at source by its forgetting of how language misleads processes of thought. It is Nietzsche who shows that the link between empirical self-evidence and conceptual truth is a species of metaphorical displacement. It is Nietzsche, therefore, who stands as the precursor to that line of post-structuralist thought - to which this analysis might also belong - which questions the very method of 'method and structure' in the name of a demystifying rhetoric. Nietzsche's notion of the delimiting power of language that man uses in order to impose meanings that suit is particularly relevant in this analysis.

Michel Foucault's 'archaeological' method of analysing history, in particular his examination of language, where a new episteme brings to light the functioning of abstract forces outside of man's direct experience is pertinent to the methodology of this thesis. As Foucault puts it, on behalf of the new episteme:

...Expressing their thoughts in words of which they are not the masters, enclosing them in verbal forms whose historical dimensions they are unaware of, men believe that their speech is their servant and do not realise that they are submitting themselves to its demands. The grammatical arrangements of a language are the a priori of what can be expressed in it. . .  

Foucault's 'vision' of an 'archaeological' history, outlined in The Order of Things, allows us a different glimpse of the conventional or orthodox history

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- a 'philosophical' history as distinct from the 'anti-universal', 'pragmatic', 'critical', and 'fragmentary' varieties of factual history.

This analysis of the American Abstract Expressionist - printmaking configuration also gravitates towards a 'philosophical' history. As such the traditions of post-structuralist and psychoanalytic theory as outlined by Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida are drawn on.

Of particular importance is the post-structuralist notion that writers of history use a language in a logic whose proper system, laws and life their discourse, by definition, cannot absolutely dominate. And when they use them they allow themselves to be governed by the ideological elements in the system itself. In this way the patterns of the language that are used - what the writer cannot command and of what the writer is unaware - can become visible when a certain relationship to the text by the reader is aimed at. In this instance a double reading is possible, describing the ways in which lines of argument in certain analysed texts call into question their own premise - using the system of concepts within the text that works to produce constructs - which challenge the consistency of that system.

By critiquing the historicism of Lanier Graham, Pat Gilmour and the A.N.G. (by analysing the advertisement placed in the journal *Imprint*), Clement Greenberg's historicism and art criticism, the criticism of certain writers on American Abstract Expressionism and on printmaking during the period 1930-1960, by forcing a close reading of American Abstract Expressionists' comments, and the contents of *Imprint* (1966-1993) a challenge is made to the structures of American Abstract Expressionism and of contemporary printmaking in Australia and, as well, the historical contexts in which art history prefers to locate printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism.

Of the American Abstract Expressionists, it is Robert Motherwell, Clyfford Still, Hans Hofmann, Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko who will concern us most. All the figures included in this list are generally recognised as leading first generation American Abstract Expressionists in most writing on American Abstract Expressionism. However, others not included in the list, such as Helen Frankenthaler and Lee Krasner for example, are also
included in this discussion. Reasons for including these artists become apparent as this thesis unfolds.

The movement is always described as American Abstract Expressionism rather than abstract expressionism, in order to distinguish it from those of the European abstract expressionist schools (the *Ecole de Paris* or *Tachisme*, for example), and also to make a distinction between the first and the second generation school of American abstract and expressionist artists and from abstract expressionism as it is applied to a movement in metal sculpture,\(^{16}\) a movement which began a few years after the first impact of the work of major figures already named was felt.

It is the concepts underlying Action Painting\(^ {17}\) and Gestural Painting\(^ {18}\) - branches within American Abstract Expressionism - that are of particular interest since they represent the more extreme elements of American Abstract Expressionism: those of the Gesture Painters regarding the painting rather as a record of the process by which it came into being than as a finished product, and therefore a concrete symbol of the inner mental

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\(^{16}\) Harold Osborne, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*, Oxford University Press, 1981 names the chief exponents as: Seymour Lipton, Ibram Lassaw, Herbert Ferber, Theodore Rosak, David Hare, Reuben Nakain and David Smith.

\(^{17}\) Harold Osborne, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*, Oxford University Press, 1981 defines Action Painting as:

> ... that which was predominantly practised by Kline, Still and Motherwell. That which exploited the 'self-revelatory' brushwork which was thought to be the hallmark of Action Painting. . .  


> . . . *A phrase coined by Harold Rosenberg in 1952 to define the abstract GESTURAL painting then prevalent. Rosenberg referred particularly to Willem de Kooning, although later the phrase came to be popularly associated with the name of Jackson Pollock, and with the splashing or squirting of paint on canvas; it has also been used synonymously with Abstract Expressionism and *Tachisme*, a French term for much the same thing. According to Rosenberg, the canvas had become an 'arena in which to act'. the scene of an encounter between the artist and his materials - an encounter possessing a psychological as well as a physical dimension. The term has been rejected by many artists and critics because of Rosenberg's linkage of the artists psyche to European Existentialist thought, and because of Formalist criticism of, notably, Clement Greenberg. . .

\(^{18}\) Harold Osborne, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*, Oxford University Press, 1981 defines Gestural Painting as that which was practised by Pollock and De Kooning.
states of the artist in the course of its creation,\textsuperscript{19} and those of the Action Painters who exploited self-revelatory brushwork.\textsuperscript{20}

American Abstract Expressionism is a loosely termed style of painting and printmaking is a term for a discipline. It is at this point that certain difficulties arise. This paper might appear to treat printmaking as a style or American Abstract Expressionism as a discipline when clearly they are not. To avoid confusion, some explanation must be given about the use of these two terms.

Both terms are used in their traditional contexts as well as employed as generic terms which differentiate the individual aesthetic and a concept of the technological. These two concepts - individual aesthetic and the technological - are interwoven and interdependent and the structures of interdependency can be glimpsed in the formation and development of the underlying philosophical structures of American Abstract Expressionism as well as in the historical development of printmaking as an independent and autonomous discipline. These structures of interdependency become particularly apparent when both printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism are analysed as a configuration. Hence an historical appraisal of the configuration is necessary before an investigation proper can begin.

American Abstract Expressionism is treated as representative of the height of the rhetoric of the individual aesthetic and printmaking is treated as the example of how a concept of the technological was deployed - how the individual aesthetic became synonymous with a concept of a 'pure' uncontaminated subjecthood via immediacy and how a concept of the technological became synonymous with the rational, logic and reflection\textsuperscript{21} - in short with a 'pure' zone of non-self-presence.

\textsuperscript{19} A theme which is developed by S.W. Hayter in \textit{New Ways of Gravure}, (Oxford University Press, 1966 and also in \textit{About Prints}, Oxford University Press, 1962


\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Macquarie Dictionary}, Macquarie Library, 1982, defines \textit{reflection} (also Reflexion) as:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{n. 1. The act of reflection. 2. The state of being reflected. 3. an image; representation; counterpart. 4. a fixing of the thoughts on something; careful consideration. 5. a thought occurring in consideration or meditation. 6. An unfavourable remark or observation. 7. the casting of some imputation or reproach.}
\end{itemize}

\textit{reflexion} as:
The American Abstract Expressionists have previously been collapsed into a group and no apology is made despite claims by certain of the artists, writers or art historians that they all should be treated as individuals. Outlined here is a general theoretical model. This might seem contradictory: to develop an argument concerning the individual aesthetic by circumventing the individuality of actual individuals concerned. But no excuse is necessary. What is explored is the social concept of an 'individual aesthetic,' not the aesthetics of particular individuals. The distinction is an important one.

The Arguments Outlined in Part 1:
The thesis is divided into two Parts. Part 1 is an historical appraisal of some of the driving forces of American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking.

Part 1 of this thesis argues that the philosophical underpinning of American Abstract Expressionism, that is the concepts revolving around notions of 'immediacy' (the preconceived site of a 'pure' subjectionhood) was only able to be articulated by polarising 'immediacy' against its supposed opposite -

'the bending back or folding back of a thing upon itself'. But in this thesis I am concerned with the philosophical concept of reflection, as best described by Rudolphe Gasche in The Tain of the Mirror Harvard University Press, 1986, in Chapter 1 entitled 'Defining Reflection' he writes:

. . . [Reflection]from the outset has turned away from the immediacy and contingency of the reflective gesture by which philosophising begins in order to reflect on the beginning of philosophy itself. The concept of reflection is. . . a name for philosophy's eternal aspiration toward self-foundation.. . . From the moment it became the chief methodological concept for Cartesian thought, it has signified the turning away from straightforward consideration of objects and from the immediacy of such an experience toward a consideration toward the very experience in which objects are given. Second, with such a bending back upon the modalities of object perception, reflection shows itself to mean primarily, self-reflection, self-relation, self mirroring. . . through self-reflection, the self- the ego, the subject - is put on its own feet, set free from all unmediated relation to being. . . It makes the human being a subjectivity that has its centre in itself, a self-consciousness certain of itself. . . By severing the self from the immediacy of the object world, reflection helps give the subject freedom as a thinking being. From Descartes to Husserl, not to mention German Idealism, reflection as self-thinking to thought, as self-consciousness, has had an emancipatory function. It constitutes the autonomy of the cogito, of the subject, of thought. . .

technology (the predetermined locus of cognition, the rational, reflection - the zone of non-self-presence'). By rejecting printmaking processes, American Abstract Expressionists revealed the fabrication of the structural tensioning of their own philosophical concepts, how a system of referral and transaction was superimposed and erased by rejection. Part 1 is a recovery of the structures generated by a system of exclusion. It uncovers a discursive practice within the scene of writing and exposes a structure of referral and transaction between American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking despite these being regarded as independent and 'autonomous' in most writing.

What is of concern most about the American Abstract Expressionists is the belief that by 'unpremeditated spontaneity ' they could draw upon and release the universal creativity of the unconscious mind. That while insisting that their painting was not devoid of content, they argued that the painting process itself was the content and paid more and more attention to the sensuous qualities of the painting materials and to the techniques of their manipulation, forgetting that the step towards an 'unpremeditated spontaneity' required certain structured steps, including the rejection of the technological and of printmaking as a viable process for such an 'unpremeditated spontaneity'. This of course leads us to ask certain questions regarding the technological, particularly in its deployment as a metaphor for cognition and rational thinking, and to speculate on the rejection of printmaking in this context, and how this structural opposition might lead to an aesthetic of the individual.

Printmaking is a generic term which describes several technical processes of making prints: Lithography, Etching/Intaglio, Engraving, Woodblock, Relief, Silk-screen, Photo Process etc. It does not pertain to a style. Printmaking is used as a general term for all the traditional and contemporary print technologies and processes. However printmaking has also become synonymous with artist printmaking as distinguished from mass-reproduction printing techniques (even though photo-copying and computer laser prints are regarded by many art institutions as 'collectable'

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art work) and herein lies the argument that printmaking has already acquired certain theoretical and philosophical connotations which cannot be avoided. Printmaking has developed a sophisticated aesthetic based on an attachment to technology in order to define itself (Even institutions have accepted this ideological position in the way they collect prints and even in how printmaking is promoted or discussed: as an extension of technological development), which leads one to suspect that printmaking is already theorised as a development of a concept of technology.

Robert Motherwell, in a conversation with Dore Ashton for the art journal *Studio International* stated:

...I do not see how the works of Mondrian or Duchamp can be described apart from a description of what they refused to do. ...

There is irony in Motherwell’s statement in the context of this thesis: in order that the period to which Motherwell belonged could be better understood, an examination of that which American Abstract Expressionists refused to do is necessary. It is what American Abstract Expressionists refused to do that may provide the best description of what they were attempting to do.

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...I believe our collections should judiciously acquire instances of photocopy work and computer print outs as a reflection of the vital activity in this area. They will broaden our perception of art practice generally and force it into direct relationship with culture at large.

26 It is George Petelin in 'Escaping the Margins', *Imprint*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1991, p.3, that poses the question that printmaking must have:

...simply acquired unfortunate connotations somewhere in its history.

27 Anne Kirker, 'A Field of Expanding Interpretation', op. cit., p.13.

28 For example the recent Print Symposium at the National Gallery of Australia in Oct. 9-11, 1992 confirm that Printmaking is defined by technological means rather that by imagery. And also refer to: Anne Kirker, 'A Field of Expanding Interpretation', *Imprint*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1991, p.13.


...For the purposes of the practising artist and indeed the student of printmaking it is important that the public collection to be able to provide an overview of the history of the discipline, it techniques and predominant styles so that whatever the prevailing fashion there is a reference point or context.

Printmaking sometimes appears in history as an impenetrably written technological history. However, this analysis shows how prolific 'myth making' is in Western thought by uncovering and recovering the term 'technological' and showing how this term is imbued with rhetorical meaning which, when recovered, exposes the philosophical underpinning within the term in this historical context.

Part 1, Chapter 1 describes Alfred H. Barr's and Phillip Johnson's development of Roger Fry's formalism through the 'Machine Art' exhibition of 1934 and shows how their rhetoric set the scene for printmaking's orientation towards technological competence and medium specificity. It demonstrates how notions of function, beauty, rational thought and logic became synonymous with a sign-system of the technological. It discusses how Barr and Johnson, followed by Clement Greenberg, Theodore Adorno and Walter Benjamin exploited notions of the technological, to imply a depoliticisation of the printmaking discipline because of its technological base.

Part 1, Chapter 2 describes how Hayter equated the plate with the image it carried; how Hayter may have inadvertently emphasised technique over content in order to establish printmaking as an autonomous creative medium and discloses how this adopted position generated systems of referral and transaction between the dominant aesthetic and printmaking. It exposes the continual attempts by Hayter to redirect printmaking by forcing the dislocation of artist printmaking from reproductive technologies and his attempts to disassociate fine art printmaking from propaganda and political art while simultaneously claiming a link with the unconscious through his method, a method inextricably bound to medium specificity. It demonstrates that the American Abstract Expressionists' refusal of printmaking during the height of the rhetoric of expression was based on several prejudices: the association that printmaking had prior to the 1940's with the politics of nationalist art, socialism and propaganda, its association with reproduction and education as well as the medium itself being unsympathetic to notions of self expression because of an inherent lack of immediacy. It elucidates how formalist notions concerning medium specificity developed by Barr, Johnson and Greenberg as well as Adorno and Benjamin were accented by the writing of Hayter and others and how these influences assisted in creating a split between painting and printmaking. More importantly, it
reveals that the American Abstract Expressionists had determined that the site of authentic self-hood could be rhetorically defined by opposing it against the technological and printmaking in particular: how the technological became a metaphor for the rational, logic, the cogito and sophisticated culture.

Part 1, Chapter 3 discusses the development of the rhetoric of immediacy in the context of a concept of art as fundamentally anti-technological with particular reference to a notion of authentic art opposed to mechanical reproduction expressed by Walter Benjamin, a concept of the self located in the primitive-primordial unconscious, developed in psychology by Carl Jung and an attitude central to Existentialist philosophy, stated by Jean Paul Sartre which accented a notion of philosophical method that was not bound by deterministic scientific-rationalist models. It also demonstrates how notions of immediacy juxtaposed against certain metaphors of a sophisticated culture upheld by American Abstract Expressionists is directly aligned with Rousseau's philosophical position outlined in his 'Essai sur l'origine des langues'.

Part 1, Chapter 4 makes a comparison between Hayter's 'degrees of originality', the definition of an original print agreed to at the Third International Congress of the Arts, and the definition of an original print ratified by the American Print Council. It discusses the impact of the definitions of originality on American Abstract Expressionists. It discusses the significance of attitudinal change by American Abstract Expressionists after 1960 and the mechanism of 'différance' disclosed by the structure of 'originality' in prints. It clarifies how the definition of originality constitutes a

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31 The marking out or spacing of concepts; traces of signs, is complex and differential. Derrida expands on this theme in Positions. Signifying events depend on differences, but these differences are themselves products of events. When one focuses on events one is led to affirm the priority of differences, but when one focuses on differences one sees their dependence on prior events. One can shift back and forth between these two perspective's which never give rise to any synthesis. This alternation Derrida gives the term différance'. . . is a structure and a movement which cannot be conceived on the basis of the opposition presence/absence. Différance is the systematic play of differences, of traces and differences, of the spacing [espacement] by which elements refer one to another. This spacing is the production, both active and passive (the a of différance indicates this indecision in relation to activity and passivity, indicates that which cannot be governed and organised by that opposition), of intervals without which the 'fill' terms could not signify, could not function. . . (Derrida as quoted from Positions by Jonathan Culler, Ed. John Sturrock, Structuralism and Since, Oxford University Press, 1979, p.165).
crystallisation of a conceptual model (immediacy is treated as metaphor for an authentic self-hood and is rhetorically juxtaposed against the technological as a metaphor for the sophistication of culture): how the structure of originality in prints verifies the closure of an historico-metaphysical epoch.

Part 1, Chapter 5 discusses the significance of art criticism in reinforcing a negative concept of technology as a metaphor for sophisticated culture. It reveals how Greenberg, through his three essays, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', and 'Modernist Painting' developed three important concepts which reinforced notions of a negative concept of the technological: the source of the degradation of art was to be found in literature, reproduction technologies and kitsch, that art of quality could be defined by virtue of its medium, and that an authentic abstract and plastic quality was defined in relation to kitsch. It shows how other writers such as Schapiro, Rosenberg, Trotsky and Breton shared similar views to Greenberg and emphasised the relation of the artist as an individual positioned against the excesses of a technocratic society in decay.

Part 1, Chapter 5 also reveals how the rhetorical structure of the 'primitive' set against a European technocratic culture highlighted the postures of American Abstract Expressionism; how 'primitivism' was conflated with 'anonymity', 'universality', 'timelessness', and notions that creativity necessarily stemmed from a deep 'psychological' self with primitive-primordial drives. It demonstrates how decontextualisation allowed for Western industrialised and technological societies to be promoted as undemocratic, de-personalised, and therefore opposed to the individual; how technology was construed as 'evil' and how these writers promoted the notion that the salvation of individuality could be accomplished by a regression to states of being that were pre-technological, pre-conceptual, pre-phonetic and therefore natural.

The Arguments Outlined in Part 2:
Part 2 discovers that the discursive practice operating between printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism between 1935-1960 is echoed within the scene of writing in Australian printmaking, and these duplicated structures have impinged forcibly on a concept of self-hood in order to perpetuate a site of production. Located by this analysis is an isomorphic
conceptual model to which both Australian printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism are bound. By examining the system of duplication and reproduction, the architecture and arrangement of the general system of operating concepts is elucidated: how both American Abstract Expressionism and Australian printmaking axiomatically belong to this ‘field’ or system of exclusion.

One of the key texts which is examined in depth is the print journal *Imprint*. This journal was chosen above other sources for various reasons: *Imprint*, although based in Melbourne, is essentially an Australian print journal (in fact the only nation-wide print periodical). *Imprint* has remained the most consistent record of printmaking activity in Australia since 1966 to the present. Most of its contributing writers are artists and represent the whole gamut of art writing on printmaking available in Australia, despite Kate Reeves comments in ‘The Politics of Printmaking: Behind the Institutional Screens’, that ‘*Imprint* became an in-house affair only reflecting the views of the major institution’ (The Australian National Art Gallery ’). Many of its contributing writers were involved in publishing for other magazines, journals and local newspapers. Many of its contributors were educationalists. And many were involved with institutions other than the A.N.G. But even if, as Reeves suggests, its contribution resembled a sister publication to the A.N.G, from the point of view of ideology, such a journal

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32 Refer to: ‘A Conversation with Rose Vickers’, Appendices: R.V. ' Well I would say on one level its been part of a very welcome proliferation of magazines and publications which arouse artists to speculate and be informed on their particular field of art activity. In a sort of wider way than what is happening in Sydney. It's provided a forum for ideas. We've briefly discussed that it did seem to have a few geographical limitations because it's located in Melbourne and its sometimes inconvenient for people to travel from Adelaide or Brisbane and to take part in some of the discussions which produce the kind of information which *Imprint* conveys. But more and more because of fax machines and telephones and travel being a bit easier it has become a very successful - Australia wide - discussion platform. It has mirrored the development of printmaking in Australia over the last few years. Based on things like what's happening in technology and also the spread to regional centres of what is happening, is interesting. It has made it much more diverse and interesting situation. . .


34 ibid., p.15:

. . . From 1985 until the end of 1989 Imprint became an in-house affair. . . Infiltrated by academics/ curators and featuring in each issue a lengthy historical survey it began to resemble a scholarly sister publication to the promotional booklets from the Australian Prints department of the A.N.G. . .
can shed enormous light on the role that institutions have had in promoting ideology. From this standpoint alone *Imprint* occupies a favoured niche in Australian printmaking, a niche which local newspapers (such as the *Melbourne Age* or the *Sydney Morning Herald*), although giving details and critical comments of exhibitions, were unable to match. That is not to say that newspaper articles or articles from other magazines have been ignored by this thesis. On the contrary, a wide variety of sources, many from newspapers and journals have been examined which lend weight to the arguments presented here.

First and foremost, the advertisement for the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition is found in *Imprint*. In that regard *Imprint* and its contents (in relation to the program of education and the dissemination of certain information which it set itself over the period 1966-1993) is important and must be negotiated. In the global context, *Imprint*, being an Australian print journal, is as far from the geographical centre of American Abstract Expressionism - New York - as is possible. In this case, *Imprint* becomes a site to measure the influence of a philosophical attitude to printmaking that was developed in America prior to 1960 but also through *Imprint* we are able to measure the impact of American Abstract Expressionism on certain concepts of Australian printmaking. Although *Imprint* did not begin publication until 1966, the journal was first published sufficiently close to 1960 to reveal the impact of the close of American Abstract Expressionism on printmaking and give some measure of the rise of a modernist concept of printmaking (as an independent and autonomous discipline) in Australia. *Imprint* has been published consistently since 1966 and has gone from strength to strength, increasing its audience in Australia. Significantly, it remains the most important forum for debate on Australian printmaking. It is perfectly positioned for the purposes of demonstrating the theoretical model in question.

Part 2 is a collection of essays which sets into motion a series of questions which undermine that favoured and self-imposed 'marginal' position printmaking carved out for itself from 1940-1961 in America,\textsuperscript{35} questions which, until recently, the practice has been obliged to repress.

\textsuperscript{35} Editorial, 'The Woodcuts of Vincent Longo', *Arts*, 33.7, April, 1959, p.35:

... Gradually the art of Printmaking in this country seems to have removed itself from the centre of interest to the margins...
These questions suggest that rather than printmaking falling prey to hierarchical convention, far from being a victim of a hierarchical structure, far from any self-imposed 'margin', printmaking is one of the corner stones of a calculating philosophy whose aim it is to create a 'living' subject from out of such hierarchical posturing and positioning, exposing a philosophy of repetition, multiplication, duplication and reproduction of a general system of exclusion in order to produce authentic self-hood.

Extrapolating from the contradictions heralded by that unique moment in history (American Abstract Expressionism's exclusion of printmaking - discussed in Part 1), these essays uncover, and recover the methods by which a praxis simultaneously seeks to privilege one position over another, all the while claiming its status as 'marginalised', in order to maintain an ordered system of meaning.

It is from certain significant ruptures and rifts discerned in the textual 'workings' of Australian printmaking that an inter-discursive practice begins to unfold. It is the task of Part 2, to follow the unfolding of this inter-discursivity disclosed by writing on contemporary printmaking by measuring meticulously the ruptures and rifts, the traces and traits of a disclosed counter-discourse discerned behind the facade printmaking presents as it is represented.

An appraisal of the discovered and recovered counter-discourse allows us fresh opportunity to re-examine the philosophical underpinning of American Abstract Expressionism from one of its frames of reference, its margin: printmaking. Further, it allows us to negotiate printmaking from the matrix that underpins American Abstract Expressionist philosophical discourses. To negotiate printmaking or American Abstract Expressionism thus informed, is to encounter a general theory of repetition and duplication within the American Abstract Expressionism-printmaking interdiscursive configuration, their reciprocal frames of reference. Importantly, it also allows fresh insights into a discipline (printmaking), and a style of painting (American Abstract Expressionism) where new information is rare.

Part 2, Chapter 1 examines the significance of the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition
advertisement placed in the Australian Print Council's journal *Imprint*, Vol. 22, No. 1-2, 1986, under 'Exhibitions' in the context of: the archive, the definition of originality in prints (1961 in America and 1966 in Australia), collaboration and *Imprint*'s pedagogical stance. It demonstrates that the advertisement is an attempt to blur or elongate the period of American Abstract Expressionism beyond 1960 by including second and third generation abstract and expressionist artists of the *Ecole de Paris* and *Tachisme* in order to conceal the frame of reference which the abstract expressionists relied on to produce the individual aesthetic (the rejection of the technological and printmaking in particular).

The question of archival integrity is raised and the claims of the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition advertisement are analysed in terms of a conscious or unconscious political manoeuvre whose aim is continue the master narrative by enfolding the exemplars of immediacy within the superstructures of printmaking.

What is revealed in this chapter is that the narrativisation of past events is not hidden but can be shown to be deliberate and composed into a narrative whose construction is overtly imposed (even if by an unconscious desire). It is this process of construction - of the master narrative - that is put into question.

Part 2, Chapter 2, Section 1, examines the significance of the duplication of the American definition of originality in *Imprint*. It examines the publication of that definition in the context of claims by Australian writers and artists that Australian printmaking was predominantly influenced by European perspectives. It demonstrates how this view is contradicted by four factors:

1. Artists were interested in the New York School through the writing of Elwyn Lynn and through the journal *Broadsheet*.
2. Hayter was an acknowledged influence by most printmakers and what was of concern to Australian artists was Hayter's method (described in *New Ways of Gravure*) which in itself was aligned to Barr's and Greenberg's Modernism and was a direct result of the impingement of the American Abstract Expressionist construct: 'immediacy' juxtaposed against the technological.
3. The definition published in *Imprint* was an exact duplication of the American Print Council version despite there being an earlier French definition and the definition of the Third International Congress of the Arts.

4. Writing in *Imprint*, from 1966 onwards, is imbued with formalist rhetoric derived from Greenberg.

An argument is developed which demonstrates that underpinning Australian printmaking since 1966 is a theoretical construct brought about by the direct influences of American Abstract Expressionism and American printmaking rather than any perceived European influences. In the context of a similar stressing of the European in ‘The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition (discussed in Chapter 1), the work of a powerful cultural politics is made manifest which translates as a strategy of erasure (of a prior history of printmaking consisting predominantly of women artists) and concealment (of the operations of a powerful structure for the production and reproduction of selfhood which is an echo of the structures of authentic selfhood contrived by the rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists).

Part 2, Chapter 2, Section 2 is a close examination of Sasha Grishin’s claim in *Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History*\(^\text{36}\) for an Australian printmaking tradition unique and distinct from its European and American counterparts. This chapter locates many contradictions in Grishin’s argument and shows how Grishin’s account itself betrays the influences of a European heritage imbued with American formalist tendencies. This Section of Chapter 2 demonstrates that the facts relied on by Grishin to promote his concept of a ‘Golden Age’ of Australian printmaking can themselves be used to reveal significant traces of Hayter’s influence and therefore of American formalism deeply embedded in the Australian ‘traditions’ that Grishin uncovers. This Chapter demonstrates that Grishin’s account of the history of Australian printmaking appears as an attempt to mask the obvious: Australian printmaking is not unique or distinct but is an echo of European and particularly American formalist traditions.

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Part 2, Chapter 3 is a detailed examination and analysis of the underlying structures of the collaboration between master printer and artist and pays particular attention to a contemporary concept of collaboration as it was written about and promoted by the Tamarind Institute and other 'authorities' (notably American in origin). This chapter demonstrates that this modern approach to collaboration is underpinned by the same philosophical proposition that underpinned American Abstract Expressionism: an individual aesthetic opposed to a feared concept of the technological. It shows how a structure of collaboration, moulded by influences in America, was embraced by Australian printmaking, and the consequences and implications of this policy.

The structures and mechanisms of collaboration, as it is practised between printer and artist, is also interrogated, allowing us a valuable insight into a practice which has undergone rapid transformation in a relatively short period of time. This chapter shows how historians and critics have a long tradition of trying to erase textual elements which would situate their ideology in the text and exposes the structures of that totalising and universalising impulse which underpin the way in which collaboration is written about.

A re-examination of collaboration is also made through a re-interpretation of the structure of printers' marks, blind stamps, chops, etc. It proposes that the structures underlying printers' marks have undergone transformation over the 500 years that they have existed as authenticating marks and that this transformation is mirrored by the simultaneous transformation of the structures which authenticate the signatures of artists. The implications of the referral to a 'prime mover' disclosed by the construction are discussed in relation to the identity of the artist and the erased identity of the printer and how this mechanism operates 'behind the scenes' to construct and enforce a concept of authority invested in these separate identities.

Part 2, Chapter 4 focuses on the language which artists and writers use in order to situate or represent a preconceived notion of the 'self'. It focuses on a general apparatus employed in writing and discloses that much writing (to be found in magazines such as *Imprint*) is loaded with ideology. This chapter reveals that within certain writing (especially that found in *Imprint*), there exists a desire to contextualise, to situate the particularities of both
reception and production to humanist universals. Such writing reveals that
the 'danger' of printmaking lies in its apparent (technological) transparency
but also in the pleasure it arouses in viewers without creating any
awareness of its act of ideological constructing. This chapter explores the
strategy of such writing to posit the technologies of printmaking as
dangerous and exterior and sets out to negotiate and deconstruct such
concepts.

In *Imprint* a feared concept of the technological is placed in the service of a
philosophical structure which masks and marks the subject by calling into
being the 'dangerousness' of the technologies of printmaking. The
technological is employed and deployed as a species of 'bad faith' so that
one begins to suspect a complicitous naivétée, even a guilty recognition of a
theoretical structure: Technology must be accounted for in such a way that
the artist's individual aesthetic is emphatically defined against a feared
concept of technology. This practised naivétée becomes a springboard into a
theory: technology must be arrested by references to the artist's 'hand' in
order to animate the individual aesthetic, the desired 'subject'. The fact that
the strategy of juxtaposing the same conceptual opposites that American
Abstract Expressionists relied on to promulgate notions of origin are being
re-constructed in the post-originality era in *Imprint* despite the obviousness
of the manoeuvre of invoking the conceptual opposites - individual aesthetic
strategically placed against the technological - suggests that the desire for a
subject located in technology's other is a driving force. This strategy
translates as Australian printmaking's sustained and practised ideology.
Where American Abstract Expressionists rejected technology and
printmaking because of its technological base, where printmaking through
its definition of originality rejected mass reproduction and mechanical
reproduction as a viable means of individual expression, writing in *Imprint*
suggests that printmaking technologies are not so much rejected but
accounted for in such a way as to neutralise their corrosive potency.
Regarded as an evil necessity, dangerous, seductive, a threat, dominating,
subversive, immoral, inhibiting, binding, and a process which trains the
cognitive process, technology remains as the other of authentic self-hood.

Part 2, Chapter 5 explores the writing about Aboriginal printmaking in
*Imprint*. Analysis suggests that the universal language ideology is being
written into texts about Aboriginal printmaking. Notions of an authentic,
natural aboriginal art are always positioned against a dangerous and sophisticated Western culture that arrives as a noxious influence in the guise of the technologies of printmaking. Despite the dangerousness of this encounter with Western technology, the naturalness of an authentic 'pure' Aboriginality is always shown to assert itself and demonstrates that a form of intellectual primitivising is at work in texts such as *Imprint* which echoes the construction of a primordial-primitive self-hood located in the other of Western technology (metaphor for sophisticated culture) that American Abstract Expressionists constructed prior to 1960. Writing suggests that a 'pure' authentic aboriginal and natural self is being reconstituted from 'the other side' of the same philosophical construct which American Abstract Expressionists upheld.

Part 2, Chapter 6 discusses the influence of the physicalist approach to criticism, developed in America, on Australian printmaking. It demonstrates how writing in *Imprint* is inscribed by an approach which accents the physicalist-formalist approach to criticism developed by Roger Fry, Alfred H. Barr, Clement Greenberg and Stanley William Hayter. This chapter shows how such writing reveals a desire to mirror the artists' individual aesthetic against historically determined physicalist attributes given to materials and processes, how, in fact, these physicalist attributes and the processes of printmaking revealed a psychological portrait of the artist - the presupposed site of authentic self-hood. Such writing marks of a desire to augment the subject by describing the physical qualities of printmaking and how these might reflect the subject - how, in fact, subjecthood is derived by erecting and manipulating a self-imposed 'physicalist' border. This chapter demonstrates that the 'history' of printmaking in Australia, in *Imprint*, is a narrativised account of certain terms which have already been individuated: 'technique', 'medium possibilities', 'process', 'function', materials' - their intentional properties, or it is the narrativised career of these referents.

Part 2, Chapter 7 shows the significance of Derrida's reading of Rousseau to the argument of this thesis. It locates traces and traits of Rousseau's supplementary logic in the writing of such influential writers as Walter Benjamin, Clement Greenberg, and William Hayter and reviews how traces of this supplementary logic was also put to work in the texts of printmaking, and *Imprint* in particular.
Derrida's thesis on language in *Of Grammatology* is used to argue that much writing on printmaking, although in outward appearance saying one thing, is contradicted by a logic of supplementarity which implies that the writer is enforcing a philosophical view in order to maintain a concept of self-hood which has itself been previously constructed. This chapter argues that the concept of technology which much writing on printmaking promotes in *Imprint*—as an excess of culture, as dangerous, exterior etc.—reveals the same structure as Rousseau's philosophical notion outlined in his 'Essai sur l’origine des langues': a structure which is based on an opposition of Nature to Culture where Nature is given as prior, an assumption and presupposition which is flawed. This chapter focuses on

37 For Rousseau, writing threatens to invade the utopian community of free and equal discourse which exists among primitive peoples. It gives rise to all those evils that attend the birth of modern civilised society. Rousseau can only account for these effects by evoking some primal catastrophe, some accident that has befallen mankind, the perverse addiction to false ideas of social and intellectual progress. What Rousseau cannot think is the notion that these evils have always existed as far back as the origins of human society. This is precisely Derrida's claim: that the blindness in Rousseau's theories are produced by the 'workings' of what Derrida has named 'a supplementary logic' which effectively suspends and disqualifies all recourse to a notion of Origin. Derrida imputes a significance to Rousseau's texts which contradict their express meaning:

... *Rousseau's discourse lets itself be constrained by a complexity which always has the form of a supplement of or from the origin. His declared intention is not annulled by this but rather inscribed within a system which it no longer dominates. The desire for the origin becomes an indispensable and indestructible function situated within a syntax without origin...* (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Trans. Gayatri, Chakravorty Spivak, John Hopkin University Press, 1974, p.243.). Rousseau is obliged to treat all signs of human cultural emergence, even at the most 'primitive' level, as pointing to a kind of aboriginal swerve away from nature. His refusal to acknowledge this predicable is the cause of the tensions complicating his texts which lend themselves to the purposes of Derrida's deconstruction in *Of Grammatology*.

According to Derrida, what is in question in Rousseau's texts is a powerful mythology of human nature which can only be asserted (as Rousseau asserts it) by forgetting or effacing the signs of its cultural production. To acknowledge these signs would be to set in train a series of disruptive shifts and reversals whose effect would be to reach back to the postulated origins of man, language and society. Rousseau cannot help but acknowledge these, despite his project of maintaining the 'natural' order of values. But always there is a falling away from nature, identity and origin which makes it impossible for Rousseau to maintain what he intends. This leads Derrida to write:

... *Therefore this property [propre] of man is not the property of man: it is the very dislocation of the proper in general: it is the dislocation of the characteristic, the proper in general, the impossibility - and therefore the desire - of self proximity; the impossibility and therefore the desire of pure presence...* Man calls himself man only by drawing limits excluding his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity. The appearance of these limits is at once feared as a threat of death, and desired as access to a life without *différance*... (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Trans. Gayatri, Chakravorty Spivak, John Hopkin University Press, 1974, p.244.)
five key quotations which this thesis has referred to in both Parts 1 and Part 2 and analyses these in relation to some of the principles (for example: différance and the logic of the supplement) outlined by Derrida's deconstruction of Rousseau's ‘Essai sur l'origine des langues’.
part 1
Although Andreas Huyssen, in 'The Hidden Dialectic', pointed out that there was a move to specialisation, fragmentation and autonomy of "institutional art" received by bourgeois society in the 19 Th. Century whose framework rested on Kant's and Schiller's aesthetic of the necessary autonomy of art, the necessity of maintaining strict boundaries between the arts has been the essence of Modernism since Roger Fry's work in the 1920's. Fry developed the idea that critics should distinguish between reality and the pseudo objects artists create. Since artists interpret rather than reproduce nature, art must have its structure and follow its rules. This idea was the basis for the Formalist art criticism of the modernist period. However it was not until after Alfred H. Barr Jr. had written Cubism and Abstract Art, and What is Modern Painting, and after Clement Greenberg, following a Kantian philosophical approach, wrote of his desire to see each discipline achieving a 'purity and radical delimitation of their fields of activity,' in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', that printmaking embraced the ideals of medium specificity and retreated into a self-imposed exile to preserve the integrity and identity of its discipline. Following Greenberg's call in 'Modernist Painting,' printmaking became entrenched 'more firmly in its area of competence.'

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39 Refer to Roger Fry, Vision and Design, M.O.M.A, 1920, and in particular, Transformations, M.O.M.A., 1926.
41 Alfred H. Barr, Cubism and Abstract Art, Museum of Modern Art, 1937
42 Alfred H. Barr, What is Modernist Painting, The Museum of Modern Art, 1943
43 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', Modern Art and Modernism, Ed. Francis Francinca and Charles Harrison, The Open University, 1982, p.5, writes:

. . . Because he was the first to criticise the means itself of criticism, I conceive of Kant as the first real Modernist. . .
44 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting,' op. cit., p.6-7 writes:

. . . each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar to and exclusive to itself. . . 'Purity' meant self-definition. . .
45 Greenberg: 'Modernist Painting', Modern Art and Modernism, op cit., p.5.
Barr's role as Director of the Museum of Modern Art (M.O.M.A.) from 1929-1944 in determining American printmaking as an autonomous creative discipline cannot be underestimated and should not be overshadowed by Greenberg's critical predominance or Stanley William Hayter's influence.\(^{46}\) Francis Francina, editor of *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, commented that:

... As director of M.O.M.A. from its inception until 1944, Barr was the single most important man shaping the Museum's artistic character and determining the success or failure of individual American artists and art movements...\(^{47}\)

M.O.M.A.'s first major exhibition of industrial design was entitled 'Machine Art' and was presented from March 6 to April 30 1934, prior to the interest in developing a printmaking discipline as an independent and autonomous creative process with distinct intrinsic qualities inherent in its various mediums and processes; before printmaking followed Greenberg's prescription for modern art and was 'hunted back...isolated, concentrated and defined';\(^{48}\) before identity was restored by 'virtue of its medium... unique and strictly itself';\(^{49}\) before each medium was discovered to be 'essentially psychological and sub- or supra-logical';\(^{50}\) before the visual arts

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\(^{46}\) S. W. Hayter arrived in America and set up the Atelier 17 Printmaking workshop in the School of Social Research in 1940. (S. W. Hayter, *About Prints*, Oxford University Press, 1962, p.100). Hayter's involvement is detailed later in this Thesis; Hayter's creative career as a printmaker spans more than 60 yrs. First in Paris from 1926-39 and then in New York from 1940-1950 and then in Paris from 1950-1988. Atelier 17 was founded in 1927: ... The Atelier... cultivated a new approach to the creative process and encouraged an adventurous experimental attitude toward technique and its synthesis with idea. Atelier 17... laid great store on direct creation on the plate. This new approach was in tune with the surrealist conception of artistic creativity, which much influenced Hayter. Preliminary drawings at most set the mise en scene, determining the overall structure of the image. But this development took place in direct interaction with the medium, typically seizeing upon the artistic potentialities of unanticipated consequences in the various operations of engraving, etching, or soft-ground texturing, to create an image that could not have been foreseen in advance, even by the artist. ... (Refer to P. M. S. Hacker, 'The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter', *The Tamarind Papers*, Vol. 14, 1991-92. p. 31)


\(^{49}\) ibid.

\(^{50}\) ibid.
'had escaped from "literature"';\textsuperscript{51} before printmaking made a 'progressive surrender to the resistance of its medium.'\textsuperscript{52}

The concepts underlying the 'Machine Art' exhibition foregrounded American Abstract Expressionist philosophy and printmaking's retreat into a self-imposed area of technological competence. The 'Machine Art' exhibition espoused a formalist proposition. Writing on it, both in reviews and in the Museums' own \textit{Bulletin} accompanying the exhibition suggested that 'function' and 'materials' and 'process' had an intrinsic aesthetic - a machine aesthetic - which printmaking later exploited through such influential figures as Hayter who arrived in America in 1939,\textsuperscript{53} but which was antithetical to the individual aesthetic that American Abstract Expressionism later evolved and stressed. The \textit{Bulletin} accompanying the exhibition explained that each object in the exhibition was 'not only produced by the machine, but its design is also inspired by the machine.'\textsuperscript{54} Phillip Johnson, one of the curators of the exhibition wrote in the catalogue for the show:

\ldots Some will claim that usefulness is more important than beauty, or that usefulness makes an object beautiful. This exhibition has been assembled from the point of view that although usefulness is essential, appearance has at least as great a value. \ldots \textsuperscript{55}

In the forward to the same catalogue Barr claimed that the 'straight lines and circles, and shapes, planes and solids, made by the lathe, ruler or square' was equivalent to Plato's absolute beauty of geometry,\textsuperscript{56} and implied that the classical beauty heretofore unseen in machine made objects was the 'logical' outcome of the machine. Unadulterated and uncontaminated by artificial or social taste this beauty was the consequence of a 'logic' inherent in technology. The machine aesthetic was the result of the consequences of an inherent machine 'logic,' a direct consequence of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{51} ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{52} ibid., p.71.
  \item \textsuperscript{53} S. W. Hayter arrived in America and set up the Atelier 17 Printmaking workshop in the \textit{School of Social Research} in 1940. (S. W. Hayter, \textit{About Prints}, Oxford University Press, 1962, p.100). Hayter's involvement is detailed later in this Thesis.
  \item \textsuperscript{54} Phillip Johnson, 'Machine Art', \textit{The Bulletin} of the Museum of Modern Art, 1934, p.2
  \item \textsuperscript{55} ibid., p.17.
\end{itemize}
'function', 'materials' and 'process' and had an 'unintentional beauty' of design expressing functional 'logic'. Thus the aesthetic of the machine, and therefore of technology, epitomised the notion of a 'naturally' defined law succinctly expressed by Walter Benjamin in his pivotal essay 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' as an 'authority of the object'. By applying formalist rhetoric, technology itself could be demonstrated to reveal an aesthetic inspired by 'function', 'material' and 'process', an aesthetic that excluded the 'subject'.

The depth of this rhetoric and the ease with which it was absorbed can be gauged by reading the reviews of the 'Machine Art' exhibition. The journal *Architectural Forum* called the exhibition 'a celebration of the reunion of technics and design and the unconscious achievement of beauty as a by product of utility'. Barr made clear by implication that the 'unintentional' beauty of design was the soundest source for artistic design. Barr's writing extended Fry's Formalism which had centred on the problems associated with art criticism to include a strategy for artists. Objects, particularly those associated with technology, exhibited an internal 'logic' which exceeded the impingement of the human subject. This was, in fact, the dominant message of the 'Machine Art' exhibition.

Some fifty years later, Sidney Lawrence in 'Clean Machines at the Modern' (1984), suggested that most writers and curators of the time considered that machine art was virtuous. The ground for such claims had already been prepared by others before the Machine Art exhibition of 1934. Walter Gropius of the Bauhaus for example had acknowledged the new aesthetic:

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60 Sidney Lawrence, 'Clean Machines at the Modern', *Art in America*, 1984, p.131, writes:

... By isolating the mechanical object, the exhibition had obviously struck a chord; its convincing, even seductive point of view for the most part proved not only acceptable but logical, *truthful* and even inevitable to most critics. ...

[Italics are mine]
. . . It is to its intrinsic particularity that each different type of machine owes the 'genuine stamp' and 'individual beauty' of its products. . .  

However the look of polished steel, geometry and formalism - a formalism that 'lifts its function to the loftiest plane' - was not simply a reiteration of the 'beauty of the mechanical object,' expressed by art from the Bauhaus it was also a reflection of the Museum's formalist preferences.

For Barr, Johnson and other writers, the objects exhibited in the 'Machine Art' exhibition contained mystical or magical elements or 'forces' out of reach of ordinary human perception: 'the new machines are incomprehensible unless one knows about the existence of invisible forces. . . [they- the invisible forces] do not visually explain themselves.' These objects, machines, no longer had a function but a virtue. They quickly had become signs and ciphers. As such they guaranteed 'ancestry', 'heredity', worth and value; they were given the attributes of the 'myth of origin.'

63 'Art and Machines: Examples of Art of and for the Machine as shown in Two New York Exhibitions', op. cit., p.331.
64 Sidney Lawrence, Clean Machines at the Modern. Art in America, op. cit., p.138-9
65 These thoughts are echoed in the words of Jean Baudrillard some 55 years later:

. . . What man lacks is always invested in the object- while power is fetishised by the 'underdeveloped' in technical objects, heredity and authenticity are fetishised by the 'civilised' in mythical objects. . . (Jean Baudrillard, Revenge of the Crystal, Ed. and Trans. Paul Foss and Julian Pefanis, Pluto Press Australia and Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney 1990, p.41.).

Baudrillard elaborated his position:

. . . Thus every object has two functions: one of being practical, the other of being possessed. The former belongs to the domain of the subject's practical totalisation of the world, whereas the later belongs to the subject's attempt at abstract totalisation of himself outside the world. These two functions are inversely proportional to one another. At one extreme, the strictly practical object takes on the social status of a machine. At the other extreme, the pure object- devoid of function, or abstracted of its use - has a strictly subjective status: it becomes the object of collection. It ceases to be a rug, table, compass, or curio to become an 'object': a collector would say a 'beautiful object', not a beautiful figurine. When the object is no longer specified by its function, it becomes subjectively qualified: but then all objects are equal in possession, in this passionate abstraction. A single object is not enough: there always has to be a succession of objects, with the ultimate aim of having a complete set. This is why the possession of any particular object is at once satisfying and so frustrating: a whole series enhances and disturbs its possession. . . (p.44.)
On one hand machine art represented a bid for reform against the 'hand-crafted' styles of preceding generations and also against the highly visible contemporary style - 'Art Deco' or the 'Modern'. On the other hand it extolled the virtues of the clarity of functionally motivated form - the 'classical beauty' inherent in machine-made forms. Clearly functional and without apparent symbolism machine art epitomised something even more basic, timeless and universal. Machine art exposed and clarified its functionality, not disguised it. 'It refines, simplifies and perfects' wrote Johnson.66

Coupled with the writing of Barr and Johnson, the 'Machine Art' exhibition promoted three interdependent themes. Firstly, there was an inherent rational logic within machine-made objects and it followed that the machine-made generated a beauty which was classical in origin. Secondly, machine objects could be reduced to signs or symbols of an aesthetic based on logic and the rational. Thirdly, by focusing exclusively on the physical attributes of machine-made objects, implied the depoliticisation of the object. And by extension, because the object had been exhibited in an art gallery it implied the depoliticisation of any art strongly associated with technology.

The idea of art and technology welded together has a certain appeal, particularly when construed hierarchically. Although Barr's and Johnson's formalist approach is significant because it reduced machine art in terms of its function as a sign-symbol, neither Barr nor Johnson overtly construed a hierarchy between art produced by hand and the machine-made. Later writers involved with American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking did seize on Barr's and Johnson's notions of an inherent logic in the machine-made in order to construe such a hierarchy. By examining the manner in which these later writers exploited these sign-systems, the 'play' of a cultural politics can be analysed.

It was Walter Benjamin, in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', (1936) who first broached the concept that the oscillation between 'hand-crafted' and 'machine made' re-enacted the contemporary fetish of a fundamentally anti-technological notion of art, a notion of an art welded to concepts of technology. Theodore Adorno, in 'The Dialectic of Enlightenment', also drew attention to the notion of mechanically

reproduced object as sign when he wrote that 'the product prescribes every reaction: not by its natural structure (which collapses under reflection), but by signals'.

And even though Jean Baudrillard has concerned himself with the fetishistic discourse of technology in contemporary times, it is Derrida, in Of Grammatology (1974), who revealed that the notion of technology is a sign that exceeds itself. And it is Derrida's philosophical notions of the excesses of the sign that this thesis draws on to analyse a perceived cultural politics at work within the writing of American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking concerning the deployment of the technological as a sign-signifier.

To fully appreciate the 'work' of the technological sign-system developed in writing about the Machine Art exhibition it will be expedient to summarise the use of at least three concepts of technology which writers and artists were conversant with immediately before the emergence of American Abstract Expressionism or an autonomous American printmaking discipline.

Art, prior to the 'Machine Art' exhibition of 1934 had seen in Dada the use of a concept of technology which mainly functioned to ridicule and dismantle bourgeois high culture and its ideology. But technology took an entirely different meaning in the post 1917 Russian Avant-Garde. Where Dada ascribed technology with an iconoclastic value in accord with its anarchistic thrust to break up traditional and conformist values, the Russian Avant-Garde - in Futurism, Constructivism, Productivism and the Proletcult - became openly political and expressed itself in capitalist concepts such as standardisation, Americanisation and even Taylorisation. In the mid 1920's a similar enthusiasm for technification and functionalism had taken hold.

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70 Refer to: Kenneth Coutts-Smith, Dada, Studio Vista Ltd., 1970.
71 Dada, as practised by Duchamp, Picabia and Man Ray was described as working in the 'machine style' (Kenneth Coutts-Smith, Dada, Studio Vista Ltd., 1970, p. 68)
72 Kenneth Coutts-Smith, in Dada, op. cit., writes that the machine, dynamism, speed and movement were central to the Futurist idea; The First Futurist Manifesto was printed in the news paper Figaro on 20/2/1909 and stated:...

... We declare that the world's splendour and beauty has been enriched by a new beauty; the beauty of speed...
among the liberals of the Weimar Republic\textsuperscript{73} but commentators explained this Russian cult of the technological as: 'emerging from the specific conditions of a backward agrarian country on the brink of industrialisation'\textsuperscript{74} and rejected it for the art of an already highly industrialised West. In Russia, the constructivist romanticism - especially of artists such as Tatlin, Rodchenko, Lissitzky, Meyerhold, Tretyakov, Brik, Arvatov, Eisenstein, Vertov, etc. - had a deep meaning, associated as it was with the powerful technological offensive of the beginning of industrialisation and the revolutionary hopes of 1917 and yet at the beginning it was regarded by many as just another reflection of industrialisation, 'another propaganda device'.\textsuperscript{75} In fact their goal was the liberation of everyday life from all its material, ideological and cultural restrictions, and the artificial barriers between work and leisure, production and culture were to be eliminated.

In other words, prior to the 'Machine Art' exhibition of 1934, there were three quite separate and contradictory notions of technology, all of which were overtly tied to political ideologies. On one hand was the use of a concept of technology by the Dada movement to ridicule and dismantle high art culture - a critique of capitalist ideology, and on the other, two contradictory concepts of technology embodied in socialist politics also associated with Dada: a concept of technology as progressive and liberating, and a concept of technology shackled to propaganda.

In effect what the 'Machine Art' exhibition and Barr's formalism did was to depoliticise these three concepts of technology formed in Europe for the use of American art. It allowed the concepts which it projected as positive - mechanical reproduction technology as depersonalised zone - to be exploited by American artists who simultaneously and unashamedly maintained the concept of mechanical reproduction as a cipher for propaganda, traditions, conformity, education and politics, in order to reject mechanical reproduction technologies. And yet printmaking artists and

\textsuperscript{73} Kenneth-Coutts-Smith writes: 
\textit{...In Germany Dada went out and found an adversary...} states a \textit{manifesto:}
The introduction of progressive unemployment through comprehensive mechanisation of every field of activity. Only by unemployment does it become possible for the individual to achieve certainty as to the truth of life and finally become accustomed to experience... (Kenneth Coutts-Smith, \textit{Dada}, Studio Vista Ltd., 1970., p. 82)

\textsuperscript{74} Andreas Huyssen, 'The Hidden Dialectic', op. cit., p.12.

\textsuperscript{75} ibid., 12.
writers maintained and furthered notions of an inherent logic and beauty of the technological. In this way the high art ideals which Greenberg aspired to were attained without compromising certain 'universal' and 'democratic' political affiliations (the claim that Hayter made in regard to play for example\textsuperscript{76}, or the claim of kinship with children's art, primitive and oriental art\textsuperscript{77}).

The avant-gardist roots of printmaking linked with technological developments, nurtured by Dada in the West, by Constructivism in Russia, and which developed into Comic book and cartoon illustration in America, (as outlined by Sheena Wagstaff, in 'Comic Iconoclasm'\textsuperscript{78}) and in Britain by such groups as 'The Independent Group'\textsuperscript{79} (whose approach was firmly rooted in the legacy of early European modernism, that of the inter-war years, of the Bauhaus, of Duchamp, of Joyce among others, and who did not accept the notion that the modernist heritage had passed to New York and was centred in American Abstract Expressionism) was diverted by American formalist ideology.

Mass culture for Greenberg was unthinkable without 20 Th. century technology - mass media techniques as well as technologies of transportation, the household and leisure.\textsuperscript{80} Both Walter Benjamin in 'Art in

\textsuperscript{76} S. W. Hayter \textit{New Ways of Gravure}, op. cit., p.280.; Letter sent by Gottlieb and Rothko to the \textit{New York Times}, June 7, 1943:

\begin{quote}
\textit{. . . We profess spiritual kinship with primitives and archaic art. . .}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{80} Greenberg, in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.64, suggested that culture was in the grip of a romantic theory of art, that it was motivated by a desire for 'imitation rather than communication [and therefore it was necessary] to suppress the role of the medium.'(ibid., p. 65) This, according to Greenberg was the result of: 'a rationalist and scientifically-minded city culture. . . that tries to achieve allusions by overpowering the medium.'(ibid., p. 62) According to Greenberg this 'abhorrent situation could be directly attributable to literature and the reproduction industry.'(ibid., p. 65). Greenberg called for artists to overturn this romanticism:

\begin{quote}
. . . It was to be the task of the avant-garde to perform in opposition to bourgeois society the function of finding new and adequate cultural forms for the expression of that same society, without at the same time succumbing to its ideological divisions and its refusal to permit the arts to be their own justification . . .'(ibid., p.65). This over-turning would 'not be an about-face towards a new society, but an emigration to Bohemia which was to be arts sanctuary

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the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"\textsuperscript{81} and Theodore Adorno in 'The Dialectic of Enlightenment'\textsuperscript{82} also reveal this strong tendency to conflate mass culture with mechanical reproductive technologies. While Greenberg's, Adorno's and Benjamin's continual allusions to mechanical reproduction as a basis for a concept of mass culture is hard to counter, their desire to conflate mechanical reproduction technologies with cultural decline can be construed as the result of technological determinism. Andreas Huyssen in After the Great Divide\textsuperscript{83}, makes an especially strong reading of this aspect of history:

... This horror of technics can itself be regarded a logical and historical outgrowth of the critique of technology and the positivist ideology of progress articulated earlier by the late 19 Th. century cultural radicals who in turn were strongly influenced by Nietzsche's critique of bourgeois society. ... The experience of technology at the root of the dadaist revolt was the highly technologised battlefield of W.W.I. ... which the dadaists condemned as a manifestation of the ultimate insanity of the European bourgeoisie. ... Instrumental reason, technological expansion, and profit maximisation were held to be diametrically opposed to the 
Schoner Schein\textsuperscript{84}(beautiful appearance) and Interesseloses Wohlgefallen\textsuperscript{85}(disinterested pleasure) dominant in the sphere of high culture. ...''

It is not the intention of this chapter to explore the political positions of Barr, Johnson, Greenberg, Adorno or Benjamin, and neither does it offer a critique of consumerism or even offer to discuss the dominant values of capitalist consumer society. However, Greenberg's position, as well as that of Adorno and Benjamin, because they conflated mechanical reproduction technology with an aberrant consumerism, can be seen to be thoroughly from capitalism.\textsuperscript{86} (ibid.)

\textsuperscript{81} Walter Benjamin, in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op cit., tended towards fetishising technique, science and production in art, hoping that modern techniques could be used to build a socialist mass culture.

\textsuperscript{82} Theodore W Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Trans John Cumming, 'The Culture Industry, Enlightenment as Mass Deception', op. cit., writes:

... Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the Rhythm of the iron system (p.120); ... Interested parties explain the culture industry in technological terms(p121). ...\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{83} Andreas Huyssen, 'The Hidden Dialectic', op. cit., p.10-11.
implicated, collusive and even complicitous with a cultural politics. Barr’s and Johnson’s notions of a functional, logical beauty of technology and Greenberg’s notions of ‘kitsch’ enmeshed with reproductive technology are always implicated in questions of authorship, originality, innovation and the critique of consumerism (particularly of capitalist consumerism). But Greenberg’s, Adorno’s and Benjamin’s insistence on the critique of consumerism to implicate technology was a strategy which only served to manipulate the concepts which fetishised technology. Thus a cultural politics is inadvertently exposed by the rhetoric of Barr and Johnson when they discussed machine art as well as by Greenberg, Adorno and Benjamin as soon as they mentioned technological production or reproduction in conjunction with culture, and this politics remains quite separate from the self-professed political positions of these writers, a fact which confirms the view that the ‘work’ of cultural politics is often unintentionally present in the writing of historians, critics and other commentators, as well as in the work of artists.

American printmaking’s initial philosophical impetus of the 1940s came about largely because of the extravagant use of a depoliticised technology as a concept with which to criticise culture used by Barr, Johnson, Greenberg, and to a less measurable degree, Adorno and Benjamin. This depoliticisation of technology allowed formalist rhetoric to take hold and pivot printmaking toward an exploration of its mediums, processes, function and materials, directing it away from the political arena into self-imposed physicalist boundaries.

John I. H. Baur, in ‘The Machine and American Art’, summed up arts involvement with technology prior to 1960:

... Not only has the machine established a new aesthetic of functionalism, which is perhaps its most commonly recognised contribution to modern art, but it has also been romanticised for its power and mysterious complexity, it has served as a symbol of social and economic forces, it has assumed the role of demon, it has been a source of fantasy and humour, and it has

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85 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit., p.221
been transformed into organic or semi-organic forms as a metaphor of the human condition... 86

In his summation Baur reiterated Barr's formalist notions by claiming that American arts' first and foremost attitude was 'towards the machines functionalism' 87 and, on an aesthetic level, for the 'new beauty sensed in its precision, the clarity of its parts, and the logic of its design.' 88 Baur also echoed Benjamin's notion of the 'authority of the object' when he claimed that work of a technological nature had an intellectual bias: 'it is a response to the machines' impersonal perfection... beyond the shape, behind it, subtly infusing it with its aura, there nearly always lurks the history of its function... and all that man's imagination has found symbolised in these imperious forces.' 89

In summarising the historical association between art and technology, Baur claimed that machine art, science and technology came to be associated with communism, particularly Stalinism in the 1920's and mid 1930's and that many artists turned away from an involvement with technology in art because of its perceived 'communistic tendencies'. 90 Amy Goldin, on the other hand, in 'Art and Technology in a Social Vacuum' 91, suggested that 'technological art' presented a 'democratic' 92 universalism posited in an 'authority' inherent in the 'object-as-object' of machine made items. Goldin also claimed that art and technology represented a trend toward the democratisation of art where people with no special training might have access to technological aesthetics 93 and that the democratisation of art

87 ibid., p.83
88 ibid.
89 ibid., p.84-87
90 ibid., p.8
91 Amy Goldin, 'Art and Technology in a Social Vacuum', Art in America, March-April, 1972
92 ibid., p.48.
93 Amy Goldin, 'Art and Technology in a Social Vacuum', Art in America, op. cit., p.48:... It [the concept of art and technology] weakens the stranglehold of artistic professionalism and elitism on art, and re-introduces the vital element of belief into art theory. Since it reaffirms art's ability to 'contain' certain kinds of reality, it is a big help to artists who want to go on working and can't find a direction in 'traditionalist' art. Yet faith in technology must be distinguished from the technological developments themselves. ... What it [technology] has done is to shift the art world's idea of audience. Theoretically, art is no longer addressed to patrons. The supposed audience is now large, unspecialised in its concerns, and entitled to aesthetic response... An ideal of democratic art now rationalises the
represented new grounds for approving art and, as well, new desires. Goldin's claims echoed notions developed earlier by Walter Benjamin, particularly those outlined in his discussion on photography representing a break-point in reproduction and the way in which we view art. Such claims and counter claims imply that art associated with technology was inherently welded to political idealism and echo claims made by Andreas Huyssen, in 'The Hidden Dialectic', that 'there are always political aspirations in an art meshed with science and technology.'

With technology comes new advanced communication networks. Technology represents mechanical reproduction, mass production, mass communication, mass public experiences. For the American Abstract Expressionists, a technological aesthetic denied individual responses and encouraged the group response which was considered valueless. This was the basis upon which American Abstract Expressionists eschewed technology. Technology appealed to and mirrored the values of a technocratic society seen by American Abstract Expressionists and their main critical supporter, Greenberg, as 'evil' and in decay.

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94 Walter Benjamin, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit., p.224: 
... [photography led] for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art on its parasitical dependence on ritual...
95 Andreas Huyssen, 'The Hidden Dialectic', op. cit., p.4, writes concerning the political aspirations of an art meshed with science and technology: 
... Henri de Saint Simon's Opinions litteraires, philosophiques et industrielles (1825) ascribed a vanguard role to the artist in the construction of the ideal state and the new golden age of the future, and since then the concept of an avant-garde has remained inextricably bound to the idea of progress in industrial and technological civilisation. In Saint Simon's messianic scheme, art, science, and industry were to generate and guarantee the progress of the emerging technical-industrial bourgeois world, the world of the city and the masses, capital and culture. The avant-garde, then, only makes sense if it remains dialectically related to that for which it serves as the vanguard - speaking narrowly, to the older modes of artistic expression, speaking broadly, to the life of the masses which Saint Simon's avant-garde scientists, engineers and artists were to lead into the golden age of bourgeois prosperity...
The strategy of analysing a concept of the technological as rational, cognitive, logical, (but also one of 'beauty') does not imply that the question of the hidden dialectic of mass culture and avant-garde, as well as the socio-political subtext of the decline of the avant-garde and simultaneous rise of mass culture (with the corresponding rise of technology) has been marginalised or negated. Rather, this strategy draws attention to a tendency by writers to project the depoliticisation of technologically-based art by the manoeuvre of focusing on medium specificity. The focus on medium specificity translates as an ideological or cultural-political manoeuvre. This is especially observable in the writing of Clement Greenberg, despite Greenberg's claim that an art true to itself would be revolutionary and counter culture's decline. The focus on medium specificity, first by Barr and Johnson and then by both Greenberg and Adorno, intentionally masked the political.

98 ibid.
Chapter: 2

The Rhetoric of the Technological: uncovering the construction of the technological in American printmaking (1940-1960)

Alfred H. Barr's premises for a discussion of Modern Art and history, implicitly or explicitly, was based on a linear and intentionalist model which informed much subsequent history and the explanation of modern art. Apart from the 'Machine Art' exhibition, Barr organised two shows at M.O.M.A. in 1936: 'Cubism and Abstract Art' and 'Fantastic Art, Dada, and Surrealism'. With these two shows Barr constructed the dialectic in Modern Art that proposed that Abstract Art was the culmination, the reaction to the exhaustion of possibilities by Cubism. Barr's general thesis rested on two major premises which were outlined by Meyer Schapiro in 'The Nature of Abstract Art' which was itself critical of Barr's stance. Barr made the distinction between the representational and non-representational. For Barr representation was associated with art that resembles or mirrors the world. Hence Barr saw Cubism as exhausting the representational which led to the next major trends in painting. Secondly, Barr saw art as essentially explicable in terms of formalist analysis. He identified what appeared to be formal similarities between works produced by different cultures and in different circumstances. Formal similarity for Barr became the key to 'unlocking' historical complexity. But this, according to Schapiro, was Barr's error. Schapiro, in 1937, wrote:

. . . The logical opposition of realistic and abstract art by which Barr explains the more recent changes rests on two assumptions about the nature of painting, common in writing on Abstract Art: that representation is a passive mirroring of things and therefore essentially non-artistic, and that abstract art is a purely

100 Kathleen Church Plummer, 'The Streamlined Modern', Art in America, Jan-Feb., 1974, p.46-54, claims that the optimism and faith in scientific utopianism that had been exhibited in machine technology epitomised by the 'Machine Art' exhibition at M.O.M.A. in 1934 had begun to fade by the mid 1930's. Such a scientific utopianism was arguably conflated with Socialism(already under severe criticism both from within and without ).
aesthetic activity, unconditioned by objects and based on its own internal laws. . . 102

But despite Schapiro's criticisms, Barr's essentially Formalist hypothesis became exemplary. Clement Greenberg refined and elaborated Barr's explanations and history of Modern Art in Greenberg's gradual emphasis on 'modern specialisation'.103 Further, Barr's paradigm was a raging success because it appeared to solve problems within the very practice of criticism itself. By defining the field of problems for criticism, it misrepresented the problems of modern art practices. That is, the criteria for choosing problems within criticism was accompanied by narrowing the 'field' to different and opposed disciplines each with its own integrity, isolated and insulated from socially important problems that were not reducible to the 'field' that each discipline came to occupy (because they could not be stated in terms which were supplied by the conceptual and instrumental tools of the paradigm).

American printmaking turned in on itself between 1937-1960, subscribing to the philosophical view proposed by Barr104 and developed by Greenberg that each medium should remain faithful to itself and explore its own aesthetic possibilities.105 Barr's formalist hypothesis in the hands of Clement Greenberg became paradigmatic:

. . . The arts lie safe now, each within its 'legitimate' boundaries. . . Purity in art consists of acceptance, willing acceptance of the limitations of the medium of the specific art. It is by virtue of the medium that each art is unique and strictly itself. To restore art to the identity of an art the opacity of its medium must be emphasised. . . 106

105 Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69.
But it was Hayter who had the greatest impact on American printmaking: James Johnson Sweeny, writing in 1944, claimed that work accomplished at Hayter’s Atelier 17 represented ‘some of the most vital researches in twentieth century graphics.’ Hyatt Mayor in 1948 went even further and suggested Hayter had ‘revitalised American work . . . by disclosing unsuspected possibilities in technique and expression.’ Carl Zigrosser, also writing in 1948, claimed that there was no doubt that Studio 17 had ‘impressed itself on the graphic idiom of our time’. However, it was P. M. S. Hacker, writing in 1992, who best summed up Hayter’s decade in the United States (first at the New School for Social Research in New York from 1940-1945, and then to Greenwich Village from 1945-50) when he described Hayter’s involvement as ‘seminal for American printmaking’.

Lanier Graham, Clinton Adams, Riva Castleman, Judith Goldman and James Watrous (all of whom have written on printmaking after 1960), concur that Hayter through his Atelier 17, was the most influential printmaker in America during the period 1940-195.

Despite the fact that Greenberg only once in his entire collection of reviews and criticisms referred to Hayter (he criticised Hayter for being too decorative), P. M. S. Hacker, in ‘The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter’, claimed that Hayter was an influential figure in the birth of American Abstract Expressionism, ‘constituting as it were, a bridge

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114 ibid.  
118 Hacker and Coates also claim that: ‘Hayter was recognised at the time as one of the founders of the movement (American Abstract Expressionism).’ (See Robert Coates review of Hayter’s work.)
between European Surrealism and the new abstract art evolving in New York in the 1940's. Judith Goldman, in American Print: Process and Proofs, suggested that the establishment of Hayter's Paris-originated Atelier 17 in New York in 1944, 'should have helped to dissolve the distinction between printmakers and painters,' but this was not so. In fact, Hayter's studio contributed to the distinctions between painting and printmaking being emphasised.

While Clement Greenberg, in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', encouraged a divorce from commercial means of production, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon' advocated the concept that each discipline was an autonomous artistic activity, contained a unique means of creativity, each with its own language of self criticism, points not lost on Hayter. A major section of Hayter's book, New Ways of Gravure, first published in 1949, contain three Chapters (17, 18 &19: the 'Theory of Line', 'Descriptive Drawing' and the 'Specific Qualities'. A further chapter, 'Implications of Gravure as a Specific Medium', describes in detail the textures and plaster techniques for engraving. Hayter's teaching methods, described in New Ways of Gravure, reveal an antipathy toward commercial reproduction techniques. According to Goodman, Hayter viewed printmaking as the American Abstract Expressionists viewed painting. Focusing on the action of the tool, he saw the plate as 'an arena'. In other words Hayter's notion of printmaking meshed with Rosenberg's notion of creativity taking place in 'action' - the canvas the artist's arena. Of Hayter's 'method', Golman wrote, 'he believed as much in the art of making a line as in the line itself'. This view of Hayter meshed with Meyer Schapiro's notions concerning 'traces' that the artist leaves behind - 'all signs of the artist's active presence.'


118 ibid., p. 34, footnote 4
120 S. W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, Oxford University Press, New York, 1966 (first Published 1949).
. . . The act-painting is of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's existence. . .
Of his method, Hayter wrote:

. . . Starting from an arbitrary position, action is continued in consecutive stages, at first rational but later becoming intuitive, in the absence of a concrete project, and further continued to the destruction of the plate. . . 126

In the ‘Conclusion’ to New Ways of Gravure, in the chapter entitled the 'Future of Gravure', Hayter elaborated on his method and claimed that it was 'in the exposure of his idea and his plate to the accidents of method, to the immanent risk of destruction, that the greatest result may occur in the work and most valuable experience in the artist.' 127

Hayter claimed that these 'controlled experiments' lead to discoveries primarily concerning the inherent qualities of the medium, but this always in relation to the artist. Successive prints pulled from each stage of the process or 'experiment' could be analysed as the individual steps of unconscious thought processes of the artist. In this way Hayter deployed technology as a metaphor for cognition and for the sophistication of culture and polarised this against the unconscious (metaphor of an uncontaminated nature): 'In my own manner of working I would consider the selection among these consequences rather to be unconscious than deliberately conscious, and in no case mechanical.'128

When Hayter Published About Prints in 1962129 his commitment to the formalist critique had crystallised. In his definition of 'originality in prints' in a chapter entitled ‘Five Degrees of Originality’ Hayter described originality as 'the emergence of an image by the exercise of a technique in the medium.'130 Hayter also confirmed his orientation to the notion of medium specificity in his treatment of the process as a means 131 rather than as an imitative reproductive tool, claiming that the expressive possibilities of a process in the hands of an artist who devised it ‘could give results in the

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126 S. W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, op. cit., p.218
127 S. W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, op. cit., p.277.
128 ibid., p.279.
130 ibid., p.131
131 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting,' Modern Art and Modernism, op. cit., p.5.
category of the print as a major work beyond any result to be expected from the ingenious adapters of other men's methods. Such statements revealed Hayter's formalist orientations and echoed Greenberg's notion that 'the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique to the nature of its medium.' It is within these borders that Hayter directed printmaking to develop its own competency and criticism directed from within: its autonomy.

In 1944, four years after Hayter's arrival in New York, James John Sweeney claimed that Hayter had seen the neglect into which engraving as a medium of creative expression had fallen during the last four centuries but who had 'realised the possibilities it offered for the exploration of those pictorial interests which most attracted twentieth century artists.' Herbert Read, writing in 1947, reiterated Sweeney and claimed that Hayter's method was to 'explore the technical possibilities of the medium and to show how they could be applied to the particular problems of modern art.' Many of the leading artists in the modern movement joined in the experiment at Atelier 17, and the result was a number of discoveries which, Read claimed, 'considerably extended the expressive effects of the medium.' Carl Zigrosser was even more effusive in his praise. Only eight years after Hayter had established Atelier 17 in New York he claimed that a new school of printmaking had grown up around Hayter and that the artists of Atelier 17 shared 'a more or less common outlook on the problem of creative expression. . . Hayter is at the core of this enterprise.'

Each of these writers stressed the importance of Hayter's influence in the context of the recognition of printmaking as an autonomous creative discipline. Hayter himself, in the Catalogue to the 14 Th. Atelier exhibition of 1949, wrote suggesting the potential of printmaking as an autonomous creative medium:

... Although the account given here of the techniques used by the Atelier is largely mechanical and few hints are given of the

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133 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', op. cit., p.5.
137 ibid.
ideological consequences of their employment it is the general conviction of the group that the mechanical technique, to be valid, must be the direct consequence of an idea; that the act of expression in these media will, however, not merely modify a preconceived idea but can give rise to new imaginative material.

Clinton Adams too, writing in American Lithographers 1900-1960: Artists and Their Printers, claimed that printmaking was strongly influenced by Hayter and his American followers: Mauricio Lasansky, Gabor Peterdi, and Karl Schrag. But to imply that printmaking had become completely autonomous and isolated from other developments as Adams and writing on Atelier 17 suggests, is to overlook the influence of the concept of the individual aesthetic - rhetoric of the self - couched as it was in notions of 'immediacy': the dominant aesthetic. From the moment printmaking established itself in relation to its medium specificity as Barr, Greenberg and Hayter had directed, it was rejected by the American Abstract Expressionists. Prints just did not suit the modern aesthetics; restrictions in procedure and format made it a difficult medium in which to convey abstraction, and the discipline began to define itself in relation to the refusals of American Abstract Expressionists to engage with its processes. Lanier F. Graham in the 'The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era', 1987 also acknowledged that the reasons for the rejection of printmaking hinged on a negative notion of the technological:

... Abstract expressionist artists were deeply concerned about the growing tendency in modern society for individuals to be stripped of their identity in a technocratic state. As the post war era began, the corner-stone of democracy - individuality itself

140 Adams, Clinton, American Lithographers 1900-1960, op. cit., p.160.
142 Judith Goldman American Prints: Process and Proofs, op. cit., p.116, writes:
was at stake. The new style developed as a passionate assertion of individuality. . . \(^{144}\)

Hayter was quick to react to this rejection. In *New Ways of Gravure*, Hayter claimed an affinity with the American Abstract Expressionists through his method of working. Hayter conflated technology with conscious thinking, cognition and rational thinking conceptually opposing these against the unconscious, the irrational, untamed thinking which he valued. For Hayter, the desired self was revealed by the artist's reactions to the process, captured in the printing of the various stages. It was a psychological self exposed through the processes that Hayter sought and claimed was possible through processes. Hayter elaborated on this psychological self by focusing on a notion of play:

. . . Perhaps this account will make my point about the attitude of play in elaborating an idea as distinct from the mechanical and repetitious execution of a frozen scheme by the methods of work. As I see it there is no lack of seriousness in this attitude - what could show greater seriousness and concentration than a child playing an elaborate game? . . . \(^{145}\)

Hayter's allusion to the universal child was rhetorical. Children represented innocence and naïveté, an uncontrolled spontaneity. Clement Greenberg also suggested that artists invoked the universality of children's art to prove that their concept of purity is something more than a bias in taste: 'painters point to the Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal purity'.\(^{146}\) Hans Hofmann also claimed that the difference between art produced by children and great works of art is that 'one is approached through the purely subconscious and emotional, and the other retains a consciousness of experience as the work develops and is emotionally enlarged through the greater command of the expression-medium.'\(^{147}\) Such claims echo those expressed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his 'Essai sur l'origine des langues':

\(^{144}\) ibid., p.5.  
\(^{145}\) ibid., p.280.  
\(^{146}\) Greenberg, in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69  
All our languages are the result of art. It has long been a subject of inquiry whether there was ever a natural language common to all; no doubt there is, and it is the language of children before they begin[have learned] to speak. This language is inarticulate, but it has tone, stress and meaning. The use of our own language has led us to neglect it so far as to forget it altogether. Let us study children and we shall soon learn it afresh from them. . . It is not the sense of the word, but its accompanying intonation [accent] that is understood. . .

Such notions did not go without critical comment. Leon Golub, in the *College Art Journal*, claimed that 'reversion or regression to primitive means, common to the childhood of the race or of childhood itself, can only be a romantic device.' Golub even suggested if expression could not be directly achieved and if the sophisticated artist does not reach a residual primacy, his forms only simulate pre-conscious activisation. The only outcome for a failed or simulated expression was 'mannerism' and 'decoration':

Continuing with Hayter:

... The acquisition of means in the plate media, the enriching of the artist's experience, can only occur as he plays with his process with a certain detachment from the result; the painful and accurate execution of a preconceived plan can only involve those means already familiar to him and offer no new ones. . .

Play is posited as a disinterested science whose object is the subject. For Hayter, immediacy' represented the site of self-presence and technology - mechanical reproduction in particular - represented the locus of a site of cognition.

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148 Rousseau as quoted by Derrida in Of Grammatology. Trans. Gayatri Chakrovorty


150 ibid.

151 ibid.

152 ibid.

153 S. W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure. op. cit., p.280.
While James Johnson Sweeny wrote that despite print technology, artists maintained a degree of independence under Hayter's technical guidance 'without conceding the individuality which has marked their work in other media', Hyatt Mayor suggested that 'individualism makes itself more rugged, not less, by learning where to merge itself [with technology].

James Mellow writing in 1955 attempted to deflect the rejection by the dominant aesthetic by drawing parallels between American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking by focusing on formalist aspects:

... In its attempt to establish itself as an art form in its own right, rather than as a supplement to painting that it [printmaking] has acquitted itself with the same inventiveness and daring in its techniques that characterise the modern movement in painting. ...

Such views were reinforced when reiterated by American Abstract Expressionist artists. Hans Hoffman, for example, claimed that the difference between the arts arose because 'of the difference in the mediums' expression, and in the emphasis induced by the nature of each medium.' However, comments such as these only propelled printmaking further into introspection:

Even though printmaking was practised by many of American Abstract Expressionists in the formative stages of the their careers, in the early

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... The aim of art, so far as one can speak of an aim at all, has always been the same; the blending of experience gained in life with the natural qualities of the art medium. ... Art is a reflection of the spirit. ... which finds expression in the nature of the art medium. ... Thus he creates a new reality in terms of the medium. ... The medium becomes the work of art. ... and at the same time masters its essential nature and the principles which govern it. ...
1940's, in particular Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb, it was rejected out of hand by these artists as the rhetoric of 'immediacy' took hold.

Even though Hayter claims that several major American Abstract Expressionists were working in his studio between 1943-44, the M.O.M.A. exhibition 'New Directions in Gravure', the first major exhibition of prints from Hayter's studio in 1944 contains no prints from any recognised American Abstract Expressionist. Most of the New York artists turned their backs on printmaking at this time.

The exhibition catalogue of the 14 Th. Exhibition of S. W. Hayter's Atelier 17 at Laurel Gallery in 1949, the same year that Hayter published New Ways of Gravure, also shows that there were no American Abstract Expressionist artists represented.

Willem de Kooning's involvement in printmaking is recorded by Lanier Graham, in 'The Prints of Willem de Kooning: an illustrated catalogue of his editions 1960-1971': 'The few prints de Kooning made in 1943 have disappeared, unrecorded and unphotographed.'

Similarly Robert Motherwell, despite having a separate career as a bookman, an early exposure to graphics, and who had also visited

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159 ibid., p.8.
160 Refer Catalogue 'New Directions in Gravure', M.O.M.A. Bulletin, 21-1, New York, 1944.
162 Refer Hayter, Catalogue Atelier 17, 1949.
166 ibid., p.114.
Atelier 17 to make engravings, becoming involved with the European artists Max Ernst, Andre Breton (themselves working at Atelier 17), did not make prints until the early 1960’s (with Tatyana Grosman and Irwin Hollander). Franz Kline, another major American Abstract Expressionist artist, only made prints when he received an invitation from a publisher (and then) in 1960.

In an interview with Clinton Adams in 1982, Nathan Olivera claimed that the attitude that was prevalent at the time (1940-1950) among the American Abstract Expressionist artists in New York was that printmaking had to do with craft and technique and that was seen as part of the ethic that these artists were destroying. In some ways, Olivera claimed, 'they looked on printmaking with contempt; they couldn't really accept the modern concern for craft and felt it was better to ignore it rather than become involved in it.'

Leon Golub wrote at the time (1955): 'The [American Abstract Expressionist] artist seeks an action that is pre-logical, pre-cognitive, and amoral.'

Even more pertinent was Franz Kline's statement:

... Printmaking concerns social attitudes, you know - politics and a public. ... like the Mexicans in the 1930's; printing, multiplying, educating. ... I can't think about it. I'm involved with the private image ... .

Kline's statement indicated that the private image (the personal-authentic, originary statement) was unable to be articulated through any mediated or technical process: print technology had been associated with propaganda, which contaminated.

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167 ibid., p.116.
169 ibid.
170 ibid., p.50.
Even though Will Barnett taught Mark Rothko and Jenkins printmaking in 1950, and 1951, Barnett claimed that: 'as ivory tower attitudes replaced the social consciousness of the depression years the graphic medium was considered the lowest possible way of expressing yourself.'

Such statements demonstrate the degree to which the rhetoric of self-expression had taken hold. Any technical or mechanical device was seen to be a hindrance, a barrier, which would prevent the flow of the unconscious (the source and site of the authentic). 'Immediacy' was essential, it was the vehicle of the unconscious. Without the rhetoric of the 'immediate' (felt to be unavailable in prints, sculpture, in fact any technologically based medium), the Gestural mark lost its power to convey the presence of the author and with it the 'truth', the 'soul', or the 'spirit' of the artist. Technology was discarded so that a clear and direct path would be available for the 'immediate' to reveal itself, thereby revealing in a chain of signifiers the authentic self-presence of the artist.

Dore Ashton writing at the height of the rhetoric of self-expression, in 'The Situation in Printmaking: 1955' stated:

... Almost every important painter in the last quarter-century has known one or another of the print media intimately: Feininger, Hartley, Kuniyoshi, Dehn, Hopper, Marin and others of equal distinction have done scrupulous work in Graphic media. During the Depression, the W.P.A. Art project encouraged printmaking, and large numbers of artists had the opportunity to learn appropriate techniques. ... In New York today there are several important graphic workshops, and unlike their European counterparts, they emphasise the importance of the artist's own hand... the most active atelier being The Contemporaries directed by Margaret Lowengrund. ... the same is true of lithography but on a smaller scale. ... [Italics are mine]

When Ashton wrote: 'The importance of the artist's own hand', she revealed how much the rhetoric of 'immediacy' had impinged on the psyche of artists by this time. The importance of the hand of the artist was a major part of the rhetoric of the self, of the 'individual aesthetic' and was a rehearsal of what was to come later as 'originality' in prints became hotly debated in America.\(^\text{177}\) Even though Ashton acknowledged the names of several important American artists, none of the American Abstract Expressionists were mentioned. This is because none seriously contemplated Printmaking as a method of articulating the self, a point which Clinton Adams, who thoroughly researched the development of Lithography in America in 'American Lithographers 1900-1960: Artists and Their Printers' noted:

\[\ldots\text{There was little interest in lithography among the new generation of artists in New York. A number of these artists - Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko among them - had made intaglio prints at Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17, after it was relocated from Paris to New York in 1944. In doing so they met the distinguished émigré artists who - in the European tradition - saw the making of prints as a natural part of their total work. But neither the attitudes of the Europeans nor the experience with Hayter served to overcome the American artist's prejudice against printmaking, an activity which they identified with ideas and methods completely foreign to their work.}\ldots\]\(^\text{178}\)

[Italics are mine]

Despite their contact with European artists such as Joseph Albers, Lyonel Feininger and Max Weber - all European trained - American Abstract Expressionists continued to reject printmaking. Adams gives two reasons. Politics: 'the rejection of the nationalist art and politics of the social realist painter\(^\text{179}\) (propaganda, American Social Realism, Russian Constructivism, as well as Commercial Poster Making), and the impediments of technology: 'the rejection of the technical methods which were intrinsic to printmaking.\(^\text{180}\)

\(^{177}\) It is interesting to note that the title of Pat Gilmour's essay in *Lasting Impressions*, National Art Gallery of Australia, 1988, p 308-359, (Lithographic Collaboration: the Hand, the Head, the Heart) stresses the 'hand'.


\(^{179}\) ibid.

\(^{180}\) ibid.
But there is another possible explanation for the spurning of printmaking by 'serious' contemporary American artists of the immediate post war period overlooked by Adams. The economic distress and the sociological factors that marked the Depression years had contributed to still another division of attitude between the conservative-regionalist and the modern internationalist. On one hand, the regionalism of the Mid-West, epitomised by artists such as Thomas Benton and Grant Wood, tenaciously resisted both European and modernist influences, seeing the true expression of American art in the simple life, close to the earth of the Midwestern farmer. On the other hand the internationalists, looking to New York (if they did not already live there), living in close proximity and coming into contact with ideologies, theories and influences from abroad, responded to the crisis of the Depression in a different way. Many of these artists had come together under the umbrella of the Works Progress Administration, organised in 1933 and the Federal Art Project (F.A.P.), organised in 1935. Among those on the F.A.P. were Stuart Davis, Mark Tobey, Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, William Baziotes, James Brooks and Jack Tworkov (many of whom were first generation American Abstract Expressionists.). Coupled with the rejection of technology, therefore, is an ideological split, almost generational, between an internationalist avant-garde pivoted against a group of regionalist artists who advocated political isolationism of the country as a whole and the Midwest in particular.  

It seems natural, therefore, to expect these artists to create greater dissimilarities between themselves and the regionalist attitudes of the previous generation by purposefully not involving themselves printmaking. Prior to the 1940's, according to Adams, the previous history of the development of printmaking had been tied to painting and with the resurgence of its technologies, printmaking and lithography in particular 'became strongly identified with the regionalism of Benton, Wood and Curry.'

The painter Paul Brach speculates that printmaking was rejected in the 1950's for quasi-technical reasons:

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The unique individual painting was seen to be a reflection of the artist's existential crisis. To produce a series of plates, stones, or screens from which a multiple could be made contradicted the uniqueness of the [personal] statement.  

A smattering of prints were made by an isolated few American Abstract Expressionists before 1960, but the general consensus was overwhelming rejection. Although Lanier Graham claims that 'many artists of the era were to some extent involved with printmaking during the 1940's', Graham only mentions one candidate, Jackson Pollock, for whom she claims the '[printmaking] experience proved to be profound,' even suggesting that '[his] prints between 1944-45 played a crucial role in the development of his style.'

However, in the Catalogue to the Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era exhibition held at the A.N.G of in 1987, all but one of the engravings and intaglio prints of Pollock's included in the exhibition are printed well after the height of the rhetoric of American Abstract Expressionism, in 1967 by Emiliano Sorini, a decade after Pollock's death. The only print of Pollock's that was included in the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition of 1987 in the National Gallery of Australia was printed in 1945. Although it was labelled as 'a unique painted proof' it is an engraving with dry point and incorporates painting as well as printmaking. The fact that it is a 'proof' may also suggested that Pollock had no intention of printing editions. Riva Castleman in American Impressions: Prints since Pollock, writes that there were no editions pulled from any of Pollock's plates produced at Hayter's and 'neither were they ever referred to by the artist.'

Even though Castleman admitted that Pollock's prints themselves had no

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184 Judith Goldman, *American Prints: Process and Proofs*, op. cit., p. 53, writes: ' . . . Few American Painters became involved with graphics; with the exception of Karl Schrag and Gabor Peterdi, both painters, the artists who dominated American Graphics in the 1950's were primarily printmakers. . . .'
186 ibid.
187 ibid.
influence, her book carries a title which implied that Pollock played a crucial role in creating a demarcation in printmaking and that printmaking played a crucial role in his own work.

Pollock did influence printmaking but certainly not in the way either Graham or Castleman suggest. Pollock's interest in print prior to his death must be regarded as a calculated lack-of-interest. The only editions Pollock engaged in making at the height of the American Abstract Expressionist era was a series of serigraphs in 1951. One could hardly accept Pollock's excursion into printmaking as a 'significant moment' in printmaking history or in the history of his own work as Castleman suggests. Rather it was the reverse. It was the American Abstract Expressionists' refusal to make prints that impacted on printmaking. Pollock's prints were actually an anomaly. That is their significance.

There is one other factor which might have deterred American Abstract Expressionists from making prints: the claim by June Wayne, in the Preface to the Tamarind Book of Lithography that printmaking, particularly lithography, had 'gone into decline in both Europe and the United States' and that 'master printers were extinct in the United States and were dying out in Europe'. Wayne claimed that by 1959: 'only one printer still pulled stones for artists in [America] and, unfortunately, his technical skills were irrelevant to the then dominant aesthetic of abstract expressionism'.

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190 The Catalogue to the Exhibition, The Spontaneous Gesture: Books and Prints of the Abstract Expressionist Era, Australian National Art Gallery, 1987, lists 125 artists prints by abstract expressionists. It is the first Major print Exhibition anywhere in the world of abstract expressionist prints. In all, only 23 prints in 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition (125 prints) were printed before 1959. of that number, only 9 were by Americans and only 4 by a recognised American Abstract Expressionist (ironically, by Jackson Pollock).
Apart from Jackson Pollock's 3 silk screen prints (printed in 1951) and one engraving (printed in 1945), there is not one print in this exhibition by an American Abstract Expressionist artist that was printed between 1946 and 1958 - the height of the American Abstract Expressionist period. It is true Jacob Kainen's print (1949), Richard Diebenkorn's print (1948) and Frank Lobdell's print(1948) were printed before 1960 but Kainen was not a major figure of the movement and Diebenkorn and Lobdell were not of the New York School (both artists were from the West Coast of America and in any case were second generation abstract expressionists).


192 ibid., p.8.


194 ibid.

195 ibid.
However, Pat Gilmour's book, *Lasting Impressions*, documents several important print workshops available to artists across America. Gilmour documents the activities of many highly qualified, highly skilled Master Printers (lithographers and printers of intaglio) several of whom were technically capable of printing for American Abstract Expressionist artists. For example, in 1936, a government sponsored Works Progress Administration Federal Art Programs workshop opened in New York City (lithography, intaglio and relief), William Hayter's (intaglio and relief) Atelier 17 was one of the best known print workshops in the United States in the 1940's, and in 1948 Robert Blackburn (lithographer) set up the Bob Blackburn Workshop, to name but a few. Lynton Kistler, too, who printed for Jean Charlot amongst others, was operating in America, a (lithographic) printer the Tamarind Institute itself 'discovered' in its own researches into the history of lithography in America.

Furthermore, Clinton Adams's book in *American Lithographers 1900-1960: Artists and Their Printers* is testimony to the fact that many highly skilled printers were available to print for and collaborate with artists in lithography, in America prior to the 1960's. In fact, two chapters of Adams's book - Chapter 5 ('The 1940's and 1950's') and Chapter 6 ('Towards the 1960's') is devoted to the development of lithography in America. Adams' writing suggests that the revival of lithography begins in this period, 1940-1955, despite the refusals of the American Abstract Expressionists to make prints.

Lanier Graham claimed that printmaking was actually flourishing before 1960 and wrote that Richard Diebenkorn and Frank Lobdell created a series of lithographs that: 'effectively demonstrated the power of the medium to accommodate images parallel to those of Kline and Pollock', and that in the 1950's the printer of Jean-Paul Riopelle and K.F. Dahmen had 'seduced [these artists] into the realisation of the potential of lithography.'

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199 ibid.
202 ibid., p.19.
Riva Castleman also contradicted Wayne:

... Lithography was not an utterly dead technique in America in the 1950's. ... East Coast [artists] suffered from the dominance of William Hayter's workshop[Atelier 17]. ... On the West Coast the artists who worked in the lithography workshop of Lynton Kistler had a much more satisfactory experience. ...

There is considerable evidence to suggest that there was much encouragement of printmaking practices by various organisations between 1940 -1960. Several institutions taught printmaking to an extremely high standard and much interest was taken in many of its mediums. Reginald Neal, who worked at the Art Centre of Colorado Springs in the 1940's even went so far as to produce a film entitled 'Colour Lithography: An art medium', at the University of Mississippi, in 1956. 204 M.O.M.A. exhibited an American Survey of prints in 1944 205and the Atelier 17 Prints in 1949. 206 Throughout the 1950's Gustave von Groschwitz organised a series of international exhibitions focusing on colour lithography for the Cincinnati Art Museum. The 'First International Biennial of Contemporary Colour lithography' took place in April 1950. These International Biennials continued into 1958. 207

In 1990 Gustave von Groschwitz wrote for the *Tamarind Papers* an article entitled 'Changes I have Seen: Memories and Observations', concerning the development of lithography during 1953 and made the claim that:

'lithography flourished, as did the F.A.P. [Federal Arts Project]' 208 In 'American Colour Lithography 1952-54 ' , in Studio, von Groschwitz contradicted Wayne's analysis of the state of lithography in America and promoted the view that lithography was actually in a healthy state:

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205 Refer to Catalogue 'New Directions in Gravure', M.O.M.A. *Bulletin*, 21-1, New York, 1944.
... In comparison to European artists, the Americans have done a great deal of experimental work on stone... thereby demonstrating the flexibility and range of colour lithography...

James Watrous in *American Printmaking 1880-1980*, Chapters 5-6, also puts forward the argument that printmaking, despite its rejection by American Abstract Expressionists was in a state of rejuvenation during this period:

... On the one hand Robert Blackburn at his Creative Graphic Workshop, Margaret Lowengrund at the Contemporaries, and Will Barnet at the Art Students League were active lithographers who also coached artists in the craft or who offered their skills as printers... *There was no consensus about the stature of American lithography in the fifties...* 210

[Italics are mine]

Wayne herself, in an article entitled 'Broken Stones and Whooping Cranes: thoughts of a wilful artist,' retells of her own exploits with Master Printers Lynton Kistler and Marcel Durassier211 during the 1950's which also seems to contradict her earlier statements that there were no lithographic printers available in America.

Printmaking during the period between 1940 and 1960 was actually undergoing a major technical revolution. Printmakers threw themselves with vigour into exploring the technical qualities of each medium, in particular Intaglio printing. This ferocious experimentation led to many unorthodox printmaking techniques and also directed printmaking on a self-interrogative investigation into the various print mediums.

In the beginning of the 1940's Hayter's Atelier 17 was the centre for experimental printmaking. 212 The search for material 'qualities' inherent in

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each medium helped to define printmaking as technically focused rather than just orientated towards technology. The experimental attitude fostered by Hayter's Atelier 17 continued through the 1940's through to 1955 when Atelier 17 was abandoned in New York. The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art claimed that the Atelier 17 prints exhibited in 1949 were 'modern prints', bore the 'bench marks of new directions' suggesting that the kind of printmaking that was favoured by the Museum of Modern Art as well as that favoured by the Metropolitan Museum of New York was technologically experimental and unorthodox. This attitude was perhaps exemplified by Louis Shanker in Printmaking and the American Woodcut Today, when he wrote that: 'Traditional tools are no longer sufficient. . . [and] . . . anything which can be used to 'mar' the surface of the wood is legitimate as a tool. This offers endless possibilities.'

The burgeoning of interest in this experimental attitude in the techniques of printmaking even led to the point of ensuring differences between the different printmaking mediums. Exhibitions of prints and blocks together were common. These, although intended to be educational, also had an adverse effect. Such exhibitions highlighted the technical focus rather than content:

...[In] the spring of 1949, 'Technical Process in Contemporary Printmaking' was organised by the University of Minnesota Gallery and displayed expressly for the annual meeting of Mid-America College Art Association. Prints by Will Barnet, Adolf Dehn, Sue Fuller, Malcom Meyers, Harry Sternberg, and Mauricio Lasansky were hung next to the woodblocks, copper plates, and photographs of lithographic stones that had been used for one or more of the trial proofs and final impressions exhibited by the artists. . . In conjunction with the display, the six exhibitors participated in a panel discussion - offered recapitulations of the current state of printmaking, enthusiastic affirmations of its emerging prominence among the arts and a

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213 Refer S.W. Hayter, About Prints, Oxford University Press, 1962, p.100.
consensus of liberal attitudes towards and condemnations of contemporary tools, materials and processes. . .217

Of this situation, Irvin Haas in the 'Print Collector', Art News wrote:

. . . Just a short time ago [in the early 1940's], some of us were bewailing the fact that few printmakers were working in Relief mediums. The situation seems to be the reverse at present. . . with many artists exploiting the wood's inherent qualities for their expression. . . 218

James Johnson Sweeny writing in 1944 on the work of Atelier 17 wrote in glowing terms of the interest and revival of etching: 'the interest in the revival of old techniques was neither antiquarian nor archaeological, but essentially a means of following up their problems in this fresh medium.'219

But Vincent Longo writing in 'Peterdi as a Print Maker' emphasised that technique was a barrier to 'immediacy', that it was the 'inherent qualities of the medium', that was the inhibiting factor:

. . . Printmaking is as much a craft as it is an art. Its overriding demand for technical accomplishment is the very fact that makes it at best an unwieldy vehicle for immediate expression. It demands an engagement of techniques and materials and special skills, sometimes entirely mechanical and a mastery of them before spontaneity (a major value in today's aesthetic) of performance can be obtained. Graphic spontaneity is only possible from within the separate stages in the development of the idea from plate to print (which is not to minimise the inherent potential of the medium for a special kind of creative act). These stages, stages which interrupt the formal growth of the image, have a virtue in that they offer periods of deliberation, speculation and detached observation of an intimate artistic process. These steps create, too, a workshop atmosphere by which craft itself enriches creative experience and provides possibilities that can be found in no other medium. . . That is to

say that craft, rather than being an unnecessary adjunct to creative action, shapes the body of idea... [Italics are mine]

Una E. Johnson wrote the catalogue for 'Ten Years of American Prints 1947-1956'. In this catalogue Johnson identified certain developments in that decade: growth in scale, preoccupation with surface, the increased use of colour, the shift from professional printer to artist-printer (emphasising the role of the 'hand' of the artist), at the same time rehearsing the argument that America was the preserver of traditions (a position that Wayne was to take up in the 1960's) by taking a swipe at French printmaking practices. Johnson summed up the prevailing attitudes in American printmaking of that decade:

...One of the distinguishing features of prints in the United States is that the majority of them are printed by the artist himself and not by a professional craftsman-printer as so often is the case in France. Thus each print is uniquely and completely a creation of the artist...

The probing of the inherent qualities and 'new directions' in printmaking did not go unchallenged or without critical comment. The conservative lobby was still very strong and many artists and critics shied away from this new vigorous, inward-looking, technically orientated introspection. Intaglio printers were accused of feasting on technological exploits while starving their art. The technical exhibitionism that would plague printmakers provoked misgivings as early as 1951 when Carl Zigrosser wrote:

...Many printmakers seem to have an almost excessive interest in technique. Is it because they have little to say, or is it because they, like society as a whole, are assailed by confusion and doubt in these turbulent times?...

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Dore Ashton writing in 1952 concerning an exhibition entitled 'New Expressions in Fine Printmaking: Ideas, Methods, Materials' acknowledged that the display was a revealing survey of contemporary prints and methods and gave an opportunity to evaluate the extensive experiments of the past 10 years of American printmaking [1942-52] and 'to reflect on the question: do complicated novel means serve creative ends?’.  

Ashton was quite scathing in her criticisms:

\[\ldots\text{Each spectator can learn through the work of a dozen artists represented that technical gambits alone are insufficient, that the rare, truly creative products makes technique secondary.}\ldots\text{In the intaglio section, one finds that methodology frequently encumbers expression.}\ldots\]

[italics are mine]

When Lawrence Campbell reviewed the 37th Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Graphic Artists, he criticised both conservative and contemporary printmakers for an infatuation with technique. Echoing Ashton, Campbell claimed that most printmakers 'continue to be obsessed with craftsmanship' and appeared to be 'absorbed with tricks and utterly meaningless if mystifying effects.'

In the late fifties, even though there was a burgeoning of interest in printmaking processes after the Second World War, the major art journals reduced their coverage of American printmaking, favouring international news and lengthy articles on the flamboyant and subjective features of American Abstract Expressionism. The editorial of 'Arts' summarised the gradual decline of editorial interest in 1959: 'Although the modern tradition has been rich with achievements in printmaking, gradually the art printmaking in this country seems to have removed itself from the centre of interest to the margins.'

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224 ibid.
Although the judgement of the journals was harsh, *Art News* did not drop the 'Print Collector' as a monthly feature till 1957. And the American Print Council was not incorporated until 1956 with its mission of 'fostering the creation, dissemination and appreciation of fine prints, new and old.'

Books too, showed the concern for process and technique over content (technique in fact was the content). Hayter's volume of *New Ways of Gravure* (1949), Jules Heller's *Printmaking Today* (1950) Pertidi's *Printmaking Methods: Old and New* (1959), all workshop treatises, confined themselves to the growing occupation with technique.

June Wayne's assertion that there was only one printmaker left who could pull stones for an artist, that his skills were irrelevant to the then prevailing aesthetic must be weighed against the Ford Foundation's donation of $135,000 which was contributed to launch the Tamarind Lithographic Workshop in Los Angeles in 1960. Her comments concerning the paucity of lithographic printers and a flagging of lithography cannot be attributed to a lack of printmakers or interest. Wayne's claim only suggests an attempt to erase the real reason: American Abstract Expressionists rejected all technologically based disciplines, sculpture included because printmaking had become a metaphor for cognition, rational thought, logic and the sophistication of culture. Despite a growing interest in the medium, prior to 1960, printmaking was eschewed by the then dominant aesthetics, a fact that neither Fine, in her essay 'Bigger, Brighter, Bolder'. (Lasting Impressions, 1988). nor Gilmour in 'Lithographic Collaboration' (Lasting Impressions, 1988) acknowledge.

It was the fact that printmaking had been tied in the past to Socialist causes (as well as to the Mexican Socialist Movement, American propaganda and the American Social Realists) that tended to unite and polarise the American Abstract Expressionists against the medium - especially

229 Ibid.
230 None of the New York School nor any of the American Abstract Expressionists cited in the Introduction to this thesis involved themselves in any serious way in sculpture prior to 1960. Peter Schjeldahl, 'De Kooning's Sculptures: Amplified touch,' *Art in America*, March-April, 1974, p.59-63, comments on the fact that de Kooning did not begin making sculptures till as late as 1969/70.
lithography\textsuperscript{231} which also had been tied to the Russian Constructivists, Communism and Stalinism (which was then under severe criticism from both within America - the McCarthy era - and by Socialist commentators such as Leon Trotsky living in exile in Mexico). American Abstract Expressionists wanted an art that was free of political dogma, that was not propagandist and at the same time could convey the 'inner' messages of the 'individual'.

Hayter equated the plate with the image it carried. By doing so, Hayter inadvertently emphasised technique over content,\textsuperscript{232} generating systems of referral and transaction between the dominant aesthetic and printmaking. Despite continual attempts by Hayter and others to re-direct printmaking by forcing disassociation from reproductive technologies, dislocating Fine Art printmaking from propaganda and political art and by simultaneously claiming a link with the unconscious through his method, a method inextricably bound to medium specificity, Hayter and other printmakers only reinforced the prevailing notion held by American Abstract Expressionists that printmaking as an autonomous creative discipline based on medium specificity was essentially technologically orientated and did not suit the dominant aesthetics.

\textsuperscript{231} Adams, Clinton, American Lithographers 1900-1960, op. cit., p.160.
Chapter: 3

The Development of the Rhetoric of Immediacy in the Context of a Concept of Art as Fundamentally Anti-Technological

Although writers such as Hal Foster, in 'The Expressive Fallacy', and in 'The Primitive Unconscious of Modern Art, or White Skin Black Masks', and Donald Kuspit, in 'The Rhetoric of Rawness', have written with lucidity on the rhetorical nature of expressionism and the use of a decontextualised primitive in Western art with particular reference to American Abstract Expressionism, they have done so in Nietzschean terms: by disclosing the deconstructive impetus within expression itself on the basis of a linguistic reversal in order to show how, despite the suppression of its rhetorical nature, it is a formula: 'that the self and sign belong to a pre-existent image-repertoire'. Neither of these authors, despite recognising the rhetorical nature of expressionism or the nature of the decontextualised primitive within American Abstract Expressionism, have mentioned the part that a negative concept of the technological plays in the construction of this pre-existent image repertoire or indeed that a concept of the technological itself is also a sign which belongs to a pre-existent image repertoire. Neither have writers such as John Walker, in 'Art in the Age of Mass Media', who despite reviewing other writers such as Walter Benjamin (in particular Benjamin's views expressed in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'), Theodore Adorno, Marshall McLuhan, and others.

234 Hal Foster, in 'The Expressive Fallacy', op. cit., p181-210
236 Hal Foster, in 'The Expressive Fallacy', op cit., p. 62, quotes from Nietzsche: 
...The whole notion of an "inner experience" enters our consciousness only after it has found a language that the individual understands - i.e. , a translation of a situation into a familiar situation. . .
238 John Walker, Art in the Age of Mass Media, Pluto Press, 1983
239 After reviewing Benjamin's "extraordinary study", in his essay 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Theodore Adorno nonetheless voiced strong scepticism in regard to its argument. By setting up an enabling opposition between cult value and exhibition value, privileging the latter, and representing it as an unequivocally positive agent of change, Adorno felt that Benjamin had lapsed into a technological determinism. This thesis tends to agree with Adorno's assessment. The techniques of reproducibility, Adorno claimed, having arisen wholly within the framework of the capitalist order, were not so easily disentangled from their role in the functioning of that order. If the historical...
and John Berger, (all of whom have written extensively on the relationships between art and media) and despite recognising the importance of industrialisation and the importance of the impact of mechanical reproduction, have done so only in terms which discuss how the relationships between the fine art - mass media and mass culture divide reflect class structures in society and how these might be overcome.\textsuperscript{240} All of these authors have failed to grasp the significance of the technological as a sign system in relation to the production of self-hood. And although Jean Baudrillard radicalised Marshall McLuhan's notion that the 'medium is the message'\textsuperscript{241} in \textit{Revenge of the Crystal} \textsuperscript{242} and has analysed notions of expression in 'Gesture and Signature: Semiurgy in Contemporary Art',\textsuperscript{243} his critique does not include the fetishising of technology by American Abstract Expressionists nor how American Abstract Expressionists deployed a negative concept of the technological in order to construe self-hood.

There are three basic influences which affected modern painting that reached a climax in American Abstract Expressionism and which were...

\textsuperscript{240} Refer to the Introduction of John Walker, \textit{Art in the Age of Mass Media}, op. cit., p 9-11.
\textsuperscript{241} Refer to 'The Medium is the Message', Jean Baudrillard, Ed. Paul Foss and Julian Pefanis, \textit{The Revenge of the Crystal}, op. cit., p 88 - 91
instrumental in forming a concept of the self based on the rejection of the technological:
a notion of authentic art which remained outside mechanical reproduction,
succinctly outlined by Walter Benjamin in his essay 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction',\textsuperscript{244} a concept of the self located in the unconscious developed in psychology by Carl Jung and outlined in \textit{Modern Man in Search of a Soul} (available in English by 1933)\textsuperscript{245}, and an attitude central to Existentialist philosophy, stated by Jean-Paul Sartre in his plays and novels as well as in his more academic philosophical writings.\textsuperscript{246}

It was in Walter Benjamin's pivotal essay, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', that notions of 'authenticity', 'aura', and 'originality', in contradistinction to reproduction were first aired.\textsuperscript{247} Although Benjamin's work is not mentioned specifically by artists of the period, it is clear that Benjamin's notions regarding authenticity and reproduction bear a striking resemblance to much which underpinned the American Abstract Expressionist philosophical position. It is highly probable that American artists of the period were aware of Benjamin's writing since many of them held comparable views concerning notions of authentic selfhood juxtaposed against mechanical reproduction. Benjamin acknowledged Freudian theory and the influence of psychoanalysis, particularly that outlined in Freud's 'Psychopathology of Everyday Life',\textsuperscript{248} in determining his model. Much of his

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{244} Walter Benjamin in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' \textit{Illuminations}, Trans. Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, New York, 1968
\item In his theoretical writings Sartre laid the foundations for an original doctrine of Existentialism. Sartre's major concern was to relate his theory to human response and the practical demands of living. To this end he carried his philosophical concepts into his novels and plays, and there subjected them to the test of imagined experience. His uniqueness and that which was attractive to the American Abstract Expressionists was the success with which he demonstrated the utility of Existentialist doctrine while creating works of literary merit.
\item \textsuperscript{247} Walter Benjamin , 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' op. cit., p.220, writes: \ldots The whole sphere of authenticity is outside the technical - and of course, not only technical - reproducibility. \ldots
\item \textsuperscript{248} Walter Benjamin, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' op. cit., p.235.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
hypothesis meshed with Jung's notion of an unconscious based on the
decontextualisation of the primitive, particularly in his description of an
authentic art originating in the service of ritual, magic and religion, a
concept which American Abstract Expressionists found sympathy with.
Barnett Newman for example, in 'Northwest Coast Indian Painting',
attacked non-objective abstract art - the plastic decorative arts - as being
feminine and therefore of no serious value. Along with its practitioners it was
relegated to insignificance - to a role of entertainment. History, on the other
hand, was shaped by men, by ritual. By relegateing the decorative art of
primitive societies because it was performed by women, Newman was able
to say that great works of art were made by men in the services of ritual.
Newman advanced the notion that by regressing to the 'primitive' state of
mind, artists could produce art of magico-ritualistic significance.

Newman advocated for a decontextualised primitive when he claimed in
'Northwest Coast Indian Painting', that in 'to understand modern art, one
must have an appreciation of the primitive arts. . . [because] modern art
stands as an Island of revolt in the stream of Western European
aesthetics. In 'The Ideographic Picture', (1947), Newman reiterated this
view: 'Spontaneous and emerging from several points, there has arisen. . . a
new force. . . that is the modern counter part of the primitive art impulse'.

Walter Benjamin, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' op. cit., p.223, writes:

... We know that the earliest works of art originated in the service of ritual -
first the magical and then the religious kind. It is significant that the
existence of the work with reference to its aura is never entirely separated
from its ritual function. In other words, the unique value of the 'authentic'
work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value. . .

Barnett Newman, Northwest Coast Indian Painting, Catalogue, Betty Parsons Gallery,
Sept. 30-Oct. 19, 1946, writes:

... Design was a separate function carried on by women and took the form
of geometric, non-objective pattern. . .

Concerning ritual and its relegation in hierarchy to that of design and mere decoration
Newman writes:

... it is not inappropriate to emphasise that it would be a mistake to
consider these paintings as mere decorative devices; that they constitute a
kind of heightened design. . . These paintings are ritualistic. They are an
expression of the mythical beliefs of these peoples and take place on
ceremonial objects only because these people did not practice a formal art
of easel painting on canvas. . . (Barnett Newman, Northwest Coast Indian Painting,
Catalogue, Betty Parsons Gallery, Sept. 30-Oct. 19, 1946.)

Barnett Newman, Northwest Coast Indian Painting, Betty Parsons Gallery, Sept. 30 -
Oct. 19, 1946, Sages Guilbault, Trans Arthur Goldhammer, New York Stole the Idea of
Modern Art, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1983, p.120.

Barnett Newman, 'The Ideographic Picture,' as printed in Herschell, B. Chipp, Theories
In accord with Newman, Harold Rosenberg, in ‘The Myths Act, Art Works and Packages’ even suggested that the core of Jackson Pollock’s effort lay in the tradition of art as ritual, made explicit by Pollock’s titles. Newman also rejected design and relegated it, mimicking Alfred H Barr’s and M.O.M.A.'s hierarchical positioning of Machine Art, Design, Primitive Art and American Abstract Expressionism.

For Rothko the true significance of primitive art lay not only in its formal arrangement but in the spiritual meaning underlying all archaic works:

... Our presentation of these myths... must be in our own terms, which are at once more primitive because we seek the primeval and atavistic roots of the idea rather than the graceful classical version; more modern than the myths themselves because we must re-describe their implications through our own experience.

Speaking on behalf of other American Abstract Expressionists, Rothko claimed that it was 'the immediacy of their images which draws us irresistibly to the fancies and superstitions, the fables of savages and the strange beliefs that were so vividly articulated by primitive man.' In this he followed Newman’s and Graham’s prescription for an evocative art tied to the intellect of the primitive.

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258 Irving Sandler, The Triumph of the American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism, Icon Editions, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1970. p.106, quotes Graham: ... an evocative art is a means and a result of getting in touch with the powers of our unconscious. It stimulates us to move and act along the intuitional line in our life procedure. Two formative factors apply to primitive
The turn to an archaic form of art was a way for artists to establish an indirect link with a past they perceived they were being cut off from by an ever increasingly technocratic society. The decontextualisation of the primitive by Graham, Newman and Rothko are coincidental with certain notions of Walter Benjamin's in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', first published in Zeitschrift fur Sozialforchung, V.1., 1936, written ten years before Newman's 'North west Coast Indian Painting'. For Benjamin it was 'the presence of the original [that] is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity'. When Benjamin elaborated on his concept of the authentic he claimed that 'the earliest art works originated in the services of ritual - first the magical, then the religious kind' and that it was 'significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function'. Benjamin expanded his hypothesis of the authentic by claiming that 'the unique value of the authentic work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value.' But when Benjamin defined authenticity as that which 'is outside the technical,' he created the background for the theoretical underpinning for the decontextualisation of the primitive for the use of American Abstract Expressionism and sowed the seeds of fetishising a concept of art as fundamentally anti-technological. This philosophical approach to art, and to the technological in particular, was sealed when Benjamin defined the 'aura' of authentic art as: 'that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction.'

Pollock demonstrated his position in respect to a primitive-primordial when he wrote the following remarks for the first and only issue of 'Possibilities' (1947/48):

art: first, the degree of freedom of access to ones unconscious mind in regard to observed phenomenon, and second, an understanding of the possibilities of the plain operating space. The first allows an imaginary journey into the primordial past for the purpose of bringing out some relevant information; the second permits a persistent and spontaneous exercise of design and composition as opposed to the deliberate which is valueless... [Italics are mine]

261 ibid.
262 ibid.
263 ibid., p.222.
On the floor I feel more at ease. I feel nearer, more a part of the painting, since this way I can walk around it, work from all sides and literally be in the painting. This is akin to the Indian sand painters of the West. . .

The influence of psychology, particularly that advocated by Jung in determining a construction of a primitive-primordial self-hood in opposition to a negatively charged concept of the technological is also easily demonstrated. American Abstract Expressionists, in particular those artists Irving Sandler termed the 'Myth Makers' in The Triumph of the American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism, may have been stimulated by the writing of John Graham as well as that of Jung. Graham’s 'Primitive Art and Picasso', appeared in the Magazine of Art in April 1937, where he claimed:

...Primitive races and primitive genius have readier access to the unconscious mind than so-called civilised people. . . the unconscious mind is the creative factor and the source of the storehouse of power and of all knowledge, past and future. . .

Graham elaborated on this concept when he asserted that 'the art of primitive races had a highly evocative quality which allows it to bring to our consciousness the clarities of the unconscious mind, stored with the individual and the collective wisdom of past generations and forms.' Jung summarised Graham as follows: 'Our minds. . . bear the marks of evolution passed through.' By conflating the mind with Darwin's 'evolutionary process,' Jung and Graham created the illusion that the unconscious of 'primitive' peoples, was further down the evolutionary ladder, a

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266 Irving Sandler, The Triumph of the American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism, op cit. The 'Myth Makers' were led by Gottlieb, Pollock, Newman, Rothko, Gorky and Baziotes. The 'Action Painters' were led by de Kooning, Kline, Motherwell, Hofmann, Rienhardt, Still as well as Pollock.
267 ibid., p. 106
269 W. Jackson Rushing, 'The Impact of Nietzsche and Northwest Coast Indian Art on Barnett Newman's idea of redemption in the Abstract sublime.' Art Journal, Fall, 1988, p.188.
psychological ladder that can be used as a resource. Both Jung and Graham suggested that artists who had the will could climb down this psychological ladder, regress the psyche and reach the source of unconscious imagery. Artists had no need to speak because there was a self-authenticating truth and wisdom behind images thus attained.

Jung wrote in Modern Man in Search of a Soul (available in English by 1933), that there was a qualitative difference between the power of the 'psychological' artist who was aware of the relationship between his intention and his product, and that of the 'visionary' artist who was directed by 'dark primordial drives' deep within his psyche to produce work whose meaning he could not divine. According to Jung, artists in search of access to the unconscious could analyse their dreams: 'the dream carries us back to earlier states of human culture, and affords us a means of understanding it better.' Jung also suggested that like dreams, the myths of antiquity and primitive art (as the product of the primitive mind) could transport us back into the primordial stages of consciousness:

... This primordial experience, is the source of [visionary artists] creativeness. ... it offers no words or images. ... being essentially the instrument for his work, he is subordinate to it, and we have no reason for expecting him to interpret it for us. ... A great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and it is never unequivocal. ...

The idea that reason can somehow dispense with language and arrive at a pure, self-authenticating truth or method was the truth claim made by these statements. Such influences directed artists towards a non-phonetic pre-conceptual language. Leon Golub, in the College Art Journal, for example, asserted that the artist 'seeks an action that is pre-logical, pre-cognitive, and amoral. ... [in order to] articulate what was once primitively experienced.'

In this statement Golub made the assumption that the pre-logical, pre-
literate, and pre-cognitive was once primitively experienced. Such presuppositions were characteristic of the decontextualisation and intellectual primitivising which American Abstract Expressionists promoted.

Greenberg had already suggested, in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon',\(^{273}\) that the first and most important item on the American Abstract Expressionists agenda was 'the necessity of an escape from ideas, which were infecting the arts with the ideological struggles of society. Ideas came to mean subject matter in general.'\(^{274}\) In accord with Greenberg, Golub summarised the nature of American Abstract Expressionism, in the Winter Art Journal, of 1955, as follows:

1. The elimination of specific subject matters and a preference for the spontaneous, impulsive qualities of experience.
2. The unfettered brush - discursive, improvisatory techniques - motion, motion organisation, and activated surface. \(^{275}\)

Golub's 'unfettered brush' was intended as a metaphor for immediacy and, in the context of his earlier comments aired in the College Art Journal, the metaphor of the 'unfettered brush' also implied the suspension of cognition and the rational. Meyer Schapiro in his essay, 'The Liberating Quality of the Avant-Garde', written two years later (1957) was to expand on these concepts. For Schapiro, notions of an 'authentic' 'being-in-the-world' were embodied in the very marks created by the actions of the artist. This statement can be applied to most 'gesture' painters,\(^{276}\) and summarised their aims:

. . . Hence the importance of the mark, the stroke, the brush, the drip, the quality of the substance of the paint itself, and the


\(^{274}\) Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.65

\(^{275}\) Leon Golub, 'A Critique on Abstract Expressionism', op. cit., p.90.

\(^{276}\) Harold Osborne, Ed., The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art, 1981 writes: . . . A near synonym for Action Painting . . . The term [Gestural Painting] carries an implication not only that a picture is the record of the artists actions in the process of painting it but that the recorded actions express the artists emotions just as in other walks of life express gestures express personal feelings. The name 'gestural' is applied particularly to painting in which the visible sweep and manner of applying the pigment has been deliberately emphasised. . .
surface of the canvas as a texture and the field of the operation - all signs of the artist's active presence. . . 277

The focus on marks left by the painting act, and the stressing of the surface as a 'field' is where the psychological 'subject' appeared,278 demonstrated where both Schapiro's and Golub's thinking coincided. For both Schapiro and Golub, the tracks made by artists - 'all signs of the artists active presence'279 - were metaphors which embodied a coincidence of thought with meaning through which the subject became present: 'The impulse. . . becomes the tangible and definite on the surface of a canvas through the painted mark. We see, as it were, the track of emotion, its obstruction, persistence or extinction.'280

As with Jung, who located his thesis in a paradigm of duality positing two kinds of thinking: 'directed or dream and fantasy thinking'281(it was fantasy thinking which he associated with the unconscious), Benjamin, Newman, Rothko, Golub, and Schapiro also insisted on a dualism where the unconscious was valued as the site of an uncontaminated pure self-presence. When Benjamin, Newman, Rothko, and Golub favoured primitive art (as products of the primitive mind-organisation) they simultaneously depreciated the value of rational thinking and cognition(as products of a sophisticated culture). In doing so they simultaneously advocated a site of 'authority' located in technology, the metaphor for sophisticated culture, rational thinking and the cogito.

The automatic biomorphic qualities of Newman's early works such as 'Gea' (pre-1945), and Newman's use of organic growth as a metaphor for the evolution of consciousness reflected Jung's notions of a stream of consciousness (fantastic thinking) that takes place when directed thinking ceases.

278 In Printmaking, the print Studio becomes a site where the psychological subject appears. For example Refer to: S.W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, Oxford University Press, NY, 1966 (first published in 1949), p.218. who writes:
. . . Starting from an arbitrary position, action is continued in consecutive stages, at first rational but later becoming intuitive, in the absence of a concrete project, and further continued to the destruction of the plate. . .
280 ibid.
281 Jung as quoted by W. J. Rushing, Art Journal, Fall, 1988, p.188.
Other artists of the New York Avant-Garde, including Adolph Gottlieb, Jackson Pollock, Richard Poussé-Dart, and Mark Rothko, made paintings that referred to atavistic myth, primordial origins and primitive rituals and symbols - especially those of native American cultures. In a letter sent by Gottlieb and Rothko to the *New York Times*, June 7 1943, they wrote:

1. To us art is an adventure into an unknown world, which can be explored only by those willing to take risks.
2. This world of the imagination is fancy-free and violently opposed to common sense.
3. It is our function as artists to make the spectator see the world our way - not his way.
4. We favour the simple expression to the complex thought. We are for the larger shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal. We wish to reassert the picture plane. We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth.
5. It is widely accepted among painters that it does not matter what one paints as long as it is well painted. This is the essence of academicism. There is no such thing as good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless. That is why we profess spiritual kinship with primitives and archaic art.

This five point aesthetic program unveiled the pre-determinations of the American Abstract Expressionists. Significantly it sketches in the oppositions: 'imagination' is opposed to 'common sense', 'simple expression' to 'complex thought', 'truth' to 'illusion', and 'impulse' to 'cognition', the 'rational and logical'. The American Abstract Expressionists' notion of the authentic self were lodged in Jung's primitive-primordial unconscious which was rhetorically opposed to the sophistication of civilised culture.

Barnett Newman offered an interesting example of decontextualisation of the 'primitive' in 'The Ideographic Picture, 1947 when he claimed that: 'The abstract shape he [the primitive]used, his entire plastic language, was

282 Letter sent by Gottlieb and Rothko to the *New York Times*, June 7, 1943.
directed by a ritualistic will towards metaphysical understanding. Newman assumed that all primitive art-making was ritualistic and conflated metaphysical understanding with a preconceived notion of the unconscious.

A radio talk-show given by Rothko and Gottlieb in 1943 illustrated artists' interest in the primitive-primordial and explained that the 'return' to archaic art was a way for American artists to establish a direct link with a part of modern history from which they imagined they were being cut off by the influences of a technocratic culture.

. . . While modern art got its first impetus through discovering the forms of primitive art, we feel that its true significance lies not in merely in formal arrangement, but in the spiritual meaning underlying all archaic works. . . it is the immediacy of their images that draws us irresistibly to the fancies and superstitions, the fables of savages and the strange beliefs that were so vividly articulated by primitive man. . .

For these artists the return to primitive art was an abstract intellectualism. They were not raiding primitive art for form as did the Cubists for example, but rather for its metaphorical properties. For Rothko decontextualisation of the primitive began with their myths: '[Myths. . . are the eternal symbols upon which we must fall back to express basic psychological ideas. They are the symbols of mans' primitive fears and motivations. . . be they Greek, Aztec, Icelandic, or Egyptian.'

By decontextualising the primitive through their myths, Rothko was able to conflate all histories and mythologies into a general and anonymous primitive. As with Jung's decontextualisation of the primitive-primordial unconscious, Rothko's myths acquired the status of a trans-cultural-object, disclosing the desire for an anonymous decontextualised primitive that is trans-cultural. This constructed primitive was the result of the desire for a universal language.

285 ibid.
Concerning his painting method Pollock claimed in 'Possibilities' that when he was painting: 'I am not aware of what I am doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I am about.' In the draft for this statement, he also wrote that the: 'source of my painting is the unconscious. I approach painting the same way I approach drawing. That is direct - with no preliminary studies.' Pollock had expressed an earlier interest in the unconscious, in 1944 in an interview-questionnaire in the February issue of 'Arts and Architecture' where he acknowledged the importance of contemporary European masters living in New York in understanding of the problems of modern painting: 'I am particularly impressed with their concept of art being the unconscious.' In the same interview Pollock discussed the influence of psycho-analysis, and notions of Jung's primitive-primordial unconscious in the formulation of self- hood:

... We're all of us influenced by Freud, I guess. I've been a Jungian for a very long time. ... Painting is a state of being. ... Painting is self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is. ...

In another interview, this time recorded by William Wright in the summer of 1950 for a radio interview, Pollock confirmed his reliance on the unconscious: 'The thing that interests me is that today painters do not have to go to a subject matter outside of themselves. Most modern painters work from a different source. They work from within.' Later in the same interview Pollock juxtaposed this 'inner' against culture's technological sophistication by using the camera and photograph as metaphors for a sophisticated culture:

... H'm - the artist is living in a mechanical age and we have a mechanical means of representing objects in nature [using means] such as a camera and the photograph. ... The modern artist, it seems to me, is working and expressing an inner world - in

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287 Ibid.
288 Ibid., p.32.
289 Ibid., p.73.
290 Ibid., p.80.
other words - expressing the energy, the motion and the inner forces. . . 291

Greenberg was at ease with Pollock's decontextualising and claimed that Pollock's art was: 'an attempt to cope with urban life; it dwells entirely in the lonely jungle of immediate sensations, impulses and notions, therefore it is positivist, concrete. 292

Greenberg, Pollock and other American Abstract Expressionists saw the artist surrounded by the perils of a sophisticated and civilised technological urban culture. Graham also favoured primitive societies and imagined that they were in touch with their unconscious because of their lack of technology:

. . . Two formative factors apply to primitive art: first, the degree of freedom of access to one's unconscious mind in regard to observed phenomena, and second, an understanding of the possibilities of the plain operating space. . . 293

Graham also favoured the decontextualised primitive with spontaneity and immediacy through an assumed access to the unconscious:

. . . The first allows an imaginary journey into the primordial past for the purpose of bringing out some relevant information; the second permits a persistent and spontaneous exercise of design and composition as opposed to the deliberate which is valueless. . . 294

As with Pollock who refused 'preliminary studies', and designed his method (of painting) as a means for resisting mental calculation,' 295 Graham also degraded the 'deliberate' as a way of condemning rational thought. As Pollock's 'inner' was opposed to the 'outer', Nature was opposed to Culture
via the detour taken through technology (the metaphor for the sophistication of culture). Pollock even equated his working methods with Oriental painting methods: 'I paint on the floor and this isn't unusual - the Orientals did that'.

However this reliance on the unconscious did not go without criticism. Motherwell, writing on surrealism, rejected what he saw as the destructive forces of Surrealist art. These included 'animal' tendencies and a total surrender to the unconscious. Motherwell saw these forces as a nullification of his freedom. Resorting to the unconscious totally might entail the loss of the artist's freedom of choice: 'To give oneself up to the unconscious is to become a slave.' However, although Motherwell rejected the total reliance on the unconscious, he accepted what he called the Surrealists' 'plastic automatism' which avoided any political or psychic involvement. Motherwell could not tolerate the destructiveness and the negativity of the most extreme elements and experiments of Surrealist practice: 'What we love best in the Surrealist artists is not their program... but their formalist innovations.'

If Surrealism's innovations are defined by their dualism, their innovation was to oppose 'reality' to the dream, the normal to anomaly, the rational to the irrational. They were able to do this by using such formalist devices as biomorphic shapes and endless free-flowing lines which implied automatism, implied a connection with the unconscious and severance from reality. Such devices can be seen in the early biomorphic works of Rothko, Newman, Gottlieb, and Gorky. Greenberg did not counter Motherwell's more optimistic note, even though Greenberg also attacked the Surrealist movement as 'anti-institutional, anti-formal, anti-aesthetic nihilism'.

American Abstract Expressionists were also interested in constructing a duality. On one hand a negative concept of the technological was

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298 ibid.
300 Clement Greenberg, 'Surrealist Painting', Nation, August 12, 1944, p.192.
developed in order to represent cognition and rational thought, the dangers of sophisticated culture: swerves away from the natural. On the other hand a source of creativity was located in a notion of the unconscious self which was necessarily primitive-primordial. By willing into forgetfulness the rational step of elimination and substitution, the non-phonetic 'language of the soul' - the archetypal language - was articulated by opposing a primitive-primordial self against the technological.

American Abstract Expressionist artists asked for their works to be treated as a script, the script of a non-phonetic language; a script of the 'soul'; a language of the Absolute. 301 Harold Rosenberg, writing in Art News, in 1959, even asserted that this 'new plastic language' . . . is an apocalyptic wallpaper'. 302 Therefore interrogation and interpretation of American Abstract Expressionism's archetypal language must also begin on that level - as a Scripture to be deciphered.

Harold Rosenberg's statement concerning the painting act conjoined Schapiro's 'track of emotion'303 and Golub's 'unfettered brush'304 into signs of the artist's unconscious self presence that narrated the 'inner' life of the artist. As with Newman who had claimed that the art of primitive peoples was synonymous with a personal language: 'To him a shape was a living thing, a vehicle for the abstract thought-complex, a carrier of the awesome feelings he felt for the unknowable,'305 Rosenberg was also suggesting that painting had became an 'act inseparable from the biography of the artist'.306

301 Harold Rosenberg, in Art News, December, 1959, reprinted in David Schapiro and Cecile Schapiro, Abstract Expressionism: A Critical Record, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.81, writes: . . . When a tube of paint is squeezed by the Absolute, the result can only be a success. . .
302 ibid., p.82.

The term 'action painting' was at once taken up and widely used. Parts of Rosenberg's Tradition of the New, in particular Rosenberg's reduction of the role of painting to 'an arena in which to act' and his belief that 'What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event', were vigorously attacked. Hilton Kramer wrote: '... but painting being painting, and not theatre, what does he mean by the canvas 'as an arena in which to act'? (The New American Painting, Partisan Review, New York, XX, 4, July-August, 1953, 421-427). Clement Greenberg objected that for Rosenberg painting 'remained as but a record of solipsistic
For Rosenberg the artist's psychological biography is the locus of the primal self: 'The act-painting is of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's existence.' 307

However Rosenberg's 'act' of painting revealed the limits of the 'act' and the limits of uncloaking the psychological 'autobiography' of the artist. Ironically, Harold Rosenberg's "autobiography of the artist" is indeed inseparable from the artist's acts. Once determined as a product of the unconscious, this 'autobiography' now also becomes the autobiography of wily stylistic calculation. Revealed by the act are two autobiographies of the artist, both of which compete against each other for domination.

Action painting heralded the non-reflective self presence of the artist by taking a detour through a constructed primitive unconsciousness. By dispensing with representation, Rosenberg's statement focused on the idea that there is a coincidence of meaning and thought with the Gestural mark and with mark-making and the act itself: 'The action on the canvas became its own representation.' 308 However the self-presence that the articulation of a 'primitive' unconscious alluded to was by implication only, through signs that affect other signs, a point which even Rosenberg himself was quick to acknowledge:

... This was possible because an action, being made of both the psychic and the material, is by nature a sign - it is a trace of a movement whose beginning and character it does not in itself ever altogether reveal. ... yet the action also exists as a 'thing' in that it touches other things and affects them. ... 309

The chain of signifiers is unveiled and différance acknowledged. Action is a sign. Marks are signs. But neither are signs of an absolute totalised 'being-in-the-world' - a self present - that many American Abstract Expressionists

"gestures" that could have no meaning whatsoever as art - gestures that belonged to the same reality that breathing and thumbprints, love affairs and wars, but not works of art belonged to (How Art Writing Earns its Bad Name', The Second Coming, I, 3, March, 1962, 58-62). For Rosenberg's reply to the criticism aroused by it, see 'Action Painting, A Decade of Distortion', Art News, LCI, Dec., 1962, p.42-44 ff. In his article on the Pollock exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art he attaches action Painting to Pollock(The New Yorker, 6 May, 1967.).

307 ibid.
309 ibid.
believed. As signs these signifiers have no signifieds. They are just signs which lead to other signs in a continual chain. All we can do is make a trace from one sign to another and then back again (the movement is an oscillation). The non-reflective self that 'action' suggests is always by implication only. The sign never leads us to the signified, never leads us directly to the pure 'subject'. And most importantly, these signs only become signifiers of self-presence when placed in opposition to the cognitive-conceptual (the extreme polar point of oscillation).

The problem of the picture-puzzle brings together all the difficulties of deciphering the code of the non-phonetic script. It is a complex composition of signs against signs; signs pointing to signs; signs pointing away from signs. Rosenberg's statement in Art News: 'Since there is nothing to be "communicated", a unique signature comes to seem the equivalent of a new plastic language,' echoed that of Jacques Lacan expressed in Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis concerning the Other:

... The other is the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be present of the subject - it is the field of the living being in which the subject has to appear. ...

The non-phonetic 'language' of American Abstract Expressionism was neither a cuneiform, pictograph nor an ideograph yet it exhibits certain 'graphic' 'characteristics' which causes it to be conveniently placed, for the sake of an analysis - on one broad level at least - within the domain (and confines) of 'writing', since it asks of us to behave as a reader would. It

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... Pollock, who had been psychoanalysed, often spoke of 'reading' a
has 'semantic possibilities'. It calls itself a script. Indeed it portends to be the 'Scripture' of the mind-of-the-artist.

Parker Tyler, in the Magazine of Art, March 1950, wrote that the relation of Pollock's "paint-stream" to calligraphy supplied another paradox:

... [It] has the continuity of the joined letters and type of curve associated with the Western version of Arabic Hand writing - yet it escapes the monotony of what we know as calligraphy. It is as though Pollock "wrote" non-representational imagery. So we have the paradox of abstract form in terms of an alphabet of unknown symbols. 

Pollock's universal 'inner' and non-phonetic 'language' - his crypto-graphs - were dispersed through a 'calligraphic' writing he shared with Franz Kline.

Pollock too, was intent on creating the impression that the script he uncovered belonged to a greater God: 'When I am in my painting I am not aware of what I am doing... The painting has a life of its own.' Barnett Newman's choice of fast mediums - chalks, crayons, ink, water colour, in his drawings of 1944 - revealed a desire to connect his mind to the bank of primeval images stored in his unconscious. Images derived through a pre-conceptual 'language' that was larger than life and omnipresent: 'How it went... that's how it was... my idea was with an automatic move, you could create a whole world.'

painting. . .


315 ibid.

316 ibid., p.365.


Existentialism is a body of philosophical doctrine that dramatically emphasised the contrast between human existence and the kind of existence possessed by natural objects. Briefly, the argument of existentialism advocated the notion that men, endowed with will and consciousness, find themselves in an alien world of objects which have neither:

. . . Existentialism was inaugurated by Kierkegaard in a violent reaction against the all-encompassing absolute idealism of Hegel. For Hegel, God is the impersonal Absolute; finite human personalities are insubstantial fragments of this engulfing spiritual unity, and everything that happens, including human actions, can be rationally explained as a necessary element in the total scheme of things. Kierkegaard insisted on the utter distinctness of God and man and on the inexplicability (or absurdity) of the relations between them and their actions. Later existentialists, such as Jean Paul Sartre, contended that Man is a self-creating being who is not initially endowed with a character and goals but must choose them by acts of pure decision, existential leaps analogous to that seen by Kierkegaard in the reason-transcending decision to believe in God. For Heidegger, man is a temporal being, conscious, through his will, of a future whose only certainty is his own death. To live authentically is to live in the light of this bleak unrationalisable fact, in full awareness. . . both of ones own nature until one has chosen a character for oneself. . .

Meyer Schapiro, in 'The Liberating Quality of the Avant-Garde', revealed the alignment of American Abstract Expressionists to Existentialist theories when he wrote concerning the mark making possibilities of the gesture:

. . . These elements of impulse which at first seem so aimless on the canvas are built up into a whole. . . The artist today creates order out of unordered variable elements to a greater degree than the artist of the past. . . The order is created before your

eyes and its law is nowhere explicit. . . This power of the artists
to deliver constantly elements of so-called chance or accident,
which nevertheless belong to a well-defined personal class of
forms and groupings, is submitted to critical control by the artist
who is alert to the rightness and wrongness of the elements
delivered spontaneously, and accepts or rejects them. . . 321

This strongly existential flavour of Meyer Schapiro's remarks was also
echoed by de Kooning's claim that American Abstract Expressionists
'weren't influenced directly by Existentialism, but it was in the air, and we
felt it without knowing too much about it. We were in touch with the mood.'322
Fritz Bultman, echoing both Schapiro's and de Kooning's existentialism
claimed that: 'Jung was available in the air, the absolute texts were not
necessary, there was general talk among the painters,'323 implying that
existentialist theory, as with Jungian psychology was widely discussed
amongst artists of the period. Clement Greenberg had previously written
about the interest of American Abstract Expressionist artists in
Existentialism as early as 1946. In an essay entitled 'Art', in Nation, CLXIII,
he wrote:

. . . What we have to do with here is an historical mood that
has simply seized upon Existentialism to formulate and justify
itself, but which has been gathering strength long before most of
the people concerned had ever read Heidegger or Kierkegaard.
. . Whatever the affectations and philosophical sketchiness of
Existentialism, it is aesthetically appropriate for our age. . .
What we have to do with here, I repeat, is not so much a
philosophy but a mood. . . 324

As with Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg believed that artists operated in an
Existential mode: 'The artist worked in a condition of open possibility, risking
to follow Kierkegaard'.325 Rosenberg excused the less than rigorous nature

322 Irving Sandler, The Triumph of the American Painting: A History of Abstract
Expressionism, op. cit., p.98.
323 Fritz Bultman as quoted by W. J. Rushing, The Impact of Nietzsche and Northwest
Coast Indian Art on Barnett Newman's idea of redemption in the Abstract sublime.' op. cit., p
.189.
324 Clement Greenberg, 'Art', Nation, CLXIII, No. 2, July 13, 1946, p.54
325 Harold Rosenberg, in Art News, December, 1959, reprinted in David Schapiro and
of the American Abstract Expressionist ideological stance by claiming that philosophy was not popular among American painters: 'My painting is not art; it's an Is... It's not a picture of a thing; it's the thing itself... The painter does not think; he knows.'

By not acknowledging the very direct influences impinging upon them, the American Abstract Expressionists were able to masquerade as modern but intellectual primitives. Greenberg, de Kooning, Bultman and Rosenberg created an impression that the absorption of Existentialist philosophy was a 'natural' consequence of 'being'. Artists were already 'in touch' with their own internal non-phonetic language.

In 'Beyond Art and Philosophy: Deconstruction and the Post-Modern Sublime, The Modernism, Deconstructionist Tendencies in Art', Paul Crowther summarises the reasons why Existentialist philosophy was so attractive:

... Broadly speaking, modern philosophy from Descartes onward... tended to interpret reality on the basis of mechanistic models derived from the scientific domain. However, whilst such mechanistic models have proven value in the scientific context as a means of controlling and utilising reality, they result only in distortions when applied to philosophy. In general terms the world is construed as a kind of intellectual construction - a function of the mind's organisation of sense-data. Indeed, the human subject is reduced to a pure subject - the disembodied organiser of such sense-data. Now against these abstractions Heidegger, Sartre and Marleau-Ponty all assert (albeit with different emphasis), the primacy of 'being-in-the-world'. The human subject does not organise sense-data through mere intellectual acts of mind as such - rather our knowledge is constituted from the totality or our practical, emotional, social and linguistic interactions with it. This complexity of the sensuous and the intellectual underpins all knowledge, but it is difficult to articulate because of the


ibid., p.81.
traditional philosophical language of abstract concepts and systematic arguments oversimplify and, thereby, distort. . . 327

[Italics are mine]

It was the primacy of 'being-in-the-world' that encouraged the American Abstract Expressionists to focus on the 'act-of-painting' as a metaphor for 'being-in-the-world'. This enabled them to imagine that they were expressing the sustaining complexities of the sensuous and the intellectual which underpinned all knowledge. The sensuous as exemplified by the brush mark, the drip, the splash, the line, and so on. The intellectual by emphasising the central role of the artist in determining his existence. Hence the attraction of Jungian psychology (which emphasised universal archetypes).

Even though the abstract forms developed by gesture painters were unprecedented in their extremeness, they did acknowledge antecedents in Expressionism. Kandinsky's early 'Improvisations' were of special interest, an interest stimulated by a retrospective of more than 200 works at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting in 1945 and by publication of his book Concerning the Spiritual in Art. 328 Although Kandinsky's mysticism did not strike a sympathetic chord, his statement that 'the artist is not only justified in using, but is under moral obligation to use, only those forms which fulfil his own need'329 did, since it focused on 'inner necessity' and meshed with existential philosophy and to a lesser extent Jung's psycho-analytical method.

In an article written at the time of the show of Soutine's paintings at the Museum of Modern Art in 1950, Jack Tworkov examined Soutine's contribution:

. . . His passion is not for the picture as a thing, but for the entire process itself. It negates professionalism. Soutine's painting contains the fiercest denial that the picture is the end in itself. . .

328 Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, (first published under the title of 'The Art of Spiritual Harmony' by Constable and Company Ltd., in 1914), New York, Wittenborn, Shultz, 1947.
329 ibid.
It is meant to have impact on the soul. . . the composition is not a plan, a previous arrangement. . . it is rather the unpremeditated form the picture takes as a result of the struggle to express his motive. . . This struggle on the part of the artist to capture the sequence of ephemeral experience is not only at the heart of Soutine's method, but also expresses his tragic anxiety, his constant brooding over being and not-being, over bloom and decay, over life and death. . . It requires the unity of instantaneous perceiving and doing. . . It excludes touching up. . . it is not a technique but a process. . . 330

"The artist's impulse", "the power of the artist's hand", "spontaneously", "it was in the air", "we breathed it in", "in touch with the mood", "was not a plan", "not a previous arrangement", "negates professionalism", "the unpremeditated form", "his tragic anxiety", "being and not-being", "instantaneous perceiving and doing", "not a technique but a process" are examples of the rhetoric used by the American Abstract Expressionists to emphasise that the 'act of painting' is a state of 'being-in-the-world' and also to underscore the notion that in this state (of being) they were in direct communication with the essential and basic nature of humanity, the 'truths' of existence. Statements by de Kooning, 331 Newman,332 Baziotes,333 Reinhardt,334 Hare,335 Pousette-Dart, 336 and Clifford Still 337 are various treatments of the same metaphors.

331 . . . I am always in the picture somewhere. The amount of space I use I am always in, I seem to move around in it, and there seems to be a time when I lose sight of what I wanted to do, and then I am out of it. . . (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 '(1950), Modern Artists in America, First Series, New York, Wittenborn Schultz, 1951. Maurice Tuchman, New York School, The First Generation, New York Graphic Society Ltd., Greenwich, Connecticut, 1965, p.25-37)
332 . . . To what extent are you intoxicated by the actual act, so you are beguiled by it? To what extent are you charmed by its inner life? And to what extent do you then really approach the intention or desire that is really outside of it? . . . (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 '(1950), ibid., p.25-37)
333 . . . Whereas certain people start with a recollection or an experience and paint that experience, to some of us the act of doing it becomes the experience; so that we're not quite clear why we are engaged on a particular work . . . ;
334 . . . He does something on a canvas and takes a chance in the hope that something important will be revealed. . . (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 '(1950), ibid., p.25-37)
335 . . . But the emphasis with us is upon a painting experience, and not with any other experience. . . (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 '(1950), ibid., p.25-37)
Denying that the step into the 'primitive' unconscious was a step into a pre­configured non-reflection, the critic Lawrence Alloway, in 'Sign and Surface: Notes on Black and White Painting in New York', claimed that American painters: 'in black and white jump from the autobiographical to the monumental, without the usual intervening stages of preparation and rehearsal.'³³⁸ Rosenberg, forgetting the thinking necessary to make the conceptual leap from thinking to the unthought thinking, put it like this:

... At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act - rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyse, or 'express' an object, actual or imagined. ... A painting that is an act is inseparable from the biography of the artist. The painting itself is a 'moment' in the unadulterated mixture of his life - whether 'moment' means the actual minutes taken up with spotting the canvas or the entire duration of a lucid drama conducted in sign language. ...³³⁹

In accord with Alloway and Rosenberg, Schapiro wrote: 'the new painting appears as an art of impulse and chance.'³⁴⁰ And again:

The painting symbolises an individual who realises freedom and deep engagement of the self within his work. ... hence the great importance of the mark, the stroke, the brush, the drip, the quality of the substance of the paint itself, and the surface of the canvas as a texture and field of operation - all signs of the

³³⁵ ... A man's work is his signature. In this sense art has never been anonymous. ... (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 (1950), ibid., p.25-37)
³³⁶ ... All art is abstract, and all abstract work must needs be of nature because we are of nature. ... (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 (1950), ibid., p.25-37)
³³⁷ Benjamin Townsend, 'An Interview with Clifford Still', Gallery Notes, Albright-Know Art Gallery, Vol. 24, No. 2, Summer 1961, p.10-16:
... I am not an action painter. Each painting is an act, the result of action and the fulfillment of action. ...
³³⁸ Lawrence Alloway, 'Sign and Surface: Notes on Black and White Painting in New York', Quadrum, No. 9, 1960, p.50, 53
artist's active presence. The work of art is an ordered world of its own kind in which we are aware, at every point, of its becoming. The impulse, which most often is not readily visible in its pattern, becomes tangible and definite on the surface of a canvas through the painted mark. We see as it were, the track of emotion, its obstruction, persistence or extinction. . . 341

American Abstract Expressionists amplified notions of 'being-in-the-world' by concealing the systematic play of differences. The now conventional term, "action painting", emphasised a physical movement which defied representation. For Rosenberg, action painting did away with the need to represent states, and foregrounded the enacting of physical movement. Action on the canvas became its own representation: 'The 'act-painting' is of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's existence'342 which enabled the canvas to "talk back".343

The statement . . . 'I am nature' 344 made by Jackson Pollock in 1942 in response to Hans Hoffman's suggestion that Pollock work directly from nature, synthesised many of the prevailing beliefs 'in-the-air'. It brought together the 'being-in-the-world' of the Existentialist and the Jungian notion that the artist could be in direct contact with the primitive-primordial unconscious. Such a statement shows that there is a deep connection between the craving for self-presence, as it affected the philosophy of the language of expression, and the painting-act. Both are components of a powerful metaphysics which works to confirm the 'natural' priority of the painting act as a moment of true expression. Barnett Newman, one of the pivotal figures of the American Abstract Expressionists, in 1948, succinctly expressed these notions when he claimed that: 'the image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation, real and concrete, that can be understood by anyone who will look at it without the nostalgic glasses of history.'345

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The idea that 'messages' inherent in the work could be understood by anyone who loosened the shackles of history was a prevailing belief amongst many American Abstract Expressionist artists. Robert Motherwell, for example, claimed that the authenticity of painting: 'lies in the pure form and inner life which springs from the artist's realisation and experience.'

It is here that the exemplariness of Rousseau's philosophical influence makes its presence felt. Where Rousseau repeats the Platonic gesture by referring to another model of presence: self-presence in the senses, in the sensible cogito, which also carries in itself the inscription of the divine law, the American Abstract Expressionists also evoke what is condemned in Rousseau's 'Essai sur l'origine des langues' - writing in the common sense, (it is the carrier of death) - and as well elevates the other face of the same proposition, writing in the metaphoric sense, the natural, living; it is equal in dignity to the origin of value, to the heart, to the sentiment and so on. Natural writing is immediately united to the painting act, the gesture, the inner voice and to its breath. Summarising Rousseau in Of Grammatology, Derrida writes: 'There is good and bad writing: the good and natural is the divine inscription in the heart and the soul.' For American Abstract Expressionists, this divine inscription is arrived at through immediacy and is directly opposed to: 'the perverse and artful [which] is technique, exiled in the exteriority of the body'. Expressionist and abstract painting was thought of as a non-phonetic 'language' of the 'interior' succinctly expressed by Hans Hoffman when he said: 'Painters speak through paint - not through words,' a statement which echoed Greenberg's call in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon' to abandon literature.

Such statements revealed that the non-phonetic, favoured as it was, always remained under constant threat from phoneticisation.

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346 Robert Motherwell, from a talk at Boston Memorial School, Boston, 1951. (From Artists' Sessions at Studio 35 (1950), op. cit., p.25-37.
347 Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.17.
348 ibid.
350 Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69
351 The American Abstract Expressionists' evasion of language is well documented in Ann Gibson's essay: Abstract Expressionism's Evasion of Language. Art Journal, Fall, 1988., Gibson points out many of the reasons why language, which might have opened up new possibilities in painting, was avoided. Essentially, American Abstract Expressionists avoided language because they believed that language contaminated. But as Gibson points out as language contaminates so too does the evasion of language contaminate.
system of defence? An appeal to the universality of the non-phonetic, buried (and masked) within the primitive-primordial unconsciousness of the individual. This is how a metaphysics of self-presence was 'shielded' from a certain 'violence' of speech and the letter. David Smith, in a radio talk in 1952, demonstrated this attitude when he claimed that there were 'no words in my mind when I made [the work of art], and I am certain there are no words needed to understand it. As far as I am concerned, after I've made a work of art I've already said everything I have to say.'\(^{352}\)

American Abstract Expressionist discourses presented a 'picto-ideo-non-phonographic' 'language'. But within its internal structures, over determination and presupposition radicalised the concepts which are supposedly inherent in the metaphors of 'immediacy' and the 'technological'. The metaphor of 'immediacy' against the 'technological' were taken over by a graphic rhetoric that relied for its impetus on a decontextualised 'primitive' prestige in order to articulate this non-phonetic 'language'. The signs it discovered or borrowed did, in fact, lead to a type of non phonetic notation. This is how the graphic sign - the gesture borrowed from the 'act of painting' became a symbol or metaphor of a singular reality, unique to itself retaining its primitive prestige. But however much this writing of the non phonetic developed, it could never reduce the voice of the soul to itself. There was no chance of encountering anywhere the purity of 'reality', 'yncity', 'singularity' of a authentic self in American Abstract Expressionism by taking the detour through the technological.

The evocation of the primal through the use of pre-history, archaeology, myths, the shunning of technology as a metaphor for cognition, the conceptual and cultural sophistication, shows a direct allegiance with Rousseau's philosophical position outlined in his 'Essai sur l'origine des langues'.\(^{353}\) In a very general sense, what formed the basis of American Abstract Expressionist philosophy is a conceptual structure, a Rousseauism that dominated modern anthropology and the psychology formulated by Freud and updated by Jung. Derrida, in Of Grammatology, calls upon and questions this declared Rousseauism in order to suggest the phonocentrism and ethnocentrism that attempts to dominate philosophy and even language.

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\(^{352}\) Ann Gibson, 'Abstract Expressionism's Evasion of Language,' op. cit., p.208.

Briefly, Derrida shows that Rousseau believes that 'culture' represents a dangerous swerve away from the natural. The apparent 'danger' to the natural society which Rousseau conceives is sophisticated culture, and is that which Derrida deconstructs. This 'danger' is also witnessed in the contrived construction of the 'primitive' where sophisticated civilisations with advanced reproductive technologies are translated as a 'dangerous' supplementarity. The concept of 'originality' and the 'originary' is defined in violent and diametrical opposition to this 'dangerous' supplementarity, forgetting that technology (the metaphor of sophisticated culture) is also as constructed a representation as is the natural (that to which immediacy points). It is a notion of technology as contaminator of the individual aesthetic that translates as a general fear of technology: a fear of sophisticated culture.

Notions of the 'primitive', the 'savage' and the 'barbarian' within the hierarchical ordering postulated by Rousseau in his Essay had a direct relationship with Jung's 'primitive unconscious' and the 'primitivism' proposed by key figures in the American Abstract Expressionist movement. Such disclosures illustrate the constructed nature of the concept of the technological and how it was deployed. The act of painting - its signs - in American Abstract Expressionism was construed as embodying a perfect coincidence of meaning and signification. But this self-presence, concealed (whilst all the while presupposing) the negative, embodied in a concept of the technological in a play of différence:

... the signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would only refer to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts by means of

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354 All the artists which this thesis treats as first generation American Abstract Expressionists (refer to Introduction) are male. All the influential writers of this period were men. This could well be the basis for an argument that advocated that the transactions and referrals revolving around the refusal and denial of the technological witnessed between American Abstract Expressionism and Printmaking was due to a phallocentric or homocentric discourse.


... These three ways of writing correspond almost exactly to three different stages according to which one can gather men into a nation. The depicting of objects is appropriate to a savage people; signs of words and of propositions to a barbaric people; and the alphabet to a civilised people. . .
a systematic play of differences. Such a play, différance, is no
longer simply a concept, but rather the possibility of a
conceptuality, of a conceptual process system in general. . . 356

Discovered in the rhetoric of immediacy is a constructed configuration, a
tool in the service of a powerful metaphysics of self-presence which also
demonstrates that the writing of the Other (in both a concept of
immediacy and that which was opposed to it in the dyadic structure: the
technological) 'is each time invested with a domestic outline.'357

Brighton, 1982.
357 Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.80.
Chapter 4:

The Significance of a Definition of Originality in Prints in the Context of the Rhetoric of Immediacy and the Rhetoric of the Technological

Before a concept of originality in prints was crystallised by the American Print Council, the topic of originality in prints was hotly debated. In 'The Situation in Printmaking': 1955, Dore Ashton rehearsed the argument for originality in prints and simultaneously took a swipe at French culture. Ashton made a point of isolating French printers by describing their manner of marketing prints as 'insidious malpractice' despite the fact that it was the French who had previously ratified a concept of originality in prints in 1937 for Customs purposes. Ashton claimed that most of the problems of the print market experienced in America originated in France. To support her arguments, Ashton co-opted the comments of Jacques Villon, a master printer working in France:

...I am partly responsible myself... but I would like to say that it is not honest for any artist to sign the work of another... the public must be warned...  

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358 Dore Ashton, 'The Situation in Printmaking: 1955', Arts, October, 1955, p. 60: 
360 Dore Ashton, 'The Situation in Printmaking'. ibid. 
361 ibid.
Thus as early as 1955 Ashton had positioned American printmaking as the saviour of a dying but noble tradition, claiming that the tradition of the engraver had been 'admirably preserved'\textsuperscript{362} in America while simultaneously bringing French printmaking into disrepute. In doing so, Ashton acknowledged the preparation for the 'saving of lithography' that June Wayne would later argue for in the formation of the Tamarind Institute, a workshop which would promote the concept of artist-printmaker and collaboration. \textsuperscript{363} Ashton's article was a rehearsal for the establishment of the concept of originality in prints as an American invention. It is not difficult to acknowledge that American printmaking was invested by the forces and resources of an 'Imperialist Ideology'.\textsuperscript{364} In fact, one can argue printmaking was deeply embedded in the strategies and rhetoric of the 'Cold War'. It was the French, after all, who had developed a concept of originality - incorporating it into law - in order to distinguish between mechanical reproduction and artist produced prints for Customs purposes - to protect buyers and artists - twenty-seven years before America adopted the Print Council's definition. As with Greenberg's rhetoric which conflated kitsch with the evils of culture and the totalitarian authority to which it was allied and by which it was exploited,\textsuperscript{365} in order to promote American Abstract Expressionism, Ashton's rhetoric positioned America's approach to printmaking as virtuous: printmaking would be rescued from decay.

\textsuperscript{362} Dore Ashton, 'The Situation in Printmaking', p.60, writes: . . . Happily the situation in American Printmaking is quite different, for here the tradition of the painter engraver has been admirably preserved. . .

\textsuperscript{363} Pat Gilmour, 'Symbiotic Exploitation or Collaboration: Dine and Hamilton with Crommelynck,' \textit{Print Collectors News Letter}, Vol. XV, No. 6, 1985; In the \textit{Tamarind Book of Lithography}, the Printer is warned 'to avoid the imposition of his aesthetic viewpoint'...and must....'present the artist with alternatives, not directions.' (Garo Anatreasian and Clinton Adams, \textit{The Tamarind Book of Lithography}, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1971, p.82.); In the \textit{Tamarind Book of Lithography}, the Printer is warned 'to avoid the imposition of his aesthetic viewpoint'...and must....'present the artist with alternatives, not directions.' (Garo Anatreasian and Clinton Adams, \textit{The Tamarind Book of Lithography}, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1971, p.82.)

\textsuperscript{364} Serge Guilbaut, \textit{Trans Arthur Goldhammer}, How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1983, makes a good case for the method by which American Abstract Expressionism was promoted to the disadvantage of European abstract art (in particular that practised by the French, since Paris was the then capital of art) of the same underlying philosophical base: in effect how Americans promoted New York as a centre, if not the centre of culture for this period)

It is possible that the definitions proposed by Third International Congress of the Arts, The American Print Council, as well as that proposed by Hayter had their origins in the French definition. Ironically the French definition of originality was preceded by Walter Benjamin's essay on 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', predated both the beginning of the rhetoric of immediacy in American Abstract Expressionism and notions of medium specificity in printmaking, marked the beginnings of Formalist analysis, and revealed that the oscillation between hand-made and machine-made was well established in what constituted an original print. Despite that, it appears to have remained relatively unknown.

Both Hayter's definition of 'Degrees of Originality' and the definition of prints agreed to at the Third International Congress of the Arts, held in Vienna in September of 1960, published by the American Print Council and issued by the International Association of Art in 1963 are significant.

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The Definition of the Third International Congress of the Arts:
1. It is the exclusive right of the artist-printmaker to fix the definitive number of each of his graphic works in the different techniques; engraving, lithography, etc.
2. Each print, in order to be considered an original, must bear not only the signature of the artist, but an indication of the total edition and the serial number of the print. The Artist may also indicate if he is the printer.
3. Once the edition has been made, it is desirable that the original plate, stone, wood-block, or whatever material was used in pulling the print from should be defaced or should bear a distinctive mark indicating that the edition has been completed.
4. The above principles apply to graphic works which can be considered originals, that is to say to prints for which the artist made the original plate, cut the wood-block, worked on the stone or any other material. Works which do not fulfil these conditions must be considered 'reproductions'.
5. For reproductions no rules are possible. However it is desirable that reproductions should be acknowledged as such, and so distinguished beyond question from the original graphic work. This is particularly so when reproductions are of such outstanding quality that the artist, wishing to acknowledge the work materially executed by the printer, feels justified in signing them.

The Version of the Definition of Print Council of America:
An original print is a work of graphic art, the general requirements of which are:
1. The Artist alone has made the image in or upon the plate, stone, Woodblock, or other material for the purpose of creating a work of graphic art.
2. The Impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions.
in that they dramatically impacted on printmakers and American Abstract Expressionists alike. Further, they disclosed two key concepts: the concept of différence and the concept of closure. In order to expand on these two concepts in the context of the definition of originality it will be necessary to first analyse the structures and the philosophical underpinning of the various definitions.

It is worth noting that points one, two, three and four of the definition defined by the Third International Congress of the Arts state that only those prints pulled from a plate, stone or block that has been drawn, then printed and defaced, the print signed and editioned by the artist can be considered as original prints. If they do not fulfil these conditions then the prints are classified as reproductions. The main criteria for originality being that the artist made the original printing base.

The Print Council of America definition follows closely that of the Third International Congress of the Arts: only those prints pulled from blocks, plates or stones (or other materials) made by the 'hand of the artist' can be considered as original prints. Again, the main criteria for originality is that the hand of artist makes the original printing base.

Chapter eleven of Hayter's book About Prints is entitled 'Five Degrees of Originality in Prints'. He defines and classifies degrees of originality, in order:

Category A (most original) is a work which is born out of the medium itself, but where the only the artist's hand is involved and no other. This meshed perfectly with the definition as proposed by the Third International Congress of the Arts and The American Print Council. Category B, the 'Autograph', is a work in which the idea has been processed and formed by or through another medium and then translated into a print but still by the artist. (Artists who might copy a painting and transpose that into a print would fall under

3. The finished print is approved by the artist.


370 Hayter writes: Cat. A . . is in reality a method of reproduction being employed by the artist himself. [and . . . in which the emergence of an image by the exercise of a technique in the medium. . . (William Hayter, About Prints', op. cit., p.131)

371 Hayter writes: Cat. B . . which I should like to call 'the Autograph. . . is most unlikely that the technique contributes in any way to the transposition of idea on the part of the artist. . . (William Hayter, About Prints', op. cit., p.131)
this category); Category C\textsuperscript{372} is a work in which an artist employs others (professional printers or Master printers) to print the work for them. Here is where Hayter excuses collaboration; Category D\textsuperscript{373} is where the work is taken to a professional print shop where: 'the exercise of the technique at its maximum perfection can almost equal the quality of the original, but under no circumstances could be expected to surpass it.'\textsuperscript{374} The idea being that the technician will copy the work almost exactly, by hand, and reproduce it; Category E (least original) 'is frankly a reproduction'.\textsuperscript{375}

Echoing Walter Benjamin's 'grading of authenticity',\textsuperscript{376} William Hayter argued, the case for degrees of originality in prints even though, as Benjamin pointed out, it was 'precisely because authenticity is not reproducible, [that] the intensive penetration of certain (mechanical) processes of reproduction was instrumental in differentiating and grading authenticity.'\textsuperscript{377} Hayter arrived at these categories by talking to 'experts'.\textsuperscript{378} However Hayter admits later in his book to the difficulty of distinguishing an original from a reproduction.\textsuperscript{379} In other words, even after defining, grading and classifying originality into degrees of originality, Hayter agreed with Benjamin\textsuperscript{380} that originality or authenticity is not inherent in a print. \textsuperscript{381}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{372} Hayter writes: \textit{Cat. C . . . in which the work is still executed on the plate, blocks, screens, or whatever surface is being used, by the hand of the artist, but . . . he will apply to one of the excellent firms of artisans such as Lacourier and Mourlot where very competent advice will be offered in the techniques of reproduction . . .} (William Hayter, \textit{About Prints'}, op. cit., p.131)
\item \textsuperscript{373} Hayter writes: \textit{Cat. D . . . is that in which the artist has gone to a competent firm of craftsmen with a gouache, drawing water-colour, or painting which he or his dealer would like to see in the form of a print . . .} (William Hayter, \textit{About Prints'}, op. cit., p.131)
\item \textsuperscript{374} William Hayter, \textit{About Prints'}, op. cit., p.131
\item \textsuperscript{375} Hayter writes: \textit{Cat. E . . . frequently done by mechanical means, photographically or otherwise . . .} (William Hayter, \textit{About Prints'}, op. cit., p.131)
\item \textsuperscript{376} Walter Benjamin in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' \textit{Illuminations}, op. cit., p.243, footnote 2.
\item \textsuperscript{377} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{378} Hayter writes: . . . During the preparation of this book[ About Prints] I have interviewed hundreds of print experts, engravers, lithographers, dealers and artists. . . (William Hayter, \textit{About Prints'}, op. cit., p.126)
\item \textsuperscript{379} Hayter writes: . . . One of the nightmares haunting even experienced connoisseurs of prints is the fear of being fooled by one of the methods of reproduction which so perfectly resembles the effect of original work that it is extremely difficult to distinguish. . . (William Hayter, \textit{About Prints'}, op. cit., p.136)
\item \textsuperscript{380} Walter Benjamin in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' p. 224, writes: . . . to ask for the "authentic" print makes no sense. . .
\item \textsuperscript{381} Shane Simpson, \textit{The Visual Artist and the Law}, The Law Book Company Ltd., 1982, p.150, is also at pains to show the difficulty of defining an original print: . . . Arguments as to [the] definition [of original print] have been a feature of the print world since the nineteenth century. Even before the Society of French
Despite these admissions Hayter continued to pursue concepts revolving around immediacy and spontaneity and even claimed in 1985 that: '[We were] not involved with systematic bodies of reasoning. Reasoning can only take us so far. [We were] involved with unreasoning - spontaneous unreasoning.'

By claiming that printmakers were involved with 'spontaneous unreasoning', Hayter was demanding a suspension of his earlier logic concerning his own claims to printmaker's autonomy - claims which invoked the 'inherent qualities of the medium', 'truth to materials' and medium specificity based on the technological - while maintaining belief in a system which contrived originality by opposing the technological. The twists and turns of Hayter's logic is difficult to follow.

In all the definitions described above stress is placed on the artist's presence in the manufacture of the work. It is the 'hand-of-the-artist' in original prints that inscribes self-presence and therefore authenticity and origin. But it only does so by being polarised to mechanically mass-produced prints: technology(Culture) versus the 'hand done'(Nature). Here we witness the contrived oscillation between the mechanical reproduction and the 'hand-of-the-artist' where the seduction of technology is treated as a danger, in order to create a concept of originality which echo the thoughts of Walter Benjamin: 'The whole sphere of authenticity is outside the technical.'

Benjamin's criticism did not go completely unnoticed. Pat Gilmour noted as early as 1979, in Understanding Prints: a Contemporary Guide that originality in prints was a 'result of the deification of the individualistic gesture.' Gilmour also noted that the deification of the individualistic gesture: 'suppressed printmaking's natural potential for wide distribution. Mystique and rarefied connoisseurship were encouraged not least by an

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Artists banned colour lithographs from their annual Salon and Andre Mellerio wrote his essay 'L'Estampe et l'affiche' (1898), people have argued the definitional toss. . .


383 Walter Benjamin, ibid., p.220.

elitist art market,"\(^\text{385}\) acknowledgement by Gilmour of the effort by which
capitalism exploits the market. But it was Walter Benjamin who conjoined
certain practices of production and reproduction, vis-à-vis the 'original', to
show how capitalist 'exploitation ultimately creates conditions which make it
possible to abolish capitalism itself'.\(^\text{386}\) The dialectic encapsulated in the
various definitions of originality in prints themselves revealed a tendency to
erode the concepts of creativity, genius and mastery over production, even
as demands for such are made of the superstructure. It is the structure of
originality itself which exposes the deficiency of the system. To follow
Benjamin's proposition, these deficiencies might be a useful tool for the
formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art.

The impact of the definitions of originality both on printmaking and American
Abstract Expressionism was significant. Although the standards proposed
by the American Print Council were commended by reputable dealers and
willingly accepted by prominent printmakers, they were unenforceable in
the market place and even unacceptable to many printmakers, in particular
those who were exploring new conceptions and experimenting with novel
technologies and materials. Luis Camnitzer, co-director of the New York
Graphic Workshop published a 'Re-definition of the Print' in *Artists Proof*.\(^\text{387}\)
He criticised the Print Council's certification of plate, stone wood block or
other material as a 'liberal although limited definition' \(^\text{388}\) that subscribed to
traditional, two dimensional image producing surfaces that are: 'thought to
require ink and to print on paper'.\(^\text{389}\) He also asserted that printmakers were:
'moving into a realm of almost absolute freedom - the [only] limitation being
the printing of an edition, and the sole responsibility being to reveal an
image.'\(^\text{390}\) But however limited the definition was for some, the definition of
prints agreed to at the Third International Congress of the Arts impacted
enormously on the psyche of printmakers and American Abstract
Expressionists alike.

The definition of originality, coupled with a type of collaboration which was
promoted by the June Wayne whereby the printer acted as a 'buffer'

\(^\text{386}\) Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit.,
p.217.
\(^\text{387}\) Louis Lamnitzer, 'A Redefinition of the Print', *Artist Proof*, 6, 1966
\(^\text{388}\) Louis Lamnitzer, 'A Redefinition of the Print', ibid., p.103.
\(^\text{389}\) ibid.
\(^\text{390}\) ibid.
between the artist and technology saw many American Abstract Expressionists making prints, lithographs in particular. The definition allowed American Abstract Expressionist artists from 1960 onwards to make prints without compromising their individual aesthetic. The relative positions of painting and printmaking maintained their 'separateness'; the American Abstract Expressionist project of opposing the primordial-primitive unconscious with cognition by taking the detour through the technological, reinforced a structure of dualism (in which each of the given elements reciprocally supported the other) was broadened and strengthened by the definition which echoed the structures inherent in American Abstract Expressionism.

Lanier Graham, in *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era*, claimed the involvement of American Abstract Expressionist artists in printmaking constituted a print renaissance. What Graham meant was that it was a renaissance for painters. Printmakers had never ceased making prints.

Several American Abstract Expressionists made prints after 1960: Adolph Gottlieb (who made many lithographs during the 1960's, as well as serigraphs), Lee Krasner, Helen Frankenthaler, Robert Motherwell and de Kooning. The involvement of these artists in printmaking impacted strongly on the psyche of various writers. Graham even claimed that Lee Krasner did not reach her full potential until she made prints:

. . . The full flowering of her Abstract Expressionist style did not occur till the 1950's. . . when finally she felt free to explore her identity. The result was a mature style of personal spontaneity - a fluid style that she brought to prints such as *Untitled 1970* . . .

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393 ibid.
Graham also suggested that Helen Frankenthaler’s earliest effort, First Stone, 1961, ‘demonstrated how deeply her artistic roots were planted in American Abstract Expressionism,’ implying that print technologies were no longer an impediment to either Frankenthaler’s ‘immediacy’ or Krasner’s ‘personal spontaneity’ echoing Hayter’s claim that printmaking technologies did not hinder what Hayter had called ‘spontaneous unreasoning’. Citing the work of both Robert Motherwell and Helen Frankenthaler who had been working at U.L.A.E. and Tyler Graphics, Ruth Fine, curator of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, claimed that both these artists had ‘discovered and invented ways to invest their printed images with a sense of their individualised mastery of abstract form,’ despite Judith Goldman’s previous claims that ‘like other New York painters, Motherwell had no interest in the slow, fragmented graphic process.’ Fine also included the series of abstract expressionist lithographs completed by Willem de Kooning working with Irwin Hollander and Fred Genis as examples of work by American Abstract Expressionists that was not compromised by print technology (‘because they had been printed in association with master printers’).

The metaphysical oppositions: inside-outside, soul-body, individual-society, art-convention, nature-culture, immediacy-cognitive, all return to an existential register in Hayter’s ‘degrees of originality’, the Third International Congress of the Arts’ definition, and in the American Art Council’s definition of originality. Therefore the structure of originality in prints is also significant in that it discloses the structures of différance. Meaning and its deferment are clearly demonstrated in the terms: ‘by hand’ - ‘hand cut’, ‘hand drawn’, ‘hand inked’, ‘hand wiped’, ‘rolled by hand’, ‘hand printed’ (Nature) which is given priority over ‘mechanisation’ - ‘technically made’, ‘mass produced’, ‘processed’, mediated’, ‘high-tech’, ‘reproduction’, mechanical reproduction’ (Culture) in the Nature-Culture duality. The closer one gets to the source (Nature) the greater the

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394 ibid., p.27.
399 ibid.
authenticity, the more 'aura', the more 'original' the work becomes. The closer one gets to the technological, the more the 'conceptual' and notions of 'cognition' come into operation. But meaning is constituted rhetorically, by a continual process of deferment. 'Nature' is always construed as having some prior access to authenticity, a 'truth' over and above 'Culture'. What has been revealed in the various definitions of originality is that a drive, an aggression with a special dynamism pits Nature against Culture in an opposition where Nature is always favoured. Paul de Man, in Allegories of Reading, succinctly summarised this operation when he concluded that subjecthood was derived 'From a binary polarity... the opposition of subject to object based on the spatial model of 'inside' to an 'outside' world with the inside favoured as prior. 

It is in this oscillation between the 'hand-done' (metaphor for the 'inside') and the 'technologically mass produced' (metaphor for the 'outside world'), articulated in the definition - a law which is not a Primal Law - where Derrida's notion of différance can be clearly seen at work. According to Derrida différance is best described as:

... a structure and a movement which cannot be conceived on the basis of the opposition presence/absence. Différance is the systematic play of differences, of traces and differences, of the spacing (espacement) by which elements refer one to another. This spacing is the production, both active and passive (the a of différance indicates this indecision in relation to activity and passivity, indicates that which cannot be governed and organised by that opposition), of intervals without which the 'fill' terms could not signify, could not function. 

As the various definitions reveal, this marking out or spacing of concepts; traces of signs, is complex and differential. The signifying event (the concept of self-presence articulated through the 'hand-of-the -artist') depends on differences, but these differences are themselves products of other events (non-self-presence in the guise of technology). When one focuses on events one is led to affirm the priority of differences, but when one focuses

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on differences one sees their dependence on prior events. One can shift back and forth between these two perspectives which never give rise to any synthesis.

The definition of originality in prints was supposed to ratify, confirm, corroborate and certify originality, but instead revealed a constructed and contrived conceptual structure. The definition of originality in prints does not confirm originality or ratify authenticity or corroborate aura but rather attests to the structures and cravings for individual selfhood. As such, the definition of originality represents a cul-de-sac, a terminus. That is its significance. It is the 'finishing touch', the device and sign of the desire for self-presence. Therefore the definition of original prints heralds the end of a struggle of an ideology and signals the closure of an historico-metaphysical epoch.

The concept of 'aura' in an original print is only 'excited' when concepts of mechanical reproduction are juxtaposed against concepts of origin and, even more so, when a work is multiplied infinitely. This is how the concept of 'aura' is fabricated through printmaking. Mass reproduction now provides the original print with mass originary - with infinite authenticity, with infinite presence. Thus a double movement in reproduction itself. Contrary to Benjamin's notion that authenticity withers with mechanical reproduction,402 'origin', 'authenticity' and 'aura' actually blossom in the age of mechanical reproduction since technology and notions of origin are juxtaposed in a self-referential and self-binding system of meaning. Originality and the technological are each others' reciprocal content.

Prior to 1960 printmaking in America was obsessed with technology in order to stake the claim of creative autonomy. As a consequence it was rejected out of hand by the American Abstract Expressionists who believed implicitly that direct and immediate communication took place outside of the technological. The return of American Abstract Expressionists to printmaking in 1960 as a viable means for expressing the 'inner' self was purely because the contrived structures encapsulated in the notions of originality and originary had been crystallised in a definition where the negative notion of the technological were held at bay. However this return to printmaking created a periodisation in the

history of American Abstract Expression, and in printmaking: the various definitions of originality allow us to grasp the conceptual model that both printmaking and a style of painting contrived in order to generate notions of individual selfhood. But even more importantly it allows us to see how a concept of technology was assigned the privilege of a zone of non-self-presence in order that the originary thesis could be maintained and then furthered. Thus refusal and denial of the technological became a system of referral and transaction echoing the claim by Theodore W Adorno, in 'The Culture Industry, Enlightenment as Mass Deception', that 'Nature and technology are mobilised against all opposition.'

In both American Abstract Expression and printmaking, a negatively charged concept of the technological was fabricated and then passed through by way of a detour in order to arrive at the unified subject. A close reading of the various definitions of originality in prints indicates the prefatory gesture before 'immediacy': the metaphor of technology prefaces 'immediacy'. When the structure of the original print is examined a crack forms between the 'writing' of immediacy and the 'writing' of the technological. This crack widens into an abyss so that each reveals its own 'writing' and the writing of the Other. Concepts of 'immediacy' and the 'technological' can be arrested by examining these prefatory gestures. As such, the structure of originality in prints verifies a constructed self-hood and is a certificate of the closure of an historico-metaphysical epoch.

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Chapter: 5

The Role of Criticism in Reinforcing a Negative Concept of the Technological (as a Metaphor for the Sophistication of Culture).

There were many art critics and writers who supported the American Abstract Expressionists: Lawrence Alloway, Dore Ashton, Alfred H. Barr Jr., Andre Breton, Clement Greenberg, Leon Golub, Robert Motherwell, Diego Rivera, Harold Rosenberg, Meyer Schapiro and Leon Trotsky to name a few. David and Cecile Shapiro's Abstract Expressionism, A Critical Record, details some of their reviews and many critical statements from newspaper articles and magazines. Other commentators' views are also documented.

However, it was Clement Greenberg, who was perhaps the pre-eminent modernist art critic, who supported the American Abstract Expressionists. His essays are genuine examples of the effort to reconcile the bridge between Kantianism - Greenberg conceived Kant as the first real Modernist - and a contracted historicism. Greenberg claimed in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', Towards a Newer Laocoon and 'Modernist Painting', three important concepts that related to Modern Art.

Firstly, Greenberg claimed, in the Autumn edition of Partisan Review of 1939, in Avant-Garde and Kitsch, to have located the source of the degradation of art - 'Kitsch'. Secondly, Greenberg claimed, in the July-August edition of Partisan Review of 1940, barely one year later, in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', that there had been a logical progressive element discernible in American art and that 'the arts had been hunted back

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404 . . . [Clement Greenberg] is the designer and subtle manipulator of modernism, which is the single most important and influential theory of modern art . . . (Donald Kuspit, Clement Greenberg Art Critic, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, p.3.); . . . [Greenberg's writing] is the apodictic core of modernist criticism . . . (Mary Kelly, 'Reviewing Modernist Criticism', Screen, 22, 3, 1981, p.47.)
408 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', Modern Art and Modernism, Ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, The Open University, 1982
to their mediums, and there isolated, concentrated and defined.\(^{409}\) It was by 'virtue of its medium that each art is unique and strictly itself'.\(^{410}\) And based on this observation, Greenberg suggested that 'to restore identity back into the arts each discipline had to emphasise the 'opacity of each medium':\(^{411}\)

\[\text{\ldots The purely plastic or abstract qualities of the work of art are the only ones that count. Emphasise the medium and its difficulties, and at once the purely plastic, the proper values of visual art come to the fore. \ldots}^{412}\]

This statement laid the ground work for Greenberg's third claim. That is, Greenberg claimed to have recovered an intrinsic logic of art, obvious in its history, that which is unique and essential - the flatness in the medium of painting. According to Greenberg it was the flatness of painting that was its essential aesthetic quality. In fact, Greenberg further claimed that flatness exhibited the 'proper values' of visual arts. It was on the basis of these three claims that Greenberg was able to justify his criticism: that the proper 'plastic' and 'abstract qualities' of the visual arts could be defined against his concept of kitsch.

These claims were enlarged upon in 'Modernist Painting'. Concerning abstract art Greenberg claimed that 'a stressing of the ineluctable flatness or support is what remained most fundamental in the processes by which pictorial art criticised and defined itself under Modernism'.\(^{413}\) Further to which he added:

\[\ldots \text{Each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself. By doing this each art would to be sure narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make possession of this area all the more secure. \ldots}^{414}\]

\[\text{it quickly emerged that the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique to the nature of its medium. \ldots}^{414}\]

\[\text{[Italics are mine]}^{414}\]

\(^{409}\) Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69.

\(^{410}\) ibid.

\(^{411}\) ibid.

\(^{412}\) ibid., p.71.

\(^{413}\) Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', p.6.

\(^{414}\) ibid., p.5
What had to be exhibited and made explicit, claimed Greenberg, was that which was unique and irreducible not only to art in general, but also in each particular art:

... Each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar to and exclusive to itself. By doing this each art would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make possession of this area all the more secure. ... 415

Greenberg expanded this theme concerning himself specifically with painting:

... Flatness alone was unique and exclusive to that art. The enclosing shape of the support was the limiting condition, or norm. Flatness, two-dimensionality, was the only condition painting shared with no other art, and so modernist painting oriented itself to flatness as it did to nothing else. ... 416

And in terms of the abstract work of American Abstract Expressionists:

... That these pictures were big was no cause for surprise: the abstract expressionists were being compelled to do huge canvases by the fact that they had increasingly renounced an illusion of depth within which they could develop pictorial incident without crowding; the flattening surfaces of their canvases compelled them to move along the picture plane laterally and seek in its sheer physical size the space necessary for the telling of their kind of pictorial story. ... 417

In this way the elegance of the formalist tradition heralded by Manet (as outlined by Greenberg in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon') was furthered. Thus the inherent logic of the program of painting itself, and its plastic and abstract qualities were recovered.

415 ibid., p.6-7.
416 ibid., p.6.
For Greenberg the task of criticism:

... became to eliminate from the effects of each art and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thereby each art would be rendered 'pure' and in its 'purity' find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well of its independence. 'Purity' meant self-definition, and the enterprise of self-criticism became one of self-definition with a vengeance. . . 418

This is how Greenberg collapsed the issue of criticism and wove self-criticism into the very fabric of the inevitable course of a humanist history. Self-criticism in Greenberg's hands became twisted into a natural-law argument. What was inherent in each medium had always been inherent throughout time. The kind of Modernism that Greenberg proposed was a concern to recover within the flux and inter transparencies of history what was already thought of as the fixed objectivity of factual knowledge. Ignoring the fact that logically well-behaved objects are already themselves historicised, enmeshed in the domination of philosophy and ideology over historicism, Greenberg claimed that art was populated by quantities of exact, logically well behaved objects. That is to say the rationalist-logical and therefore impersonal process of history appeared in the guise of an inner artistic logic which had its own intrinsic laws of development and which could be located by a stringent self-criticism directed from within. It was from within these self-regulated borders that Greenberg's art of quality emerged. But not in and of itself. Quality was only achieved by being juxtaposed against the background of kitsch.

The pivotal essay Avant-Garde and Kitsch, in which Greenberg first introduced his concept of kitsch, was preceded by Meyer Schapiro's article, 'The Nature of Abstract Art'. Both Partisan Review, 419 and Marxist Quarterly 420 which published Schapiro's article 'Nature of Abstract Art' in 1937 advocated that artists needed to work independently of political parties.

418 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting,' op. cit., p.6-7.
and totalitarian ideologies. Schapiro's article was particularly influential. It allowed for an art that was abstract. And further, because it posited that an artist's work encapsulated the artist's preconceptions and social situation in an abstract 'language' it became possible, in theory at least, for abstraction to be used as a critical language. This opened the way for firstly Breton and Trotsky (in 1938) and then Greenberg (in 1939) to posit their concepts of a critical art that was abstract and avant-garde. Schapiro's article broke the opposition between the idealist formalism espoused by Alfred. H. Barr and socialist realism as espoused by a communism which was under attack because of Stalinism. Communist criticism up to that time had implied that abstract art was the product of an ivory tower, bearing no relation to society.

If Schapiro was right and abstract art was rooted in the social fabric of society, if it was a product of social conditioning, then it was possible for left-wing artists to use abstraction. This certainly paved the way for a re-evaluation of abstraction.

According to Serges Guilbaut, in How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art, Schapiro's article liberated American painters tired of their role as propaganda illustrators, but at the same time emphasised (in a derogatory way) printmaking's historical role in propaganda.

In 1937, the editors of Partisan Review took a definite stance on the issue of art in relation to politics. They maintained that the role of the artist was a difficult one but that the artist must be an artist and a citizen. The artist must understand the difference between public life and private life:


... Many of the artists were "Marxists"(WPA unions, artists' congresses) - they had been trying to paint Society...


424 Alfred H. Barr: Cubism and Abstract Art, Museum of Modern Art, 1937,


The estrangement of the intellectual was the justification for his withdrawal from real politics, but it was also an explanation for his ability to rise above the mundane and reunite art and politics into a vision of revolutionary culture. The alienated man became the radical man. . . 427

Leon Trotsky took this ideology one step further. It was the duty of art to be independent. In a letter to Partisan Review, in 1938 wrote:

Artistic creation has its laws - even when it consciously serves a social movement. Truly intellectual creation is incompatible with lies, hypocrisy and the spirit of conformity. Art can become a strong ally of revolution only in so far as it remains faithful to itself. . . 428

Thus the independence of the artist and art was crucial if the artist hoped to avoid becoming a tool of propaganda. In fact, Breton saw his position as an essentially revolutionary one: 'True art is unable not to be revolutionary, not to aspire to a complete and radical reconstruction of society.'429

Therefore the background was set for a non-propagandist art. It would be an art that was individualistic and would not attach itself overtly to any politics, neither left nor right. Individualism became the centre-piece of liberalism. Overt propaganda was shunned since it tied artists to a political mechanism that had been posited as anti-humanist, and anti-individualist. By removing themselves from any overt political stance, artists were heralding a return to a society uncontaminated by the sophistication of culture brought about, according to Greenberg, because of the invention of printing, reproduction and the expansion of literature.430

430 Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon,' op. cit., p.62, wrote that by the middle of the 17 Th. C: . . . the pictorial arts had been relegated almost everywhere into the hands of the courts, where they degenerated into relatively trivial interior decoration. The most creative class in society, theorising mercantile bourgeoisie, impelled perhaps by the iconoclasm of the Reformation and by the relative cheapness and mobility of the physical medium after the
In 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', Greenberg had raised the notion that the invention of printing, because of its mobility, generated an interest in literature which then became the dominant art form. Other art forms, including the visual arts became 'corrupted, perverted and distorted, forced to deny their own nature in order to attain the effects of the dominant art' [literature].\(^{431}\) Greenberg called for a radical return to the essentials of each of the arts in order to avert the decline which enabled them to 'pretend to conceal their mediums'.\(^{432}\) 'Literature's corrupting influence' he wrote, 'is only felt when the senses are neglected.'\(^{433}\) This meant a new and greater emphasis on form and involved:

... the assertion of the arts as independent vocations, disciplines and crafts, absolutely autonomous, and entitled to respect for their own sakes, and not merely as vessels of communication. It was a signal for a revolt against the dominance of literature, which was subject matter at its most oppressive. ...\(^{434}\)

In other words Greenberg was calling a halt to the excesses brought about by the invention of printing and its remarkable mobility in the form of literature which, he claimed, had brought about 'imitation rather than communication.'\(^{435}\)

In 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' (1939), Greenberg reinforced this view of the artist's role. His methodological approach, adopted by the American Abstract Expressionists, was to historicise painting firstly in terms of painting's drift towards its material qualities, from which he then construed its essence: its 'flatness'. Greenberg then formulated his concept of 'quality' by juxtaposing and polarising it against the concept of kitsch, a term which covered, broadly speaking, all the excesses of industrialisation, the excesses of the bourgeoisie which was in turn caused by the loss of a social cultural elite. In short, kitsch was a product of a post-war technocratic and

\(^{431}\) ibid.
\(^{432}\) ibid.
\(^{433}\) ibid., p.69.
\(^{434}\) ibid., p.66.
\(^{435}\) ibid., p.64.
overly sophisticated Western culture. By implication, kitsch was a by-product of the popular press.Implicitly, Greenberg determined that kitsch was an evil product of the excesses of culture in the clutches of a politics gone wrong and that nothing could save culture except a return to nature through a type of primitivising inherent in the object-as-object. Greenberg's project was to simultaneously decontextualise the primitive and juxtapose it against a similarly formulated technocratic Western culture posited as being 'out of control': a machine aesthetic 'gone mad'.

In 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', Greenberg claimed that only an avant-garde could save a culture of quality from the invasion of kitsch and 'keep culture moving in the midst of ideological confusion and violence.' In this, Greenberg lacked the optimism of both Leon Trotsky and Andre Breton who, like Greenberg blamed the cultural crisis on the decadence of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie but who had seen in the independent artist the way to overcome the crisis. But where Trotsky and Breton saw an artist independent from political parties as artists taking 'eclectic action', Greenberg saw the avant-garde artist as being independent from politics itself. Pessimistically dismissing Trotsky's 'eclectic action', Greenberg saw the artist as a 'modernist avant-garde'.

By invoking the avant-garde, Greenberg was able to pose as the defender of 'quality' and the champion of progress against academicism while renouncing political struggle and sanctioning a conservative mission to rescue bourgeois culture from the clutches of the evil technocratic culture. Greenberg, like Rousseau, in his 'Essai sur l'origine des langues', saw the excesses of culture as an unnecessary and even dangerous swerve away from nature.

In Greenberg's view, the greatest threat to culture lay in academicism or 'Alexandrianism', the essence of which was epitomised in kitsch. Greenberg believed that the artist's task was to make a stand against these excesses.

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439 Joseph Margolis, 'The Interconnection of Art and History', op. cit., p.34.
Kitsch, using for raw material the debased and academicised simulacra of genuine culture, welcomes and cultivates this insensibility. It is the source of its profits. Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money - not even their time. . . 440

[Italics are mine]

The Spanish Civil War (1939), the Second World War (1940-1945), the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Stalinism were testimony to excesses of technology and the dangers which it heralded.

Leon Trotsky's letter to Partisan Review outlined the defence of a critical art that remained 'faithful to itself'.441 Greenberg took this one step further by maintaining that while the avant-garde did indeed do critical work, it was criticism directed within, toward the work of art itself, toward the very medium of art and its processes that guaranteed quality. Such criticism was necessary, claimed Greenberg, because capitalism does not tolerate quality: 'Capitalism in decline finds whatever of quality it is still capable of producing becomes almost invariably a threat to its own existence.' 442

Greenberg's attack on sophisticated culture focused on technology and mechanical reproduction in particular as the reasons for kitsch, the sign symbol of a dangerous culture:

. . . Because it can be turned out mechanically, Kitsch has become an integral part of our productive system in a way in which true culture could never be except accidentally. It has been capitalised at a tremendous investment which must show commensurate returns; it is compelled to extend as well as keep its markets. . . 443

441 In August 1938 Partisan Review published a letter that Leon Trotsky had sent to the magazine entitled 'Art and Politics', p.3-10.
442 Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch,' op. cit., p.48-49
443 ibid., p.40.
By attacking kitsch, Greenberg turned art in on itself, deflecting artists away from the political turmoil within which they found themselves, yet at the same time, provided an ideologically sound program since kitsch, according to Greenberg, was a by-product of capitalism. As a result, an oblique attack on capitalism would come from a 'purified aesthetics'. Greenberg was able to achieve this by charging technological methods of reproduction, the mechanistic and technological, with negative qualities: 'Advances in culture no less than advances in science and industry corrode the very society under whose aegis they are made possible'.

This was necessary in order to create the technocratic field, the background against which quality and the individual self-hood could be projected. In other words, Greenberg seized upon technology as the pivot upon which to propel his concept of quality and the individual aesthetic.

What the article 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' did was to formulate a position and to articulate that intellectual position already adopted by many painters, albeit in a confused way. By making kitsch the target, because it was tied to totalitarian powers (through technology), the symbol of evil, Greenberg showed a direction for artists. In this way Greenberg appealed to the socialist camp, without taking any overtly party or political line. In other words, Greenberg high-jacked socialism's project and made it his own. He appealed to socialism to save the dying culture in order to carry on the artistic tradition. His message was to reject the technocratic culture - the capitalist culture producing kitsch. In this way Greenberg was able to mask a negatively charged concept of technology by concentrating on the evils of kitsch - as the by-product of culture accidentally off the tracks. In this way the of rejection of technology - kitsch - and the rejection of the political (both signs of the dangers of social and cultural sophistication) could be accomplished.

The journal, Tigers Eye, also stressed the total rejection of politics and devoted itself completely to the individual, to art and the separation of art from criticism, and the medium as an end in itself: 'A work of art, being a phenomenon of vision, is primarily within itself evident and complete.'

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445 Editorial, Tigers Eye, October 1949.
In his essay, 'Modernist Painting', Greenberg demonstrated his direct allegiance to the Kantian philosophical discourse which also stressed a self directed criticism from within:

... Self criticism of Modernism grows out of but is not the same thing as the criticism of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment criticised from the outside, the way criticism in its more accepted sense does; Modernism criticises from the inside, through the procedures themselves of what is being criticised. . . 446

Admitting an indebtedness to Kantian philosophy, Greenberg went on to say:

... A more rational justification had begun to be demanded of every formal social activity, and Kantian self-criticism was called on eventually to meet and interpret this demand in areas that lay far from philosophy. . . 447

From such an adopted position:

... The arts could save themselves from this levelling down' [the product of the industrial revolution and kitsch]. . . only by demonstrating that the kind of experience they provided was valuable in its own right and not to be obtained from any other kind of activity. . . 448

Culture and its aberrant forms and irregularities (politics, literature, subject matter, technology, imitation and kitsch for example) were rejected in the hope that the dangerous swerves away from 'real' culture could be countered.

Thus Greenberg introduced the phenomenological and pitted this against the backdrop of technology in order to drive the wedge between culture gone wrong through technological excess and the unthought, pre-cognitive primitive societies without advanced technologies. Greenberg was then

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446 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', op. cit., p.6.
447 ibid.
448 ibid.
able to posit a pure intuition against the processes of reason and logic, mimicking Jung's decontextualisation of the primitive unconscious.

Nowhere does the thrust of Greenberg's historicising and rationalist recovery manifest itself more than in the essay 'Towards a New Laocoon'. This essay encapsulates Greenberg's Kantian vision of a self-critical and pure art and was specifically directed towards the American Abstract Expressionists who gladly embraced it, supported in part by the model Trotsky and Andre Breton provided in their description of an avant-garde artist. This was outlined in Trotsky's and Breton's joint essay entitled 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', (first published in Partisan Review in 1938). In which they wrote: 'Our aims: The independence of art - for the revolution; The revolution - for the complete liberation of art'.

This model promoted an independent individual artist who was given freedom and autonomy from party politics. The individual aesthetic was posited against the contaminating restraints of the excesses of the sophistication of culture - overt politics.

Greenberg's elevation of certain material qualities above the material qualities of 'kitsch' (who's existence and definition is tenuous, based as it is on a subjective response to reproductive technology and mechanical production) only discloses Greenberg's desire for an authentic originary source and the operation of a powerful metaphysics of presence.

In this form of historicism we can determine Greenberg's essentially structuralist project, a project whose aims were the search for foundation and origin. However, the very logic which Greenberg's structuralist project employed shows that the signs that Greenberg uncovered or recovered are already inscribed in a differential system of meaning. In other words, there is no internal self-sufficiency in the term - kitsch - that Greenberg recovered. Greenberg's 'quality' of a pure art aesthetics for instance does not exist in total isolation and neither does kitsch. The insistence on giving 'breath of life', of animating indicative meaning with an expressive meaning to a 'pure aesthetics' is given over to system and concept. What has been suppressed

by Greenberg in his recovery is the force or animating pressure of intent which exceeds all the bounds of structure.

Greenberg's prescription for a pure aesthetics is flawed by a blindness, a refusal to acknowledge the indebtedness of the detour through technology and the excesses of culture - kitsch - in order to formulate and describe as pure, the qualities of an abstract and individual aesthetics.

Therefore there are two basic flaws in Greenberg's project. These are to be found in the formulation and defence of the ontological enterprise and the philosophy of his aesthetics, both of which are bound by a Rousseauian concept of an aboriginal origin under threat from the excesses of culture.

The mistake made by Greenberg is not that he focused on a pure abstract art aesthetics, but that he did so by taking the detour through the technological in order to animate the life of expression in such a pure aesthetics, a animation (of 'purification') which required the simultaneous suppression of the 'writing' or predetermination of his thinking. In his historicising definition of pure abstract art aesthetics, Greenberg's overwhelming desire to recover an essentially Greek humanism by polarising kitsch (the degradation), exposes his critical stance. In one moment of weakness Greenberg decided that kitsch could not communicate; that only a plastic abstract art of quality could. In doing so, Greenberg banished kitsch to the infinite realm of pure objecthood, a product of the excesses of a technocratic society, and promoted the plastic and abstract 'qualities' inherent in the 'flatness' of the medium of painting as having metaphysical properties - a higher aesthetic which he equated with the art of children, the Orient and the naïveté of primitive peoples: 'To prove that their concept of purity is something more than a bias in taste, painters point to the Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal purity.'

By their very insistence on separating the individual aesthetic 'qualities' from kitsch, Greenberg and the American Abstract Expressionists separately and together, were able to primitivise the otherwise mere materiality of their formalist inventions. All this was done in order for their art to communicate with the masses. But there was also another intention in this desire to

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450 Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69
primitivise, and that was to actually refuse what self-criticism was in fact attempting. Far from wanting to rationalise art or to reduce it to any logical order in his historicising, Greenberg's intention was to create a criticism which warded off such rationalist assaults. In other words, Greenberg's criticism was bent on preserving the uniqueness of each discipline by fencing each off within the bounds of its own rhetoric.

American Abstract Expressionists eschewed kitsch, technology, literature, the art of propaganda and illustration and yet at the same time managed to maintain a sense of social commitment. These expressionist and abstract artists managed to find a middle ground politically. Although their philosophy owed much to the left-wing anti-Stalinism advocated by Trotsky, they avoided the extreme left and right, and managed simultaneously to claim an art that was liberating and liberated. They were able to do this by carefully manipulating the rationalist fence, derived from Kantian logic couched in a formalist rhetoric, espoused by Alfred. H. Barr Jr. and then tempered by the criticism of Greenberg, Schapiro, and Rosenberg which warded off politics and other negative influences of a perceived (increasingly) technocratic society. This allowed American Abstract Expressionists to invoke the decontextualisation of the primitive, the basis for their refusals and then strengthen their position by refusing any medium that was explicitly technologically orientated.

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453 Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit.
456 Also refer to Theodore W Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Trans John Cumming, 'The Culture Industry, Enlightenment as Mass Deception', *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Verso, (first Published 1944), London, 1986, p 154: *In the culture industry the individual is an illusion not merely because of the standardisation of the means of production. . . Pseudo individuality is rife. . . ;*
* Also Clement Greenberg wrote in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', op. cit., p.48-49: *Advances in culture no less than advances in science and industry corrode the very society under whose aegis they are made possible. . .
The relationship between art and politics and art and technology is extremely complex and cannot be defined in those simplified Marxist terms which would explain both art and politics as symptoms of basic economic superstructure. Despite Moholy-Nagy's call for a purely abstract art of "visual fundamentals" in his 'Constructivism and the Proletariat', (1922) which had proclaimed at the outset that it would 'create a new guild of craftsmen, without class distinctions', and would 'find a way to reintegrate the artist into a technological society', the general perception among artists in America (the dualism evident in Surrealism for example) prior to the stances taken by American Abstract Expressionism ranged from a scepticism of technology to an overt rejection of technology and led to the condemnation of a technocratic society. Again, despite Trotsky's attitude expressed earlier in 'Literature and Revolution' (1923), in which he visualises art and technology in the service of the revolutionary state.

Of particular interest to this thesis is Trotsky's claim that:

...In accord with the entire tendency of industrial culture, we think that the artistic imagination in creating material objects will be directed towards working out the ideal form of a thing, as a thing... This does not mean the doing away with "machine-made" art, not even in the most distant future. But it seems that the direct co-operation between art and the branches of technique will become of paramount importance... The wall will not only fall between art and industry, but simultaneously
writing such as that by Andre Breton and Leon Trotsky, in their 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', (1938) reinforced the trend to condemn society believed to be in the grip of a technocratic culture:

. . . But today we see world civilisation, united in its historic destiny, reeling under the blows of reactionary forces armed with the entire arsenal of modern technology. . . 462

This abhorrence of technology led Breton and Trotsky to realise 'that the role of the artist in a decadent capitalist society is determined by the conflict between the individual and various social forms which are hostile to him'.463

What these hostile social forms were was graphically illustrated:

. . . The totalitarian regime of the USSR, working through the so-called "cultural" organisations. . . the official art of Stalinism [propaganda]. . . represents not communism but its most treacherous and dangerous enemy. . . The regime of Hitler. . . has rid Germany of all those artists whose work expressed the slightest sympathy for liberty. . . [and reduced them ] to the status of domestic servants of the regime, whose task it is to glorify it. . .

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Eventually the recognition of the role of the artist in a decadent capitalist society (in the grip of a technocracy) led to the middle course taken (in regard to politics) 465 and the decontextualisation of the primitive. In fact, what Trotsky and Breton proposed was that 'the supreme task of art in our epoch is to take part actively and consciously in the preparation of the

between art and nature also. This is not meant in the sense of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that art will become nearer to the state of nature, but that nature will become more "artificial". . . (p.465) [Italics are mine]


ibid., p.484.

ibid.

. . . We recognise, of course, that the revolutionary state has the right to defend itself against the counter attack of the bourgeoisie, even when this drapes itself in the flag of science or art. . . (Andre Breton and Leon Trotsky, 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', (1938), reprinted in Herschel B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, op. cit., p.485
Both Breton and Trotsky believed that the recognition of the role of the artist:

... makes the artist a natural ally of the revolution. ... tries to restore the broken equilibrium between the integral "ego" and the outside elements it rejects. ... The need for emancipation felt by the individual spirit has only to follow its natural course to be led to mingle its stream with this primeval necessity: the need for the emancipation of man. ...\(^{467}\)

Thus for Trotsky and Breton, the emancipation of man from extreme left-wing and right-wing politics out of control was possible through an acceptance of the function of the primeval (its necessity) in turning civilisation away from capitalist (both democratic and fascist\(^{468}\)) collapse. This recognition in itself would be revolutionary.

But when the decontextualisation of the primitive is analysed in relation to the American Abstract Expression - printmaking inter-discursive configuration we come face to face with the notion, on one broad level at least, that immediacy and the primitive unconscious (Breton's and Trotsky's notions of 'primeval necessity') - the emancipation which this immediacy heralds - can only be accomplished by taking the detour through the technological. Such a view is the result of a technological determinism.\(^{469}\)

American Abstract Expressionism's rejection the technological has been seen by Andreas Huyssen as: 'a fabricated relation of high art to mass

\[^{466}\] ibid., p.485.
\[^{467}\] ibid.
\[^{468}\] ibid., p.485
\[^{469}\] Breton's and Trotsky's assertion:
... to those who would urge us, whether for today or tomorrow, to consent that art should submit to a discipline which we hold to be radically incompatible with its nature, we give a flat refusal. ...(Andre Breton and Leon Trotsky, 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', (1938), p.485), is strongly reminiscent of Barr's and Johnson's claims concerning Machine art Aesthetics (1936) and is also echoed in sentiments expressed by Greenberg in Towards a Newer Laocoon and reiterated by Hans Hofmann. (Refer to 'On the Aim and Nature of Art', from A Search for the Real and Other Essays by Hans Hofmann, eds. S. T. Weeks and B. H. Hayes, Jr. Trans. Glen Wessels, Andover, Mass: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1948, p.65-78, reprinted in Herschel B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, University of California Press, 1968, p.539.)
culture and a rejection of one over the other' 470 - arguing that modernism defined itself through the exclusion of mass culture and was driven by a fear of contamination by an increasingly consumerised society into an elitist and exclusive view of aesthetic formalism and the autonomy of art. This argument certainly prepares the way for a re-negotiation of the different possible relations between high art and popular culture. Instead of construing an essentially Marxist approach: that of viewing Modernism against the 'homogeneously sinister background' (of popular culture), it is possible to now interrogate the creation of one of the high points of modernism (American Abstract Expressionism) - self-expression - against the rejected background of technology and a perceived technocratic society. It was technology that was the 'sinister background' that American Abstract Expressionists perceived.

To conflate technology with mass or popular culture, as Huyssen has done (Adorno and Benjamin did likewise), would be to miss the point entirely. It must be recognised that is was the technological (as metaphor for sophisticated culture) that was rejected by American Abstract Expressionists not the rejection of printmaking's use-value as a popular commodity.471

The polarisation between printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism could never have been solely determined by a fear of contamination by popular culture. Rather printmaking was rejected because of the fear of contamination of a negative concept of the technological, itself contaminated by the 'touch of politics gone wrong'. Ironically, as the technological was rejected, the formalism proposed by Alfred H. Barr of M.O.M.A. was embraced. 472 Formalist analysis itself created the introspection of certain disciplines - their autonomy, and then encouraged divisions between them, pitting these against one another to form the subtle transactions necessary to keep analysis at bay. That is, 'rationalist' fences were created in order to define what were the essential and unique 'qualities' of a discipline, and simultaneously applied to prevent any 'rationalist' critique, since criticism could only be directed from within. As a consequence, disciplines became increasingly isolated from each other, as well as autonomous.

471 Dore Ashton, 'The Situation in Printmaking: 1955', Arts, October, 1955, p.60, writes that artists prints, especially those of American Artists were not in demand at this time.
Greenberg's antipathy towards literature, reproduction technology and kitsch was a reinforcement of André Breton's and Leon Trotsky's 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', published in 1938.\textsuperscript{473} In this manifesto they outlined the revolutionary position that artists would take by being true to themselves: True art, they claimed, 'insists on expressing the inner needs of man and mankind in its time - true art is unable \textit{not} to be revolutionary.'\textsuperscript{474} As with Rousseau, politics for Breton and Trotsky, became a metaphor for sophisticated culture. Consequently they stress the importance of evading political dogma and the group mentality. The dogma of capitalism was to be rejected:

\begin{quotation}
\textit{... The communist revolution... realises that the role of the artist in a decadent capitalist society is determined by the conflict between the individual and various social forms which are hostile to him...} \textsuperscript{475}
\end{quotation}

By drawing on psychology, Breton and Trotsky created the socialised role for the individual artist:

\begin{quotation}
\textit{... The process of sublimation, which here comes into play, and which psychoanalysis has analysed... This restoration works to the advantage of the 'ideal of self', which marshals against the unbearable present reality all those powers of the interior world, of the 'self', which are common to all men...} \textsuperscript{476}
\end{quotation}

And what, one may ask, was this revolutionary zeal that drew on the interior of the artist directed? For Trotsky and Breton this revolutionary zeal was to be directed at the 'entire arsenal of modern technology' because they saw world civilisation 'reeling under the blows of reactionary forces armed with the entire arsenal of modern technology... Even in times of peace'.\textsuperscript{477}

\textsuperscript{474} ibid., p.484.
\textsuperscript{475} ibid.
\textsuperscript{476} ibid., p.484.
\textsuperscript{477} ibid., p.483.
Breton and Trotsky, as with Greenberg in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', conflated the evils of society with the excesses of modern technology and science:

... We recognise... that the revolutionary State has the right to defend itself against the counter attack of the bourgeoisie, even when it drapes itself in the flag of science or art... 478

However, Trotsky and Breton claimed that the artist could not serve the struggle for freedom unless 'he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very nerves its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his art.'479 With this statement Breton and Trotsky demonstrated the privileging order where the 'outer' - technology, science and politics (culture) - is polarised against the 'inner' of the artist with the inner given priority. Artists were encouraged by Breton's and Trotsky's article to avoid both the communist-socialist and capitalist-fascist orientations offered by politics. Artists had to remain independent. A true cultural revolution could only be achieved by 'independent' and 'isolated thinkers' united in their isolation and independence.

The fear of manipulation by political or group forces can also be observed in the writing of Robert Motherwell and Harold Rosenberg in 'The Question of What Will Emerge is Left Open', 480 of 1947. In which they write:

... This is a magazine of artists and writers who 'practice' in their work their own experience without seeking to transcend it in academic, group or political formulas... 481

This fear of the group manifested itself in much of the writing and statements made by American Abstract Expressionists. 482 Hans Hofmann for example

478 ibid., p.485.
479 ibid.
481 ibid.
claimed that 'Everyone should be as different as possible' and yet simultaneously admitted complicity with a group mentality: 'the time to which we belong may work out to be our thing in common'. The opening lines of Alfred H. Barr's Essay, 'The New American Painting', [1958-59] also exposed the necessity of avoiding the group mentality and evasion of categorisation. By doing so, it exposed the very fabric of the rhetoric of selfhood and individuality that these artists were attached to, ironically binding them to a group:

. . . Of the seventeen painters in this exhibition, none speaks for the others any more than he paints for the others. In principle their individualism is as uncompromising as that of the religion of Kierkegaard whom they honour. For them, John Donne to the contrary, each man is an island. . .

Similar sentiments are also expressed in Irving Sandler's essay, 'The Club':

. . . The Abstract Expressionists abhorred all fixed systems, ideologies and categories - anything that might curb expressive possibilities. Extreme individualism was a passionate conviction: 'we agree only to disagree' was the unwritten motto. . .

But it is Willem de Kooning's statement: 'It is disastrous to name ourselves' which succinctly expressed the general abhorrence of categorisation and classification. But as Hofmann had recognised earlier, disassociation from any group actually characterised a certain philosophical underpinning. Far from removing themselves from the group, these artists, by expressing a conformity in their sentiments concerning individuality, created ties between themselves. So stringent, so urgent, so similar are their concepts of an

[484] ibid.
alienated and estranged individual self-hood (estranged from an alienating technocracy) and the expression of that individuality that a general categorisation and classification as American Abstract Expressionists is consequential, their ideology was unable to be concealed.

Robert Goldwater's, 'Everyone Knew What Everyone Else Meant', From the journal It Is, No. 3, Autumn, 1959, also captures the rhetoric of Existentialism; of a group made up of individuals.

Existentialist philosophy focused on:

... alienation and estrangement; a sense of the basic fragility and contingency of human life; the impotence of reason confronted with the depths of existence; the threat of Nothingness, and the solitary unsheltered condition of the individual before this threat. ... 490

Thus: 'Only that rare artist who is iconoclastically remote survives with an intrinsic and personal art'. 491 This point was reiterated by Harold Rosenberg in 'The American Action Painters', 1952 in which he wrote:

... This new[American] painting does not constitute a School. To form a School in Modern times not only is a new painting consciousness needed but a consciousness of the consciousness - and even an insistence on certain formulas. A School is the result of linkage of practice with terminology - different paintings are affected by the same words. In the American vanguard the words, as we shall see, belong not to the art but to the individual artists. What they think in common is represented only by what they do separately. ... 492

The idea of remaining outside of a group created the notion of alienation and estrangement - the individual set against a background of a capitalist-

489 David and Cecile Shapiro, Abstract Expressionism, A Critical Record, op. cit., p.46.
industrialist culture: the anonymous hero. But anonymity, too, was a rhetorical device not without its dangers, as Leon Golub pointed out in his essay, 'A Critique on Abstract Expressionism', when he suggested that 'the withdrawal of particular(intrinsic) points of view would emphasise the dangers of anonymous or non-committal attitudes.'

Ironically, the call to art as a living language: 'We will work to restore to art its freedom and dignity as a living language', in a statement of declaration signed by some forty artists and sent in a letter to M.O.M.A. was part of a general practice of evasion exemplified by Hans Hoffman's statement: 'Painters speak through paint - not through words.'

Evasion of language was a major part of the practice of concealment. But that evasion was practised. Expression was in fact rehearsed and was the result of a calculated and prefigured conceptual posturing. This position is contrary to that espoused in David and Cecile Shapiro's thesis which postulates (in their Introduction), that the American Abstract Expressionists, from historical necessity: '[had] no choice but to explore their psyches, their inner vision, and a morphology of their own invention.' On the contrary: American Abstract Expressionists made a calculated decision to explore their psyches, their 'inner' vision and morphology in order to counter a feared technology.

The rhetorical structure of the primitive set against a European technocratic culture highlighted the postures of American Abstract Expressionism. Primitivism was conflated with anonymity, universality, timelessness, and notions that creativity necessarily stemmed from a psychological self with deep primitive-primordial drives. Simultaneously, decontextualisation allowed for Western industrialised-technological societies to be promoted as undemocratic, de-personalised, opposed to the individual and in direct opposition to the individual freedoms afforded to those in 'primitive' societies. In effect, it construed technology as evil and promoted the notion that the salvation of individuality could be

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493 ibid., p.89-94.
494 ibid., p.94.
accomplished by a regression to states of being that were pre-technological, pre-conceptual, pre-phonetic and therefore natural.
Chapter: 6

A Summary of the American Abstract Expressionist-Printmaking Inter-discursive Configuration; A Strategic Opposition of Terms and Concepts

Despite Golub's claim that 'Abstract Expressionism is non-referential and diffuse,'498 the American Abstract Expressionist-printmaking configuration was a dynamic and dyadic structural system of referral and transaction.

This configuration can be invaded by analysing two key rhetorical gestures: the decontextualised primitive (that upon which 'immediacy' - as the site of a pure non-reflective self - is based ) and the technological (the rhetoric of cognition - the site of the locus of non-self-presence). It is the manner in which the gestural mark (the rhetoric of 'immediacy' and 'untamed thinking', the pre-cognitive, pre-conceptual, pre-phonetic - metaphors for the natural self) and the refusal of technology (rhetoric of the rational, the logical and the cognitive - metaphors of sophisticated culture) intersect each other, actually participate together as well as undermine each other, thus emphasising their sameness despite their differences (in their respective constructions) that a counter discourse is demonstrated. Indeed it demonstrates itself.

The reunification of American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking - the simultaneous reunification of a concept of technology bound to a concept of selfhood via immediacy demonstrates the inequalities within the concepts or texts of the American Abstract Expressionists and of printmaking and rescues the concept of the technological from being thought of as exterior. Simultaneously, the 'private' or psychologically derived primitive-primordial is wrested from the interiority that the writing of both American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking would place it. We are not dealing with a peaceful co-existence of a vis-à-vis but rather with hierarchies in violent opposition. Thus, no simple collapsing of opposite terms is possible.

The aim of this reunification, as with Derrida's project in *Writing and Difference*, is:

...convulsively to tear apart the negative side, that which makes it the reassuring other surface of the positive; and it is to exhibit within the negative, in an instant, that which can no longer be called negative. And can no longer be called negative precisely because it has no reversed underside, because it can no longer collaborate with the continuous linking-up of meaning, concept, time and truth in discourse; because it literally can no longer labour and let itself be interrogated as the 'work of the negative.' ...499

By locking onto the 'negative side' of American Abstract Expressionism - printmaking - it can be demonstrated that it can no longer labour as that negative side because the concept which informs it - the technological - is itself constructed by différance.

The rhetoric of immediacy which heralds the decontextualised 'primordial' or 'primitive' subject- the presupposed site of non-reflection - is prefaced in this exposition of the configuration by the rhetoric of the technological. Such a proposition argues that concepts of immediacy develop out of a systematic ordering whereby the technological is placed in an artificial hierarchy in diametrical opposition to concepts of an immediate and present subject. When what has been forgotten - the erasure of the technological - is retrieved, a constellation of forces reveals that the configuration of the natural order of the hierarchical architecture of the system is artificial. Immediacy itself becomes the preface of the technological. By uncovering this conceptual model we can now appreciate the play between the two prefaces as they construct each other, exposing the lie in the other and the lie of the preclusion. The overture of the technological within printmaking discourses is a frame of reference for American Abstract Expressionism's' immediacy. As a consequence, the decontextualised primitive subjechhood unravels, and the main text - the meaning of the configuration - self-expression - is countered.

By demonstrating that the philosophies of expression are already within the concepts inherent in American Abstract Expressionist texts (the refusal of printmaking), and within printmaking (the refusal of mechanical reproduction) allows for an analysis of, and an exploitation of the configuration. The 'Other' American Abstract Expressionist artists or printmakers would seek to engage (the originary source) in order to derive authenticity, is not simply beyond, nor simply to the side but rather inside both American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking themselves, in the very structures and tensions of their discourses. At least their existence is demonstrated by the description of the infra-structures, disclosed by the interplay between certain terms and concepts: immediacy in diametrical opposition to the technological.

The structure of the original print allowed printmaking to conceal and efface the structures of the pre-figured unthought, the pre-conceptual, pre-phonetic, primitive-primordial self by claiming a negative concept of mechanical reproduction within the borders of its own creative autonomy - its own discipline - which it then re-deployed as a metaphor for the locus of the rational, logic and cognition as well as a metaphor for sophisticated culture. This re-deployment of the technological allowed the originary thesis to be furthered in a medium which had previously gained recognition as an autonomous creative medium because of its technological base.

Recourse to a frame of referral was the systematised privileging of a pre-figured non-reflective self, the primitive-primordial-primeval unconscious. As the prefigured primitive unconscious was favoured as the site of a pure non-reflective self, technology was accorded the privilege of a site of the locus of non-self-presence. Thus a systematised, self-referential and self-supporting structure of concealment and erasure was created within printmaking echoing the rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists prior to 1960.

Thus, the signs and signifiers that American Abstract Expressionists and printmakers employed can be shown to generate meanings which run contrary to that which artists originally intended. The Other that they engaged with actually denies authenticity because of its contrived structural composition. This double gesture between the discourse of the aesthetic of the individual and its counter discourse - the discourse of the technological -
appears to maintain the distinction between its two movements, suspending meaning, and allows us to penetrate the structures of the configuration and to uncover other trans-active discourses. Put into question is the ability to access a non-reflective identity from a constructed primordial-primitive non-reflectivity which relies for its impetus on the suppression of certain concepts of the techno-cultural and technological.

This inquiry is not so much a critique of the texts of American Abstract Expressionism or of printmaking, rather this inquiry aims to recover that which was placed in supposed opposition in order to create those texts. Or at very least to reclaim a general theory of repetition, multiplication and duplication - a theory of production and reproduction. It is a feared theory of reproduction. This reclamation is the very positivity of what might first appear to be a negative inquiry.

All that one perceives now, in the discourses of American Abstract Expressionism and of printmaking, is a nostalgia for origins, an ethical or archaic natural innocence and naïveté, a purity of presence and self-presence in action; in the non-phonetic, in the pre-conceptual, even remorse for what could never be and was not, which is preserved as the motivation behind the project which moves towards the recovery of an archaic society, exemplary in the eyes of these artists and writers.
part 2
This chapter examines the advertisement for the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition placed in the Australian Print Council's journal *Imprint*, Vol. 22, No. 1-2, 1986, under 'Exhibitions' in the context of the archive, the definition of originality (1961 in America and 1966 in Australia), collaboration and *Imprint's* pedagogical stance. As a consequence, certain implications in respect of the archive are elucidated and a discursive practice - an inscription of an unconscious or conscious ideology - is uncovered. This translates as a practised cultural manoeuvre.

**Australian National Gallery**
**International Prints, Posters and Illustrated Books**
**co-ordinating Curator: Pat Gilmour**

**The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era**

**6 June - 13 September 1987**

The first retrospective to be held anywhere in the world of European and American Prints of the Abstract Expressionist Era, a style which dominated contemporary art for more than a decade and eventually spread to Australia, Canada, South Africa and Japan.

One of the Myths that surrounded this legendary style is that Abstract Expressionist artists did not make prints. In fact they made a great number of lithographs, etchings and illustrated books. Among the works featured in the Spontaneous gesture are many by the most famous artists of the post war period including Pollock, de Kooning, Wols, Soulages, Hartung, Jorn, Alechinsky, Krasner, Sonderborg, Scumcher, Childs, Francis, Tobey, Hayter, Frankenthaler, Jenkins, Tapies, Vedova, and Yunkers.
About 125 Prints will be on display. They are drawn from the gallery’s own holdings which include one of the world’s most comprehensive collections of prints in this international style.  

While it might be true that this exhibition is the first retrospective to be held anywhere in the world by European and American artists of the various abstract expressionist schools, the statement that the advertisement contains that it was a myth that abstract expressionist artists did not make prints: 'In fact they made a great number of lithographs, etchings and illustrated books,' is misleading. American Abstract Expressionist artists of the New York School and all the leading American Abstract Expressionists eschewed printmaking during the height of the American Abstract Expressionist period (1944-1958), a point which Part 1, Chapter 2 of this thesis explores and a point which Lanier Graham also asserts in 'The prints of Willem De Kooning: An Illustrated Catalogue of his Editions 1960-1971' and confirms in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition.

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503 Lanier Graham, 'The prints of Willem De Kooning: An Illustrated Catalogue of his Editions 1960-1971', *Tamarind Papers*, Vol. 11, 1988, p.11-25: . . . Abstract Expressionist artists in America were not, as a rule, interested in making prints during the "heroic" years of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Few artists of the first and second generations of Abstract Expressionists discovered lithography until the 1960s . . . It was not until the late 1950's and early 1960s - after the founding of Universal Limited Art Editions Workshop, (ULAE) in New York, Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles and subsequently Hollanders Workshop in New York - that a number of Abstract Expressionists reconsidered printmaking and produced their first editions. . . (p11)
504 Lanier Graham, *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era*, op. cit., p.10-11: . . . In America, where the tradition of the *livre d'artiste* [artists books] had not yet been established, only a handful of Abstract Expressionist prints were made during the late 1940's . Most of the New York artists turned their backs on printmaking . . .
The American artists who were involved in American Abstract Expressionism that are mentioned in the advertisement and are included in the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition are: Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Stanley William Hayter, Helen Frankenthaler, and Jackson Pollock. Of these artists only de Kooning and Pollock were of the New York School or included in Greenberg's list of American Abstract Expressionists in 'American-Type Painting' or in David and Cecile Shapiro's list of 'leading exponents' of American Abstract Expressionism in Abstract Expressionism: A Critical Record.

Jackson Pollock is represented by ten prints: 7 engravings & drypoints and 3 silk screen prints. However six of these engravings & drypoints were printed in 1967, more than a decade after Pollock's death. And, even though Hayter claims to have worked with Pollock in New York from as early as mid 1943-45, there are no prints of Pollock from this period. The three other prints of Pollock included in the exhibition are silk screens printed in 1951 which were printed at Hayter's Atelier 17.

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It must be pointed out that Hayter makes these claims from memory almost forty years after these events (Lanier Graham, The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, op. cit., p.8.)


It should also be noted that neither Pollock, nor any of the New York School, nor any of the other leading American Abstract Expressionists, exhibited any prints with Hayter's Atelier 17 exhibitions prior to 1960 despite there being many opportunities to do so. (Refer to Part 1, Chapter 2, this thesis)

Hayter himself wrote: 'in 1940 I set up a workshop [Atelier 17] in the School for Social Research. . . This workshop . . . served as a centre for research into the methods of Printmaking until 1955. (S.W. Hayter, About Prints, Oxford University Press, 1962, p.100. As a consequence, while American Abstract Expressionism became the vehicle of dominant aesthetic - expression of the 'inner' self. Printmaking became its triumphant mirror double, emphasising its technological aesthetic through *truth to materials* and medium specificity. (P. M. S. Hacker, 'The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter', op. cit.,
No-one could infer that Pollock was ever seriously engaged in printmaking.\textsuperscript{513} Graham's claim that the '[printmaking] experience proved to be profound[for Pollock]',\textsuperscript{514} and her suggestion that '[Pollock's] prints between 1944-45 played a crucial role in the development of his style',\textsuperscript{515} or Hacker's claim that printmaking under the direction of Hayter, influenced Pollock's later painting style\textsuperscript{516} are dubious.\textsuperscript{517} The inclusion of 6 prints printed by a Master printer 10 years after Pollock's death in order to stake the claim that Pollock was seriously engaged in making prints

p.34 writes:

\textit{. . . The Museum of Modern Art exhibition Hayter and Atelier 17 toured the United States for two years from 1944, and opened American eyes to the potentialities for original expression inherent in gravure. Its impact on printmaking in the United States has justly been compared to the Armoury Show on painting. . .}

Pollock worked at Atelier 17 with Hayter for about six months in 1944-1945. But he also must have worked at Atelier 17 in 1951 when he made his silk-screens in which he does employ his drip techniques. P. M. S. Hacker, in 'The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter', \textit{The Tamarind Papers}, Vol. 14, 1991-1992 writes (p. 34, footnote 4) that claimed that it was during the 1944-45 period that: '[Pollock] developed the freedom of line and genuine automatism characteristic of his mature work.' Pollock certainly would have come into contact with many of the European artists of the Surrealist School who were working in New York during this time. Pollock saw Ernst working in the Studio with drip-painting techniques but we are not sure when. As with Pollock, Hayter's attachment to the work of art representative of the unconscious is explicit. However the 1944-45 print of Pollock's exhibited at the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition do not exhibit his drip style but are rather linear and resemble, if anyone's work, that of Ashile Gorky. By 1951 Pollock had already developed his mature style of drip painting before his silk-screens were made. In light of these facts Hacker's claims seem rather extravagant.\textsuperscript{518}

\textit{. . . Hayter's influence on Pollock has been much discussed. Pollock worked at Atelier 17 for about six months in 1944-45 and made there the only intaglio prints of his career. . .}

Continuing with Hacker:

\textit{. . . It was there that he developed the freedom of line and genuine automatism characteristic of his mature work. Arguably Hayter's insistence that beginners work on a plate from all four sides was influential in introducing Pollock to paint his canvas on the floor rather than on the easel. And Pollock certainly saw Hayter and Ernst experimenting with drip-painting techniques by attaching a perforated can of paint to a compound pendulum. . .}

\textsuperscript{514} ibid.

\textsuperscript{515} ibid.

\textsuperscript{516} P. M. S. Hacker, 'The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter', op. cit., p.31-77, footnote 5, p. 34 writes:

\textit{. . . Hayter's influence on Pollock has been much discussed. Pollock worked at Atelier 17 for about six months in 1944-45 and made there the only intaglio prints of his career. . .}

Continuing with Hacker:

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only serves to undermine claims made in the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' advertisement.

Willem de Kooning is represented by several lithographs, only one of which was published before 1960. Lee Krasner's prints are all published after 1970. Helen Frankenthaler's prints are all printed after 1969. Although it is not disputed here that Hayter's influence was seminal for American printmaking during this period, Hayter was never seriously considered as an American Abstract Expressionist despite claims by Hacker in 'The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter' that Hayter was an 'influential figure' at the birth of American Abstract Expressionism. Hayter was not of the New York School and neither has his name been raised in conjunction with American Abstract Expressionism by either Rosenberg, Greenberg or David and Cecile Shapiro. The Museum of Modern Art exhibition 'Hayter and Studio 17' toured the United States for two years from 1944, and its impact on


520 ibid.


522 ibid., footnote 4, p. 34:

... Hayter was an influential figure in the birth of American Abstract Expressionism, constituting as it were, a bridge between European Surrealism and the new abstract art evolving in New York in the 1940's. He was recognised at the time as one of the founders of the movement. See Robert Coates' review of Hayter's show at the Drand Ruel Gallery, New York in the New Yorker 23, March 1949. ...

523 Hayter is only mentioned once in the entire collected writings of Clement Greenberg and then he is criticised for being too decorative. Greenberg never once reviewed an exhibition of prints.

524 Interestingly enough A.H.Barr Jnr. was still the director of M.O.M.A. at this time. Alfred H. Barr was the director of the Museum of Modern Art from its inception(1929 until 1944. He was the single most important man shaping the Museum's artistic character and determined the success or failure of individual American artists and Art movements. (see Francis Francina. Ed., Pollock and After: The Critical Debate, Harper and Row, London, 1985, p.131.) As a point of interest, the few comments that Greenberg made about Barr and the Museum of Modern Art are negative and derogatory. Greenberg considered Barr 'an inveterate champion of minor art'(Clement Greenberg, 'The Late Thirties in New York', Art and Culture, Thames and Hudson, London, 1973, p.231) and Greenberg also believed that academicism, which he called Alexandrianism, had found a home in the Museum of Modern Art, which 'devoted more funds to this spurious kind of Modern Art' (Clement Greenberg, 'A Symposium: The State of American Art', The Collected Essays and
printmaking has been compared to that of the Armoury Show on painting. However the two prints of Hayter's that are included in Graham's Catalogue: Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, are dated 1958 and 1959 respectively which means that they were completed while Hayter was living and working in Paris. It appears from Hacker's writing that Hayter's abstract and expressionist work only began to emerge after he moved to Paris.


Other Americans included in the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition were: David Smith (who 'flirted' with abstract expressionism and later became a sculptor) is represented by a print made in 1952, Seong Moy (worked with Hayter from 1948-50 and is considered as a printmaker except in this exhibition) is represented by a print dated 1961, Bernard Childs (an American

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Criticism, Volume 2, John O'Brian ed., The University of Chicago Press, 1986, p.288}
\footnote{ibid., p.34.}
\footnote{S.W. Hayter, About Prints, Oxford University Press, 1962, p.100; Also refer to P. M. S. Hacker, The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter, op. cit., p.37:}{A dramatic change took place in Hayter's subjects, imagery, colour and technique came in 1957. This might be attributable to his return to Paris. Perhaps because he was happier in Paris than anywhere else, the character of his imagery changed. . .}
\footnote{ibid.}
\footnote{ibid.}
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\footnote{ibid.}
\footnote{ibid.}
\footnote{ibid., p.22.}
\footnote{ibid.}
\footnote{ibid.}
\footnote{ibid., p.19.}
\footnote{ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
printmaker) is represented by a print made 1956. George Miyasaki is represented by a print dated 1957. None of these artists have been included as American Abstract Expressionists in writing on that subject prior to this exhibition. To include them by attempting to broaden the number of artists to include second and even third generation American Abstract Expressionists and European artists of the Ecole de Paris and of Tachisme is to misrepresent those who are considered the key figures of the American Abstract Expressionist movement and also to misrepresent the philosophical underpinning of American Abstract Expressionism. The impact of American Abstract Expressionism on European artists, including those involved with Ecole de Paris or Tachisme, was unprecedented:

... The impact which abstract expressionism made on Europe, particularly the Ecole de Paris, was also unprecedented. With abstract expressionism American art for the first time led the world. ... American Abstract Expressionist artists should not be bracketed with these quite independent art movements even though these various styles even though they shared expressionist and abstract content. This point will be enlarged on later in this chapter.

All the other artists represented in the exhibition are European artists. But even of the European artists represented by this exhibition, only Wols (prints signed 1945 & 1949), Jean Fautrier (prints signed 1945 & 1949), Hans Hartung (print signed 1946), Henri Michaux (print signed 1946), Stacha Halpern (print signed 1958), Jean Dubuffet (print signed 1958), K. R. H. Sonderborg (prints signed 1958 & 1958) are represented by prints made before 1959. This is a total of 10 prints (from out of 125) that were printed between 1940 and 1959.

536 ibid., p.20.
537 ibid., p.21.
538 Refer to the Introduction to this thesis.
539 The American artists considered as American Abstract Expressionists are listed in the Introduction to this thesis.
It seems remarkable that even in the immediate post-war period (1945-1959) that only 10 prints were printed. Hardly a sufficient number to make the claim that abstract expressionists were seriously engaged in printmaking in the post-war period or sufficient evidence to claim that abstract expressionists (whether American Abstract Expressionists or those European abstract and expressionist artists of the Ecole de Paris or Tachisme schools) did not reject printmaking.

Apart from Jackson Pollock's 3 silk screen prints (printed in 1951\footnote{Ibid.} and one engraving (printed in 1945), there is not one print in this exhibition by a leading American Abstract Expressionist that was printed between 1946 and 1958 - the height of the American Abstract Expressionist period. It is true that Jacob Kainen's print (signed 1949), Richard Diebenkorn's print (signed 1948) and Frank Lobdell's print (signed 1948) were printed before 1960 but Kainen was not a major figure of the movement and Diebenkorn and Lobdell were not of the New York School (both artists were from the West Coast of America and in any case are regarded by most literature as second generation American Abstract Expressionists).

Despite Hayter's\footnote{In letters to Lanier Graham, The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, op. cit., page 11.} and Graham's assertions that American Abstract Expressionist artists produced prints in the late 1940's, there is no evidence available to support the claim that American Abstract Expressionists made such prints or that they were pivotal works. If abstract and expressionist prints of American artists exist from this period, they are not included in this exhibition.

In all, only 23 prints (less than 20%) in the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition (of 125 prints) were printed before 1959. Of that number, only 9 (less than 10%) were by Americans and only 4 (3%) of those by a recognised American Abstract Expressionist (ironically, these were all by Jackson Pollock).\footnote{Ibid.} By far the vast majority of the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition was printed after 1960, after the introduction of the definition of originality in prints and after the
introduction of collaboration by institutions such as the Tamarind Institute.\textsuperscript{545} Even then it is worth noting that of the leading exponents of American Abstract Expressionism - Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Ashile Gorky, William Baziotes, Robert Motherwell, James Brookes, Philip Guston, Clyfford Still, Ad Reinhardt and Hans Hoffman - only Kline, Motherwell, Gottlieb and Pollock are represented in the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition. Their combined effort (with the exception of the 6 Pollock prints printed after his death) totals 9 prints.

The curators of the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition were Lanier Graham, the author of the Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era catalogue and Pat Gilmour, the co-ordinating Curator of the exhibition. Pat Gilmour was the Curator of prints at the A.N.G. at the time and has researched and written extensively on the history printmaking.\textsuperscript{546} Lanier Graham has also written extensively on printmaking and in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition even admits to the anti-print attitudes\textsuperscript{547} prevailing among the American Abstract Expressionists prior to the 1960s in the catalogue. This leads us to ask certain questions: What was the intention of the advertisement for the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition? Is its accompanying statement wilful blindness or merely an oversight? In staking the claim that abstract expressionists did not reject printmaking when clearly they did implies that American Abstract Expressionist artists did not reject the

\textsuperscript{545} Refer to Part 1, Chapter 4.

technological. Was it an attempt to suggest that immediacy was not contrived out of the rejection of the technological? Artists involved in the European Tachist movement and the Ecole de Paris were rarely if ever, included in a movement that is regarded as America's major contribution to Twentieth Century Art. The statement contained within the advertisement implies that the rejection of printmaking was a myth when clearly for American Abstract Expressionists it was not.

The 'spontaneous gesture' which many of the prints in this exhibition incorporate as the major device to promote the individual aesthetic are contrived ten or twenty-five years after the first American Abstract Expressionist impulses burst on the American scene, after originality in prints was defined. Most of the prints of 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition are printed through collaboration with a Master printer. This is significant. These facts alone may explain the ambiguous wording and claims of the advertisement.

In Part 1, Chapter 4, of this thesis the concept of originality in prints was shown to disclose a mechanism whereby immediacy - the metaphor for an authentic self-hood - was rhetorically juxtaposed against a concept of the technological - the sign-symbol for the rational, logic, the cogito and deployed as a metaphor for the sophistication of culture; how the mechanism of différance operated within the conceptual architecture of the definition; how the Other which printmaking would seek to engage with was structured rhetorically and was an echo of the rhetorical structure which American Abstract Expressionists contrived when they rejected printmaking prior to 1960. It was demonstrated that the definition of originality furthered the originary thesis within printmaking because the perceived dangers of the technological were kept at bay: mechanical reproduction was rejected in the definition. The definition - a law which is not a primal Law - allowed for the exemplars of immediacy - American

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548 The term 'Abstract Expressionist' was used by Robert M. Coates in 1946 when he sought to identify what he saw as anew and distinctively American movement. Coats' definition of the objectives of the new movement was widely accepted by the early 1950's. (Lanier Graham, The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, op. cit., p.5.)

549 Despite various attempts by American and Australian arts organisations (Australian Print Council for example: 'Presidents message', Imprint, No. 1, 1981, p.8) the definition of what does or does not constitute an 'original' print is not legally binding. See Shane Simpson, The Visual Artist and the Law, The Law Book Company Ltd., 1982, p.150.
Abstract Expressionists - to make prints without compromising their individual aesthetic.\textsuperscript{550}

The claim that abstract expressionists did not reject printmaking implies that American Abstract Expressionists did not reject printmaking and therefore masks the constructed frame of referral which American Abstract Expressionists relied on to generate their concept of the individual aesthetic. It masks the oscillation between 'hand-made' and 'machine-made', between nature and the dangers of sophisticated culture. It masks the fetishistic fundamentally anti-technological notion of art (clearly observed in the definitions of originality) formed during the height of the rhetoric of self-expression. It masks the pivotal nature of the definition of originality and of collaboration. Such a claim implies that there was no construction of conceptual opposites between the technological and its presupposed polar opposite - 'immediacy' (the site of an authentic self-hood - the primordial self, that self upon which American Abstract Expressionism relied). It implies that self-hood was not constructed by opposing the technological.\textsuperscript{551}

Apart from the question of archival integrity, the claim implicit in the advertisement that American Abstract Expressionists made prints when clearly they did not opens an engagement with a discourse of concealment and erasure of the frame of reference. This raises the question of the role institutions have in determining not only the constitution of the archive but the emphasis placed on certain aspects of it.

Consciously or unconsciously the claim in the advertisement appears as an attempt to conceal and erase a conceptual superstructure. Herein lies a key that unlocks the architecture of the conceptual model under interrogation. It is the form the assertion comes in - its desire to account for American Abstract Expressionist artists making prints which fits the master narrative, rather than in terms of its contradictions\textsuperscript{552} - that calls into question and threatens the master narrative because it threatens the

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\textsuperscript{550} This theme is developed in Part 1, Chapter 4, this thesis.

\textsuperscript{551} Charles Green in 'Art as Printmaking: The Deterritorialised Print', op. cit., p.11, has suggested that:

\textbf{... this contrived authenticity is the link between printmaking and the postmodern idea of identity. ...}

\textsuperscript{552} It makes no sense, in terms of the master narrative, that American Abstract Expressionists refused printmaking before 1960 and then after 1960 embraced it.
centred, totalising, masterly discourse of the constructed individual aesthetic as upheld by American Abstract Expressionism.

Taken at first glance, the advertisement appears informative. Placed as it is by Pat Gilmour for the A.N.G. in *Imprint*, a journal whose declared primary function was educational, and sanctioned by the authority of the Australian Print Council, one could be excused for taking it at face value, for believing as fact that there was no rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists, that indeed, the rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists, was the myth the advertisement implies.

Events following the definition of originality and the renaissance of collaboration between artist and printer (which began to blossom at the end of the 1950's and the beginning of the 1960's), various other 'educational' enterprises such as that espoused by proponents of the Tamarind Institute, as well as other commercial interests also need to be examined in the context of these claims. Information on each of these seemingly peripheral artistic enterprises are written about in *Imprint* in a

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554 The *Print Council's* aims for the magazine was outlined: 'to encourage understanding and appreciation of the original print'. (Udo Sellbach, *Imprint*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1966). This pedagogic stance was reiterated by Sellbach in an interview with Anne Kirker in 'A Perspective on the Print Council of Australia.', *Imprint*, Volume 26 No. 3, 1991, p.15:

U.S. . . . From the beginning, the concept I carried in my mind was to overcome the isolation of the artist and to bring him or her in touch with the collector. In fact, to emphasise the collector rather than the artist seemed important to me. . . . In helping to found the society, I felt we should provide a network of people who were potential consumers of the print and encourage them to become collectors so that artists could begin to rely upon having a well-informed public. . .


556 Garo Anatreasian and Clinton Adams *Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques*, University of New Mexico, Harry N. Abrams, 1971; also see *The Tamarind Technical Papers*, The University of New Mexico.

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similar 'informational style', sanctioned by an authority which operates under the guise of education and academicism.

More than 95% of the prints in the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition are produced through collaboration. Pat Gilmour has been a champion of the collaborative enterprise which was gaining strength in America and Europe at the close of the 1950's and which ‘heralded the print renaissance’. These are striking coincidences: the structure of originality in prints maintains that 'original' prints can be produced through collaboration. When these factors are taken into consideration they suggest that ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition, under the guise of the educational and academic, was an advertisement for collaboration.

The ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition appears to attempt to prolong the American Abstract Expressionist period beyond 1960, by providing evidence of a continuing and significant abstract and expressionist creative output beyond the 1960's. Lanier Graham herself expressed the notion that history will have to ask when the abstract expressionist period ended when confronted by this production of prints which extends well into the late 1980's:

. . . The abstract expressionists were not solely responsible for this change in attitude [towards prints]. It was the Pop artists who moved printmaking into a new prominence during the early 1960's; many Abstract Expressionists followed their lead.

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557 An explanation of the ‘informational style’ of art criticism can be found in Donald Kuspit, 'Art and Ideology', *Art in America*, Summer, 1981, p.94.
558 Refer to Pat Gilmour: 'Bibliography', Appendices.
Points 2 & 3 of the Version of the Definition of Print Council of America states that: (pnt 2) The impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions, and (pnt 3) The finished print is approved by the artist.
561 Charles Green in 'Art as Printmaking: The Deterritorialised Print', op. cit., p.11.

writes:

. . . Artistic identity. . . is marked by the diffusion of authority, in collaborations like that of the printer-technician with an artist. . .
In doing so gave an authority to contemporary printmaking which was extremely important in the minds of the art buying public. At the end of the decade, the era of abstract expressionism was coming to a close, but the role of the contemporary print maker had just begun. Prints had re-entered the mainstream of contemporary art. . .

It is clear from her writing in *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era*, catalogue who Graham considered to be the abstract expressionists. As with Robert Coates Graham means the Americans:

. . . In America, where the tradition of the *livre d'artiste* [artists books] had not yet been established, only a handful of abstract expressionist prints were made during the late 1940's. Most of the New York artists turned their backs on Printmaking . . .

Her essay on Willem de Kooning Graham in the *Tamarind Papers* also suggests that Graham means the American artists when she uses the term 'abstract expressionist'. This essay also confirms the importance of notions of collaboration as a motivation for these American Abstract Expressionist artists making prints:

. . . Abstract expressionist artists in America were not, as a . . .

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562 Lanier Graham, in *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era*, op. cit., p.28

. . . The author of the definitive history of abstract expressionism will have difficulty determining just when abstract expressionism ended. . .

563 The term 'Abstract Expressionist' was used by Robert M Coates in 1946 when he sought to identify what he saw as anew and distinctively American movement. Coats' definition of the objectives of the new movement was widely accepted by the early 1950's

564 A.H Barr, Leon Golub, Harold Rosenberg, Meyer Schapiro, Dore Ashton, Clement Greenberg, Robert Coates, P.M.S. Hacker, Irving Sandler, Serge Guilbaut, Lawrence Alloway, Clinton Adams, June Wayne or Ann Gibson all explicitly refer to the American Abstract Expressionists when they use the term 'abstract expressionist'. Even in the in *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era* catalogue a distinction is made between abstract expressionist and Ecole de Paris and Tachisme, implying that one - abstract expressionism - refers to the American Abstract Expressionist movement and the other terms to the European movements which were also abstract and expressionist in content.

rule, interested in making prints during the "heroic" years of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Few artists of the first and second generations of abstract expressionists discovered lithography until the 1960s. It was not until the late 1950's and early 1960s - after the founding of Universal Limited Art Editions Workshop, (U.L.A.E.) in New York, Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles and subsequently Hollanders Workshop in New York - that a number of abstract expressionists reconsidered printmaking and produced their first editions. 

By making prints the American Abstract Expressionists sanctioned the definition of originality and its underpinning structures, sanctioned the oscillation between 'hand-made' and 'machine-made', sanctioned the fetishistic fundamentally anti-technological notion of art inscribed within the definition, and sanctioned collaboration between printer and artist. Acceptance of the definition of originality in prints by American Abstract Expressionists allowed for the subsequent masking of its construction.

The fact that the A.N.G., the Australian Print Council and Imprint sanctioned such an exhibition reveals an exploitation of the connoisseurship of printmaking but also reveals the structures of concealment. Although is not the intention of this thesis to focus on a perceived power politics at 'work' behind the scenes, it can but only acknowledge here a model of institutionalised behaviour operating behind the scenes which echoes Walter Benjamin's thesis, concluded in the Epilogue to his essay, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.

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567 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Illuminations. Ed. Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, 1968, p.241, writes: . . . Fascism attempts to organise the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses whom Fascism . . . forces to their knees, has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values. . .
In relation to Benjamin's thesis, one could argue in a general way that what is disclosed by this advertisement is that the denial of closure of the historico-metaphysical epoch, or at least its subversion, is in the best interests of a cultural power-politics. Such denial of closure reveals a desire (by the power-politics) to maintain an apparatus of production through ritual values, reveals a desire to give artists expression while maintaining a conceptual structure that actually denies expression (disclosed by the very fabricated nature of authenticated authorship invoked by the definition). In other words the power-politics may be those of the system rather than that of certain individuals operating in institutions.

By determining that American Abstract Expressionists did make prints (even by this flawed method of blurring a time frame and as well blurring the key artists involved with that movement), an 'authority' can lay claim to securing the patronage of American Abstract Expressionists, (capture the exemplars of the philosophy of immediacy opposed to the technological) and confirms that the technological (the metaphor for the sophistication - the necessary 'evil' - of Culture) discerned in printmaking technology can be kept at bay through the convoluted and sophisticated system of differentiation between original print and mechanical reproduction described in the definition of originality. In this way, the master narrative - the metaphoric hierarchical configuration: immediacy versus cognition, originality versus reproductive technology and the 'hand made' versus the 'machine made' - is upheld.

American Abstract Expressionist artists upheld the metaphor of immediacy as the presence of Nature by excluding technology, the metaphor for sophisticated Culture in the period 1940-1960. In this they reveal a Rousseauism. This construction is repeated in the definition of originality in prints (1960) - the Rousseauism is declared. The attempt to capture American Abstract Expressionists by the Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era exhibition reveals a desire to posit an authentic self-hood in opposition to the technological within the confines of a printmaking discipline, a task requiring a conceptual leap that asks us to forget that American Abstract Expressionists excluded printmaking as a means of articulating the
individual aesthetic at the height of the period of self-expression and simultaneously asks us to accept the polarity of reproduction opposed to the 'original' in a definition. Indeed we are asked to forget that the exclusion of the technological was the frame of referral of or for the concept of immediacy - the metaphor of nature and of the individual aesthetic. Logic is put to the test in the twists and turns of this exercise.

The past of American Abstract Expressionism and its relationship to printmaking cannot be hidden so easily but is only known to us today through its textualised traces (which lie open to interpretation). Consequently, the writing of history becomes a form of complex intertextual cross-referencing that operates within (and does not deny) its unavoidably discursive context. Writing about American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking during the period 1940-1960 in America has already raised basic questions about the possibilities and limits of meaning in the representation of the past. This particular example of the writing of abstract expressionism in relation to printmaking (the advertisement) raises more questions concerning not only the limits of textual traces but also the question of whether or not these traces are not already (and perhaps entirely) fictionalised. If the 'truth' of events can be distorted this far (and even promoted) without scrutiny by a major institution, it raises serious questions concerning the truth of any historical documentary evidence which has previously been used as the certificate of authenticity to verify events in the period of American Abstract Expressionism and of printmaking (in its formation as an autonomous creative discipline), events which previous writers have construed as totalising and universalising. The desire to universalise and to totalise past events characterises their argumentation: the narrativisation of past events is not hidden. This becomes problematical to the assertions of this thesis (of an interdiscursive configuration) because these assertions are dependent on the writing of the previous history of American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking in order to construe the particularised and contextualised ideological and philosophical impact of such argumentation. That is to say, the argumentation presented here may not only be hinged onto an error or oversight by writers who did not examine the rhetoric of their own texts but may actually be hinged onto a fiction.
When events in history emphatically tell us that American Abstract Expressionists rejected printmaking - there is no factual evidence of them making Prints before 1960 - it gives rise to an ideology, rooted in documentary reality which this thesis has already located. However, that history itself, and the impact of the underlying ideology, becomes subverted when later historical writing(such as that which circumscribes 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition), imbued with a particular perspective that transforms the documentary evidence, changes not only the history but also the underlying ideologies. The documentary is shown to be inevitably touched by the fictive, the shaped, the invented. In other words, the perspectives and emphasis that frame the histories of American Abstract Expressionism and its relationship to printmaking both before 1960 and after, despite their being rooted in documentary evidence and reality, are still created forms. This raises the disturbing possibility that the validity of the entire concept of objective and unproblematic documentation in describing the 'history' of the interdiscursive configuration located by this thesis is already in question.

I have suggested that Lanier Graham, Pat Gilmour, and the National Gallery have blurred actual historical fact in order to present us with a certain biased view of printmaking (or is it a view of American Abstract Expressionism?) in order to maintain an underlying ideological assumption. However, one could argue with equal success that the reading or interpretation of historical documentation that this thesis presents is as distorting of historical fact in order to draw attention to the interdiscursive configuration it locates, a project not without an ideological premise.

What is substantially different between what the A.N.G., Imprint, Pat Gilmour and Lanier Graham present is that this examination encompasses a reading done in such a way as to stress both the discursive nature of those representations of the past and the narrativised form in which we read them rather than attempting to conceal them. But both forms of history, while recording actual events, it could be argued, in a very real sense, falsify the real they represent. This is worth noting. It means that what this examination of the advertisement uncovers and recovers, in its methodology, also allows it to be ascribed to an ideological motivation: It
too emphasises certain aspects of 'historical evidence' to make a point. Linda Hutcheon in the Politics of Postmodernism makes the comment that: 'writing, is as much transformation as recording; representation is always alteration, be it in its language or its images, and it always has its politics'.

Both the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition advertisement and this reading of it, verify the past and simultaneously void it of its historicity. Both versions of history ironically point to the prints of American Abstract Expressionists as art inescapably bound to its aesthetic and even social past. This emphasis and reliance on the 'documentary evidence' could be seen as a 'fetishising of the archive- making it a substitute for the past,' in order to covertly construe or underscore an ideology.

Graham's, Gilmour's and the A.N.G.'s aggressive assertion of the historical in order to make sense of the American Abstract Expressionist artists use of printmaking after 1960 calls to attention not to what fits the master narrative but instead to the marginal - all those things that threaten the security of the centred master discourse that American Abstract Expressionism both employed and supported.

569 ibid. p.86.
Part 2

Chapter 2
Section 1


As early as 1928, Dorothy Ellsmore Paul, in the Introduction to the Painters and Etchers Society Exhibition catalogue, had broached the distinction between 'reproductions' and the "original production" of the artist:

...In the Etcher's proof we have the original production of the artist craftsman, free from the vulgarising touch of mechanical process, and yet produced in sufficient quantity for the collector and art lover of average income. . .

Paul's statement suggests that the theoretical construct - hand made versus the 'vulgarising touch' of mechanical reproduction - was already instilled in the consciousness and unconsciousness of Australian printmakers before 1966 when a definition of originality was introduced in the first bulletin of *Imprint*. Despite that, Anne Kirker, in 'A Field of Expanding Interpretation', asserted that the concept of what constituted an original print was confusing for many artists even after the Americans had published their definition in 1961 and even though the definition was based on the same theoretical construct as Paul's notion of original production:

...During the mid 1960's the Print Council of America and in turn the Print Council of Australia agonised over the definition of what constitutes an 'original print. . .

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572 ibid.
Udo Sellbach, in ‘Aims and Program of the Print Council of Australia’, in Imprint's first bulletin also claims that there was confusion over what an original print was: 'We know that there is confusion between the print as a multi-original work of art and a print as reproduction of a work of art with the result, that many people are still blind to the particular qualities of the original print.'\textsuperscript{573} It was a direct response of this confusion that led the Australian Arts Council to follow the example of the Print Council of America and through Imprint 'stimulate further activities and encourage understanding and appreciation of the original print'.\textsuperscript{574} As a result, Imprint published the definition of Originality:

1. The artist alone has made the image in or upon the plate, stone, wood-block or other material for the purpose of creating a work of art.
2. The impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions
3. The finished print is approved by the artist.\textsuperscript{575}

The Australian definition - an exact duplicate of the American Print Council's version of originality was further explained by Udo Sellbach:

... An original print(wood-cut, etching, engraving, lithograph or serigraphy) belongs to the category of multi-original works of art, limited in edition to anything from a few, to several hundred originals, each as fine as the others. Its aesthetic qualities correspond directly to the image the artist has imparted to the printing block, plate or stencil and its scale follows exactly the dimensions of the drawn image. Unlike photo-mechanical process for reproduction, the printing process for original prints requires the artist himself to produce the printing surface in a suitable material so that the resulting prints from that surface become the originals. Whether printed by hand or with the help of printing presses(which are sometimes motorised) the making of the printing surface must be made by hand and not by a

\textsuperscript{573} Udo Sellbach, ‘Aims and Program of the Print Council of Australia’ Imprint, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1966
\textsuperscript{574} ibid.
\textsuperscript{575} ibid.
mechanical process. The resulting prints are checked by the artist and approved by him. Hand signed, numbered and often printed on specially selected paper, original prints bear all the marks of an artist's aesthetic intention, unchanged by any mechanical interference. . . 576

Coupled with the duplication of the American Print Council's version of originality, Sellbach's explanation showed direct influences of Hayter's 'Five degrees of Original Prints,' in About Prints,577 the definition of the Third International Congress of the Arts,578 as well as the influence of

576 Udo Sellbach, 'What is an Original Print?', Imprint, No. 1 Vol. 1 , 1966
577 S. W.. Hayter, About Prints, Oxford University Press, 1962:

Cat. A . . is in reality a method of reproduction being employed by the artist himself. [and .] . . in which the emergence of an image by the exercise of a technique in the medium . . . Cat. B . . which I should like to call 'the Autograph.' . . is most unlikely that the technique contributes in any way to the transposition of idea on the part of the artist. . . Cat. C . . . in which the work is still executed on the plate, blocks, screens, or whatever surface is being used, by the hand of the artist, but. . . he will apply to one of the excellent firms of artisans such as Lacourier and Mourlot where very competent advice will be offered in the techniques of reproduction . . . Cat. D. . . is that in which the artist has gone to a competent firm of craftsmen with a gouache, drawing water-colour, or painting which he or his dealer would like to see in the form of a print. . . Cat. E . . frequently done by mechanical means, photographically or otherwise. . .

578 1. It is the exclusive right of the artist-printmaker to fix the definitive number of each of his graphic works in the different techniques; engraving, lithography, etc.
2. Each print, in order to be considered an original, must bear not only the signature of the artist, but an indication of the total edition and the serial number of the print. The Artist may also indicate if he is the printer.
3. Once the edition has been made, it is desirable that the original plate, stone, wood-block, or whatever material was used in pulling the print from should be defaced or should bear a distinctive mark indicating that the edition has been completed.
4. The above principles apply to graphic works which can be considered originals, that is to say to prints for which the artist made the original plate, cut the wood-block, worked on the stone or any other material. Works which do not fulfil these conditions must be considered 'reproductions'.
5. For reproductions no rules are possible. However it is desirable that reproductions should be acknowledged as such, and so distinguished beyond question from the original graphic work. This is particularly so when reproductions are of such outstanding quality that the artist, wishing to acknowledge the work materially executed by the printer, feels justified in signing them.(Albert Garrett, A History of Wood Engraving, Bloomsbury Books, London, 1986, The Definition of an Original Print, p.373;)

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American printmaking via the Print Council of America\textsuperscript{579} on Australian printmaking.

However, when commenting on the Print Survey Exhibition of 1964, in \textit{Art and Australia}, James Mollison suggested that Australian printmaking was deeply influenced by the philosophical approach of recent European immigrants.\textsuperscript{580} Martin Terry, in 'Australian Prints 1773-1985', reiterated Mollison's claims and asserted that the Print Survey Exhibition: 'moves through the influence of Paris and Hayter, and, for Sydney, the moody expressionism of middle European migrants, before concluding with prints of our own time.'\textsuperscript{581} \textit{Imprint} also suggested that influences were predominantly from Europe attributing these European influences to artists such as Udo Sellbach, because he was a European(born in Cologne, Germany and trained at Kolner Werkschulen, came to Australia in 1955): '[Udo Sellbach] exerted an extraordinary influence on artists throughout this country as a teacher, writer and practitioner of the art of printmaking'.\textsuperscript{582} Elizabeth Cross, in 'Udo Sellbach,' agreed with both \textit{Imprint} and Hendrik Kolenberg in the introduction to his catalogue Tasmania Visited, when he wrote that Sellbach: 'has substantially influenced teaching in art schools in Australia.'\textsuperscript{583} Daniel Thomas, in the 'Introduction', to the catalogue, \textbf{The Australian Print Survey} claimed that the 'German tradition' had arrived with the post-war immigrants and was directly influential:

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\textsuperscript{579} The Version of the Definition of Print Council of America :

An original Print is a work of graphic art, the general requirements of which are:

1. The Artist alone has made the image in or upon the plate, stone, woodblock, or other material for the purpose of creating a work of graphic art.

2. The Impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions.

3. The finished print is approved by the artist.


\textsuperscript{580} James Mollison, in \textit{Art in Australia} op. cit. 1964, p.235-236:

... It is very largely the work of a group of new Australian printmakers that gives the Print Survey Exhibition the flavour that makes it so different from that which a corresponding exhibition of paintings would have. These men and women born and trained in Northern Europe are heir to the German Expressionist graphic art tradition. Henry Salkauskas, Eva Kubbos, and Vaclovas Ratas each have in common a vigorous bold style. . .


\textsuperscript{582} \textit{Imprint}, No. 1, 1971

\textsuperscript{583} Elizabeth Cross, 'Udo Sellbach', \textit{Imprint}, No. 1 1982, p.7,
Robert Hughes, in *The Art of Australia*, in discussing the major influences impinging on Australian art, stated in relation to The Direction 1. exhibition held in 1956 at the Macquarie Galleries (works by John Olsen, Robert Klippel, Eric Smith, John Passmore and William Rose who were all associated with abstract expressionism in Sydney), that the influence of the show was from Paris. Alison Carroll in *Graven Images In the Promised land: A History of Printmaking in South Australia 1836-1981*, in a chapter entitled 'The Last Decades', notes that in South Australia such artists as Udo Sellbach, Karen Schepers (both German born and German trained), and Franz Kempf had a major impact on South Australian printmaking. Other Australians such as Jacqueline Hick, had travelled to Europe and studied in London and Paris; Geoff Brown, Geoff Wilson, Brian Seidel, Syd Ball, and Barbara Hanrahan also had travelled and studied in Europe before establishing their respective careers in South Australia. It is interesting to note that according to Christopher Giles, in the catalogue for ‘Abstract Expressionism in Sydney 1956-1964’, that the Australian abstract expressionist movement was confined to Sydney. This might explain why there was a perception that a European influence dominated printmaking which was by and large centred in South Australia.

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586 Alison Carroll in *Graven Images In the Promised land: A History of Printmaking in South Australia 1836-1981*, Published by the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1981.
587 Christopher Gentle notes, in *Catalogue for Abstract Expressionism in Sydney 1956-1964*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, 1980, that the:
   . . . [Australian Abstract Expressionist] . . . movement was locally based in Sydney and did not spread to other centres for some years. . . .
588 Christopher Gentle notes, in *Catalogue for Abstract Expressionism in Sydney 1956-1964*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, 1980 notes that:
   . . . So strictly regional was it that students undertaking the school
However none of these writers has ever explained what these European influences were or in what shape they came. Furthermore, the claim that Australia had inherited a European outlook is undermined by the duplication of the American version of originality in *Imprint*. Australian artists (including those of European extraction) were directly influenced by American formalist propositions outlined by Alfred H. Barr Jr. of M.O.M.A. as well as by Clement Greenberg, Meyer Schapiro and Hayter. References to the influences of European abstract expressionism (Tachisme and Ecole de Paris) by Hughes, Mollison, Terry, Thomas, Carroll and Cross all ignore the fact that European abstract expressionism was deeply affected by American formalism and American Abstract Expressionism. The desire to position Australian printmaking outside of the influence of American printmaking and the impingement of American Abstract Expressionist constructs must be treated with circumspection, despite the fact that many of the most public figures in Australian printmaking were from Europe. The reproduction of the American Print Council's version of originality reveals how *Imprint*, and, by implication, the Australian Print Council, were orientated towards the American formalist philosophical proposition rather than any perceived or imagined European influences.

leaving certificate examination were asked . . . to examine to difference between Sydney and Melbourne art" (Melbourne at that time being the home of the Antipodean "Figurative Mythmakers" - Nolan, Boyd, Tucker and company). . .

Harold Osborne, *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth Century Art*, Oxford University Press, 1988:

. . . The impact which abstract expressionism made on Europe, particularly the Ecole de Paris, was also unprecedented. With abstract expressionism American art for the first time led the world. . .

Refer to Part 2 Chapter 1, this thesis

*Imprint* was the only print periodical that was available in Australia. A major part of its program was promotion of Printmaking and for educating the art public along similar lines as those expressed by Stanley William Hayter (About Prints). The Sydney Printmakers' Society was formed in 1960 (TiU Reissar, A Symposium of Views, *Imprint*, 1992, No. 2, p. 1.) . . . with the express purpose of promoting printmaking and educating the art public to appreciate this specialised art form. . . and the South Australian Graphic Art Society in December 1961 with similar ideals. (Alison Carroll, 'Graven Images in the Promised Land: A History of Printmaking in South Australia 1836-1981', Art Gallery of South Australia, 1981. p.55.)

Alison Carroll in *Graven Images In the Promised land: A History of Printmaking in South Australia 1836-1981*, Published by the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1981, in a chapter entitled 'The Last Decades', p.57, Footnote 2 writes:

. . . Reminiscences of the time include marked reference to the purchases of German prints at the Art Gallery and to the travelling show of German prints in South Australia in 1959-1960. Indeed the woodcuts of the young
American influences (conscious and unconscious) impinging on Australian art were very real and were probably strengthened by Elwyn Lynn's contributions to the Contemporary Art Society's *Broadsheet* which were the main sources of information about the emotional element of American Abstract Expressionism. Bernard Smith, in *Australian Painting, 1788-90*, commenting on influences on Australian art also contradicts claims of a European inheritance: 'By 1965 most Australian artists would have preferred to work in New York than anywhere else.' These statements and the adoption of the American version of originality in prints in 1966 reveals how an American philosophical position concerning the individual aesthetic positioned against a negative concept of the technological, was accepted by Australian printmakers and painters.

A variety of factors may have persuaded the view that Sydney artists were drawn towards European abstraction rather than American Abstract Expressionism during the 1950's. The critic Paul Haefliger was orientated towards French painting and was particularly influential. Original works

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* Australians of the time relate in their rough expressive joy of the wood to the German Expressionists rather than to the mannered care of Australia's relief print makers of the previous decades... Such a statement seems to indicate that expressionism in prints in Australian prints after 1960 was taken for granted as being an influence from Europe either through travelling print shows or by certain European artists themselves. However, the influence of the formalism on European artists before coming to practice in Australia between 1940 and 1960 cannot be overlooked.

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594. ibid., p.341.


... Only a few weeks before the beginning of this exhibitions tour the original print signalled its new found strength when a serigraphy by Henry Salkauskas [Abstract and Expressionist in appearance] was awarded the grand prize of £350 at the Mirror -Waratah competition in preference to any of the sectional prize-winning paintings or sculptures... 

created by the first wave of American Abstract Expressionists were not shown in Australia until the 1960's. Smith himself had seen American Abstract Expressionist work at the Venice Biennial but does not seem to have brought them to the attention of Australian artists. Robert Hughes, in commenting about 1956 writes: 'Passmore had seen none of it [American Abstract Expressionism]. Olsen, Rose, Smith had never been abroad and no pictures by members of the New York School were to be seen in Australia. Christine France, in 'New Directions 1952-62', stated that it was not until 1959-1960 that American Abstract Expressionism had a 'sustained influence on Sydney Abstraction'. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to argue when exactly the American influence began to impinge on Australian art, the date of the first Imprint - 1966 - coincides with Jenny Zimmer's claim, in 'Memories of Dulux and Masonite, Abstract Art in Australia', that it was not until 1966 that the effect

597 The first wave of American Abstract Expressionists do not include other American artists not named in the Introduction to this thesis.
602 Paul Haefliger, The Sydney Morning Herald, 6 Th. Feb. 1957, in an article entitled 'New Art Movement Arrives in Australia', sought to describe elements of Abstract Expressionism emerging in Sydney painting in 1956, wrote concerning an artist seeking to project an 'inner reality':

... Here a new world is discovered and externalised, using the accidental as a means of freeing the subconscious; not 'thinking' but 'feeling'; using abstract forms only in order that the atmosphere created - the emotional and spiritual experience suggested by those shapes - will not be obscured by a resemblance to nature....

However the term 'Abstract Expressionist' had probably appeared first in Elwyn Lynn's essay 'The Critical Motif in Painting' in the Contemporary Art Society's Broadsheet of March 1956. Lynn also claims in a conversation with Pater Pinson not to have known about the writings of Rosenberg, Greenberg on American Abstract Expressionism until 1960 but had read Art News who had published articles by Trotsky, Greenberg, Schapiro and Greenberg before 1960 (Catalogue essay, text by Peter Pinson, Abstract Expressionism in Sydney 1956-1964, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, 1980)
of late abstract expressionism, and colour field painting was experienced in Australia.

The question of how notions of an individual aesthetic (contrived through a concept of immediacy juxtaposed against a concept of the technological) found its way into the structures of printmaking in Australia during or before the 1960's is problematical. However it is likely that the American influence may have already impacted in subtle ways in the late 1950's through women involved in printmaking. It has been pointed out by Therese Kenyon, in 'Print Workshops, Galleries and Associations of New South Wales - Part 2,' that 'Printmaking has been regarded (even by contemporaries) simply as craft performed mainly by women'. Similar notions were expressed by Zimmer, in 1983 when she referred to Australian artists responding to the last stages of American Abstract Expressionism in the late 1960's. It was implied by Zimmer that it was women who were in fact connected to the international movement and that it took men several years to 'catch up'. There certainly seems to have been an attitude that embraced intermedia practices by printmaking (mostly women) before 1960 and another which followed in the wake of

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\[\ldots \text{by late 1964 most of the painters discussed had left Australia, or had reoriented their styles. Abstract Expressionism no longer represented the overwhelming dynamic of Sydney painting.} \ldots\]

This seems to suggest that the definition of Originality in Prints in Australia in 1966, as in America in 1960, coincided with the demise of Abstract Expressionism as a style.


\[\text{For example: Elizabeth Rooney had developed considerable skills as a printer while at East Sydney Technical College and in 1960. Rooney along with other members of the Contemporary Art Society, including Earle Backen and this group, was concerned about the plight of printmaking in Sydney (Deborah Durie Saines, The Will to Paint; Three Sydney Women Artists of the 1950's, Joy Ewart, Nancy Borlase and Yvonne Audette, M.A. Thesis, School of Fine Arts, University of Sydney, 1992, p.30-31.)}\]

\[\text{There were few artists making prints in the late 1950's despite the avant-garde role printmaking played within Sydney Modernism during the 1920s -1940s(marked by Trail, Preston and Proctor). One can only speculate that this was perhaps due to printmaking's association with mainly women artists and Lindsay's eccentricity; printmaking was seen to be a 'lower' form of art than painting which did not predispose artists towards exploring the medium. Mostly relief printing was used as an appropriate medium for women involved in floral images and decoration.}\]

\[\text{Therese Kenyon, in 'Print Workshops, Galleries and Associations of New South Wales - Part 2,' Imprint, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1992.}\]

\[\text{ibid.}\]

the American formalist proposition of 'truth to materials' and medium specificity as outlined by Greenberg 610 and Hayter611 which separated and distinguished disciplines by their media after the formation of the Sydney Printmakers Society in 1960. This may have been attributable to figures, predominantly men, such as Earle Backen, James Sharp, Roy Fluke and John Coburn, but also women such as Sue Buckley who helped to found the Workshop Art Centre with Joy Ewart, and other figures such as Laurie Thomas(then Director of the National Gallery and president of the Sydney Printmakers).

The advent of Imprint, in 1966 which included the American version of originality allows for critique of Australian print history which begins to take shape in the shadow of Imprint's writing and claims of a predominantly European influence on Australian printmaking. This is not to imply that there was no history of Australian printmaking before Imprint. Durie Saines M.A. Thesis on Joy Ewart,612 Mollison's essay in Art and Australia ('The Australian Print Survey Exhibition'), 613 Carroll's Graven Images in the Promised Land 614 The Deutsher Gallery's 'A Survey of Australian Relief Prints', Kay Vernon's 'Prints and Australia' ,The A.N.G.'s 'Prints and Australia: Pre-Settlement to Present - 1987', 615 not to mention the work of Margaret Preston, is acknowledgement of a rich history of Printmaking in Australia before Imprint. In fact it appears that printmaking prior to 1960, because it was dominated by women artists, had a significantly different orientation - one that stressed community concerns - from that stressed after 1966 which stressed technological concerns; evidence of the impingement of formalism and the American influence. If the re-orientation was purely the influence of male artists, then there could be a good argument developed to show that the focus of Australian printmaking developed prior to 1960 by women was high-jacked by a homocentric discourse. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to argue for or against such an hypothesis. However, in the context of Vernon's

610 Refer to Part 1, Chapter 2, this thesis.
611 Refer to Part 1, Chapter 2, 3 & 4, this thesis.
612 Deborah Durie Saines, 'The Will to Paint: Three Sydney Women Artists of the 1950's, Joy Ewart, Nancy Borlase and Yvonne Audette', M.A. Thesis, School of Fine Arts, University of Sydney, 1992
613 James Mollison, in Art in Australia op. cit. 1964,
614 Alison Carroll in Graven Images In the Promised Land: A History of Printmaking in South Australia 1836-1981 . Published by the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1981,
statement in 'Prints And Australia',\textsuperscript{616} that the A.N.G. exhibition prints and Australia: Pre-settlement to Present - 1987, ' challenges the notion that there was a revival of printmaking in Australia during the 1960's', implies that the education of artists proposed by \textit{Imprint}, The Sydney Print Makers, The Melbourne Contemporary Art Society, The Adelaide Art School (under Paul Beadle and Udo Sellbach), The South Australian Graphic Art Society and so on, was a program of re-education and re-orientation to formal concerns - a direct influence of American art. Rose Vickers's comment in 'Sydney Print Makers: A Symposium of Views',\textsuperscript{617} that printmaking in the 90's in Sydney should re-direct itself away from its educational program which it originally set itself in the 1960's could be interpreted as an attempt to recover its earlier pre-formalist or pre-homocentric orientations. In the context of Vicker's self-proclaimed feminist perspective (see 'A conversation with Rose Vickers',\textsuperscript{618}) such statements could reflect a desire to re-direct printmaking back to its communal (and feminist) roots. This argument is especially strengthened by Vicker's requests for the creation of a News Letter specifically directed to N.S.W. printmakers and for a co-operatively run Print Studio.\textsuperscript{619} Such statements in this context imply that formalism, derived from America, was pervasive and possibly destructive of what had preceded it.

Stanley William Hayter's influence in America 'was seminal for American printmaking.\textsuperscript{620} The M.O.M.A. exhibition 'Hayter and Studio 17' toured the United States for two years from 1944 and 'opened American eyes to the potentialities for original expression inherent in gravure. Its impact has justly been compared to that of the Armoury show on painting.\textsuperscript{621} And certainly there can be no doubt that Hayter has also been influential for Australian printmaking judging by the number of artists who visited Hayter's Atelier 17, both in America and Paris. Hayter's influence is acknowledged throughout writing on printmaking in Australia both in \textit{Imprint} and \textit{Art and Australia}.\textsuperscript{622} Undoubtedly Hayter provides a direct

\textsuperscript{616} ibid., p.11
\textsuperscript{618} Refer to Appendices: A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92.
\textsuperscript{619} Rose Vickers, 'Sydney Print Makers: A Symposium of Views', op.cit., p.2.
\textsuperscript{620} P.M.S. Hacker, 'The Colour Prints of Stanley William Hayter', op. cit., p.34.
\textsuperscript{621} ibid.
\textsuperscript{622} Neville Watson, 'S. W. Hayter , \textit{Art and Australia}', Vol. 22, No. 2, 1984.
'link' between Australian printmaking and impingement of the constructs of American Abstract Expressionism.

Several Australian artists had direct contact with Hayter's workshop, Atelier 17 (notably Earle Backen 1956-7 and 1959; Alan Mitelman, 1969. Kenneth Jack, Barbara Brash, Harry Rosengrave and Mary McQueen have all firmly stated that developments in Australian printmaking were not isolated but were connected to and influenced by certain overseas developments. Martin Terry, in 'Australian Prints 1773-1986'(A.N.G. 5 Feb.-22 May 1986), wrote concerning this exhibition, that it moved through the influence of Paris and Hayter. Imprint also records that Australian artists had access to S.W. Hayter's New Ways of Gravure. (pub. Routledge & Keagan Paul Ltd., 1949). Hayter also published a book, About Prints in 1962, which was readily available to Australian printmakers before 1966. In About Prints, Hayter writes at length about his teaching methods, Originality (in a chapter entitled 'Five Degrees of Originality'), the autonomy of the print as opposed to the reproduction, and the importance of the technological nature of the printmaking process as a unique artistic means rather than as a reproductive or imitative reproductive process. Hayter's methods were orientated towards a 'truth to materials' and the stressing of the inherent nature of the printmaking process as a means to arrive at establishing the autonomy of print in...
order to break away from the conception of prints as imitations of works in unique media. These methods were aligned with A. H. Barr's and Greenberg's philosophical position and were formulated out of the rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists.

Although many artists visited Hayter's Workshop, Atelier 17 in Paris, after 1955, Hayter had already developed his teaching methods, based on a formalist approach developed while he was working in America from 1940-1955. Furthermore, the artists who visited Hayter in Paris knew of Hayter through his association with the American Atelier 17 and through his book, published in 1949 while he was in America. To insist on Hayter's influence as a European influence when Hayter's American experience was instrumental in the development of his methods is to attempt to erase from memory the impact of the rhetoric of American Abstract Expressionism on American printmaking. To continue to insist on the European influence and overlook the influence of American printmaking and its subsequent impingement on Australian art involves suppression and embodies an ideology of concealment and erasure.

An interview with Rose Vickers, on 6/7/92, concerning influences on Australian printmaking specifically in relation to Sydney, revealed the depth of Hayter's teaching methods through such influential practitioners as Earle Backen:

of the plate. . .

ibid., p.131.

This aspect of Hayter's position has been dealt with in detail in Part 1, Chapter 2, this thesis.

James Mollison, 'Printmaking in Australia,' op. cit., p.235.-236.

The insistence that Australia was influenced more by European traditions overlooks the influence of women artists such as Joy Ewart who started the first access Print Workshop in Sydney and who were trained in America. It also overlooks Earle Backen's training under Hayter. The position that has been adopted may have been the result of male artists suddenly taking an interest in printmaking in the late 1950s and early 1960s as well as such influential figures as Udo Sellbach who was European. Mollison makes few references to women artists in his essay in Art and Australia, on the Australian Survey of printmaking in 1963. Why omissions were made and how this has impinged forcibly on our perceptions of this period of printmaking is problematical. Most of the writers involved in Imprint and Art and Australia writing on printmaking were men and from Europe, despite the fact that most people involved with printmaking were women. This may explain the cultural and homocentric bias.

Rose Vickers is the head of printmaking at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales (formerly the City Art Institute). Rose Vickers was a student of Earle Backen at the National Art School (East Sydney Technical College) from 1961-65.; see Appendix, Vol. III: A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92.
Now the way that Earl taught is that he would get his students first of all do a trial plate where you would have the copper or the zinc and you would use all the techniques and you would modify the plate, take a proof, modify the plate, take a proof, modify the plate, make a proof; adding and subtracting the techniques. And when I later got to know how Fred Williams worked: that's how he worked too. And the sorts of marks that you could achieve with an aquatint or dry point or whatever. . . as it were suggested to you how the image would evolve. . .

This methodological approach to the process is exactly how Hayter describes his Process in *New Ways of Gravure*:

. . . Starting from an arbitrary position, action is continued in consecutive stages, at first rational but later becoming intuitive, in the absence of a concrete project, and further continued to the destruction of the plate. . . When all the work on the experimental plate is finished the complete series or states is pinned up on a wall and analysed in detail with the newcomer[artist]. . .

A conversation with Earle Backen, on the 13/7/92, confirmed the influence of Hayter and formalist thinking on Backen. Of particular importance to Backen were Hayter's working methods and an embracing of Hayter's essentially formalist approach to printmaking. . .

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638 Refer to Appendices: A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92.
640 Refer to Appendices: A Conversation with Earle Backen 13/7/92
641 ibid.

. . . Yes what I used to do was set three major projects. One would be following more or less through the variations following through with the Hayter method, of working taking a plate and working on it till the plate more or less disintegrated. The second plate would be an ordinary etching using line and the Third Plate would be engraving using the various engraving tools. And then having done those three basic things they would by then have done soft ground, aquatint spit biting a little bit of everything - sugar lift. After that I would encourage them to go whichever way they wished to go. One of the problems is actually is to get students to feel free enough to experiment because so many students actually already know what they want to do before they start. Its a matter of liberation. You've got to try a liberate them so that they can let the plate teach them a thing or two. . .
. . . I think the big thing that he and his workshop did was to open up the perimeters or parameters of what you could do. . . He was very conscious of the importance of the material you were working with. . . So he made you start off working with the material of the plate and not imposing a preconceived idea of what you wanted. . .

Arguably, Backen was the single most important printmaker working in Sydney in the sixties and early seventies. As well as being acknowledged in *Imprint* and various exhibition catalogues, his influence is acknowledged by many teachers in art schools in New South Wales.

Backen did not study printmaking before he studied at Hayter's Atelier 17 and absorbed the working methodology of Hayter and Hayter's teaching methods, repeating them here in Australia at the National Art School and then the College of Advanced Education/City Art Institute (now the College of Fine Arts, U.N.S.W.).

His approach, according to Rose Vickers, was 'very experimental.' Backen himself stated that he taught etching in a very experimental way and acknowledged the influence of American Abstract Expressionism on Hayter's methods:

. . . Hayter himself was really following the career of the abstract expressionists anyhow. He was applying it to etching. . . it really related to what Hayter was talking about and the importance of things like brush strokes and their integrity as a form in space anyhow. . .

During the sixties, Backen's interest in Greenberg's formalism grew and he identified Hayter's methods and Greenberg's position in relation to the autonomy of the printmaking medium:

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642 Refer to the Appendices: A Conversation with Earle Backen 13/7/92.
643 Backen states in interview:
. . . I had taught almost everybody who is now about. I have taught almost everybody. . . (Appendices: A Conversation with Earle Backen 13/7/92.)
644 ibid.
645 ibid.
646 Refer to the Appendices: A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92.
647 ibid.
I think that the great strengths of all the areas of printmaking are their limitations and then working within those limitations... Yes Greenberg's aesthetics I really approved of very much. I still do...

Paddy Lemcke, in ‘The Workshops Arts Centre, Willoughby, N.S.W.’ writes on another American influence that had a major impact on the Sydney printmaking scene: Joy Ewart. The Willoughby Arts Centre (W.C.A.) was formed in 1963, establishing the first N.S.W. access Print Workshop. Deborah Durie Saines, for her Masters Thesis at Sydney University also discusses Ewart’s contribution to the Sydney scene. Briefly, Ewart had two opportunities to travel. One in 1948, after she won the Mosman Art Prize, and another in the late 1950’s when she won a Fulbright Scholarship. During this second study program Ewart studied painting and printmaking at Newcomb College, Tulane University, New Orleans. While Ewart was in America she visited the Pratt Graphic Art Centre in New York and on her return to Sydney visited the Lacourriere Print Workshop (in France) Ewart, like Earle Backen, became a prominent figure in the promotion of printmaking in Sydney. Ewart’s major contribution to Australian printmaking was not only the Print Workshop but also her own artistic inclinations which tended towards American Abstract Expressionism.

ibid.
ibid.
All Print departments in Art Colleges had been influenced either directly or indirectly by Hayter’s teaching and in fact Pertidi who was the teacher or printmaking at the Pratt Graphic Centre had been a pupil of Hayter’s during the 1940’s.
According to Vi Collins in an interview with Durie Saines, Ewart even made a film, Youth Creates, about her teaching methods which was shown in the Museum of Contemporary Art, (Deborah Durie Saines, The Will to Paint: Three Sydney Women Artists of the 1950’s, Joy Ewart, Nancy Borlase and Yvonne Audette, M.A. Thesis, School of Fine Arts, University of Sydney, 1992, p.29.)
James Mollison, ‘Printmaking in Australia’, op. cit., p.237, writes:

... A place... opened last year in Sydney at Joy Ewart’s workshop arts centre[WAC] where lithographic presses have been installed and journey man printers are available to do the heavy work... 

Deborah Durie Saines, The Will to Paint: Three Sydney Women Artists of the 1950’s, Joy Ewart, Nancy Borlase and Yvonne Audette, op. cit.
As early as the 'Australian Print Survey of 1963/64', the concept of originality in prints was being ushered into Australia. However, none of the published introductions to the definitions of originality reveal anything but mute acceptance the conceptual structure which can only indicate that the drive for a self-presence by conceptually contriving an individual aesthetic in opposition to the technological was endemic. Udo Sellbach's article in *Imprint* No. 3 1967, 'Printing Possibilities Versus Medium Possibilities', reveals his allegiance and sympathy for Hayter's methods. This hypothesis argued for an autonomous medium-based discipline where the artist is encouraged to 'creatively' research the inherent qualities of the medium. Sellbach's writing is infused with formalist rhetoric derived from Greenberg's Modernism.

From the second *Imprint* onwards, the orientation is towards delivering specific technical information, emphasising the technological by

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656 James Mollison, 'Printmaking in Australia,' op. cit., p.231.
657 Refer to Appendices: A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92. Rose Vickers confirms that the influence of Hayter through Earle Backen propelled and 'fuelled' the notion of printmaking as an autonomous creative medium:

> . . . Earle was very adamant in that one should not try and reproduce the marks you made when did drawing or that you could get in painting, say. That you shouldn't try to copy it across. We all took that in. Earl very rapidly gained an enthusiastic following. It was at about that time that he and others started the Sydney Printmakers (1960) a group of people who formed who promote and to educate the general public what fine art prints were as opposed to reproductions and the people who were part of that group were the people who were making prints at that particular time. (before 1964 - before the Print Council got off the ground) and the people who were in that original group were quite small in number. . . only about twenty or thirty original members. And they were all people who had begun as painters and who had gradually got interested in making prints and making prints in this particular way where they editioned their own prints and used these concepts to evolve the image and that philosophy of printmaking very much permeated the approach to print. So the students who then began to come out of the art school at this stage - and in Sydney printmaking was only something you did as a minor.- they began to produce their own work and built on from there.

G.C. *It became an autonomous medium?*

R.V. Yes. It became a more acceptable as a creative way of producing art work and simultaneous with Melbourne there was a development around people like George Baldessin who was much younger than Earl and had been working with Hayter. . .


659 *Imprint*, No. 2, 1967 for example, published an article on 'Engraving' by Murray
targeting the four particular printing processes: Etching, Lithography, Serigraphy and Wood-Block. As a consequence, printmaking through *Imprint* began to revolve itself around the technological instead of the merely technical. *Imprint* was orientated to researching the various mediums as distinct technical processes. However, technical information, couched as it was in *Imprint*, must have been familiar to most printmakers working in Australia at the time.\(^6^6^0\) *Imprint*'s size and format only enabled the barest technical outlines of the various process to be printed. These articles, one must assume, were intended to educate other artists not familiar with printmaking language and to impinge on the projected market,\(^6^6^1\) the future patrons of prints.

The very first issues of *Imprint* established the major concerns and the agenda of the Australian Print Council. *Imprint* No. 1 was to spread the notion of originality in prints and develop a pedagogical stance.\(^6^6^2\) Subsequent editions of the magazine continued that approach.\(^6^6^3\)

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Walker. Essentially this article is a potted history of the development of the medium of copper plate engraving. The article is informational and describes the advantages 'its intrinsic difficulty gives engraving much of its strength', and disadvantages: 'It is certainly not a medium for 'sketchy' vague ideas'. of the medium; *Imprint*, No. 1, 1968, introduced a paper by Grahame King on 'Lithography'. This article includes a brief history of the development of lithography written in the informational style. It is purely a description of the process of lithography. King writes concerning his own work revealing his own interest in surface qualities and promoting the exploration of mediums potential:

> . . . My aim with this print was to explore this particular textural form and with the use of the third colour create a controlled movement in depth. . .

\(^6^6^0\) The Catalogue to the Australian Print Survey of 1963-64 contains an abbreviated Biography of each artist. It includes some 70 artists 'all of whom made their own prints'.

\(^6^6^1\) Kay Vernon in 'Prints and Australia,' *Australia Art Monthly*, June, 1989, No. 21, p.11, challenges the notion of a revival of printmaking in Australia in 1960s:

> . . . The convincing demonstrations of the unabated strength and vitality of Printmaking practices by Australian artists is Prints and Australia, particularly throughout the 20 Th. C, challenges the notion that there was a revival of printmaking during the 1960s. As Daniel Thomas said in a talk given at the National symposium in Canberra at Easter, the revival was more one of promotion than of practice. In this light the construct 'Prints: a coming of Age', the title of the section heralding the prints from the 1960s, is strangely at odds with the accumulated visual evidence in the exhibition. . .

Vernon forgets that most of these prints were collected after 1977 which itself reflects the notion that interest grew after the 1960s.

\(^6^6^2\) Sellbach had been a dominant and influential figure in South Australia prior to becoming editor of *Imprint*. Alison Carroll in *Graven Images In the Promised Land: A History of Printmaking in South Australia 1836-1981*, Published by the Art Gallery of South Australia, 1981, in a chapter entitled 'The Last Decades' notes that the South Australian Graphic Arts Society was formed in 1961 and Udo Sellbach was the treasurer. The aims of the Society were set out in their first exhibition held in 1962. In 1963 a second show was held at David Jones Gallery. This was again accompanied by a glossary and notes on the
However the duplication of the American version of definition of originality in prints exposes the influence of American printmaking and therefore of the impingement of the American Abstract Expressionist conceptual model on Australian printmaking, despite claims by writers that Australian printmaking was orientated to European perspectives. The attempt to suppress or conceal obvious American influences and the insistence on a European influence on Australian printmaking despite the intrusion of an American philosophical model deployed through an American definition of originality, Hayter's teaching influences, and writing in *Imprint* infused with formalist rhetoric reveals an ideology of erasure. One can only assume that the insistence on a European influence as opposed to an overt American influence was due to the fact that it was European artists such as Udo Sellbach who controlled *Imprint* and by and large controlled the South Australian printmaking scene. Such claims may also be attributable to post-war and cold-war rhetoric. When this type of history-making is analysed in the context of the claims of the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition of 1987 which included and even stressed the European (*Tachist and Ecole de Paris*) as well as second and third generation abstract expressionists in order to substantiate a point, the work of an unconscious or conscious ideological strategy begins to emerge.

The definition of originality makes distinctions between the 'hand crafted' and the 'machine made'. This reliance on technology (absent or present) upon which to base a concept of originality embodies an ideology which assumes that technique and content are inseparable. What underpins the structure of originality is that same originary thesis espoused by the

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**graphic arts media employed. Education was obviously a priority for the South Australian Graphic Art Society; In an interview of Udo Sellbach in Conversation with Anne Kirker, 'A Perspective on the Print Council of Australia., op. cit., p.16, Sellbach confirms the purposes of *Imprint*:**

**From the beginning, Imprint was a most important vehicle for conveying information and a means to overcome isolation. . .**

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663 Tiitu Reissar, Rose Vickers and Alexandra Karpin, in 'Sydney Printmakers: A Symposium of Views', *Imprint*, Winter 1992, Vol. 27, No. 2, all confirm the success of the educational programs that were set in the early 1960's by both the *Sydney Print Makers*; Udo Sellbach in a conversation with Anne Kirker, 'A Perspective on the Print Council of Australia.', *Imprint*, Volume 26 No. 3, 1991, p.15, also claims that *Imprint*’s educational program was successful.

664 Refer to Appendices: Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era.
American Abstract Expressionists: a fear of contamination of the 'true nature' of the individual by a concept of technology as exterior, seductive and dangerous - a declared Rousseauism.

The American definition of originality in prints of 1961 marks a crucial period in American art history. It heralds the end of the rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists. The year 1960 marks the demise of the period of American Abstract Expressionism in America even though some of the foremost early American Abstract Expressionists (notably de Kooning and Motherwell) continued to maintain this form of painting into the 1980's. In printmaking, it marks the beginning of the era of professional Workshops such as the Universal Limited Art Editions Workshop (New York), Tamarind Institute (1960), Hollander's Workshop, Gemini, and Tyler Graphics. It marks the promotion of collaboration between artist and Master Printer (the Victorian Print Workshop, Viridian Press and the Bee Hive Press are Australian equivalents of this approach to collaboration). It also marks the 'print renaissance' in America. In other words, the definition of originality in prints, sanctioned by the American Print Council and American Abstract Expressionists (when American Abstract Expressionists began making prints after 1960 with Master Printers it sanctioned both the definition of originality, and collaboration) marks the closure of an epoch. The

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667 Refer to The Tamarind Technical Papers.
668 For example, Judith Goldman, in American Prints: Process and Proofs, Whitney Museum of American Art, Harper and Row, 1981, p. 117-118, imputes that the Prints of Motherwell would not have been possible without the assistance of Master Printers; Sonia Dean, in 'A Collection of Printer's Proofs', Imprint, No. 1, 1983, also makes comment that the work of Willem de Kooning would not have been possible but for the expertise of Fred Genis.

... As the American Print Renaissance developed during the 1960s, it was primarily a lithographic renaissance...

670 Lanier Graham, in The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, op. cit., p.28, writes:

... The Abstract Expressionists were not solely responsible for this change in attitude [towards prints]. It was the Pop artists who moved printmaking into a new prominence during the early 1960's; many Abstract Expressionists followed their lead. In doing so gave an authority to contemporary printmaking which was extremely important in the minds of
definition of originality in prints seals, sanctions and certifies the conceptual model derived through the formalist critique: authentic selfhood (lodged in concepts of self-expression via 'immediacy' or the 'primitive' unconscious) juxtaposed against the technological, its supposed opposite. But while a definition of originality in prints sanctions, it simultaneously exposes the contrived structures of the conceptual model. The practised evasion and erasure of a negative concept of the technological in favour of the 'hand-made' - the oscillation between culture and nature - reveals that privileges have already been assigned. It is in the crack exposed between 'Nature' and 'Culture' (in the contrived oscillation between man-made and machine-made) that we see the relationships between a metaphysics of expression and the 'writing' of technology (as metaphor of cognition) - have already been assigned.

But, in spite of its privilege, it is able to produce its own dislocations and proclaim its own limits. This proclamation of 'limits' draws us to an inevitable conclusion: the definition of originality in prints marks the period from 1966 onwards in Australia as one of closure. As such, *Imprint* contains within itself an example of how a theory of printmaking has gone unacknowledged, unnoticed and unchecked, since 1966, confirming Benjamin's observation that: 'The public is an examiner, but an absent-minded one'. It is beyond the scope of what is intended by this thesis to argue whether or not the operations of this perceived cultural power-politics is fascist (Benjamin's thesis) but rather to acknowledge certain circumstantial evidence of such a power-politics.

Four factors contradict the claim that Australian printmaking inherited a European outlook and instead suggest that American formalist notions were rife throughout Australian printmaking since 1966:

1. Artists were interested in the New York School through the writing of Elwyn Lynn and *Broadsheet*.
2. Hayter was an acknowledged influence by most printmakers and that what was of concern to Australian artists was Hayter's method (described in *New Ways of Gravure*) which in itself was aligned

the art buying public. At the end of the decade, the era of Abstract Expressionism was coming to a close, but the role of the contemporary print maker had just begun. Prints had re-entered the mainstream of contemporary art. . .


672 ibid.
to Barr's and Greenberg's Modernism and was a direct result of the impingement of the American Abstract Expressionist construct: 'immediacy' juxtaposed against the technological.

3. The definition published in *Imprint* was an exact duplication of the American Print Council version despite there being a French definition and the definition of the Third International Congress of the Arts.

4. Writing in *Imprint*, from 1966 onwards, is imbued with formalist rhetoric derived from Barr and Greenberg.

The stressing of the European in the Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era advertisement (discussed in Part 2, Chapter 1 of this thesis) in the context of claims of a European inheritance in Australian printmaking when the 'work' of American formalist notions is all pervasive, translates as the work of a cultural politics that attempts erasure (of a prior history of printmaking consisting predominantly of women artists) and concealment (of the operations of a powerful structure for the production and reproduction of selfhood, itself an echo of the structures of authentic selfhood contrived by the rejection of printmaking by American Abstract Expressionists).

*Imprint* must be held accountable, not only for allowing such a fabricated structure as the definition of originality in prints to go unquestioned (before it was embraced) but the Australian Council and *Imprint* must be examined in regard to the role it has played in upholding such a structure. The position *Imprint* carved out for itself, the program of education, the promotion of an imported concept of originality, the erasure and concealment of constructs imported from America, the promotion of a European heritage for Australian contemporary printmaking, the kind of debate which it has allowed and the debate which it continues to suppress, also needs to be examined.

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Part 2

Chapter 2

Section 2

An examination of Sasha Grishin’s claim in Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History of an Australian Printmaking tradition unique and distinct from its European and American Counterparts.

Sasha Grishin’s claim in Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History that Australian printmaking is unique and 'distinctly Australian' is flawed. Not once in his entire narration does Grishin mention the introduction of the American Print Council’s version of the definition of an original print into Australia through Imprint despite quoting directly from Udo Sellbach’s 'What is an Original Print' published in the same journal that published the American definition in 1966. Neither does Grishin make the correlation between the introduction of the American definition and the rise of the concept of printmaking as an autonomous discipline nor of the notion of 'artist printmaker' in Australian printmaking during the 1960's and 1970's - both consequences of Greenberg’s modernism and American formalism. Grishin does however acknowledge the influence of the Print Council of Australia (PCA) of which Imprint was a major function as well as the continual stream of artists that frequented Hayter's Atelier 17 both in America and Paris and who returned to Australia to teach or practice the Hayter-inspired methods. However Grishin does not make the correlation between the numbers of artists that were directly or indirectly influenced by Hayter's methods and the rise of printmaking as

676 ibid. p.8.
677 ibid. p.16
678 ibid. p132-135.
an autonomous discipline in Australia. These omissions undermine Grishin's argument of a unique Australian printmaking that was separate and distinct from its European and American counterparts.

Certainly something profound had triggered the proliferation of printmaking in Australia during the 1960's and that this change was linked to a new generation who called themselves 'artist printmakers':

... Printmaking in Australia in the 1960's and 1970's came to spectacular prominence. It was as if suddenly a new generation of artist printmakers appeared who produced work in a wide variety of print mediums, work which was fresh, original and had creative vitality. ...  

Embodied in this statement, printed on the cover of Grishin's *Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History*, is an acknowledgement of an approach to print that stressed medium specificity.

The factors that explain this orientation to medium specificity in Australian printmaking are: the adherence to an American definition of originality published in *Imprint* in 1966, the all-pervasive American formalist orientation towards medium specificity introduced via writing in *Imprint*, the introduction of an American concept of printmaking as a 'creative autonomous medium'- a philosophical orientation championed by Greenberg and then by Hayter- also promoted through *Imprint*, and the introduction of the American concept of 'artist printmaker' via *Imprint* as well as by various artists who studied abroad.

Grishin spends a substantial part of his 'Introduction' describing the work of several Australian artists in ways that attempt to elucidate and enlarge on his claim that Australian printmaking was not a 'tired
reapplication of European or American formal artistic conventions'. The work of Fred Williams, Jans Senberg, George Baldessin Barbara Hanrahan, Bea Maddock, Martin Sharp, Brett Whiteley, and other artists working in screen-printing collectives, artists dealing with social issues such as pop-culture, the peace movement, the women's movement, the Aboriginal land rights movement, as well as other social causes are called upon to substantiate this claim.

As with other commentators writing about the emergence of the 'artist printmakers' in America prior to 1960, and commentators such as Udo Sellbach in the first editions of *Imprint*, Grishin laments the lack of a receptive audience for printmaking claiming that 'unlike the situation in Europe and America where there is a receptive audience for printmaking, the situation in Australia is frequently a combination of apathy and ignorance.' These claims appear as the foundation for the development of Australian printmaking's distinct and unique character.

This is Grishin's lament:

. . . This book has been written with the realisation that Australian printmakers have produced work over the past thirty or forty years which is distinctive and of a quality which will match anything done internationally. However this achievement lies largely hidden both in this country and abroad. Reasons for this neglect go back to the very essence of what constitutes a print. The concept of multiple unique originals has meant that prints have never achieved in this country a monetary value commensurate with their quality as art objects. Australia has lacked discerning print

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680 Refer to Part 1, Chapter 2 this thesis; It should be noted that one of the primary reasons for Imprint was to educate prospective buyers about original prints - the products of artist printmakers.

681 Refer to Part 2, Chapter 2, section 1, this thesis.

collectors and unlike Europe and America, where a print by Rembrandt, Picasso or Johns commands enormous prices on the art market, prints in Australia have been frequently viewed as a "cheap surrogate" for the expensive original. This is not a question of ignorance, but of snobbishness. Australia's lack of an informed audience for printmaking has been this form's greatest handicap. . .

Apart from being an echo of previous commentators' lamentations both in America and Australia, this statement hints that the motivation for *Imprint's* educational project - the commercialisation of artists prints - which has by Grishin's account, failed miserably.

Grishin's claim that Australian prints of the last forty years, in contrast to prints of the colonial era which have focused on 'descriptive, narrative and decorative vignettes', have 'concentrated more on ways of understanding systems of visualisation through which we invent ourselves as visual images to ourselves' is sustained only by relying on an historicism that emphasises technological change and medium specificity:

. . .Printmaking arose some five hundred years ago to disseminate visual images, in the same way as the printed word disseminates textual information. About a century ago, photography, and later film and digitised images, usurped

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684 Refer to Part 1, this thesis.
685 Grishin's view of the failure of Imprint's educational mission contradicts both the view of Rose Vickers and Udo Sellbach both of whom have claimed that Imprint's educational programme to be highly successful. Refer to A Conversation with Rose Vickers, Appendices, this thesis and to A Conversation with Earle Backen, Appendices, this thesis. Also refer to Udo Sellbach in a conversation with Anne Kirker, 'A Perspective on the Print Council of Australia.', *Imprint*, Volume 26 No. 3, 1991, p.15, who also claims that *Imprint's* educational program was successful.
687 ibid.
this function. What printmaking has retained from its earlier history is its ability to tap into, and interpret, the languages of mass visual communication. . . This is something that could not have been achieved in another art form like painting, drawing or photography, but can be done brilliantly with multiple originals of the print. . .

Such claims are echoes of similar claims made by American writers in the 1950's prior to the invention of the definition of an original print and when printmaking in America was orientating itself towards becoming an independent and autonomous creative medium.

Grishin begins the first chapter of his book, a chapter boldly titled 'The New Age of Printmaking in Australia: Laying the Foundations' with:

. . . While prints have been made sporadically in Australia since the early years of white occupation, printmaking as a separate, recognised art form - one where relief printing, intaglio, lithography and screen printing were brought together under a single roof - was a phenomenon which scarcely predated the 1960's. It was development which occurred almost simultaneously in Eastern and Western Europe, the United States, as well as in Australia, and one which was accompanied by the creation of a new audience for contemporary art. . .

Here is an admission by Grishin of the influence of American formalism, and especially of Greenberg's modernism on Australian printmaking. Greenberg stressed the need for independent and autonomous disciplines and a self-directed criticism stemming from within each

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688 ibid.
689 Refer to Part 1, Chapter 2, this thesis.
discipline. But this recognition of a similar underlying philosophical structure to European and American printmaking are glossed over in Grishin’s account.

Throughout Chapter One of his book Grishin stresses the notion that printmaking in Australia had in the 1950’s and 1960’s emerged from a self-absorbed, technically orientated and stagnant discipline preoccupied with a commentary about what could be achieved in the other visual arts mediums:

... Printmaking became an autonomous creative activity which had at its disposal a wide range of techniques through which to explore the various codes, conventions and systems of visualisation and representation. In short, it was no longer preoccupied with a commentary on what could be achieved in the other mediums in the visual arts, but explored its own unique peculiarities and the reproduction of visual languages. ...  

Despite the overwhelming weight of evidence to the contrary Grishin makes the claim that 'The major [Australian] printmakers of the 1960's were primarily artists for whom the constraints of a particular medium were largely irrelevant'. The contrary is true. The first few issues of Imprint dealt specifically with processes and mediums, their techniques and technical possibilities. Udo Sellbach even wrote a major essay entitled 'Printing Possibilities versus Medium Possibilities' in 1967 which was published in Imprint and which implied that the technicalities and mediums were of considerable concern to the newly autonomous creative discipline. Littered throughout Imprint are references to the

\[\text{ibid.}, \text{p.17.}\]
\[\text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{Refer to Part 2, Chapter 2, section 1, this thesis}\]
\[\text{Udo Sellbach ‘‘Printing Possibilities versus Medium Possibilities’, Imprint, No.3 1967.}\]
medium and its technologies. It was primarily because of the technologies particular to printmaking that allowed printmaking to become an autonomous creative medium.

Roger Butler's essay 'Lithography in Australia: Melbourne 1948-1958', Chapter 8 in Lasting Impressions suggests that prior to 1960, prior to the influence of the migrant European artists, printmaking was firmly embedded in socialist causes and that it dealt specifically with Australian issues and was not at all caught up in the technical niceties that Grishin suggested:

. . . Support for a committed art practice was consolidated with the anti-Fascist movement. Exhibitions of lithographs held in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide between 1937 and 1942 stressed the educative and democratic possibilities of the [lithographic] technique. . .

Butler stressed that a printmaking practice existed which was tied to social politics during this period. The work of Noel Counihan, Rem McClintock, Vic O'Connor, Yosl Bergner, James Wiggley, Nutter Buzacott, Roy Delgarno, Greenhalgh, Harold Freedman, Napir Waller, and Kenneth Jack, are discussed at considerable length and depth adding weight to his argument. Butler does however write of the demise of the 'painter-printmaker' preceding the 1950's but there appeared to be a revival of this concept with the revival of printmaking commencing with work produced by Freedman, Ben Crosskell, Geoffrey Barwell and Kenneth Jack and Lionel Harrington during the mid 1950's.

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695 This aspect of Imprint and printmaking in Australia will be taken up in later chapters.
697 Pat Gilmour, Lasting Impressions, Lithography as Art Australian National Gallery, 1988
698 ibid., p.288
Butler describes the work of other 1950's artists such as Arthur Boyd, Ken Whisson, Len French, Harry Rosengrave, Charles Blackman, and Bill Gleeson. None of these descriptions fit the narrative of a concern with technical niceties as suggested by Grishin. Rather all of these artists (all Australian) are concerned to depict what Butler has described as a 'mood' which 'might best be described as post-war anxiety'.

In a telling statement concerning the inclusion of several Australian artists in the Fifth International Biennial of Contemporary Colour Lithography at the Cincinnati Art Gallery in 1958 (which included works by Karin Schepers, Udo Sellbach, Kenneth Jack and Bill Gleeson) Butler draws the thread which ties Australian and American printmaking together:

. . . That Australian artists were beginning to exhibit their work in the United States rather than the traditional centres of Europe is not surprising. In 1951 Australia had cemented its military ties with the United States with the signing of the ANZUS treaty and by the end of the decade American culture dominated Australia to the extent that it [Australia] was dubbed by some 'the 51st State'. As America strove to demonstrate that it was not only a dominant military power in the world but also a cultural centre, exhibitions like the Cincinnati Biennial were encouraged. . .

According to Grishin it was the decade which followed the conclusion of the Second World War which was most crucial for the foundation of a revival of Australian printmaking and he argues that the greatest catalyst came with the arrival of the migrant artists. It is not disputed in

\[\text{ibid., p.289} \]
\[\text{ibid., p.295} \]
this thesis that the presence of migrant artists working in Australia contributed in a positive way to the development of Australian printmaking. However the claim by Grishin and others (based as it is on the claims by the migrant artists themselves who managed very quickly to ingratiate themselves into the Australian Print Council and who by and large controlled *Imprint* for at least two decades\(^{702}\)) may be biased because of its singular authoritative base.

Of the early arrivals, Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack (arrived early 1940's), Udo Sellbach and Karin Schepers (1955), it is Sellbach and Schepers that concern Grishin the most since they went on to play a prominent role in setting up the printmaking department at the South Australian School of Art. Apart from the technical skills which these artists brought with them (a virtuosity in colour lithography\(^{703}\)) it was 'an attitude and a whole philosophy of art' which was of most significance:\(^{704}\)

... Sellbach speaks of two major moments of revelation in his life. The first occurred with the collapse of the Nazi state when the blackout on contemporary art came to an abrupt end and suddenly a new type of art appeared which transformed his thinking. The second was his arrival in Australia where again he sensed he was caught in a 'time warp', but now it was up to him, and to others like him, to introduce some of the liberating concepts involved in contemporary art. ...\(^{705}\)

Obviously the new type of art which appeared on the scene in Europe after the Nazi occupation was the work of the abstract expressionists - *Ecole de Paris, Tachisme* and American Abstract Expressionism. All of these forms of abstract expressionism had exploded on the European

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\(^{703}\) ibid., p.23

\(^{704}\) ibid.
scene after the Second World War. All of these forms had been influenced to some degree by formalist rhetoric. It is obvious from Selloch's writing in *Imprint* and the introduction of the American definition by Sellbach in *Imprint* that many of the migrant artists including Sellbach had been heavily influenced by American formalist propositions and by Greenberg's modernism in particular, a modernism which stressed the bordering of autonomous creative disciplines and in printmaking fuelled the concept of artist-printmaker. Unfortunately these influences have seemed to have escaped Grishin's attention.

According to Grishin it was the Lithuanian Henry Salkauskas who had the greatest impact on the Sydney printmaking scene. Salkauskas arrived in Australia in 1949 but worked in Canberra for two years before living in Sydney. But as with Sellbach, Salkauskas too had been influenced by abstract expressionism:

... His highly expressive lino cuts and later his silk-screen prints drew both on the heritage of the Northern European graphic tradition and on contemporary forms of gestural abstract expressionism. ... 706

Other European artists that Grishin claims had a 'profound impact' on Sydney were Eva Kubbos and Vaclovas Ratas (both Lithuanians) and art critic Laurie Thomas who formed the core of the Sydney Printmakers Society. Other artists included British artists Eileen Mayo and Strom Gould who emigrated to Australia in the 1950's. Grishin's reason for including these artists as influential appear to be because they had an attitude towards printmaking as another form of expression rather than 'the "master craftsman" concept prevalent amongst many Australian born printmakers of the previous generation.' 708

706 ibid.
707 ibid., p.24
708 ibid., p.24
Whether these artists were influential or not is not disputed by this thesis. Certainly these artists were influential. But according to Butler, Australian artists were concerned in the 1950's to resurrect the concept of the 'painter-printmaker'.\textsuperscript{709} The notion of 'master-craftsman' appears to have been a European concept and may in fact not even have been of any concern in Sydney given that printmaking by all accounts, including Grishin's, had been in serious decline until the Europeans arrived in the mid 1950's. The concept of 'artist printmaker' also seems to have been imported at around this time.

Printmaking in Melbourne was heavily influenced by Irishman Tate Adams who arrived in Australia in 1951 after studying in London at Gertrude Hermes's evening classes in engraving at the Central School in London in 1949. Adams returned to Ireland in 1957 to practice and it was not until 1959 that he again returned to Australia and became a lecturer at the Melbourne Technical College (RMIT). Grishin's account places Adams's influence as heavily entrenched in a European-British tradition but despite that he was an energetic and enthusiastic figure in the Melbourne printmaking scene and contributed to 'laying the foundations for a printmaking revival'\textsuperscript{710} in Melbourne.

What is significant about all the accounts of the revival of Australian printmaking during the 1950's and 1960's (including Grishin's account) is that the European migrants had a significant part to play. What has been obscured in all these accounts is that the history of printmaking during this period was controlled by these same artists. Significantly it was they who controlled the editorship of \textit{Imprint} during the 1960's and early 1970's - the main source of historical accounts - and it was they who occupied significant positions in print departments in the various


\textsuperscript{710} Grishin, Sasha, \textit{Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History}, op.cit., p.28
art schools (the reasons for this are not clear but may have been due to the cultural cringe mentality of Australian tertiary institutions during this time).

Commentators such as Grishin seem to have forgotten that these European trained artists had experienced first hand the impact of abstract expressionism and the formalist critique on European art as well as had come into direct contact with ‘master craftsman’ printers as well as the newly formed concept of ‘artist printmaker’, a concept championed by Hayter. These omissions concerning the very real influences impinging on the migrant artists is compounded by Grishin’s account of the influence of Australian artists who studied abroad.

Few Australians studied in the United States. This may be the reason for Grishin’s dismissal of American formalism and may also explain why Clement Greenberg does not get a mention in Grishin’s description of the theoretical underpinnings of Australian printmaking despite there being plenty of evidence to suggest otherwise.

According to Grishin’s account of the South Australian artists who studied abroad, Jacqueline Hick went to London to the Central School and then on to the Academie Montmartre in Paris to study under Fernand Leger before returning to Adelaide,711 Jeffrey Smart studied at the Academie Montmartre in Paris,712 Geoffrey Brown studied at the Academie de la Grand Chaumiere in Paris then at the Central School in London,713 Geoffrey Wilson studied lithography at the Hammersmith College, 714 and Barbara Hanrahan studied at the Central School in London.715 Brian Seidel who studied at Iowa University (1961) before

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712 ibid.
713 ibid.
714 ibid.
studying with Stanley Jones at the Slade in London and Sydney Ball who spent 1963-1965 at the Art Students League in New York and also studied at the Pratt Graphic Centre\textsuperscript{716} are the only South Australian artists Grishin acknowledges that went to the United States of America.

From 1941 a Central School (London) trained artist John Goodchild was the principal of the South Australian (SA) School of Art. Geoffrey Brown returned to teach at the SA School of Art. This meant that from 1941 onwards that the printmaking department of the SA School of Art was only populated by artists who were European trained: Sellbach, Schepers, Brown and Hick. However this European influence was tempered by the arrival of Charles Reddington from Chicago (USA) in 1959 'who had just experienced the flowering of American Abstract Expressionism\textsuperscript{717} and who assisted in the silk-screen area of the print workshop.

Adelaide attracted other artists such as Barbara Hanrahan, Alun-Leach Jones, Jennifer Marshall, Robert Boynes, Tony Bishop, Brian Seidel and Franz Kempf. So strong was this printmaking 'group' that by 1960 Ron Appleyard was praising the revival in South Australian printmaking: 'the success of the present renaissance depends on public acceptance of the print as an original art form'\textsuperscript{718} If Australian printmaking was in such a state of rejuvenation one wonders at comments such as those of Udo Sellbach, who also had been living and working in Adelaide and who wrote six years later in \textit{Imprint} lamenting the failure of print because it was not being accepted as an original art form by the public.\textsuperscript{719}

\textsuperscript{716} Grishin, Sasha, \textit{Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History}, op.cit., p.29
\textsuperscript{717} Ibid., p.35
\textsuperscript{718} R.G. Appleyard 'Some Recent Australian Graphic Art' Bulletin of the National Gallery of South Australia (1960), vol.22, No.1, p.7.
\textsuperscript{719} \textit{Imprint}, 1966, No.1.
Of the Melbourne artists that Grishin claims laid the foundation for the printmaking revival in Victoria, Grahame King studied at the National Gallery School and then at the Central School in London,\textsuperscript{720} Fred Williams studied at the Chelsea School of art and also at the Central School in London from 1950-1956,\textsuperscript{721} Ian Armstrong studied at the Slade (1951-1953),\textsuperscript{722} Janet Dawson studied at the Slade and at the Central School in London from 1957-1959 and then worked as a Proof printer at Atelier Patris in Paris in 1960,\textsuperscript{723} John Courier studied at the Slade between 1951-1960 before returning to teach at Caulfield in Melbourne,\textsuperscript{724} Robert Grieve studied at the Regent Polytechnic College in London and Murray Walker studied at the Slade between 1960-1962.\textsuperscript{725} One is left to make the assumption that it was through the overseas experiences of these returning artists that Australian printmaking received the impetus for its revival. While this may have been the case no mention is made of the fact that the British Print Council had adopted and promoted a version of the definition of originality in prints in England in 1963 which was almost identical to the American version published in 1961 or that the success of Hayter's approach to printmaking in America had already had a significant impact on European printmaking, particularly in London and Paris\textsuperscript{726} before 1955, or of the influence of Roger Fry's formalist propositions\textsuperscript{727} and of American formalism on British art.

According to Grishin (despite the influence of Salkauskas, Eva Kubos and Ratas - those migrant artists that Grishin claimed laid the foundation for a revival of printmaking in Sydney) the development of

\textsuperscript{721} ibid.
\textsuperscript{722} ibid.
\textsuperscript{723} ibid.
\textsuperscript{724} ibid.
\textsuperscript{725} ibid.
\textsuperscript{727} Refer to Part 1, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, this thesis.
printmaking as a major art form in Sydney was slow.\textsuperscript{728} Of significance were two prominent artists - Earle Backen and Lesbia Thorpe - both of whom were overseas trained. Lesbia Thorpe studied at the Central School in London but returned to Melbourne.\textsuperscript{729} (One is left wondering how Thorpe influenced Sydney printmaking at all given that she returned to Melbourne). And Earle Backen who had studied at the Central School in London and then studied at Hayter's Atelier 17 in Paris (1954-1958) who Grishin claims to be the most prominent printmaker in Sydney during this period.\textsuperscript{730}

Although print skills were available to trade apprentices at the School of Printing and Allied Trades, printmaking was not available to be taught to artists in Sydney before 1964.\textsuperscript{731} However a number of Sydney printmakers formed their own presses: Frank Hinder established his press in the 1940's,\textsuperscript{732} Strom Gould acquired a press in 1954 and began printing for other artists (John Coburn and Frank Hodgkinson).\textsuperscript{733} Elizabeth Rooney, Earle Backen and David Rose also held presses before 1960.\textsuperscript{734} Like Eileen Mayo who abandoned lithography after arriving in Sydney in 1953, Guy Warren who had studied at Chelsea School of art and returned to Sydney in 1959 also abandoned lithography because of the lack of facilities and took up screen printing.\textsuperscript{735}

The lack of printmaking facilities in Sydney government held institutions led to the private organisation of facilities mainly through Joy Ewart who had studied at the Pratt Graphic Arts Centre in New York and

\textsuperscript{729} ibid.
\textsuperscript{730} ibid.
\textsuperscript{731} Refer to a Conversation with Rose Vickers, Appendices, this thesis; Refer to A Conversation with Earle Backen, Appendices, this thesis.
\textsuperscript{732} Grishin, Sasha, \textit{Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History}, op.cit., p.36.
\textsuperscript{733} ibid.
\textsuperscript{734} ibid.
\textsuperscript{735} ibid.
Lacouriere print workshop in Paris. Ewart returned to Sydney in 1960 and set up the Workshop Arts Centre with the assistance of Elizabeth Rooney, Sue Buckley, James Sharp, and Robert Curtis which moved to Willoughby in 1963. Grishin's account has it that this workshop has remained a major teaching and access print workshop in Sydney. The print workshop of East Sydney Technical College, the Sydney Printmakers Society which was formed about 1960 (with the purpose of disseminating information about prints and printmaking) and the Willoughby Arts Centre became the core of Sydney printmaking activities during this period.

The other significant artist that Grishin mentions in his role-call of influential printmakers is the Tasmanian artist Bea Maddock who studied at the Slade between 1959-61 and returned to Melbourne.

It is this generation of artists that Grishin claims that laid the foundation for a unique and distinctive Australian printmaking discipline. Of these artists ten (Wilson, Hanrahan, Siedel, King, Grieve, Walker, Thorpe, Maddock and Warren) studied in London, four (Hick, Brown, Dawson and Backen) studied in both London and Paris, one (Smart) studied only in Paris, one (Ball) studied only in the USA, one (Siedel) studied in both London and USA, and one (Ewart) studied in both the USA and Paris. Grishin's role-call suggests that there was an overwhelming influence from London. It should be remembered that Hayter, although he worked in America (from 1939-1955) and in Paris from 1955 onwards, that he was a British citizen and both his books New Ways of Gravure (1949) and About Prints (1962) were written in English and had a major impact on the English speaking world. Again these facts seem to have escaped Grishin's attention when making his claims for

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an Australian printmaking that was unique and distinct from its European and American counterparts.

Chapter Two of *Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History* begins with a quote defining the concept of an original print from the Third International Congress of Plastic Arts, Vienna, 1961.\(^{738}\) It is interesting to note that Grishin never quotes from the definition published in *Imprint* - the American version - despite being fully aware of it (Grishin quotes from *Imprint* No.1, 1966 at the beginning of Chapter One). It is not clear why Grishin should begin a Chapter entitled 'The Golden Age of Printmaking in Australia' with the European version of originality which was not publicised in Australia and not the American version which had a significant impact on Australian printmakers. One can only assume that Grishin is attempting to enforce his proposition that Australia was not influenced by American formalism.

Grishin's dubious claims in Chapter Two 'The Golden Age of Printmaking in Australia' that Australian printmaking was not marginalised during the 1960's seem unsustainable in light of Rose Vicker's and Earle Backen's comments\(^{739}\) and comments littered throughout *Imprint* from 1966 onwards. Grishin fails to note that *Imprint* only began to be published in the mid sixties, in 1966. Furthermore the next five issues of *Imprint* concerned themselves primarily with informing the public about the concept of original print and the various printmaking technologies available. Sellbach himself laments the lack of knowledge about contemporary printmaking in the first issue and subsequent issues thereafter. These facts alone seem to indicate that Australian printmaking, although under revival had not moved to 'centre stage'\(^{740}\) despite a substantial number of prominent (national and

\(^{738}\) ibid., p.48

\(^{739}\) Refer to A Conversation with Rose Vickers, Appendices, this thesis.

\(^{740}\) Grishin, Sasha, *Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History*, op.cit., p.48
international) printmaking exhibitions and awards being made available.\textsuperscript{741}

The question of marginalisation aside, Grishin makes some interesting observations in Chapter Two. Of particular interest to the arguments presented in this thesis are Grishin’s comments that the Australians who had studied in London did not ‘simulate a “colonial copy” of developments in Britain’ but rather were influenced by Hayter through their overseas experiences.\textsuperscript{742} Grishin makes the observation that it was through Gertrude Hermes’s teaching at the Central School in London that Australians came into contact with Hayter’s methods:

\ldots His main impact lay in the new attitude concerning printmaking which he expressed. The print was to be arrived at by working through the medium, rather than simply being a translation from another medium such as drawing and then duplicated through printmaking techniques. He encouraged students to work without preliminary sketches, to “destroy” their plates, while taking proofs from time to time. \ldots \textsuperscript{743}

Grishin agrees with the proposition outlined in this thesis that Hayter’s methods had a significant impact on Australian printmaking:

\ldots Hayter’s influence filtered back to Australia directly through artists like Margaret Cliento and Anne Wienholt who attended his atelier in New York in the late forties, and Earle Backen and John Olsen who worked with him subsequently in Paris. It was also communicated directly through Hayter’s English students, including John Buckland-

\textsuperscript{741} Refer to ‘Print Prizes and Exhibitions’, Chapter One, Grishin, Sasha, Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History, op.cit., p.37-42.

\textsuperscript{742} ibid., p.49
Wright and Anthony Gross, who taught at the Slade in London and came into contact with numerous Australian artists. . .

The first generation of artists that Grishin claims who laid the foundation for the revival of Australian printmaking trained overseas. Excluding the European migrants there were twenty-two that Grishin names. Of these, seven studied at the Central School in London, six at the Slade and four in America, and three worked directly with Hayter at Atelier 17. This is a total of sixteen (85%) who came into contact with Hayter's teachings and methods either through the Central School in London or the Slade or directly through Hayter himself.

Grishin continues his narrative of the growth of a unique and distinct Australian printmaking by broaching the concept of a second generation of Australian printmakers working in Melbourne. This list includes: George Baldessin, Jock Clutterbuck, John Dent, Les Kossatz, Hertha Klugge-Pott, Neil Malone, Daniel Moynihan, Greg Moncrieff, Wallace-Crabbe, Noela Hjorth, Bruno Leti, Graeme Peebles, John Robinson, Jan Sensbergs, Edwin Tanner and Roger Kemp. Of this group he writes:

... It was an unusual combination of talent which approached closest Hayter's concept of creative collaboration within an experimental workshop or Sellbach's idea of werkschullen. . .
But despite the recognition of the enormous influence of Hayter on Australian printmakers either through the London art schools or directly through Hayter’s teaching, Grishin ignores the fact that Greenberg’s modernist approach and American formalism, openly evident in Hayter’s methods and his teachings, were quickly absorbed by these young and impressionable Australian printmakers.

Tate was appointed as the lecturer-in-charge of printmaking at RMIT in 1959. Sellbach was appointed in 1965 and the appointment of Grahame King soon followed in 1966. Of this second generation of Melbourne artists, Baldessin, Kossatz, Sensbergs, Leti, Clutterbuck (who after his training at RMIT joined the staff at National gallery School - later renamed the Victorian College of the Arts), Klugge-Pott (later appointed lecture of printmaking at Melbourne State College in 1968 and later returned to head printmaking at RMIT), Daniel Moynihan (who went on to teach at Prahan and Preston, later renamed the Phillip Institute of Technology), Greg Moncrieff (who also went on to teach at the Phillip Institute of Technology), Graeme Peebles (stayed on to teach at RMIT) and Wallace-Crabbe all were taught at RMIT. All of these artists came under the direct influence of Hayter’s methods. All later became teachers of printmaking, occupying significant positions of influence in Australian art schools thereby enabling successive generations of Australian printmakers to be exposed to Hayter’s methods (and indirectly exposed to American formalist philosophy and Greenberg’s modernism). From Grishin’s account, the only Melbourne artist who seemed to have

\[\text{749} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{750} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{751} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{752} \quad \text{ibid., p.68}\]
\[\text{753} \quad \text{ibid., p.68}\]
\[\text{754} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{755} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{756} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{757} \quad \text{ibid.}\]
escaped the RMIT-Hayter influence appears to have been Robert Grieve.

When Dawson returned to Melbourne in 1961 from her stints at the Slade, Central School in London and Atelier Patris in Paris she quickly established a lithographic workshop (in 1963) and worked with Fred Williams, Albert Tucker, Leonard Hessing, Len French, Charles Reddington, John Olsen, Colin Lanceley, Donald Friend, Roger Kemp, Charles Blackman and Russell Drysdale. After five years in Melbourne she shifted to Sydney in 1968 and there worked with artists such as Martin Sharp, Gareth Sansom, Alan Riddell, Guy Stuart and Bruce Petty.

The development of printmaking at the National Gallery School is linked with Murray Walker and Bea Maddock both of whom had previously trained at the Slade in 1960-1962 with Anthony Cross. Grishin describes Cross as 'one of Hayter's most articulate and influential disciples'. The other artist closely associated with the National Gallery School is Allan Mitleman who also visited Hayter's Atelier 17 in Paris in 1969. These three artists all heavily influenced by the teachings of Hayter along with another British artist (also Slade trained), Graham Fransella, formed the core of the National Gallery School.

Melbourne printmakers, it seems, were dominated by an aesthetic and philosophical view that could be directly attributable to Hayter, a view fuelled by American formalism and Greenberg's modernism. How

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758 Robert Lindsay, Janet Dawson: Survey 9. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1979. Also note that apart from Williams and Olsen, all of these artists are known predominantly as painters. Olsen even though he had knowledge of printmaking preferred not to print himself.
760 ibid., p.87
761 ibid., p.92.
Grishin could propose a uniquely Australian printmaking practice in view of these facts seems extraordinary.

When describing printmaking in Adelaide, Grishin described Sellbach as ‘one of the quiet forces in printmaking in Australia’\(^{762}\) despite the fact that he was ‘instrumental in setting up printmaking in the South Australia School of Art. . . [a] co-founder of the Print Council of Australia, and, in Canberra revitalised printmaking’.\(^{763}\) Sellbach was head of printmaking at Adelaide from 1960-1963 and then moved to RMIT (Melbourne) in 1965.\(^{764}\)

The students that Sellbach, Jacqueline Hick and Karen Scheper (Sellbach’s wife) had were: Barbara Hanrahan, Allun Leach-Jones, Robert Boynes, and Jennifer Marshall. Hanrahan, as has already been discussed went on to the Slade and then to RMIT to teach. Alun Leach-Jones had already had some training from Liverpool College of Art (England) before becoming a student of Sellbach’s from 1960-63.\(^{765}\) Leach Jones taught at Prahran College and then at the Victoria College of the Arts before moving to Sydney in 1977. Boynes went on to teach at Canberra School of Art and Marshall to Sydney College of the Arts.

Franz Kempf was born in Melbourne and studied at Prahran as well as at the National Gallery School. Kempf had been introduced to printmaking by Robert Grieve (the Regent Polytechnic College in London) and Jessie Trail\(^{766}\) and joined the teaching staff of South Australian School of Art in 1962.\(^{767}\)

\(^{762}\) ibid., p.93  
\(^{763}\) ibid.  
\(^{764}\) ibid.  
\(^{765}\) ibid., p.95  
\(^{767}\) Grishin, Sasha, Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History, op.cit., p.97
Brian Seidel studied at the South Australian School of Art and was largely self-taught before receiving a Fulbright Scholarship where he travelled and studied in America at Iowa University (1961) before studying with Stanley Jones at the Slade in London. Siedel replaced Sellbach as the head of printmaking at South Australia School of Art from 1964 -1967. In 1971 he moved to Melbourne where he became the head of art and design of the Preston Institute which later became RMIT. Kempf remained at RMIT for ten years.

In striking contrast to the tone of Grishin’s title for Chapter Two of Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History, ‘The Golden Age of Printmaking in Australia’, it appears that Adelaide at least experienced a decline in printmaking activity between 1964 and 1971 beginning with the departure of Sellbach and Schepers in 1964 and continuing with the exodus of his more accomplished students (Barbara Hanrahan, Allun Leach-Jones, Robert Boynes, and Jennifer Marshall) and ending with Brian Seidel’s departure in 1971.

The printmaking scene in Sydney during this ‘Golden Age of Printmaking’ appears to have been in no better shape than Adelaide. According to Grishin during the art boom of the sixties, printmaking in Sydney did not play a major role.

For Grishin, the only artist printmakers that are of any consequence in Sydney during this period were Earle Backen, John Olsen, Colin Lanceley, John Coburn, and Ruth Faerber.

Of these artists, Backen (who was Hayter trained between 1957-59) returned to Sydney in 1959. According to Grishin, Backen’s teaching

768 ibid., p.29
769 ibid., p.104
770 ibid., p.51
771 ibid., p.110-132
methods closely followed Hayter and he certainly instilled Hayter's philosophical view into his students:

. . . The standard fifteen week course at the Atelier 17 which Backen took did to some extent clone students to a particular way of thinking about printmaking. There was an emphasis placed on 'psycho-automatism' and process as a path through which to arrive at an image on the plate. . . All of these features are evident in Backen’s prints which he made in France and in the first few years of his arrival in Sydney. . .

These views have been substantiated by interviews with Rose Vickers and Earle Backen himself.

Backen was also exposed to the work of Peirre Soulages, Nicholas de Stael, Hans Hartung and Viera da Silva (all of whom were either Ecole de Paris or Tachists).

Both Olsen and Backen came into contact with several minor American action painters through the studios at the American Club in Paris. But as Grishin admits, Olsen 'while competent with in most of the printmaking mediums, he generally preferred to collaborate with master printers.' Olsen's reluctance to participate in the actual printing echoes that of the American Abstract Expressionists refusals prior to 1960 and subsequent collaboration with master printers after the introduction of the original print in America after 1960. This is not surprising given that Olsen's style is abstract and expressionist.

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772 ibid., p.110
773 ibid., p.110
774 Refer to Appendices: A Conversation with Rose Vickers and A Conversation with Earle Backen, this thesis.
775 Grishin, Sasha, Contemporary Australian Printmaking: An Interpretative History, op.cit., p.114
Grishin's inclusion of Colin Lanceley and John Coburn as important artist printmakers in the 'Golden Age of Australian Printmaking' is a complete mystery. Lanceley, as Grishin himself points out, although having studied printmaking at the East Sydney Technical College in 1960, left Australia for Europe in 1965 and did not return until after sixteen years, in 1981. Furthermore Lanceley as with Olsen worked primarily with master printers. John Coburn as with Olsen and Lanceley who preferred not to print themselves, 'always employed professional printers to print his work'.

The fact that three out of the five artists that Grishin claims were instrumental in creating a distinctly Australian printmaking were not involved in the making their prints and that one of these artists was absent from Sydney for 16 years cannot go unnoticed for long.

Grishin's 'golden age' of Australian printmaking is a telling account. It appears to be an age where in Melbourne a Hayter-influenced practice flourished and was taught by Central London and Slade trained printmakers or European printmakers of like persuasion who drifted away from Adelaide. And while printmaking in Adelaide was revived by migrant artists it soon waned and the Sydney scene sputtered briefly with the return of Backen whose students Rose Vickers, Max Miller and George Schwartz founded Zero in 1974 along with David Rankin who established the Port Jackson Press in 1974. Grishin's claim for a unique and distinct Australian printmaking emerging through the 1960's and 1970's seems to fade with each passing decade since the arrival of the migrant 'artist-printers' in the 1950's. What has emerged, even from Grishin's account, is that a Hayter-Greenberg dominated philosophical approach which emphasised medium specificity and disciplined autonomy was introduced to Australian printmakers by the influx of the European migrants in the 1950's and then firmly embedded in the

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776 ibid., p.120-121
777 ibid., p.126.
psyche of Australian printmaking by a succession of artists who trained in Europe and America and then returned to Australia. Grishin’s account appears as an attempt to mask the obvious: Australian printmaking is not unique or distinct but is an echo of European and American formalist traditions. The threads of Australian printmaking’s influences can be easily traced.
The grading of authenticity in relation to reproduction, discussed by Walter Benjamin in ‘Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ and echoed in S. W. Hayter’s ‘categories’ or ‘degrees of originality’ in About Prints, was crystallised in the definition that was agreed to at the Third International Congress of Arts held in Vienna in September 1960. The American Print Council’s version of originality also graded authenticity. Each of these definitions value works made solely by the ‘hand-of the-artist’ as being the most authentic and therefore possessing the greatest degree of originality. Works produced by mechanical means were regarded as the least authentic. In all of these definitions prints produced through collaboration were situated between these two polarities. The link between collaboration and originality is more than circumstantial.

Hayter asserted that prints made in collaboration with a master printer fell into an intermediary zone. Hayter described this third Category, (C) as that:

. . . in which the work is still executed on the plate, blocks, screens, or whatever surface is being used, by the hand of the artist, but . . . he will apply to one of the excellent firms of artisans such as Lacourier and Mourlot where very competent advice will be offered in the techniques of reproduction. . .

And the fourth category, (D):

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. . . Precisely because authenticity is not reproducible, the intensive penetration of certain (mechanical) processes of reproduction was instrumental in differentiating and grading authenticity . . .


780 ibid.
in which the artist has gone to a competent firm of craftsmen with a gouache, drawing water-colour, or painting which he or his dealer would like to see in the form of a print. 

All of this results of course in a hand-made reproduction in which the exercise of the technique at its maximum perfection can almost equal the quality of the original, but under no circumstances could be expected to surpass it...

As with Hayter's degrees of originality, the definition of the Third International Congress of Arts also asserted that prints made in collaboration fell into an intermediary zone between authentic and photo-mechanical reproductions:

... Each print, in order to be considered an original, must bear not only the signature of the artist, but an indication of the total edition and the serial number of the print. The Artist may also indicate if he is the printer... The above principles apply to graphic works which can be considered originals, that is to say to prints for which the artist made the original plate, cut the wood-block, worked on the stone or any other material. Works which do not fulfil these conditions must be considered 'reproductions'.

The Print Council of America's version, adopted by Australia, also revealed the same structured grading of authenticity and originality based on the method of production:

... The Artist alone has made the image... The Impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions... The finished print is approved by the artist...

Other writers, such as Bill Meyer, in 'Print Information: Original verses Reproduction', in Imprint, have acknowledged the complex systems in

781 ibid.
783 ibid.
784 Bill Meyer, in 'Print Information: Original verses Reproduction', Imprint, No. 3,
order to protect notions of originality when works are printed through collaboration:

. . . The edition is printed by the artist or under his supervision from a *bon a tirer* release print approved by the artist. . . The signed, numbered and titled prints meet the artists standards. . . The print may take any form and includes three dimensional

1981:

Meyer writes:

'There have been numerous attempts to define a print, all of which have been hindered as much by the philosophies of what constitutes an art object, as by the innate conservatism of printmakers themselves worrying more about technical definitions than about the relationships of content, medium and form.
The more mercenary aspects of printmaking and commercial reproduction are not what concern us at the Print Council of Australia. We are concerned about the spate of misleading advertising by a number of publishers of purportedly Fine Art Reproductions and Prints which is exacerbated by the definitions.
As the only formally constituted national printmaking organisation in Australia, representing both artists and members of the public, the following is submitted to assist in determining guidelines for the recognition of original prints.
Definitions for Original Prints:

i) An Original print is conceived by the artist specifically for editioning in a chosen medium (Intaglio, screen, relief, lithographic, collotype etc.).

ii) The entire edition is considered as a divisible but unique art object and is copyright as such.

iii) The edition is not a reproduction of a pre-existing art object in another medium.

iv) The edition is printed by the artist or under his supervision from a *bon a tirer* release print approved by the artist.

v) The signed, numbered and titled prints meet the artists standards. (this includes the possibility of inking variations and so forth)

vi) The print may take any form and includes three dimensional work, Xeroxes or photos, in which case, the term 'multiple' should be used.

vii) The use of chop mark, embossed sign or IMP cannot be made obligatory although they can be helpful in establishing authenticity.

viii) It is recommended that a certificate of authenticity and provenance be issued with each print distributed. This certificate should contain all the information recommended in the USA legislative proposals recently debated in USA(presented to the Senate of the State of New York to amend the general business law in relation to the sale of visual art objects produced in multiples.

A reproduction of an existing art work(painting, drawing etc.,) should be embossed or have printed under the image 'Facsimile' or 'Reproduced from the Original (title of work) by (artist) printed by (printer).

Artists Unions in England, the USA and Australia have also been examining the legal avenues for defining and limiting the misleading trading of prints and reproductions. Provenance Certificates are already obligatory in Belgium. If the buyer knows what he is being offered in this way, and agrees to the price, there can be no belated cries of 'rip off'.
work, Xeroxes or photos, in which case, the term 'multiple' should be used. . . \(^{785}\)

It is clear from these definitions and Meyer's recommendation that: 'that a certificate of authenticity and provenance be issued with each print distributed,' that work produced through collaboration occupies a tenuous position in relation to authenticity. This is because prints produced through collaboration are situated within the contrived oscillation between the hand-of-the-artist (Nature) and that which comes to contaminate the individual aesthetic - the technological (the sophistication of Culture). The operation of di\'ffer\'\'\'\'ance generated by the structures within the definition reach a state of critical equilibrium in the notion of collaboration. The question becomes that of projecting and protecting the individual aesthetic of the artist - their originality and the prints' authenticity - in spite of the fact that the artist is not the only individual involved in their making - a contradiction of the originary thesis. Furthermore, the task is complicated by the possible contamination of the technological.

The embracing of print technologies by some American Abstract Expressionists after 1960 and the proliferation of professional print workshops since 1960 emphasises the success of an ideology crystallised in the definition of originality and marks the 1960's as a crucial period in the history of printmaking. Lanier Graham, in 'The Rise of the Livre D'artiste In America: Reflections on 21 Etchings and Poems and the Early 1960s', \(^{786}\) wrote of this American print renaissance that it was primarily a lithographic renaissance.\(^{787}\) The era of professional workshops such as the Universal Limited Art Editions Workshop (New York)\(^{788}\), Hollander's Workshop (New York), Gemini (Los Angeles), Tyler Graphics (Los Angeles) and particularly the Tamarind Institute (New Mexico),\(^{789}\) defined anew the role between artist and printer.

\(^{785}\) ibid.
\(^{787}\) ibid.
In the Preface to the *The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques*, 790 June Wayne outlined the objectives of the Institute. Wayne asserted that the art of lithography had gone into decline in both Europe and the United States because of the rise of a "covert practice", mainly in France, whereby sketches, paintings and gouaches were taken to master printers to "interpret" either by redrawing by hand onto plates and stones (by the Mater printer) or by photomechanical reproduction and then sold as bona fide 'original lithographs'.791 It was one of the priorities of Tamarind to remedy this ethical situation. Wayne claimed that there was a dearth of printers: 'by 1959, only one printer 792 still pulled stones for artists in this country[America], and, unfortunately, his technical skills were irrelevant to the dominant aesthetic of abstract expressionism.'793 As a result of this situation Tamarind would: 'support artists and master printers. . . train a small population of master printers. . . the roles of artist and printer would be defined anew. . . to restore the division of responsibilities and the ethics that had gone astray.'794

In her 'Report on the Tamarind Master Printer Program,' Beris Richardson provided evidence of Tamarind's educational program:

. . . There were also many debates on aspects of the current boom in print sales, especially the effect of valueless famous name reproductions frequently sold to the uninformed public as investments. We were disturbed to realise how often gallery
dealers were as ignorant as the public when it comes to identifying an original print or reproduction. . .

Although the Willoughby Arts Centre (W.C.A.) was formed in 1963, establishing the first N.S.W. access print workshop, it was not until after 1966, after the first publication of *Imprint*, that the Victorian Print Workshop, Viridian Press and the Bee Hive Press established themselves as equivalents of the American approach to collaboration and emphasised the division of responsibilities between artist and printer being championed by Tamarind

The Tamarind's approach to collaboration was echoed in the 'Aims and Objectives of the Australian Print Council', in *Imprint* and reiterated in the 'Aims and Objectives' of the most successful Australian print workshop, the Victorian Print Workshop:

- To fulfill the need of the Victorian community of artists and recent art graduates for a substantial accessible workshop in which to make prints
- To provide a workshop equipped for Printmaking processes, including intaglio, relief, lithography and screen printing, together with photomechanical and experimental processes.
- To encourage standards of excellence in artists work and to provide access to equipment and technical advice.
- To develop the art of Printmaking as a professional activity.
- To develop a public awareness of Printmaking, particularly with regard to distinguishing between an original print and a reproduction.
- To establish, as appropriate, printing and other services to artist-Printmakers.
- To arrange when necessary classes in the techniques of Printmaking as a preliminary to use of the facilities.

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797 Udo Sellbach, Aims and Program of the Print Council of Australia', *Imprint*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 1966:

. . . Our aims are to . . . stimulate further activities and to encourage understanding and appreciation of the original print. . . ;
Refer to Part 2, Chapter 1 & 2, this thesis.
To establish a collection of prints at the workshop by requiring that proofs be kept from each edition pulled, to represent the individual and collective achievements within the workshop.

Pat Gilmour, the co-ordinating curator 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' held at the A.N.G. in 1987, has been one of the key figures writing on collaboration of recent times. (Gilmour's book, Lasting Impressions, is concerned specifically with the collaborative exercise and was published just one year after the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition). Anne Kirker paid tribute to Pat Gilmour on her retirement from the A.N.G. and acknowledged her writing and research on collaboration when she wrote: 'Pat Gilmour's fascination with the collaboration between artist and printer has contributed mightily to our understanding of the relationship.'

However, in respect of the ambiguous position that prints produced through collaboration occupy in relation to authenticity and originality, Gilmour claimed in the journal The Print Collectors News Letter that the term collaboration as used in printmaking was far from "unproblematic". Gilmour, in 'Symbiotic Exploitation or Collaboration: Dine and Hamilton with Crommelynk', suggested that artists were reluctant to admit to collaboration: 'Another barrier to admitting collaboration has taken place is that collaboration appears to undermine the notion of 'originality'. What has fascinated Gilmour:

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798 'The Victorian Print Workshop,' Imprint, No. 4, 1983, p.9,
800 Anne Kirker, 'A Tribute to Pat Gilmour on her Retirement from the Australian National Gallery', Imprint, Vol. 25, No 1, 1990, p.15.
802 ibid.
... is the extent to which not only artists, who may be motivated by ego, but even the printers themselves deny such a contribution, or, if they perceive it to exist, work energetically to destroy the evidence of it. ...  

Why should both printers and artists deny the aesthetic input of the printer? This question might be answered by acknowledging the desire to continue the master narrative - the originary thesis and individual aesthetic - within the confines of printmaking. The only reason for situating work produced through collaboration within the intermediary zone in the various definitions is to continue the master narrative in spite of the contradictions which collaboration heralds. It is this failure to admit to the contradictions that displace originality, uniqueness and the individual aesthetic in the process of collaboration and the desire to continue the master narrative that reveals the artificiality of its constructs.

Michael Knigin and Murray Zimiles, in *Contemporary Lithographic Workshops Around the World*, wrote that: 'the print studio is a place where artists and artisans unite their individual talents... The skills of each are of equal importance; the artist supplies the conception, the artisan, the execution.' This division of labour acquired new meaning in *The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques*, where some of the ground rules governing the relationship between printers and artists were laid down. The printer was warned: 'to avoid the imposition of his aesthetic viewpoint. ... [the printer must] present the artist with alternatives, not directions'.

Artists and writers have acknowledged the importance of the 'sympathetic' printer. Yet others such as Gilmour writing on Chris

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803 ibid.
Parater and Rufino Tamayo have claimed that printers have invented new processes in order that the artists concepts could reach fruition. Leonard Lehrer, in 'Artist and Printer: Some Matches are Made in Heaven and Others', has claimed that he was 'totally dependent on [his] printers'. Judith Goldman, in American Prints: Process and Proofs, imputes that the prints of Motherwell would not have been possible without the assistance of Master printers. Sonia Dean, in 'A Collection of Printer's Proofs', also makes the comment that the work of Willem de Kooning would not have been possible but for the expertise of Fred Genis. Charles Green, in 'Slaves of the Art Cult' writes: 'The Ready Made Boomerang', Rene Block's portfolio by international and Australian artists is 'distinguished by the number of prints that simply could not have been fabricated by the artists.' Clifford Ackley of the Boston Museum of Arts commenting on the work of Ken Tyler, claimed that '[the prints] would
have been impossible without the high tech wizardry and inventiveness of
the printer.\textsuperscript{814}

While some have emphasised the importance of the printer's technical
expertise, others have emphasised the relationship between artist and
printer. In an interview with Madeleine Tuckfield, Martin Stanley
maintained that: 'In producing prints a dynamic mental relationship is
established between printer and artist.'\textsuperscript{815} Sonia Dean, in 'A Collection of
Printer's Proofs', quoted Fred Genis (a master printer of Tamarind in its
formative years and also a master printer of Hollander Print Workshop) as
saying: 'that the printer must be 'like water,' able to accommodate the
idea, to develop an intuitive understanding of the artists needs and aims; a
fluidity which enables perfect harmony between them.'\textsuperscript{816} Tatyana
Grosman had made the analogy between the printer and the musician,
comparing the printers role to that of the violinist interpreting a composer's
work.\textsuperscript{817} In an interview with Sonia Dean, another printer, Sanchez,
compared the relationship to artist and printer to that of 'dancing
Partners.'\textsuperscript{818} Leonard Lehrer, in 'Artist and Printer: Some Matches are
Made in Heaven and Others', writes that this relationship is a 'duet.'\textsuperscript{819}
Richard Hamilton has called such collaboration a 'symbiotic exploitation.'
\textsuperscript{820} In agreement with Hamilton, Sonia Dean has suggested that an
alliance and interdependency exists between artist and printer:

... A common link between the lithographs in this exhibition
which date from 1966-1981, is the Printer Fred Genis. . . By
custom the printer is given a proof of every edition he pulls. . .

\textsuperscript{814} Theodore Tremblay and Pat Gilmour, 'Ken Tyler - Printer extraordinary in Canberra.',
\textit{Imprint} 3-4, 1985, p.12.

\textsuperscript{815} Madeleine Tuckfield, 'An Interview with Martin Stanley, Lithographer', \textit{Imprint}, Vol.
27 Number 2, p.6.

\textsuperscript{816} Sonia Dean, 'A Collection of Printer's Proofs', \textit{Imprint}, No.1 1983, p.3

\textsuperscript{817} ibid.

\textsuperscript{818} ibid.

\textsuperscript{819} Leonard Lehrer, 'Artist and Printer: Some Matches are Made in Heaven and

\textsuperscript{820} Pat Gilmour, 'Symbiotic Exploitation or Collaboration: Dine and Hamilton with
it represents a token perhaps of the close alliance which exists between the two after they have worked together through all the vicissitudes of creative processes. It is also a mark of their interdependence. . . 821

Collaboration in this sense answers the first of two meanings for the definition of collaboration in the Macquarie dictionary: 'to work one with another; to co-operate'.822

Other writers and artists have emphasised the dangers of technology and how the division of labour between artist and printer works to overcome this perceived threat. The first discussion of an artist's work in *Imprint* was in 1968, on ‘Arthur Boyd's St. Francis Lithographs’ 823 by Margaret Plant. Plant showed a concern to discuss the inherent qualities of the medium and how Boyd had used these to advantage. Her writing reveals a desire to position Boyd as master of the technical process824 despite also acknowledging the contribution of Boyd's printers. In a lecture-demonstration at the Australian Print Workshop, Giorgio Upiglio, following Tamarind ‘ground rules’, claimed that it was the printer's responsibility to ensure that the artist achieved their intentions 'without [the printer] overwhelming them [the artist] with technique'.825 In a similar vein, John Loan of Viridian Press (Victoria) has claimed that the printer must make the artist an 'ally of the process',826 if artists are to achieve their aims. Yet other Australian artists such as Lloyd Rees have described printmaking's technology as 'unsympathetic'827 and had to be approached in 'a spirit of rebelliousness'.828 Likewise, Davida Allen, working at the Victorian Print Workshop, has claimed that artists must 'defy'829 the seductiveness of the

821 Sonia Dean, 'A Collection of Printer's Proofs', *Imprint*, No.1 1983, p.3:
823 Margaret Plant, 'Arthur Boyd's St. Francis Lithographs', *Imprint*, No 2., 1968
824 ibid.:
825 . . . The St. Francis Lithographs have an evenness and a depth of conception, a technical ease, a sustained sense. . .
829 ibid.
830 Julie Green, 'Davida Allen at the Australian Print Workshop', *Imprint*, Vol. 24, No. 2., 1989, p.8:
831 Historically Printmaking workshops have encouraged artists to use the print medium for purely artistic purpose. Davida said she felt she had to
medium. For these artists and writers technology is feared because it represents a swerve away from the 'naturalness' of the artist. It is the apparent danger of the technological that leads artists such as Sydney based artist Alun Leach-Jones to make the comment that: 'When I go to printmaking I break every rule that's possible and this allows me a great freedom of expression. It is not applicable to my painting for I feel constrained by many self-imposed rules and methods of working.'

Yet other writers such as Leonard Lehrer, in 'Artist and Printer: Some Matches are Made in Heaven and Others', have suggested that it was the role of the printer to: 'make the artist feel as if the printer is an extension of the artist's hand. . . it is as if the printing skills are his[the artist's] own. . . that printers are 'taught to be actors occasionally.' In this article Lehrer claimed that printers allow artists to feel as if they have 'broken the rules' and made 'aesthetic discoveries':

. . . artists are not supposed to know that we are told to be "actors" occasionally; that we're taught about the variety of ways to "keep the ball rolling" in a collaboration or assuage an artist's "tender ego!". . . [printers] are expected to make magic and shaman-like pronouncements while remaining unobtrusive; they are permanently tenured in their supporting role. . .

In this sense, collaboration answers the second definition of collaboration: 'to co-operate treacherously'.

When Picasso made prints with Ferdinand Murlot and Guston Tutin, in Paris in 1945, a series of lithographs described by Brigette Braer in Lasting Impressions, as 'stunning in their technical innovativeness as well as for their artistic brilliance.' According to Braer, Picasso 'entered into the relationship as if it were a combat', waiting to see if there was any

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' defy' the stone in order to get on with making the drawing. . .

830 Janine Burke, 'Alun Leach-Jones,' Imprint, No.1., 1976
832 ibid.
834 Pat Gilmour, Lasting Impressions, op. cit., p.330-331.
835 ibid.
limit to Tutin's resourcefulness as a printer. Tutin 'never let him down'.\textsuperscript{836}
In spite of Tutin's acknowledged skill and resourcefulness Braer claimed that: 'Picasso virtually re-invented the process.'\textsuperscript{837}

As with Braer, Garo Anatreasian (then Master Printer of the Tamarind) described Picasso's printers as a 'traditionally intransigent group of master craftsmen who had to find technical solutions outside routine and customary practice',\textsuperscript{838} in spite of the fact that before the end of the 19th century, the workshop Murlot (where Picasso was working) along with one of the leading French lithographic workshop, Sorlier, had developed a policy that 'the artist's word was law, his most outrageous requests merely a challenge for the printer.'\textsuperscript{839}

Both Braer and Antreasian positioned Picasso as the challenger of tradition, the uninhibited genius and breaker of rules. The transactions here are obvious. Picasso is positioned as the subversive in order to reveal that genius is not bound by social constraint. Odilon Redon had previously established this model when he wrote concerning the print workshop:

"... My God! How I've suffered in print workshops. What inner fury I've felt when confronted with the confusion and incomprehension that printers have inevitably shown towards my efforts. I admit these were rather unorthodox, were in fact, quite outside the normally accepted practices associated with work on stone; but I was groping about experimenting... All of my prints, from first to last, have been nothing other than"

\textsuperscript{836} ibid.
\textsuperscript{837} ibid., p.331.
\textsuperscript{838} Garo Anatreasian, 'Some Thoughts About Printmaking and Print Collaborations', \textit{Art Journal}, Summer, 1980. Antreasian's comments must be weighed against the desire of the Tamarind to establish its role as 'saviour' of a 'dying' art and its self-professed mission of restoring... the division of responsibilities and the ethics that had gone astray... (Wayne, The Preface, Garo Anatreasian and Clinton Adams \textit{Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques}, University of New Mexico, Harry N. Abrams, 1971).
\textsuperscript{839} Pat Gilmour, \textit{Lasting Impressions}, op. cit., p.330-331.
careful, inquisitive, restless and passionate analysis of the expressive power...  

This anti-bourgeois gesture of Redon’s, echoed by Braer’s and Anatreasian’s writing on Picasso, is the rhetorical bourgeois cliché of ‘authentic’ artist as subversive, challenging society from the ‘outside’. What is significant is that artists have continued using this model to the present day. Davida Allen’s ‘defying’ attitude, Lloyd Rees’s ‘rebellious attitude’ or of finding the medium ‘unsympathetic’, or Leach-Jones’s breaking ‘every rule that’s possible’, comments of Roger Butler (curator at the A.N.G.) concerning the collaborative works of Mike Parr: ‘Parr is not concerned with the niceties of the printmaker’s craft, he passionately explores different techniques with total disregard for tradition’, are reminders that Australian artists and writers are not immune to these rhetorical ploys.

Traditionally, neither printers nor artists have made any admission that the printer is aesthetically engaged, although as Gilmour has pointed out, there is plenty of evidence to suppose that a printer’s style is visible in a print and often ‘witnessed inadvertently’. Gilmour has suggested that there is also plenty of evidence to suggest that printers develop ‘house styles’. ‘Judith Solodkin’s contribution is sensuous and

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842 ibid.
845 Madeleine Tuckfield, ‘An Interview with Martin Stanley, Lithographer’, op. cit., p.6, Martin Stanley is quoted as saying:

... I get totally out of the way of the creative process. ... Your role is to produce the artwork in the way the artist wants it. ...

Also refer to: Leonard Lehrer, ‘Artist and Printer: Some Matches are Made in Heaven and Others’, *The Tamarind Papers*, Vol. 8, No. 1/2, 1985, p.49 who writes concerning the ‘do’s and do nots of collaboration:

... Don't expect the printer to voice any aesthetic opinions unless called upon. ...

848 Pat Gilmour, ‘Symbiotic Exploitation or Collaboration: Dine and Hamilton with Crommelynk’, op. cit., p.194.
humorous... Maurice Sanchez 'is generous and rich... Jack Lemon light and lean'.... Aldo Crommelynk 'can be identified and characterised. In support of Gilmour and Lehrer's comments that printers are actors massaging artists' egos, Kathryn Brown, of Crown Point Press has stated that: 'We [the printers] want the prints to look as if the artist made them.'

The denial of aesthetic influence other than that of the artist can be traced to the Industrial Revolution and resulting division of labour. For while the Industrial Revolution created greater specialisation, it also formed a 'split' between what was considered 'creative' or 'artistic' ('Natural') and what was to be considered 'manufactured' ('Cultural'). There was a perceived distance between artist and printer which was succinctly expressed by William Morris who worked in print media (engraving): 'If there is to be any pretence of beauty in the work which is to pass through his [the printer's] hands it will have been arranged by someone else's [the artist's] mind.' Aldo Crommelynk reiterated Morris when he stated that: 'a good collaboration ensues when a printer understands completely the intention of an artist and proposes the technical means which enable him to express it.'

John Loan, in a 'Note From The Printer', in the Catalogue Prints by Mike Parr, echoed Morris's, the Tamarind's as well as Crommelynk's view concerning the division of labour when he stressed the different responsibilities of artist and printer: 'The artist is free to draw or construct images on the plates while the printer takes care of the technical aspects of plate making through proofing and printing of editions.'

Many artists since Picasso, including Jim Dine, and Richard Hamilton have worked with Aldo Crommelynk. Each has remarked on

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849 ibid.
850 Pat Gilmour, 'Through Translators and Through Poets: Robert Kushner and his Printers', op. cit., p.159
853 In the Catalogue Prints by Mike Parr. The Australian National Gallery, 1990, John Loan, in a 'Note From The Printer' stresses the recognition of the division of labour.
Crommelynk’s ‘way of printing’: ‘He’s a real alchemist at spit bite’, or ‘he puts down ground like satin’, thereby acknowledging the printer’s aesthetic contribution. But others, such as Richard Hamilton who ‘would not trust a plate to any other printer’, does not think that Crommelynk contributes to his, Hamilton’s aesthetic, even though the aquatint ground is ‘absolutely distinctive and unlike anything Hamilton has produced in the past.’ Of Crommelynk, Hamilton says: ‘I love Aldo Crommelynck. . . and I don’t think he would complain if he heard me say that I think of him as a perfect machine, because that is what he would wish to be.’

Crommelynk however, while denying aesthetic contribution, knows his work is recognisable: ‘What I’m saying is not meant to be mischievous. I believe no artist truly has control and that it is therein - choosing the grains, the layers. . . that the printer can be a great asset to the artist.’

Hamilton agrees:

. . . There is nobody that I have a closer collaborative relationship than with Aldo Crommelynk. But I don’t see it . . . as his role to contribute to the aesthetic. It is to execute to perfection the ideas that I am trying to get onto the plate. . .

As with Morris before him who stated that the end product belongs to the mind of the artist, for Hamilton, the technical operations are quite separate from the image in the artist’s mind. Even so, Hamilton takes a ‘gourmet’ attitude to printers, moving from one to another, but avoiding attachment so as not to: ‘get hooked into any one way of doing things. . . I did feel that a style may be imposed by any one printer and it was better to keep moving around and keep my own personality sharpened up a bit’ - an admission from Hamilton that printers do have an aesthetic which can influence the final product.

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855 ibid.
856 ibid., p.196.
857 ibid., p.195.
860 ibid.
861 ibid.
862 ibid.
Jim Dine, also working with Crommelynk, does not share Hamilton's attitude. Hamilton's notion of Crommelynk as the 'perfect machine' is rejected by Dine. He likes it when the printer works on his ideas when he is not present and continually offers fresh suggestions:

... I like inventive people who want to stimulate me and then I'll come back and stimulate them. ... I like that interaction. That's what collaboration is. Otherwise you have a slave. ... some dope churning it out like a machine. ...\(^{863}\)

Despite his rejection of Crommelynk as machine, Dine instead projects Crommelynk as the representative of a tradition to be combated: 'He had so much to teach me, and I had so many rules to break there, which is what I love doing. ... His is a very dry and precise classic French printing.'\(^{864}\) In this, Dine projects himself as the transgressor of an intransigent (French) tradition. It is a constructed situation where the artist is allowed to play at subversion (Like Picasso or Redon). This 'sabotage' of the forms of tradition becomes his 'proof-of-standing' as an artist 'outside' of society.

In contrast, Hamilton's statements imply a sympathy with the cult of the individual: the true genius is that artist with 'will' who can manipulate technology in order to reveal the individual aesthetic. In the light of the 1990 Sydney Biennial ('Art is Easy') that dealt specifically with high technology modes of production and multiplication and where Richard Hamilton had a large number of prints exhibited as commodities, one would hardly expect to find him defending the artist's personality as the site of 'the originary source' as he seems to do with these statements about his collaborations with Crommelynk.

Both Hamilton's and Dine's conceptual positioning privilege an 'originary' source in opposition to technology. Where Dine projects the artist as subversive of traditional technological constraints and therefore 'genuinely creative', Hamilton manipulates technology and projects himself as the master of technology. In both instances, the technological is placed in the service of the originary thesis. In other words, notions of

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\(^{863}\) ibid., p.196.  
\(^{864}\) ibid.
authenticity and origin are arrived at by taking the detour through technology. The statements of Australian artists Lloyd Rees, Davida Allen, Alun Leach-Jones, Mike Parr as well as those of Roger Butler and John Loan also show that what underpins their rhetoric is a feared technology - a technology that needs to be mastered or defied in order to protect the artists' individual aesthetic from contamination.

Martin Stanley, a Sydney based printer, in an interview with Madeleine Tuckfield, in 'An Interview with Martin Stanley, Lithographer', suggested that; 'Making a print isn't just about the printer's technique, it is also about the artist's desire.' The artist's desire is marked by a longing for self-presence. In the case of Hamilton, where the printer is treated as a machine, or, as in the case of Dine, where the printer is treated as the upholder of a tradition to be combated, the printer is treated as an erased identity in order that the artist's self presence can emerge. Pat Gilmour, in 'Symbiotic Exploitation or Collaboration: Dine and Hamilton with Crommelynk', succinctly described Crommelynk's lack of identity: 'He [Aldo Crommelynk] has no finger prints left... He has wiped them all away.' A trace without a trace, Crommelynk becomes, without finger prints, inhuman, machine-like, identity-less and therefore posing no threat to the individual aesthetic of the artist. Crommelynk is projected as the 'instrument of the artist', the translator of the artists' individual aesthetic.

Therein lies the contract between artist and printer. The printer adopts the disguise offered by collaboration in order to protect the institution of the collaboration and the original print and becomes the instrument of the artist, devoid of character or identity. Finger prints are the mark of an authentic identity. Their lack implies an effacement of identity. The printer lacks not fingerprints but individual identity in order to preserve the integrity of the artist's self presence: the artist's desire.

The major M.O.M.A. exhibition, 'Technics and Creativity', in 1971 of Tyler Graphics prints was a recognition of Tyler's achievements but it

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865 Madeleine Tuckfield, 'An Interview with Martin Stanley, Lithographer', op. cit., p.6.
866 Pat Gilmour, 'Symbiotic Exploitation or Collaboration: Dine and Hamilton with Crommelynk', op. cit., p.196.
867 Leonard Lehrer, 'Artist and Printer: Some Matches are Made in Heaven and Others', op. cit., p.49.
868 The title of this exhibition, 'Technics and Creativity', is a way of drawing attention to concepts revolving around the 'authority of the object.'
was also a sanctioning of the structures underpinning collaboration. In 1970 the Arts Council of Great Britain celebrated the results of Chris Prater's collaboration with artists at Kelpna in a major show at the Hayward Gallery in London. As a result the Tate Gallery Trustees 'began to discuss the possibility of opening a department of graphic art, which they had previously not collected.' Such statements give cause to ponder on whether or not originality and collaboration are concepts which have been fabricated purely as a marketing strategy.

The sanctioning of the printer's part in the modern concept of collaboration by M.O.M.A. and the Arts Council of Great Britain was continued here in Australia both by the Australian Arts Council, through writing in *Imprint* and also by the A.N.G.. Exhibitions and demonstrations by printers such as Ken Tyler and Tyler Graphics, Giorgio Upiglio, as well as the exhibition 'A Collection of Printer's Proofs', the 'Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era' exhibition, and the exhibition 'Prints by Mike Parr', all stressed the division of labour between the artist and printer while sanctioning the collaborative enterprise. Pat Gilmour's book *Lasting Impressions*, published by the A.N.G., is concerned to demonstrate that the modern concept of collaboration reached new heights after the definition of originality had been introduced in 1960 and after the establishment of Tamarind in America. Chapters Eight, 'Lithography in Australia' by Roger Butler, and Nine,' Lithography in New Zealand', by Ann Kirker, of *Lasting Impressions* both reveal the influences of the Tamarind and of the modern concept of collaboration on Australian and New Zealand printmaking.

Bill Meyer writing in *Imprint*, in 'Print Information: Original verses Reproduction', suggested that the use of chop mark, embossed sign or IMP could be helpful in establishing authenticity - 'a certificate of

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69 Theodore Tremblay and Pat Gilmour, 'Ken Tyler - Printer extraordinary in Canberra', op. cit., p.12.
73 Sonia Dean, 'A Collection of Printers Proofs', op. cit.
authenticity and provenance be issued with each print distributed'.

Meyer's statement, apart from bringing to our attention the importance of the chop, also discloses the influence of American thought on Australian printmaking:

... This certificate should contain all the information recommended in the USA legislative proposals recently debated in USA(presented to the Senate of the State of New York to amend the general business law in relation to the sale of visual art objects produced in multiples. . .

The signature of the artist is one of the methods whereby 'authenticity' is generated in paintings as well as in original prints. But from the very infancy of the printing industry, printers have authenticated re-productions by means of recognised printers' inscriptions. These have variously been called 'frontispieces,' 'blind stamps,' 'printer's marks' or 'chops' and are placed either on the same sheet of paper as the print or on another piece of paper accompanying the print, a document which 'certifies' to the print's authenticity.

Until late in the nineteenth century, prints were rarely signed in pencil, and individual impressions were seldom numbered. 'Printer's marks', 'blind stamps' or 'chops' were the primary method whereby quality and authenticity was attested to. Prior to the late nineteenth century the printer's mark alone was enough to signify authenticity. Today, many prints carry both the artist's signature as well as the inscription of the printer. This situation suggests that the inscription of the printer is deficient and that only together with the signature of the artist can the print be authenticated. In some cases a print will carry the signature of the artist, the chop of the printer, a chop of the Workshop, and even a publisher's chop. Bill Meyer, claimed that the inclusion of the artist's signature

876 ibid.
877 ibid.
879 'Marks on Original Prints', Imprint, No. 2, 1975, contains information concerning other marks, including printers marks which are placed on the print. For example, 'Artist Proof', 'Bon a Tirer '(B.A.T..), 'Cancellation Print', 'Collector's Marks' etc.
signified that the work met the artist's standards, and the use of chop mark, embossed sign or IMP established authenticity. These statements were driven by a concern by Meyer and the Print Council of Australia 'about the spate of misleading advertising by a number of publishers of purportedly Fine Art Reproductions and Prints'.

As with Meyer, Susan Lambert, in *The Image Multiplied*, has also suggested that the presence of the signature of anyone involved in the production of a print inevitably contributes to a sense of it being the product of an individual rather than of a machine: 'The presence of the artist's signature suggests the artist's immediate involvement.' As with Meyer, Lambert also drew attention to the use of signatures on prints as a marketing strategy when she wrote:

... Since Whistler, who charged double for individually signed impressions of his prints, the print trade has capitalised on the artist's signature to increase the value of the product. The cheaper end of the reproductive trade may append a facsimile signature and even a genuine signature only proves that the artist actually touched the sheet for a moment... 

The appending of an artist's signature on prints implies an immediate involvement with the making, that the artist has touched the work and that the artist's standards have been reached. Another implication of the addition of an artist's signature is that the relative roles of the printer and artist may have changed or are in the process of transition. The mark of the printer signifies something specific and that this is different from the signature of the artist. It is together that they signify authenticity. The artist's signature is appended to signify the presence of an individual aesthetic. The printer's mark signifies an ego sublated, an individual aesthetic erased. 'Authenticity' demands that both 'signatures' be present. According to Ed Hamilton, in 'From an 'Anonymous' Printer', (the title of

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881 ibid.
882 ibid.
883 ibid.
885 ibid.
this essay itself substantiates the notion that the printer wishes to remain anonymous, ego-less and erased) the attachment of both signs convey that 'perfection',\textsuperscript{888} and that even an 'ecstasy'\textsuperscript{889} has been reached.

The printer, Gotfridus de Os, produced a book entitled \textit{Quintupertitum Opus Grammaticale} in 1486, and issued with it was a printer's mark \textsuperscript{890} of an elephant and castle, the letters G. D. and the Arms of the Archduke Maximilian and the town of Gouda.\textsuperscript{891} The castle is the fortress of the Archduke Maximilian (denoted by the heraldry). But depicted here is a symbol of the fortress, in the centre of which is a tower with a cupola. The fortress is circular and placed within this circle another, that of the tower. A circle was the symbol of the universal man in Renaissance times. The elephant, apart from possibly being a depiction of a real elephant that had been 'conducted around Holland from town to town, to the great profit of its master, and drowned near Muiden when embarking for Utrecht',\textsuperscript{892} is also a symbol. The elephant is a symbol of knowledge.(elephants never forget, elephants have long memories). In Cockney slang 'elephants trunk' means drunk. Knowledge is wealth. Before it drowned, 'the elephant brought great fortune to its owner.\textsuperscript{893} A fortress with a well can withstand a long siege. The elephant carries the castle, like a ship of trade, from left to right into the future. This mark was also printed back to front.\textsuperscript{894} The castle's prestige is secured by the printer's ability to bring knowledge and wealth to it.

The printer's mark of Phillipe Pigouchet of Paris\textsuperscript{895} can likewise be deciphered. The tree of life or knowledge is portrayed bearing a shield whose device is a crusader's cross emblazoned with the initials of Phillipe Pigouchet (P.P.). Holding this emblazoned shield are Adam and Eve. So it is that the reproduction of truth and knowledge is protected by the symbols of the church of God and if not God then nature (the tree of

\textsuperscript{888} ibid.
\textsuperscript{889} ibid.
\textsuperscript{891} Arthur M. Hind, \textit{An Introduction to a History of the Woodcut}, op. cit., p.587
\textsuperscript{892} ibid., p.586.
\textsuperscript{893} ibid.
\textsuperscript{894} ibid.
\textsuperscript{895} Arthur M. Hind, \textit{An Introduction to a History of the Woodcut}, op. cit., p.686; Refer to Appendices, Images, this thesis.
knowledge and the first people). By acknowledging the Tree and the First People - the 'Fall' - this type of printer's mark makes a claim: that of a return to origin. The printer is portrayed as both the disseminator of this knowledge as well as the protector of it. The arms (the shield with Phillipe Pigouchet's initials) protect the reproduction of truth from deception and corruption.

The frontispiece to Jacques Millet, 'L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troye', Paris, 1484 also bears the arms of printers hanging in the tree and as well as at its base. Water, trees and shields emblazoned with printers initials are not uncommon in printer's marks from this period.

Perhaps the most famous contemporary authenticating mark is the chop of the Tamarind Institute. Significantly, the chop of the Institute, as it is represented on the cover of The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques is of a 'T' signifying a tree (the Tamarind is a tropical tree) but also the cross (and therefore the trinity). A white 'T' against the dark water wash ground, placed on a green field.

The metaphors cannot be lost on us. The water wash - the well of knowledge, the White 'T' - the tree of truth and knowledge. What appears on the cover of The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques is an illuminated letter of a manuscript (the spirit of life comes to animate the dead letter of the text). A powerful motif that encapsulates the concepts of a 'Natural' knowledge that Tamarind printers have access to and are both the defenders and disseminators of.

'Chop' also means a sudden change of direction (chop and change) as well as to hack down or chop down. In these marks the 'I' is only implied. The printer is not a sustainable presence to be located 'behind' the printer's mark. The printer's identity has undergone a dissolution because

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898 Refer to Appendices, Images, this thesis.
authenticity is found everywhere, in trees, water, nature and God. By alluding to nature and the first people, these marks undo the authority of the unified subject they attempt to reveal. The 'I' implicit in the printer's mark is 'chopped out' even as it marks out the territory of the presence of its author.

These printer's marks are rich in intriguing signifiers, are a phenomenon of our printmaking and publishing industry. However, the lesson that these marks reveal is that the language of printmaking can never be its own. It is a system by which individuality must be surrendered. These marks are not the marks of individuals but the marks of a general system. The mark of Gotfridus de Os is remarkable for its symbolic rendering not of Gotfridus de Os but the appeal it makes to Nature or God. This allusion to a greater power than the individual - that the printer is God's agent on earth, that through which He works - is also alluded to by that of Phillipe Pigouchet, the printer's mark of Mathais Goes of Antwerp, Simon Bevilaqua of Venice, Jan Veldener, Louvian(1475), Felix Baliault of Paris, Thielmann Kenver, of Paris, Ungut and Stanislaus Polonus, of Seville, the publisher's mark of Gillet Hardouin, Paris, as well as the Tamarind chop.

These marks signify and are symbolic. They signify individual self-hood but at the same time are symbolic of a loss of individuality. The Tamarind printer, in the collaborative relationship, allows, through the metaphors of the chop, for Nature or God to sublate the printer's ego - it chops it out! As such, the printer is reduced to the tabula rasa which allows the artist to 'play' at being God. The artist's signature, depicting the sovereignty of the author, together with the printer's mark, signifier of an erased aesthetic together authenticate the collaborative enterprise. In the words of Leonard Lehrer:

... A good collaboration isn't a mechanical thing ... in order to really collaborate and take the project to new frontiers ...
the printer truly becomes an extension of the artist's hand. . . it is as if the printing skills are his[the artist's] own. . . 906

With the invention of the press, printers replaced monks - the original illustrators and disseminators of God's word - when they became reproducers of original texts. To do so successfully necessitated the use of marks which signified and attested to an authority beyond the printer. Hence the signifiers encapsulated in Gotfridus de Os's authenticating stamp. In the time of Gotfridus de Os, printers alluded to the God when required to account for truth of origins invested in the printed book. It was the task of the frontispiece and the printer's mark to authenticate and certify that the contents were indeed faithful reproductions of the author's intent (often God's - in the case of reproducing the Bible).

The real development of printing from movable type took place in Germany under the leadership of Gutenberg, Fust and Schoeffer.907 By drawing upon the authority invested in the blind stamp, printer's mark or chop, printers were able to generate notions of 'truth' and 'authenticity' which previously had been the responsibility of the monk, sanctioned by the authority of the Church.

American Abstract Expressionist paintings - their SIGNATURES - of the soul, spirit - the individual God within - disclose a desire for absolute self-presence. But their signatures, by taking the detour through the technical (exclusion is referral), refer to the Other in such a way as to obscure individuality. The paintings of Gottlieb, Newman, Pollock, Hans Hofmann, Clifford Still, de Kooning, Franz Kline or Rothko- their signatures- are haunted by the same paradox that haunts printmaking praxis. The mechanisms of referral in printers' marks, as with these artists' signatures, always translates an appeal to the Other (Nature or God), an appeal to the 'Prime Mover'. The printer's mark denies individual selfhood, it chops it out, even as it certifies to an authentic aesthetic individual.

In the 15 Th. century, the appeal to God through printers' marks was a response to a perceived deficiency inherent in the reproduction of biblical texts. The printing industry had to allude to an Other which was equal to

907 ibid., Vol. 1, p 35

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the task of reproducing the word of God as had been done by the hand of
the monk-artist-illuminator prior to the invention of the press and movable

type. The similarity of the structural tensioning employed in the 15 Th.
century and then repeated in the 20 Th. century cannot be lost on us. As
loss of origins, of truth, of authenticity is threatened, or a deficiency
perceived, an architecture is re-constructed to overcome the perceived
threat. This threat has expressed itself as a deficiency in the general
system of reproduction, multiplication and duplication of the authority of
identity. The perceived threat to identity is met by inventing authenticating
marks in order to shore up the concept of authentic identity. In the case of
today's printers' chops authenticity is achieved by limiting the
impingement of technology. As a consequence, the system of
authentication appears added on, supplementary.908

The significant difference between the marks of the 15 Th. century and
those created since 1960909 is that the 15 Th. century printers' marks refer
to an authority beyond the printer -usually God, the first people, or Nature-
and were the primary means of authentication. They were usually not
accompanied by an artist's signature and were printed, in ink, as a
frontispiece. Today, printers' blind stamps indicate an ego sublated and
are secondary to an artist's signature,910 are embossed in the paper, and

Supplement", p.141-164. Against the orthodox logic of supplements, Derrida pits an
unorthodox logic of supplements, where what's added on later is always liable to
predominate over what was there in the first place:

. . . The strange structure of the supplement appears. . . by delayed
action, a possibility produces that to which it is said to be added on. . .

and:

. . . The 'logic of the supplement', 'to add what is missing. . . because
there is a significant lack in the original. . .

909 Refer to: 'Printers Chops', 1979-1984, Tamarind Papers, Vol., 7, No.1, Spring,
1984; 'American Print Workshops: A Survey,' The Tamarind Papers, Vol. 12, 1989, p.86-
94; 'Addenda, American Print Workshops: A Survey', The Tamarind Papers, Vol. 13, 1990,
p.93; 'Printer's Chops', The Tamarind Papers, 1985-91, p.78.

910 It is interesting to note that of the 14 printer's chops included in the Tamarind
Papers, Vol., 7, No.1, Spring, 1984 publication, nine are abstract symbols, three are
animals, and two are initials; of the 5 Printer's Chops included in the survey of 1990, two are
abstract symbols, two are initials and one is of an animal; of the 20 included in the 1985-91
Survey 12 are abstract symbols, 4 are initials, four are animals, one of which significantly is
of a man-shape but has the 'look' of a computer drawing (and reasserts the concept of the
machine); Of the 92 printer's chops included in the 1989 Survey, 49 were abstract
symbols, 33 carried lettering or initials, 11 depicted animals or nature, 8 made references to
Printing, two made reference to trees. The weighting to abstract symbols or the mechanical
is the reverse of the weighting in the 15 Th. C. where the majority of referencing was to
nature: seas, trees and the first people (Adam and Eve), birds and fish.
not printed in ink. As with the printers they represent, their presence is felt, acknowledged, but unseen.

It is possibly as a consequence of the contrived structures of these supplementary authenticating devices that led Charles Green, in Art as 'Printmaking: The Deterritorialised Print,'\textsuperscript{911} to claim that: 'credible identity is deliberately constructed out of the curatorial activity of the printmaking industry.'\textsuperscript{912}

'. . . the limiting mechanisms of printmaking(by this I mean the editioning, publishing and technically hermetic distinctions normal in print production) are model for the circulation of ideas in late capitalism. . . Here, the aura available through the prestige of a signature on an edition functions like a brand-name that certifies quality. This contrived authenticity is the link between printmaking and the postmodern idea of identity. . . '

While it is agreed that these authenticating structures are contrived, and may provide a link between printmaking and postmodern notions of identity, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to comment on whether or not the structures of authentication witnessed in printmaking are evidence of late capitalism (a claim that seems dubious since many of these structures have been in place for several centuries).

In relation to notions of postmodern identity, Lynette Fern, in a review of prints by Mike Parr at Roslyn Oxley Gallery, in Sydney commented that:

. . . Parr withholds certainty. His obsessive reworking of the images of the self as if the self could already be visible through an image aims to prove the impossibility of pinpointing Parr's self - the focus of being, its representation, the language surrounding it. . . impelled to attempt self-illumination Parr is simultaneously determined to mask or erase it. . . \textsuperscript{913}

\textsuperscript{911} Charles Green, 'Art as Printmaking: The Deterritorialised Print', \textit{Australia Art Monthly}, April 1993, No. 58, p11.
\textsuperscript{912} ibid.
Despite Fern’s claim that Parr ‘aims to prove the impossibility of pinpointing Parr’s self - the focus of being,’ or Green, who believes Parr is ‘involved in a devious and unsettling game - the dismantling of familiar signs of originality,’ Parr’s attachment to underlying structures deep within the language which he uses to describe what he is attempting to do reveal that his approach to printmaking is orthodox, quite traditional and, in the end, only works to support the structures he might be attempting to overthrow.

Despite Loan’s claim that Parr’s approach was a ‘very raw undomesticated approach’ to collaboration, Parr relies on very traditional and orthodox methods of authentication: the effect of différance brought about by the definition of originality, the appeal to traditional structures of authentication and signification - Parr’s prints carry his own signature as well as the signature of Loan - the Viridian chop - as well as the blind stamp of the Victorian Print Workshop. Parr treats printmaking as a technique to be overcome, combated or guarded against. For Parr the technical process is a hurdle that must be encountered and overcome. The technical impositions of etching and its physical constraints are overcome by nature and accident, by the Other. Parr situates himself within the effects of chance and possibility: ‘Consequently I treasure the inadvertent scourings and imperfections of the surface.’ Natural’ marks are allowed to appear on the surface of the plates through the 'accidents' of travel.

The chop of the VW and VPW indicate that John Loan accepts the role mapped out for him in the collaborative enterprise and accepts the division of labour between artist and printer prescribed by the Tamarind

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917 ibid.
919 ibid.
920 Prints by Mike Parr, The Australian National Art Gallery, ‘1990, John Loan writes:
921 The division of labour in the process of making this work is clear: the artist is free to draw or construct images on plates while the printer takes care of the technical aspects. . .

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Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques. The limitations of technique are circumvented by Parr's manipulation of nature (chance) and of the printer who acknowledges that it is the artist who is in control. 921

Roger Butler, in the frontispiece (another form of authentication still in use today) to the catalogue, Prints by Mike Parr, claims that 'Parr is not concerned with the niceties of the printmaker's craft, he passionately explores different techniques with total disregard for tradition.'922 Such a statement reveals Butler's attempt to reserve for Parr the valued position of the artist 'outside' of traditions. Parr comes 'blind' to the medium: 'I think of drypoint in terms of braille and excavation'923

Butler's attempt to position Parr as transgressor of tradition is unsustainable. His other claim that Parr's treatment of etching technology is revolutionary: '12 sheet billboard posters worked with an electric grinder',924 is spurious. The technique of using metal grinders has been used by several artists including Jim Dine.925 This example of Parr as 'violator' of tradition, as in other writing about Parr's printmaking activities, reveals the desire to position Parr in the context of innovator and transgressor of 'traditions' (always technological).

Parr claims that his use of etching 'makes the category of printmaking irrelevant [to describe his work]'.926 To explain this point Parr alludes to the difficulty of the medium:

. . . What I am really talking about is the meaning of difficulty or better the contents that difficulty facilitates and of a direct

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921 Lehrer, in Artist and Printer: Some Matches are made in Heaven and Others..., op. cit., p. 46, who quotes Cappy Kuhn, believes that it is the printer who manipulates the artist:

. . . the consummate professional is the printer who makes each artist he or she works with think that this collaboration was the best the printer has ever had. The really special collaboration are when both parties think so. . . the burden for success or failure of the collaboration rests squarely on the printer. . . that is why I believe that the printer's ego must be smaller than that of the artist's - or at least must seem so. . .

922 The catalogue: Prints by Mike Parr, op. cit.

923 ibid.

924 ibid.


926 The catalogue: Prints by Mike Parr, op. cit.
relationship to materials as though materials embodied the objective correlative of repression. . . 927

In other words, for Parr, materials and process are metaphors of repression and are necessarily the inhibitors of expression (etching presents a 'difficulty', a resistance). This gives them emotional and expressive weight. That is how the printer on the one hand and 'Nature' on the other, are employed to assist the artist to get around the difficulty, to treat technology as a necessary evil, exterior and dangerous. But this is the point. The artist gets around the danger, reserves an expenditure and, in spite of the hazards of technology, we are permitted to glimpse the depth of an individual aesthetic.

Where Parr's earlier performances were an 'exploration of the ambiguous edges of self which could be defined by marks - made on the world, or made on the body... when the artist scarred himself with burning fuse-wire', 928 in printmaking Parr blinds himself (rather he keeps one eye fixed on the conventions and another on posterity - he wants us to think him the transgressor of tradition while remaining inside it). However, the necessity of relying on, or by making appeals to these existing structures of authentication and substitution reveal Parr's real orientation: to support the structures of appeal, to lay claim to an authority outside his identity. What is revealed here is that a structure exists that erases the ego of a printer and permits the advent of a name that owes a symbolic debt, but which is now also the name of a master: Mike Parr.

In the catalogue, all the modern pre-requisites for an 'authentic' collaboration are noted: Mike Parr's 'disregard for tradition', 929 Parr's 'blindness to the technique', 930 Parr's '(dangerous) fascination with the seductive qualities of the process', 931 and Parr's acknowledgement of the printer. 932 On the printer's part of the transaction, Loan accepts the 'division of labour as part of a good collaboration'. 933 All prints carry the 'blind stamp' of the VP and VPW, authenticating the fact that collaboration

927 ibid.
928 Charles Green, 'Art as Printmaking: The Deterritorialised Print', op. cit., p11.
929 ibid.
930 ibid.
931 ibid.
932 ibid.
933 ibid.
has taken place within the prescribed limits dictated by the definition of originality. The catalogue to the exhibition, published by the A.N.G. and carrying a 'Note from the Printer', John Loan, and an 'Introduction' by Roger Butler, the curator of prints and drawings, itself became another method of authenticating these prints. Butler projects Parr as the 'genius' who transcends the dangers of technology and tradition. This curatorial activity is aimed at the print connoisseur. Here is an example of the means of distribution of prints in contemporary times by curators and museums having become more important than the work itself. Unfortunately, because of the supplementary nature of these 'signs of authenticity' (the logic of the supplement - to add what is missing), Parr's collaboration is marked by the diffusion of authority.

Collaboration, like the use of the concept of originality, is at the disposal of a cultural power-politics that attempts to conceal the fabricated dyadic structures of conceptual opposites in order to maintain a system which serves to appear to give expression to an individual aesthetic but is actually pressed into the service of preserving ritual-religious values. As with the structures underpinning originality, the structures of collaboration actually deny expression because the individual aesthetic is constructed by opposing it to an equally contrived notion of the technological. It is within this collaboration-originality envelope that we see reiterated in Australian printmaking the philosophical structures which American Abstract Expressionists deployed in order to construct their individual aesthetic.
Chapter 4:

The Significance of Technophobia and Technophilia Located in Writing on Printmaking in *Imprint*

Jacques Lacan, in *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, succinctly described the other: 'The other is the locus in which the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made present of the subject - it is the field of the living being in which the subject has to appear'.\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^6\) The definition of originality published in the first *Imprint* in 1966 constitutes a chain of referral between the hand-made and machine-made and lays a claim within the chain of signifiers to an authentic individual located in technology's other. Thus we see in the various definitions of originality the fabrication of the other and the desire to locate the 'subject' in the other.

When Walter Benjamin, in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction',\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^5\)\(^1\) claimed that the 'whole sphere of authenticity is outside the technical - and of course not only technical - reproducibility',\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^6\) he laid the foundation for a concept of the authentic subject to be located in technology's other. The concept of an individual aesthetic outlined in the definition of originality embraced by American printmakers in 1961 also located the subject in technology's other.\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^7\) The other which they laid claim to was a result of a rejection of logic, the rational and cognition which they imagined resided in the technological. When Australian printmakers duplicated the American version of originality in *Imprint* they also laid claim to a subject generated by the exclusion of technology, metaphor for the rational, the cogito and the sophistication of culture. By embracing the American version of originality, *Imprint* laid the foundation for the fetishisation of technology within Australian printmaking.

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\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^5\) Walter Benjamin, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit., p.220
\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^6\) ibid.
\(^9\)\(^3\)\(^7\) Refer to Part 1, Chapter 4 & Part 2, Chapter 2, this thesis.
In the various definitions of originality the authentic subject is located outside of the technological, in what opposes the technological and the rational diametrically, in terms and concepts which imply the primal: concepts of immediacy and the concept of a primitive-primordial unconsciousness - that which is unthinkable. In an interview with Elizabeth Cross, Udo Sellbach claimed that '[technology] trains the cognitive process', a claim which suggested that the subject located in the other of technology was imbued with immediacy and an untamed thinking. Sellbach is not unique in making such claims on behalf of the technologies of printmaking. Similar claims are littered throughout Imprint and Art in Australia. Such claims echo Lacan's notion that the subject appears in the field created by the play between signifiers that lead in a chain of signifiers to the other. In Ecrits, A Selection, Lacan developed this theme further and suggested that the desired other is 'that which the subject lacks in order to think himself exhausted by his cogito', a notion worth consideration when the definition of originality in prints is analysed: The definition of originality implies that the authentic is uncontaminated by rational thought.

Shane Simpson, writing in The Visual Artist and the Law, acknowledged the constructed différance (the play generated between the structured opposition of signifiers) articulated by the definition when he wrote: 'there are no specific laws governing the production and marketing of prints because original prints are so very hard to define'. There is no authority in the 'law' in the definition of originality. This is because originality is implied only. All the definition of originality can do is mark the closure of a system of defining the authentic subject through an artificial juxtapositioning of terms and concepts. The definition of originality is a statement of authority that has no other guarantee other than its very enunciation, and it would be pointless to seek an authority in another signifier, which could not appear outside of its locus anyway: There is no other of the other in the definition. Suggested here is the notion that any artist claiming an authentic individual aesthetic by relying on the play of signifiers initiated by the definition of originality is an impostor.

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Writing in *Imprint*, despite the obviousness of the manoeuvre of evoking the structural oppositions, continually puts into textual play the concepts of the mind connected to the 'hand-of-the-artist' versus the 'vulgarising touch of mechanical processes'. Such writing marks a desire for the other, located in opposition to technology, rational thinking and the cogito; a desire which begins to take shape in the margin in which desire becomes separated from need.

The subject that is articulated through the definition appears to fade as it is generated because the appeals to the other are fabricated by an authority and law which is not a Primal Law. The 'anxiety' of a 'fading' subject is accentuated by further definitions and further claims concerning the emergence of an authentic individual aesthetic juxtaposed against the technological, the rational and the cogito. However, further appeals to an 'authority' or 'law' which is not a Law only fuels the obsessional character (anxiety) and exposes what that character desires (and lacks) - the unified subject positioned in the other of technology.

*Imprint* offers a unique insight into the appearance of the fading subject of printmaking because all of *Imprints* writing takes place in the shadow of a post-originality era. Any writing that attempts to promote an authentic individual aesthetic by opposing the technological in the post-originality era is eclipsed by the obviousness of the originality construct. Writing in *Imprint* therefore, offers a unique example of closure since much of its writing promotes an authentic individual selfhood positioned strategically against the technological.

Robert Nelson, in 'Why Printmakers Can't Talk,' claimed that printmakers 'have plenty to say about their art - but[have] not persuaded

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941 Dorothy Ellsmore Paul, in the *Introduction to the Painters and Etchers Society Exhibition*, 1928, as quoted by Joseph Loebovic and Sandra Warner, 'Print Forum', *Art and Australia*, Vol. 27, No. 1., 1989, p.80-81: . . . In the Etchers proof we have the original production of the artist craftsman, free from the vulgarising touch of mechanical process, and yet produced in sufficient quantity for the collector and art lover of average income. . .


943 Robert Nelson, 'Why Printmakers Can't Talk', *Australian Art Monthly*, 1992, No. 54,
the rest of the art community that printmaking is really hospitable to sustained discourse'. Nelson suggested that 'the unreadiness of printmakers to engage in discourse... demotes their product'. Nelson asserted that 'Printmaking remains a modest medium and any claims to dialectic are thin and pompous'. Nelson also claimed that 'printmakers can't draw'. Nelson's claims are 'provocative' (a claim which he made himself) and reveal a lack of understanding about the processes of ideology.

Writing in *Imprint* reveals much about the dialectic, ideologies and discourse of printmaking. Its writing demonstrates that its ideologies and discourse are sustained and well practised. It is a discourse that goes beyond thinking of printmaking as mere mark-making in 'a special language of marks which deflects the perceptual onus of traditional drawing practice' which Nelson claimed. When Nelson wrote that: 'The technology of printmaking is not the problem', he deflected critical attention away from the basic ideological structures of printmaking's discourse. Nelson's deflection of critical attention away from how the technological is thought can be read as an unconscious or conscious manoeuvre of concealment of printmaking ideology.

Udo Sellbach, in an article on Noel Counihan, suggested that printmakers were 'easily seduced into sheer illustration, pretty-picture imitation and empty display of craftsmanship'. Allan McCulloch, in a 'Letter from Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre', in a brief assessment of the first MPAC Print Prize Exhibition claimed that such 'emphasis on technology...[leads] to a corresponding emphasis on the decorative'. In a similar vein, Sue Davies, in 'Occasional Images from a City...'

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944 ibid., p. 11.
945 ibid., p.11.
946 ibid.
947 ibid.
948 Engels, 'Letters to Merhing, 1893', quoted in Raymond Williams, 'Keywords', Fontana, 1983, p.155, writes: **... Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously indeed but with false consciousness. The real motive impelling him remains unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all.**
949 ibid., p.12.
951 Allan McCulloch, 'Letter from Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre', *Imprint*, No. 3, 238
Chamber,' wrote: 'technical details. . . need to be balanced by careful formal analysis and account of the imagery'. 952 Julia Church, in 'Fighting Fire with Fire - Cultural Movements', made the observation that 'Printmakers are too obsessed with technique.' 953 Kay Vernon, in Australia Art Monthly, concerning the prints of Bea Maddock stated that: '[Maddock's] work shows a total commitment to technical perfection which never intrudes upon her total control of her images'. 954 Jenny Zimmer, in 'Printmaking: The Recent Interest in Techniques and Traditions' 955 suggested that printmaking in the 1960's had 'an exploitative approach to its technologies' 956 and 'the exponents and proponents of the print medium seem to be pursuing its origins and idiosyncrasies with a great persistence'. 957 With such statements, a concept of the technological begins to emerge in writing in Imprint, taking shape as the destructive agent whose aim is the ruination of the individual aesthetic, succinctly described by Jim Brodie, in 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Technophobia in Fine Arts Practice'; 'As with any process, until you learn how to use it, it [the technology] uses you.' 958 Brodie's statement echoed that of Charles Mereweather, in an essay on Noel Counihan who wrote: 'one must be responsive to the particular dictates of that medium. . . But this is not to say one is a slave of that medium at all.' 959 This is the printmaker's lament: Technology is treated as the fatal advantage.

Julie Ewington, in 'Political Postering in Australia' suggested that technology was to be feared and dominated when she wrote: 'technique is reduced to its proper place in the scheme of things, as servant, not master, to the ideas and the needs of the moment.' 960 Rita Hall reiterated the notion of a feared technology that could be

1974.

952 Sue Davies, 'Occasional Images from a City Chamber', Imprint, No. 4, 1975.
956 ibid.
957 ibid.
overcome in her article ‘Edition + Addition’ when she wrote: 'What ultimately matters to me is that the print has held me prisoner for a long time now and finally it has become my ally rather than I its slave'.  

For Hall, the technologies of printmaking are threatening and seductive: 'To be a printmaker is . . . to be seduced by the magic and charm of the printmaker’s technique.'  

Such statements imply that written into Imprint is a history of an ideology that accents the negative and corrosive potency of technology.

Technique has been used to characterise various groups of artists. Pamela Bell, in ‘Tasmanian Printmakers’, suggested that: 'one common element common to all these art workers [Milan Milojevic, Janice Hunter, Ray Arnold, Vivien Breheny, Joanne Roberts, Paul Zika] is meticulous attention to the medium; however, although content is expressed through recognisable images, they have not 'dissembled' the medium, using art to conceal art'. In her article 'Italian Prints in Sydney', Bell again located technology as a distinguishing feature: 'absolute professionalism in technique characterise the group of Italian printmakers... they... concentrate principally on experimental techniques.'  

However in 'Southern Printmakers' Bell developed the theme that technology had taken over to the detriment of an individual aesthetic: 'the Southern printmaker's... principal interest is in technique rather than in the content of the work... the approach is totally formalist and decorative.'  

Such writing developed the theme that if artists allowed technique to dominate, the resultant work would become suspected of a dialogue with an aesthetics not of the individual. Paul Jolly, in his article on Udo Sellbach's etchings also suggested that technique was an inhibiting factor: '[Sellbach's]expressive means [were] limited to the most mechanical aspects of the medium'. Therese Kenyon, in 'Print Workshops, Galleries and Associations of New South Wales,' asserted that 'Printmaking is at its best when the technical skills and expertise do not get in the way of the intention and meaning of an artist's work.'  

The term 'printmaker', for

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967 Therese Kenyon, 'Print Workshops, Galleries and Associations of New South Wales, Part 2', *Imprint*, 1992, Vol. 27, No. 4, p.16.
Margaret McGuire, in 'Eros Aneschi: A Personal Vision,' can be used in a derogatory sense: 'the label of printmaker refers not so much to printmaking as the poor persons art but to an inability, on the part of the artist, to move beyond the boundaries of craft'. Neil Emerson, in 'A literary Response', believed that: 'the conceptual nature of work should compliment the technical process which at times requires the artist to work against the process'. Such statements reveal and cement the need for artists to be aware of the threat of technology as a destructive agent which erodes the personal aesthetic.

This ideology has not gone unnoticed. Jim Brodie, in 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place', when commenting on the introduction of new print technologies asked: 'How then does one integrate new technologies without stressing hand processes or becoming a machine clone?' Brodie's statement clearly demonstrated that for many artists the 'hand process' - 'machine clone' (personal authentic opposed to the technological) construct was obsolete in the post-originality era. But neither had it been replaced or superseded. Instead writers in Imprint, by focusing attention on the perceived threat of technology, continued to direct artists to a way of thinking about a previously characterised concept of technology - as a necessary but effaceable evil - in order to set in motion a structure that would ultimately disclose the desired unified subject in technology's other.

Much writing in Imprint is concerned to promote the notion that for the artist's individual aesthetic to prosper the intrinsic qualities of the medium, technique or process must be overcome. For example, Allan McCulloch, in 'Letter from Mornington Peninsula Arts Centre', condemned the reliance on technique discerned in the first MPAC Print Prize Exhibition: 'In today's as in yesterday's exhibitions the emphasis is always on technology, an insubstantial foundation on which to build any art in an isolated form, as history has proved.' Udo Sellbach claimed, in 'What is an Original Print?' that in order to make 'original prints [which] bear all the marks of an artist's aesthetic intention... [they

970 Jim Brodie, 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place,' op. cit., p.15.
must be] unchanged by any mechanical interference'.

Lillian Woods, commenting on James Watson suggested that technology was an constraining factor: 'the restraints imposed by the complexities of the medium as he developed it made the aim of achieving complete editions of little importance to Watson. . . he had neither liking nor feeling for machinery of any sort'. These comments are exemplary of the anti-technological attitude written into Imprint's history. Printmaking is presented as an intrusive technological tradition whose inherent technological qualities need to be subjugated in order to allow the individual aesthetic free rein.

Writing in Imprint has stressed how the technological can be overcome by the 'naturalness' of the artist. When asked how he approached his first etching, Roger Kemp claimed with beguiling disingenuousness, that 'I just did it - straight in without hesitating'. Ray Beattie asserted that he developed his talents 'somewhat inadvertently'. Lillian Woods claimed that James Watson's involvement with printmaking 'began almost accidentally'. Such writing emphasises a devaluing of cognition and a depreciation of the systematised and ritualised steps necessary in order to make prints. By erasing the merely technical, such comments show how the technical was conflated with the technological, rational thought and the cogito.

Pat Gilmour in The Mechanised Image: an Historical Perspective on 20 Th. Century Prints, wrote that:

. . . The concept of truth to materials has been one of the most important concepts in establishing an autonomy of print during the 20 Th. Century. For it is in stressing the nature of their means, that artists have broken away from the immemorial conception of prints as imitations of works in the unique media's. . .

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972 Udo Sellbach, 'What is an Original Print?', Imprint, No. 1 Vol. 1 , 1966.
974 Elizabeth Cross, 'Roger Kemp', Imprint, No.1, 1975.
Several artists have stressed the 'truth to materials' approach as a way of differentiating their work from the reproduction. For example, Franz Kempf is not concerned with 'edition multiples' but 'unique prints': 'I am not concerned with printmaking as the production of multiples but as an original creative medium.'

Other artists have stressed the truth to materials approach in order to demonstrate mastery over the technological: Christine Forsyth 'manipulates and combines techniques freely'. Mastery of the technical limitations are written about in such a way as to demonstrate that mastery leads to individual expressive possibilities. For example, Alison Carol stated that for Barbara Hanrahan printmaking was a necessary form of activity in physical and emotional terms: 'She revels in the physical processes of printmaking in the expressive use of different techniques'.

Ian McLean, in 'An Englishman Abroad: Ian Friend's Australian Work', wrote concerning the limitations of the mediums used but that these did not inhibit the artists individual expression: 'His imagery quickly assumes a few basic shapes that run through various permutations in accord with specific limitations and qualities of the materials and media being used. . . the restraints of its various processes allows for controlled experiment.'

Similarly, Mark Pennings, writing in 'Geoff Lowe: Artists and Prints,' asserted that Lowe: 'plays with pre-supposed traditional notions of attaining technical excellence. . . His prints are constructed in a manner which unsettles the boundaries of accepted craft-orientated practices.' Such writing stresses the technological in order to demonstrate that a 'truth to materials' approach highlights the differentiation between original print production and mass reproduction.

Much writing deals specifically with demonstrating how immediacy can overcome the impingement of the technological and how immediacy generates notions of an individual aesthetic. When Elizabeth Cross, in 'Christopher Croft: A Conversation with Elizabeth Cross,' questioned Croft, she revealed her own philosophical bias concerning the impingement of technology on the aesthetic of the artist when she claimed: 'It was

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something to do with the whole process, the technical concerns of etching, that remove the drawing's immediacy. The process itself takes on so much importance.\footnote{Elizabeth Cross, 'Christopher Croft: A Conversation with Elizabeth Cross', \textit{Imprint}, No.1, 1979.} Croft also focused on technology: 'I see etching as being very much a tonal process. There's something very flat and two dimensional about etching, and working on a metal plate. . . The focus of the etching process is the surface of the plate.'\footnote{ibid.} As with Cross and Croft, Daniel Moynihan, in 'Daniel Moynihan: A conversation with Elizabeth Cross', claimed that the technique he used was: 'so immediate - in the most successful ones. . . but if I have to add lines to it then I'd probably throw the plate away because I've lost that immediate quality. . . Yes a vibrancy and immediacy to the images so that the whole print is alive. . . that's what I want anything else makes printmaking pointless.'\footnote{Elizabeth Cross, 'Daniel Moynihan: A conversation with Elizabeth Cross', \textit{Imprint}, No. 3, 1982, p.4.} Moynihan suggested that the reason he used lithography over other printmaking techniques was because: 'the medium is much closer to pure drawing, is much more immediate. . . it's also a very linear medium.'\footnote{ibid., p.6.} Such writing betrays how the merely technical is conflated with the technological and how a constructed immediacy works to undermine the rational.

Writing in \textit{Imprint} often shows how the intrinsic qualities of the medium or process are utilised, manipulated or exploited by the artists' mastery over the technological. For Alun Leach-Jones, 'the process itself will determine it [the end result].'\footnote{Janine Burke, 'Alun Leach-Jones', \textit{Imprint}, No.1, 1976.} Earle Backen on the other hand, 'creates with the medium rather than by the medium.'\footnote{Ruth Faerber, 'Earle Backen,' \textit{Imprint}, No. 3, 1976.} Backen 'places' great emphasis on exploiting to the full the potential of the process to develop the concept'.\footnote{ibid.} Both Leach-Jones and Backen are promoted as experimental and exploitative of the medium - masters of the medium. For Julie Ewington, in 'Political Postering in Australia', the question of content is of infinitely greater concern to poster makers than is mere technique: 'technique is reduced to its proper place in the scheme of things, as servant, not master, to the ideas and the needs of the moment. And this despite their inventiveness and technical
For Phillip Doggett-Williams, printmaking was 'a more controlled medium than painting, both emotionally and technically. . . Technical mastery was an integral component of both.' As with Leach-Jones, Backen, and Ewington, Doggett-Williams also projected the artist as the master of a feared technology.

The 'anxiety', generated by the fading subject (brought about by the revelation of the 'subject' through the contrived systematised structuring observed in the definitions of 'originality' in prints) is manifest in the rhetoric surrounding the use and exploitation of photographic media during the 1960's. For many artists, the exploitation of photographic technologies within printmaking was immoral as well as feared. Doug Croston even claimed that the use of photographic techniques was 'the easy way out, perhaps cheating a bit'. This point of view was also expressed by Rod Ewins who asserted that the use of photographic methods 'was not proper': 'In those days it was expressly forbidden in a number of competitions and in the definitions of Fine Prints which used to abound.' Lynton Perry asserted that mass 'reproduction technologies threatened the personal. Sally Robinson suggested that a misplaced reliance in photographic technologies led to ocular failure: 'reliance on photographic technology led to a failure to look carefully at the world seeing it, instead, through a camera lens.' The irony of this situation was not lost on Franz Kempf who pointed out the obvious contradictions concerning the way in which photomechanical techniques freed artists such as Warhol in the USA during the Pop era and yet was also strongly opposed in the 1960's in Australia:

There has been a tendency to set apart as original printmakers only those artists who conceive the image, create the printing surface - be it plate, block or stone - and print the image. . . It is ironic that the photomechanical process that

92 Doug Croston as quoted by Imprint, No 4., 1984, p.3-4:
... I . . . have not used any photographic methods in my Printmaking as I seem to have an inbuilt feeling that it is the easy way out, perhaps cheating a bit. . .
93 Rod Ewins, as quoted by Imprint, No 4., 1984, p.4.
94 Lynton Perry, as quoted by Imprint, No 4., 1984, p .4.
95 Sally Robinson, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.4.
freed artists from the dull interpretative or reproductive copying of paintings by means of the steel engraving in the 1860's was to be strongly opposed as a creative process in the 1960's. . . the 1960's saw the beginning of a period of frenetic activity by purveyors of 'limited edition, signed prints' which were reproductions of paintings. . .

Again, while these writers and artists pointed out the dangers of photographic processes by describing the association with reproductive technologies, artists were always projected as masters of this technology. For example, Ron Quick asserted: 'I have only been interested in photographic material in combination with drawing images where the photograph was the best necessary solution, in contrast to the drawing while in sympathy to it'. This notion was echoed by Theo Tremblay who believed that although photographic imagery might be the basis for the ideas behind the prints, 'there is something greater and more personalised from works that have been manipulated, drawn into, collaged and so on.' According to Tremblay, photography can have an effect of: 'distancing the artist from his or her subject matter. I attempt to balance with hand drawing'. Ruth Faerber's comments also reiterated the importance of the 'artists hand'. It is hand drawn imagery combined with photographic work which is the preferred method of mastery. Rod Ewins also emphasises hand processes. Ewins claimed that: 'I have never simply used a photograph translated into print'. Jane Amble's comments are in accord with Ewins' comments. Her prints are invariably 'composite photos and hand drawn images'. Other artists, such as Geoff La Gerche, felt that by combining the photograph with the hand drawn gives a greater 'freedom' of expression over the photograph. But it was Leon Perciles, who perhaps best articulated the conceptual structure when he claimed: 'I never use the photographic material alone. . . It must be combined with some familiar personal

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996 Franz Kempf as quoted by Imprint, No 4., 1984, p.4, (Originally quoted in 'Contemporary Australian Printmakers', Kemp, pub. Lansdown, 1976)
997 Ron Quick, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.4.
998 Theodore Tremblay, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.4.
999 ibid.
1000 Ruth Faerber, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.4.
1001 Rod Ewins, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.7.
1002 Jayne Amble, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.7.
1003 Geoff La Gerche, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.7.
statements which can be technical or aesthetic'.

For Newmarch, the use of photography evolved directly from the content: the desire to talk about relationships between public and private, personal or mass media. 'The nature of my content' claimed Newmarch, 'required the juxtapositioning of private images with mass media messages. . . I also connect these . . . by working on either or both by hand, i.e., connecting the private and public with the artists' statement'.

In other words, the subject was revealed by juxtaposing the 'hand-of-the-artist' against technology. For Barry Weston 'the camera can be seductive in its fidelity, maddening in its ability not to evade facts'.

For Lynton Perry, photographic technology presented a: 'risk of takeover by the material with resulting loss of theme'. Such comments suggest that technology must be mastered, subjugated or erased in order for the individual aesthetic to be realised.

Writing in Imprint is concerned to project the notion that the intervention by the 'hand' of the artist is necessary to make the personal 'inner' statement. The essay, 'Photography as a Tool', published in Imprint in 1984, is divided into parts which accentuate the notion that there are degrees of artistic intervention in photographic processes acting against the constraints of technology. Various comments about artists are grouped into the subheadings: 'Imagery and Technical Experimentation', 'Content and Thematic Concerns', 'Photography and Drawing', 'Playing a Major Role', 'Less Current Involvement' and finally, 'Comment'. Writing in each of these sub-groupings draws attention to certain dangers of the technology that individual artists employ but also strives to show how these dangers have been overcome by various strategies. The attempt was to construe a hierarchy of authenticity by drawing some correlation between the

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1004 Leon Pericles, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.7.
1005 Normana Wight, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.11.
1006 Ann Newmarch, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.7.
1007 Barry Weston, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.11.
1008 Lynton Perry, as quoted by Imprint, No. 4, 1984, p.8.
1009 This is not only true of writing on artists exhibitions and work in Imprint but also true of writing discussing students works. For example Jenny Zimmer, 'National Student Printmaking Exhibition', 1988, Imprint, Vol. 23, No. 4., 1988, p.4-5, writes:

. . . It appears to me that there are three basic qualities by which student prints might be judged. These are technical development, drawing and composition and subject and/or meaning - the later taking in such aspects as emotional depth, expression etc. . .

1010 'Photography as a Tool', Imprint, No. 4, 1984.
artists' input and therefore intervention (usually the hand of the artist is enough) which moves against the technological. But there is no real difference in the ways in which one artist works in one category as opposed to another. All artists who work with photographic imagery experiment or have experimented with the technology (they are all projected as masters of the medium), all employ the traditional hand print technologies to one degree or another and all privilege the hand as a tool of intervention into the perceived aesthetic - the 'dehumanising effect'\textsuperscript{1011} of photographic technology. In all the examples of intervention listed in 'Photography as Tool' the attempt to reveal the authentic subject despite the use of photographic technologies has been diverted by the desire for the subject to be revealed in opposition to the cogito (represented by photographic technology). It is, properly speaking, a subversion of the subject, a displacement of the subject and merely perpetuates an academic framework whose criterion is the unity of the subject, emphatically isolated against reproductive technologies. But to act out the dualism expressed by the definition of originality is to act out what closure reveals and what has been suppressed all along: the appearance of the fading subject.

The head-long rush by Benjamin, in 'Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction', to claim that photography represented a reversal of the function of art in the history of art and mechanical reproduction\textsuperscript{1012} as well as in how we view the world, Derrida's claim in 'The Truth in Painting' that photography represents a 'break-line',\textsuperscript{1013} and Charles Green's claim in 'Art as Printmaking: The Deterritorialised Print,' that photography in printmaking is important because it engenders the 'changing definitions of truth and identity... central to the postmodern period',\textsuperscript{1014} seem rather presumptuous in light of the comments of contemporary Australian printmakers using photography. Whenever artists have promoted

\textsuperscript{1011} ibid.
\textsuperscript{1012} Walter Benjamin, 'Author As Producer', in Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, Ed., Modern Art and Modernism. The Open University Press, 1982., p.224:
\textsuperscript{1014} Charles Green, 'The Deterritorialised Print', op. cit., p.10.
themselves as masters of photographic technology it has always been done in order to project an individual aesthetic, revealing a continuation of the structures of referral and transaction contrived during the period of American Abstract Expressionism. Certainly photography represents an ambiguous break-point: these artists illustrate themselves on two sides of the break and retain something of the character of a fetishist who, through the possession of technology, participates in its ritual-religious power.

Writing in Imprint appears to intentionally blur the distinctions between reproductive technologies and the 'hand-crafted' in order to generate différance. When Brian McKay described his approach in 'A Discourse on Prainting' he deliberately blurred the differences between two technologies in order to project his individual aesthetic: 'Prainting is described as a cross between painting and printmaking'. Sheridan Palmer, writing on Bruno Leti, reiterated McKay's approach:

. . . The monotype to Bruno Leti is more of a painting than a print, and more of a drawing than a painting. It in fact utilises all the major elements of picture making and Leti's monotypes, in particular his recent works, reveal the successful assimilation of these three areas. The act of drawing, or the calligraphic element, is the dominant control mechanism in these works, but his use of colour washes, chine colle and thick paint application make them active dramatic and confrontational, and carry them beyond the boundaries of the printmaking process toward his perception as a painter. . . 1017

Leti's work is described as only slightly less than a painting (in order for it to be more than a print). But it is also a drawing (and therefore more 'immediate') which makes it more than a print. What sets Leti apart, according to Palmer, is that 'his art is based on oppositions and aimed at producing a unity'.1018 That is its distinguishing feature: Palmer contrived a system which maintained the oppositions as it unified them into a cohesive whole. In other words, Leti's work was written to promote

1015 Brian McKay, 'A Discourse on Prainting,' Imprint, Volume 28, No. 1, p 7.
1016 ibid.
1018 ibid.
difference between painting and printmaking by relying on a negative concept of technology and deploying the term 'prainting'.

When Robert Nelson claimed that: 'Painting moves away from printmaking (which is naturally less chromatic) and photography moves towards printmaking', he also claimed a relationship between painting and printmaking as well as photography and printmaking \(^{1019}\) which was based on technological differences. It is this type of media specificity and the notion that technology inhibits the production of an individual aesthetic that gives rise to statements such as that by Rita Hall in 'Edition + Addition': I even dreamed of becoming a painter,' \(^{1020}\) or that by Julie Rochford in 'Letters to the Editor', *Imprint 1990* that 'the best prints are made by painters,'\(^{1021}\) or the comment by Mike Parr at the Australian Printmaking Symposium of 1992, when discussing his prints: 'I am not a printmaker, I am more a painter.'\(^{1022}\) Such comments have a purpose. They underscore the artists ability to recognise the dangers of the technological and simultaneously imply that these artists have evaded the corrosive effects of technology.

Similar blurring occurs when artists and writers engage in discussions of the place of posters in art. Whenever poster making is discussed in *Imprint*, \(^{1023}\) there is a tendency to describe the technologies used in their production as techniques 'outside' of the accepted art technologies. Julie Ewington in 'Political Postering in Australia' suggested that when printmaking technologies had been used by political artists, she described the persons using them have a 'fine disregard for object preciousness.'\(^{1024}\) In spite of an acknowledged inventiveness and technical competence exhibited by such artists, Ewington claimed that 'technique is reduced to its proper place in the scheme of things, as servant, not master'.\(^{1025}\) Poster makers were positioned as outside of fine art traditions but artists were projected as

\(^{1022}\) Mike Parr at a lecture at the ANG Printmaking Symposium on 9 Th. October 1992.
\(^{1024}\) Julie Ewington, 'Political Postering in Australia', op. cit.
\(^{1025}\) ibid.
masters over mass reproduction and therefore over the technological. The intention of such writing was to promote a concept of 'democracy' in the poster (by emphasising its closeness with commercial print processes) but also to re-emphasise the 'voice' or 'message' contained within the poster (by emphasising its 'outsider' and 'artistic' qualities). But this could only be achieved by demonstrating that these 'messages' had not been aestheticised or neutered by an association with fine art practices.

This is the politics of poster making, which was also described by Roger Butler in 'Stencil and Silk Screen.' According to Butler, it was Carl Zigrosser, then director of the commercial Weyhe Gallery, who coined the name 'serigraphy', imbuing the technique with a Greek lineage (silk drawing) and so 'distinguishing it for his clients from its common 'commercial art' origins'. The disassociation from commercial enterprises, synonymous with reproductive techniques, was encouraged and it was not uncommon for poster makers to be billed as a 'healthy and continuing oppositional culture' within a fine art context. In such a context, the 'radical' art worker is placed into opposition to the mainstream of fine art ideology: 'posits the supremacy of the mythical 'individual' to prior social structures and relations, which endorses idiosyncratic eccentricity as an authority for so-called 'genius' which creates artificial separations between the 'literal' and the 'visual', thoughts and emotions, self and society, and therefore constructs a visual culture upon a system of obscurity and inaccessible prior knowledge.'

Silk Screen's position has been described as: 'quasi-mechanical, tends to work against the idea of the genius of the individual touch... There is also a logical link between silk screening uses in fine art contexts, and industrial-commercial contexts. It is within this space that most political posters dwell.' Such claims aim to distance posters from 'fine art' practices but actually re-emphasise the artificiality of the structures of referral that are relied on for the production of self-hood.

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1026 Roger Butler, 'Stencil and Screen print in Australia', op. cit.
1027 Tony Ayers, 'Causes: An Exhibition of Political Posters and prints from Canberra, op. cit., p.9.
1028 ibid.
1029 ibid.
The first exhibition of 'fine art' screen prints (in Australia) was by Alan Sumner in the Georges Gallery, Melbourne on 7 May 1946\textsuperscript{1030} despite the fact that the process of silk screen printing had been expounded in Harry Hiett's 'Manual of Silk screen Process Work', (Indianapolis, 1926), available in Australia by 1932, and that the process was well known in the commercial art world and also by several prominent Australian artists of the time who worked in commercial art: Harold Herbert, Daryl Lindsay, Cyril Dyllon, Noel Counihan, Eric Thake, James F. Dlett, Nutter Buzacott, Mervyn Wallis and Leon Dominic.\textsuperscript{1031} Roger Butler reasons that the probable motivation for these artists refusal of the silk screen process\textsuperscript{1032} had to do with notions of 'high' and 'low' art (the process was identified with 'low' art because it was a commercial printing process\textsuperscript{1033}), confirming and affirming the artificial positioning of (commercial) poster making in respect to (Fine Art) printmaking.

According to Butler, it was not until the late 1950's when Henry Salkauskas\textsuperscript{1034} recognised the 'expressive potential'\textsuperscript{1035} of silk screen printing as a 'fine art' that it was embraced. Butler asserted that it was during the early 1970's that: 'Australian artists' awareness of political and social issues was sharpened and screen printing became the prime vehicle for its expression... often combining hand and photographic work'.\textsuperscript{1036} Again, as in writing about the use of photographic technologies, the dangers of silk-screen technology were neutralised by the intervention of the 'hand of the artist'.

In 'Fighting Fire with Fire - Cultural Movements,' Julia Church suggested a rampant technophilia was inherent in traditional printmaking: 'I would

\textsuperscript{1030}Roger Butler, 'Stencil and Screen print in Australia', op. cit., p.6.
\textsuperscript{1031}ibid.
\textsuperscript{1032}Pat Gilmour, The Mechanised Image: an Historical Perspective on 20 Th. Century Prints, op. cit., p.12, writes:
\textsuperscript{1033}Roger Butler, 'Stencil and Screen print in Australia', op. cit., p.6.
\textsuperscript{1034}This fact is also documented by Gil Docking, 'The Prints of Henry Salkauskas (1925-79)', Art and Australia, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1989.
\textsuperscript{1035}Roger Butler, 'Stencil and Screen print in Australia', Imprint, No. 3-4, 1985, p.9.
\textsuperscript{1036}ibid., p.11.
suggest that an obsession with innovative technique in imagery is superficial when the real issues relate to a new visual language that is the re-interpretation and the subversion of cultural motifs. By condemning traditional printmaking practice by focusing on its technologies, Church successfully introduced political art into the printmaking arena in order to exploit the structures and systems of exposure available to printmakers. Despite calling herself an Australian printmaker, Church did not view poster making as 'just another form of arts practice.' Church advocated that poster makers were able to challenge to elitist media giants through the use of the 'art' poster. Church attempted to position poster art as distinct from traditional art practices because of the use of 'democratic' (commercial) technologies and its 'low art' status. Kay Vernon, in 'Redback Graphix', also suggested that posters subverted traditional printmaking because of they dealt with political issues and used non-traditional materials:

. . . their screen printed posters engaged with political issues not just in terms of content but also by subverting traditional printmaking practices(producing un-editioned screenprints in large runs on non-archival paper). . .

Julie Ewington, in 'Political Postering in Australia,' echoed Church and Vernon when she wrote:

. . . The politico-economic issues, and the question of content are of infinitely greater concern to the people than is mere technique; in their view of things, technique is reduced to its proper place in the scheme of things, as servant, not master, to the ideas and the needs of the moment. And this despite their inventiveness and technical competence. . . A tradition of the Tin Sheds is one of fine disregard for object preciousness, which shows up in the papers used. (Expensive paper is anyway pointless when the poster is ephemeral). Butchers paper, discarded cardboard used for cigarette packets and

1038 ibid., p.19.
1039 ibid., p.13.
1040 Kay Vernon, 'Redback Graphix', *Australian Art Monthly*, March 1990, p.17
1041 ibid.
computer print out paper have all been used; Tin shed people are conscious of the politics and economics of recycling, and use their salvage with ironic satisfaction. . .

[italics are mine]

The inclusion of poster art in magazines such as *Imprint*, the signatures on poster art of the artists involved, their collectability (poster art as with photo-copy art is collected by most galleries in Australia) undermine any contrived distinction between poster art and any other art print. The distinctions that Church and Ewington tried to make between mechanically mass produced reproduction (necessarily seen to be in the clutches of a capitalist elite) and art works produced through photo-mechanical means -albeit by 'the hand-of-the-artist' as opposed to large commercial printing houses - did not re-position poster art outside of traditional fine art practices. In fact their rhetoric situates the poster firmly within fine art traditions. Ewington's claim that: 'technique is reduced to its proper place in the scheme of things, as

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1042 Julie Ewington, 'Political Postering in Australia,' *Imprint*, No. 1., 1978
1043 Kay Vernon, in 'Prints and Australia', *Australian Art Monthly*, June 1989, No. p.11, wrote concerning the manner in which Posters were displayed at the Prints and Australia Exhibition held at the Australian National Gallery (1987):

... Dominated by political prints and grouped according to such themes from the 1970s and 1980s as feminism, the environment, anti-nuclear, ethnic and prints by Aboriginal artists and crammed full of works, with posters unmounted and unframed high up on the walls, the room positively hums with intensity and energy...; Richard MacMillan in 'Redback Graphix', *Australian Art Monthly*, 1987, No. 2, p.19, for example, confirms that the survey of 85 Redback Graphix posters at the Wollongong City Gallery shows:... an impressively diverse range of clients... and that the evident handicraft in a long-established and collectable category, the serigraph...;

1044 The Editorial, *Imprint*, Vol. 22., No. 3-4., 1987, p.6 suggested that:... Posters (or limited edition prints as they are sometimes called) produced by 'alternative' workshops have been exhibited widely in Australia since the 1979 exhibition, *Walls Sometimes Speak*...; Pat Gilmour, 'Chris Prater of Kelpra Studio,' *Imprint*, No 1-2, 1986, p.16, writes:... In 1970 the Arts Council of Great Britain celebrated the results of his work in a major show at the Hayward Gallery in London and the Tate Gallery Trustees... began to discuss the possibility of opening a department of graphic art, which they had previously not collected...; Diane Dunbar, 'A Voice in the Wilderness: The Relevance of the Regional Public Print Collection.', *Imprint*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1991, p.18, writes:

... For the purposes of the practising artist and indeed the student of printmaking it is important that the public collection to be able to provide an overview of the history of the discipline, it techniques and predominant styles so that whatever the prevailing fashion there is a reference point or context...
servant, not master' and that 'a tradition of the Tin Sheds is one of fine disregard for object preciousness, which shows up in the papers used,' are examples of Ewington's 'bad faith' in the technology that poster makers employ.

*Art and Australia* echoed *Imprint's* ideological orientation when in 1981 a special section in *Art and Australia*,\(^{1045}\) was created to cater for printmakers needs: entitled 'The Printmakers.' The 'Editorial' stated that the main purpose of this special section was to 'bring to the notice of our readers the work of printmakers who have established a reputation or are following an experimental attitude.'\(^{1046}\) In that issue artists were asked to 'explain the technique used relating to the print illustrated'.\(^{1047}\) In subsequent issues of *Art and Australia* this trend was continued. However, nowhere do printmakers discuss their work other than in relation to techniques used as if the concept or content of the work can only function in its relativity to the technology with which it is inscribed. This suggests that the ideology that *Imprint* fostered had made its way into other forums.

Lesbia Thorpe, writing in *Art in Australia*, (which the editorial of Vol. 21, No. 2, of 1983 claimed was 'a barometer of contemporary Australian taste')\(^{1048}\) explicitly derided technology and positioned a dangerous technology against a concept of creativity:

. . . As I see it, one of the dangers facing printmakers today is the quest to produce something exciting. . . There is nothing wrong with this in theory but the danger is that they are then inclined to interpret this as startling technique, not creativity, and look to mechanical means of photo-gravure, acrylic moulds, computers, vacuum formed screen printing et cetera. . . I believe that the print as an art form usually has failed if the viewer is side-tracked by a pre-occupation with technique. . .

\(^{1049}\)

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\(^{1045}\) Refer to the 'Editorial', *Art and Australia*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1981

\(^{1046}\) ibid.

\(^{1047}\) ibid.


Thorpe conflated technology and culture in order to condemn cultural sophistication and then juxtaposed a sophisticated culture against an authentic creativity. For Thorpe, the use of technology is a dangerous practice because it always tends to take over from the business of the straightforward authentic self-revelation (like Thorpe's 'simple' and therefore more 'honest' techniques of wood cut and relief printing).

Thorpe's use of technology (as indeed all writing in Imprint tends toward) - a concept of technology as a necessary 'evil' to be guarded against - is a series of rhetorical gambits designed to head off the ultimate question as to whether these printmakers mean what they say, or whether they are using the confessional mode of address as a means of evading this ethical injunction. The desire for an honest self reckoning gives way to a different desire, one that places the interests of narrative complexity and intrigue above the requirement of straightforward truth-telling virtue. Instead of innocently lacking sense, Thorpe's project, and indeed all the artists and writers who employ an overtly negative concept of technology (in Imprint), are suspected of a certain duplicity. These artists and writers are caught in a curious textual predicament whereby every attempt to acknowledge some weakness or fault of character of the technology they use (by always treating it as 'dangerous', 'seductive', 'threatening', 'fatal' etc.) in order to promote a positive concept of self-hood located outside of technology becomes twisted into some kind self-justifying narrative logic. It has the effect of a guilty recognition - technology modifies the 'inner' voice - which brings about the notion that Thorpe's concept of creativity resides in a concept of an aboriginal nature brought about by calling to account a negative concept of technology which itself represents the fall from nature. This is Imprint's great virtue. Comments in it hold firmly to these values while subjecting them to a kind of involuntary auto critique; the treatment of technology, signs of cultural emergence, represents a swerve away from nature. It is the refusal to acknowledge this predicament which is the cause for the complicating and confusing tensions within the discourses of printmaking upheld in Imprint which lend these writings so readily to the purposes of a deconstruction.

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In an interview with Rose Vickers concerning the development of printmaking in Australia, with particular regard to the Sydney scene,\textsuperscript{1050} it was evident that the fetish of a fundamentally anti-technological notion of art was encouraged either consciously or unconsciously in the teaching of Earle Backen, who himself, was heavily influenced by Stanley William Hayter.\textsuperscript{1051}

When discussing the influence of Backen on Australian printmaking Vickers discussed Backen's notion of the place of printmaking technology: 'Earle . . . never forgot that techniques were in the service of evolving the image . . . and once you know how to do that then [technology is] at your service. It works for you.'\textsuperscript{1052} And when elaborating on the notion of technique being in the service of the artist Vickers suggested that both David Rose and Backen were good enough at technique: 'so that they weren't a barrier and [both Rose and Backen] had an interest in the mark saying something.'\textsuperscript{1053}

Vickers asserted that what makes a good print is to do with the relationship between knowledge of technique and use of materials:

. . . I'm looking at the way in which the person has used the subject matter and technique in a kind of marriage where they are so closely intertwined that you can't take one away without it affecting the other. And I intellectually enjoy work where the aesthetic aspects of it are down played and in fact sometimes specifically worked against. . . \textsuperscript{1054}

Of her own position in relation to technology (which Vickers acknowledged was inherited mainly from Baken) Vickers asserted:

. . . I have a particular point of view about where technology fits into the scheme. . . My perception of how technology fits into being an artist is that it is a very intrinsic part. . . I think there is a way of creating things and getting knowledge -

\textsuperscript{1050} Refer to: 'A Conversation with Rose Vickers', 6/7/92, Appendices, this thesis.
\textsuperscript{1052} Refer to: 'A Conversation with Rose Vickers', 6/7/92, Appendices, this thesis.
\textsuperscript{1053} ibid.
\textsuperscript{1054} ibid.
whatever that might be - that you do in a wordless way. Your hands make the thing and there it is. And suddenly there is this thing that wasn't there before. And to do that you need to have. . . you need to be utterly comfortable with the technique that your dealing with so that its invisible; so that you've forgotten about it. . .

G.C. 'So that it doesn't impinge ?'

R.V. 'Absolutely.'

G.C. 'So you think its a relationship with technique?'

R.V. 'Yes. . . As a printmaker you need to be able to. . . think in terms of the language of the print medium in which your working in. . . When I've got a good student. . . and my own self I look forward to the moment when we get over the hump of the technique and you can forget about it. . .

For Vickers, as for many students of Backen, technology was a 'barrier' that had to be overcome - 'forgotten about' - if the individual aesthetic of the artist was to emerge: 'when you are learning a technique in art the aim is to master the technique so well that it doesn't trip you up when your executing your particular piece of work.'

This ability to recognise the dangers of the technological reached new heights of sophistication in writing in *Imprint* concerning the new computer-based printmaking. Certain writers employed the strategy of recognising and acknowledging past and present technophobia or technophilia in Australian printmaking in order to condemn a perceived 'tradition' while simultaneously alerting readers to the apparent dangers of computer technology. Diane Mantizaris, in *Art Link*, for example, demonstrated an acute perception when she detected a technophobic attitude in regard to computer art in Australian printmaking:

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1055 ibid.
1056 ibid.
1057 Refer to: 'A Conversation with Rose Vickers', 6/7/92, Appendices, this thesis.
... Using a computer as a legitimate art medium has met with a mixed reception by traditional art circles, who feel the threat of technology in a field which has its history made up of the traditional techniques in Fine Art such as painting, drawing and printmaking. In Art Schools the boundaries are up. Traditional Printmaking methods and techniques are entrenched in the art field. This carries through to the art prizes and Print Establishments. Alternative techniques which make use of modern technological advances are not encouraged as they challenge the way in which we perceive art...  

Adding to the comments of Mantizaris, Jan Davis in 'A Print Educator's Perspective: 'The Problem', invested computer technologies with (dangerous)seductive potential that could 'spirit' the unwary away. Davis suggested that printmaking:

... involves seductive rituals and materials which can become an end in themselves. A 'ghetto' of technicians develop, isolated from mainstream contemporary arts practice. (The ghetto is visited from time to time by a painter wishing to avail herself of the 'multiplicity -equals-more-dollars-option). A fear persists in the ghetto that our traditional skills and rituals will not be passed on to the next generation, who will be spirited away by the promise of new technology.

On the other hand, Kate Reeves in her article 'The Politics of Printmaking: Behind the Institutional Screens', suggested that artists should 'embrace the brave new world of technology ... or remain cult members of the 'living dead'. Jon Casimir, in a recent article entitled 'Welcome to the Machines', reinforced the view that artists would be left behind -

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1059 ibid., p. 39.
1060 Jan Davis, 'A Print Educators' Perspective', *Imprint*, Vol. 25, No 1, 1990, p 10
1061 ibid.
1063 ibid.
1064 Jon Casimir, 'Welcome to the Machines', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday, Oct., 1993
'blown out of the water' - if they did not accept the new computer technologies:

... Interactive multimedia is a challenge that the arts community ignores at its own risk. It is here and it is happening now. The important thing is that we wrestle at least some of the discussion and debate out of the computer pages of newspapers... And it's also important that we don't wait the usual two or three decades to decide whether or not multimedia is "art"... The order of culture has been that up the top you have the visual arts, things like oil painting. Then below that you have music. And way below that you have computer games. That will all be blown out of the water... 1065

As with Mantizaris, Jim Brodie, in 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Technophobia in Fine Arts Practice', 1066 also located a technophobic or technophiliac attitude to computers by 'traditional' or 'conservative' printmakers. Brodie suggested that there were basically only two positions that institutions could take in relation to computer technology when he wrote:

'. . . If computer imagery is introduced into a fine arts department, it is often introduced as a separate entity, as an imaging studio for computer art... it isolates imaging practice from traditional technologies... becoming a de facto leper colony for the . . . technofreaks. It preserves the status quo... 1067

In agreement with Brodie's assessment, Pat Hoffie, in 'The Tyranny of Diffidence', 1068 also only recognised two basic responses to computer technology, both of which were reactionary:

... Responses to technology as a vehicle for art practice tend to fall into two reactionary categories. On the one hand are

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1065 ibid.
1066 Jim Brodie, in 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Technophobia in Fine Arts Practice', op. cit., p 14,
1067 ibid.
those who interpret the notion of working on a machine, or with a 're-production', as anathema to the basic tenets of creativity with its emphasis on the 'original' and the 'author'. On the other hand, are those who embrace technology as the only possible vehicle for a creative future and who dismiss all other forms of art production as outmoded and redundant. . .  

As computer-based technologies have been incorporated into fine arts practices there have been attempts to position computer art in the same way that Silk Screen or Photography needed to be ‘positioned’ in relation to a preconceived structure that valued the 'hand made'. This has led to comments such as that of Michaela Kobor, in 'Ideas on Technology and Change in the Print', 1070 that 'In many aspects, computer imaging in printmaking can be perceived as an extension to the existing photographic processes'. 1071

In her discussion of the impact of new computerised technologies Kobor claimed that the 'aesthetic fabric of a print is intrinsically inter-connected with the technical means through which it is produced'. 1072 Although Kabor claimed that 'The 1992 Fremantle Awards' clearly reflected changing trends in attitudes to printmaking and to the definition of a print, and suggested that the boundaries which defined prints were becoming increasingly blurred, expanding to accommodate multi-disciplinary interpretations, Kobor's comment: 'that regardless how sophisticated the technology becomes we are far from substituting technology for human creativity', 1073 implied that computerised technology continued to represent a threat to the individual aesthetic. As with Kate Reeves in 'The Politics of Printmaking: Behind the Institutional Screens', 1074 who was highly critical of the teaching of printmaking in tertiary institutions which emphasised a technological approach, 1075 Kobor claimed that many lecturers in tertiary...
institutions were unskilled in the use of the necessary equipment - computers and photo-process skills.\textsuperscript{1076} Kabor suggested that in the new educational context the people who held the knowledge were not primarily the lecturers. Rather, information was delivered by technicians skilled in the use of equipment but unable to provide aesthetic judgement. This resulting shift in the teaching from the lecturer to technician, claimed Kobor, was producing a new type of learning which (dangerously) 'focused on technical aspects and promoted a technological aesthetic as opposed to an individual aesthetic.' \textsuperscript{1077}

intentionally to marginalise that practice:

\textbf{. . . The Art School:}

At worst, art school Printmaking departments are a caricature of the bleak existential wasteland. Soullessly sterile and efficient (and empty) with a whiff of the Inquisitorial room about them, they are staffed by a technician who is either a technical fetishist or a disaffected Painter, and by Printmaking lecturers who are either staunch upholders of the proud tradition of the artist/printmaker, or disaffected painters... . . method is considered sacrosanct. . . The strength or subtlety of the personal mark is the order of the day... . . This particular sort of print room can still be encountered in Australian Art Schools. It remains rigidly autonomous from other departments and from the world of advertising, publishing and trade printing.'

\textbf{The Access Workshop:}

The current artist policy seems to consolidate and promote the elite custom printing at the expense of the access workshop.'

\textbf{The Council:}

Until the early seventies Imprint appeared as an annual six-paged quarto devoted almost entirely to the reproduction of Patron and Member prints. . . By 1974 Imprint had developed a larger magazine style format and consisted of artists profiles, more often than not a copy by committee members and various art school colleagues. From 1985 until the end of 1989 Imprint became an in-house affair of a completely different variety. Infiltrated by academics/ curators and featuring in each issue a lengthy historical survey it began to resemble a scholarly sister publication to the promotional booklets from the Australian Prints department of the A.N.G. . . It is interesting that Imprint has rarely if ever reviewed local and interstate print shows or even the Council's own events. . . It[Imprint] precluded any formal debate of issues of Printmaking. Papers presented included Public Collections in Australia, Custom Printing, Political/Social Concerns, Toxicology and Paper conservation. . . There is an opportunity for the P.C.A. to continue as a valuable educational and professional resource for galleries, schools and libraries or for it to evolve as a marketing body dealing in the international import/export of prints. There is also room for a total restructure and the establishment of an independent committee with a broad covenant to implement a more relevant and highly visible program. . .

\textsuperscript{1076} Michaela Kobor, 'In Ideas on Technology and Change in the Print', \textit{Imprint}, 1992, Vol. 27, No. 4, p .5
\textsuperscript{1077} ibid.
This overt positioning of computer art (drawing on its similarity with other accepted 'fine art technologies) is an attempt to account for its inclusion as a 'fine-art' despite it being highly technical and appearing to negate the concept of the 'hand of the artist'. Kobor acknowledged the preconceived privileging structures when she wrote:

...To the non computer-literate person, this generic term appears to undermine the level of human involvement in the image. The terminology suggests that we are merely passive operators in the process of image making. ...\textsuperscript{1078}

Peter Charuk, in 'Computers and Printmaking' \textsuperscript{1079} on the other hand invested computer technology with qualities which extended the personal (authentic) - what Charuk has called his 'personal philosophy':

...I like the computer because: \textit{it is fast and immediate}, it can store information and retrieve it at will, it is an electronic notebook, it is a new frontier of art technology, of its abilities with image processing, \textit{the flow of information from the brain to the screen can happen instantaneously}, there is an historical relationship in the use of technologies and my art, it is possible to work with it as a chemical free darkroom, it provides many possibilities with image processing, \textit{the touch seems from the brain}, it is possible to produce a sequence of images in a closed form but with an open interpretation, \textit{it has the ability to show and repeat accidents}. ...\textsuperscript{1080} 

[italics are mine]

Charuk's allusions to the interconnection between 'the brain' and 'the hand' which it motivates - as a form of immediacy - is touching. Charuk's claim that the computer has an electronic ability to 'repeat accidents' is a claim that attempted to ally computer art to process art and to the process art idiom where mistakes are projected so as to reveal the psyche of the artist: the 'hidden' but authentic identity. Such claims are also made by

\textsuperscript{1078} Michaela Kobor, 'In Ideas on Technology and Change in the Print', \textit{Imprint}, 1992, Vol. 27, No. 4, p. 5
\textsuperscript{1080} ibid.
Lindy Lee in 'Redefining History', 1081 when she described her use of photocopying technologies (another electronic reproduction technique collected by Galleries1082):

... I find that in the new photocopy work I am playing with the idea of relief, building up the surface with paint before I photocopy. By the time I end up actually putting things through the photocopy machine, the surfaces are quite indented and pitted. the photocopies become more like paintings. There is a shift in emphasis - previously they were about re-instating the singularity back into the copy but now I use them more as visual raw material. ...1083

Sheridan Palmer in 'The Approaching fin de siecle' has suggested that computer art, such as that of Mantizaris, is important because it is 'able to give us an insight into the cultural transitions it represents.'1084 Mantazaris’s imagery, according to Palmer, 'is a powerful contemporary voice for modern technology and its role in serving the arts.'1085 For Palmer, the importance of Mantazaris’s imagery does not lie in the content of the imagery but what the process of computer art represents.

Mantazaris’s computer art is treated by Palmer as a cipher. For Palmer the dilemma is of distinguishing the human from the machine rather than negotiating the imagery which Mantizaris is interested in producing and is characteristic of the transactions that occurred between American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking.

Some writers have made interesting use of the terms 'high tech' and 'low-tech'. Comments by Rene Block, in the fly leaf to the catalogue of the 8 Th. Australian Biennial, 'Art is Easy', are particularly interesting:

1082 Anne Kirker, 'A Field of Expanding Interpretation,' Imprint, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1991, p. 13, writes: 
... I believe our collections should judiciously acquire instances of photocopy work and computer print outs as a reflection of the vital activity in this area. They will broaden our perception of art practice generally and force it into direct relationship with culture at large'
1083 Michaela Kobor, 'In Ideas on Technology and Change in the Print', Imprint, 1992, Vol. 27, No. 4, p. 5
1085 ibid.
These artists are thus members of a very different tradition from that revival of expressionist painting which has also been seen to mark the 1980's. Wit and irony imbue much of their art, as do a number of other concerns currently identified as hallmarks of Postmodernism: an engagement with appropriation; a denial of the individuality or singularity of the author; a preoccupation with the eternal recurrence of history as farce, not as tragedy. Their down-beat, anti-heroic stance, like their preference for novel high-tech materials and processes, also attests to their communal heritage in the art of Duchamp, Man Ray and Picabia. . .

Such statements imply that the term 'high-tech' for many contemporary artists and writers today, as with concepts of the technological discerned in printmaking for the American Abstract Expressionists, represents a technological authority which an individual identity might be defined against. For Block, the term 'high-tech' has acquired rhetorical power. The term has been deployed to lend weight to the notion that sophisticated technology represents a de-humanisation. Where for American Abstract Expressionism the aesthetic of the individual hero was defined against the backdrop of technology, Rene Block's post modernity claims an anti-heroic, anti-authorship, anti-human identity by its attachment to 'high-tech', echoing claims by Margaret Lovejoy, in 'Post Modern Currents, Art and Design in the Age of Electronic Media':

...The computer begins to make decisions and generate productions even the artist cannot anticipate. In fact, the program itself manufactures contingencies and instabilities and then proceeds to resolve unpredictable productions, not only out of random inventions but out of the total character of the system itself. . .

Such notions echo the rhetoric of previous writers such as Johnson and Barr in the 'Machine Art' catalogue of 1934, the Bulletin. or of Gropius

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1066 Rene Block, 'The Catalogue of the 8 Th. Australian Biennale (1990): Art is Easy.'
1067 Margot Lovejoy, in 'Post Modern Currents, Art and Artists in the Age of Electronic Media', op. cit., p. 142-143.

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of the Bauhaus who claimed that the product of the machine reflected the 'logic' of the machine and a classical beauty defined by function, process and materials, physicalist attributes which Weisberg, in 'Towards a Syntax of the Print',\textsuperscript{1089} has also claimed for printmaking processes. Thus we can appreciate that 'high-tech' postmodernity as described by Block in the 8Th. Sydney Biennial catalogue, \textit{Art is Easy}, is nothing more than a clamorous reflection of the same structures of referral and transaction which underpinned American Abstract Expressionism. Block's exemplars of post modernity use the metaphors of the 'computer', 'virtual reality', 'digitisation', 'user friendly', 'multiple', 'built environment' and 'high-tech' to generate the character of the logical, rational and cognitive individual they wish to recover (even the word 'computer' evokes notions of 'pure' cognition, or rational and logical thinking). The intention is to erase the identity of the artist and replace it with a technological identity, one that is positioned against modernist notions of an heroic aesthetic individuality.

Far from recovering a Dadaist use of technology (where technology mainly functioned to ridicule and dismantle bourgeois high culture and its ideology and was ascribed an iconoclastic value in accord with Dada's anarchic thrust), Block's use of 'high-tech' marks the avant-garde's failure and of a continued bourgeois domination and a continued depoliticisation of art by treating technology as a sign. This sign has a value. It is a sign which allows writers to continue to falsely re-represent the self as the natural.

Block's post modern introduction of 'high-tech art', with its underlying current of an anti-human, anti-individual, anti-heroic stance offers no discontinuity; it finds its place without difficulty, within an epistemological arrangement that welcomes it (the arrangement actually makes room for it) and that it, in return, had no intention of disturbing and, above all, no power to modify, since it rested entirely upon it. Although in opposition to received opinion concerning authenticity, originality and constructions of individuality - the traditional theories of artistic self-hood - and though this opposition leads it to use the project of a radical reversal of history as a weapon against them, that conflict and that project nevertheless have as

\textsuperscript{1089} Ruth Weisberg, 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', \textit{The Tamarind Papers}, Volume 9, No. 2, 1986
their condition of possibility, not the reworking of the history of art reproduction, but an event that archaeology can situate with precision and that prescribes simultaneously, and according to the same mode, both mid-20th century bourgeois concepts of authenticity and late 20th century revolutionary concepts of individuality. There is no break or rupture created by Block's post modernist use of high-tech.

Anne Kirker's comments regarding Adam Wolter, in ‘A Field of Expanding Interpretation’, suggested that Adam Wolter suffered from a form of technophilia:

. . . His images are first produced on a Commodore Amiga computer, using a variety of software (such as the Deluxe Paint 111), and are then printed out. Adam Wolter has been involved with computer generated imagery for close to a decade. His output has kept pace with available hardware for domestic use. From a very elementary computer he acquired an Amiga 1000 in 1986 when it first came onto the market. The ramifications this had for Wolter's imagery were extraordinary. With Public domain software, Wolter no longer needed to write his own programs to produce an artwork; even Benoit Mandelbrot's mathematical theories were made user friendly. .

But of his own work, Wolter wrote:

. . . Some of my work I refer to as painting and say that in general the work is 'hand-done', in distinction to calculated or computed work. In my experience computed work is achieved by the more classical technique of writing a program with some particular work in mind and being totally reliant on that program to control the graphic capabilities of the machine as you look on - 'hands off' as it were. . .

[Italics are mine]

1090 Anne Kirker, 'A Field of Expanding Interpretation', op. cit., p 13
Such comments imply that while for Kirker, Wolter's use of computers indicated a technophilia, Wolter justified his use of computer technology by claiming that his computer assisted imagery was 'painting' and was 'hand - done'. Wolter's bad faith in the technology he uses was further demonstrated by Wolter's comment that 'The effects and facilities afforded by working in this artificially configured space are so numerous that it often seems no one will wholly be their master. Such comments belie Wolter's intention: to alert us to his awareness of a 'dangerous' computer technology and in doing so demonstrates his vigilance.

In 'Art Goes High Tech,' Mark Dery similarly treats computer technology as dangerous while simultaneously comparing computers with another technological (and therefore dangerous) process - photography. Dery quotes Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom:

... The computer represents a threat to the tradition of subjective expression in the same way that the camera did 150 years ago. ... Until artists can imagine a means of using a given technology so that the look of their identity, based on style, can come through. ... they're not going to embrace it. ...

In order to project the notion of a dangerous and seductive technology further, Hill and Bloom claimed that 'A lot of computer work is still about computers; the intent hasn't merged with the concept, and the idea is frequently not as strong as the technology. ... Most computer art does not look original. ... Good art transcends tools'.

Terms such as 'virtual reality' (what Wolter has referred to as 'pseudo-space'), 'virtual worlds', 'built environments', 'imaginary universes' are also deployed as signs which imply self-presence: 'More and more futurologists believe that much of those lives will be lived in 'virtual worlds', electronic environments that exist entirely inside computers.'

The use of this particular kind of language is intended to create an

1092 ibid.
1093 Mark Dery, 'Art Goes High Tech', op. cit., p.75.
1094 ibid.
1095 Adam Wolter, 'Real Hands and Pseudo-Space', op. cit., p.35.
oppositional and fragmented universe of 'real'(natural) versus 'virtual'(computer/technological). The phenomenological can now be semantically situated in the 'real' and existential experiences can be located outside of computers. Wolter's article polarises 'real hands' against 'pseudo space' in its title for example. But this 'virtual world' or 'pseudo-space' - a virgin territory yet to be colonised by the subject - derived from 'a system emulating human cognition,' or the 'calculations' of the programmer, is as rhetorically formulated as printmaking's alienation of the subject in the period of American Abstract Expressionism, and relies on the same systems of referral and transaction generated by exclusion. Individuality in this 'new', 'built', 'simulated', 'virtual' or 'pseudo' (but always 'user friendly') environment, as with individuality construed by printmaking's structures formalised during the 1940-60's in America, is not negated by the manoeuvre of invoking the terms 'high-tech', 'virtual reality', 'pseudo-space' and so on, it is strengthened. The notion that individual identity - a 'pure' uncontaminated self exists 'outside' of high-tech, parallel to it is promoted by such rhetoric. Such rhetoric implies that colonisation by artists of electronic reproduction technology requires an approach which treats technology as a cipher for that which is dangerous and exterior.

'The 1992 Fremantle Print Awards' exhibition graphically illustrates the notion that new technology acts as a cipher. Michaela Kobor, in 'Ideas on Technology and Change in the Print,' points out that 'The 1992 Fremantle Print Awards' were divided into two categories: unique state prints and prints using innovative technologies, as well as the traditional or 'conventional' print techniques. Such a division seems to imply that there is a conscious effort to create différance in order to promote concepts revolving around the issue of art welded to technology as well as to 'foster change in the development of printmaking in Australia.'

1098 Adam Wolter, 'Real Hands and Pseudo-Space', op. cit., p.35.
1099 The use of certain words and expressions are employed because they trigger off conditioned reflexes. This echoes the thoughts of Theodore W Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Trans John Cumming, 'in The Culture Industry, Enlightenment as Mass Deception', op. cit., p. 166, who writes:

.. words are trade marks which are finally all the more firmly linked to the things they denote, the less their linguistic sense is grasped. ..
1100 Michaela Kobor, 'Ideas on Technology and Change in the Print', op. cit.
1101 ibid., p.4.
(Kobor's claim). Joanna Flynn, in 'Fremantle Award Reviewed' 1102 wrote expressing the desire that future awards would expose greater differences between ‘the graphic and painterly’ and what she termed the ‘technoflashers’:

. . . Next year I have my fingers crossed for some serious disrespect from the technoflashers, exacerbated by a rash of glorious mono-types. Hopefully the graphic and painterly will be a foil for one another. . . 1103

Significantly Roger Butler, a curator of the A.N.G. and one of the judges for the Fremantle Award, remarked that the technologically experimental prints were 'of a low [technical] standard and were eliminated early in the judging.'1104 This seemed to imply that even though there was an outward effort on behalf of the award to incorporate experimental work and new technologies, these were judged by the criteria of 'quality' laid out for conventional prints utilising traditional technologies. This fact seems to indicate that the new 'languages' of the new computer-based technologies are merely languages which disguise the old metaphors - prints are continued to be evaluated and judged according to physicalist theories - not new ways of thinking about images or content.1105

When one reads Imprint, what becomes inescapable is the importance of the contrived negative concept of the technological as a metaphor for cognition and sophisticated (and therefore evil) culture which is woven throughout the discourse of printmaking’s 'subject', a subject that could not be articulated without effacing the dangers which this metaphor heralds. Technology is in effect a dangerous supplement.

1103 ibid.
. . . But what is new is that the irreconcilable elements of culture, art and distraction, are subordinated to one end and subsumed under one false formula: the totality of the culture industry. It consists of repetition. That its characteristic innovations are never anything more than improvements of mass reproduction is not external to the system. It is with good reason that the interest of innumerable consumers is directed to the technique, and not to the contents. . .

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For Jacques Derrida, writing in *Of Grammatology*, the dangerous supplement:

... which Rousseau also calls a 'fatal advantage', is properly seductive; it leads away from the good path, makes it err far from natural ways, guides it toward its loss or fall and therefore it is a sort of lapse or scandal. It thus destroys Nature. . .

Pointing to the 'fall' or the 'swerve' away from nature is the reason for the supplementarity - technology - in *Imprint*. Its meaning is to authorise its own potential to create the swerves away from 'the good path'. This is the 'logic' of the supplementary deployment of a feared concept of the technological.

In writing in *Imprint* a concept of the technological is placed in the service of a philosophical structure which masks and marks the 'subject' by calling into being the 'dangerousness' of the technologies of printmaking. Regarded as an evil necessity, dangerous, seductive, a threat, dominating, subversive, immoral,

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1107 Amy Goldin, 'Art and Technology in a Social Vacuum,' *Art in America*, March-April, 1972:
   . . . There are real risks in using technology for making art. . . the artwork might be used as a tool to maintain institutional values rather than as a means of questioning them. . .
1108 Rita Hall, 'Edition + Addition', op. cit., p.14:
   . . . The print has held me prisoner for a long time and now finally it has become my ally rather than its slave. . .
   . . . To be a printmaker . . . is to be seduced by the magic and charm of the Print maker's technique. .
   . . . The effects and facilities afforded by working in this artificially configured space are so numerous that it often seems no one will wholly be their master. . . note that the title also establishes the conceptual frame of the 'hand of the artist' versus an alienating space - represented by technology.
1111 Julie Ewington, 'Political Postering in Australia', op. cit.:
   . . . Technique is "reduced to its proper place in the scheme of things, as servant, not master. . ."
1112 Lynton Perry, as quoted by *Imprint*, No 4., 1984, p.8:
   . . . Photographic technology presented a "risk of take-over by the material with resulting loss of theme. . ."
1113 Doug Croston as quoted by *Imprint*, No 4., 1984, p.3-4:
   . . . I have not used any photographic methods in my Printmaking as I
inhibiting,\textsuperscript{1114} binding,\textsuperscript{1115} technology is employed and deployed as a species of bad faith so that one begins to suspect a complicitous naïveté, even a guilty recognition of a theoretical structure: Technology must be accounted for in such a way that the artist’s individual aesthetic is emphatically defined - thrown into relief - against a feared concept of technology. This practised naïveté becomes a springboard into a theory: technology must be intervened by the artist’s hand in order to release the 'spirit', the 'soul' of the artist; to give the 'breath-of life' to the 'original'; to animate the subject.

Within all of these examples, Rousseau’s 'dangerous supplement' is put to work. It is the work of a supplementarity. That is to say, that within the 'logic' of the supplement, what Derrida has called the 'graphic'\textsuperscript{1116} of the supplement, is a 'voice'.

... Within the chain of supplements, it was difficult to separate writing from onanism. Those two supplements have in common at least the fact that they are dangerous. They transgress a prohibition and are experienced within culpability. But, by the economy of différance, they confirm the edict they transgress, get around a danger, and reserve an expenditure. In spite of them but also thanks to them, we are authorised to see the sun, to deserve the light that keeps us on the surface of the mine. . . \textsuperscript{1117}

It is the task of writing, such as that in \textit{Imprint}, to demonstrate that in spite of technology, in spite of the dangers which technology heralds and thanks to them, we are authorised to find within the chain of signifiers, an 'original' which bears the stamp of an authentic unified subject.

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\textsuperscript{1114} Janine Burke, Alun Leach-Jones, \textit{Imprint}, No.1., 1976: \textit{the process itself will determine the end result}. . .

\textsuperscript{1115} Margaret McGuire, 'Eros Aneschi: A Personal Vision', op. cit., p 5: \textit{The label of printmaker refers . . . to an inability, on the part of the artist, to move beyond the boundaries of craft}. . .

\textsuperscript{1116} Jacques Derrida, \textit{Of Grammatology}, op. cit., p.165.

\textsuperscript{1117} ibid.
In the early 1960's when art historians were consolidating their efforts to construe a modernist tradition that stretched from Manet to Pollock, printmaking signalled its own aspirations to fine art status through formulating a definition of prints. But, ironically, the break with traditionalist printmaking as a craft in the service of a dominant aesthetics (usually painting), that a definition of original print supposedly heralded in 1961, also renewed affirmation of the fundamental formal, material and procedural criteria of print (the reproduction) and the role of traditional printmaking. The ambivalence over print avant-gardism appears in highest relief in texts such as Hayter's About Prints and New Ways of Gravure, Riva Castleman's Impressions: Prints since Pollock, James Watrous', American Printmaking: a Century of American Printmaking, 1880-1980, Lanier Graham, in The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era, Garo Anatreasian's and Clinton Adams', The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques, but also in the Print Collectors News Letter, and the Tamarind Papers in America and Imprint in Australia. According to these official accounts the first avant-gardist break with printmaking tradition was achieved during the 1940-50's during the time of Hayter's Atelier 17. Hayter and his artists staged an assault on the traditional form of printmaking as reproductive process and the procedural limitations of the printmaker's craft in order to eventually make a claim for the validity for the autonomy of printmaking as an a independent creative medium, in its own right, in the discursive and commercial spaces of high (Modernist) art. The print process became the site of an encounter between pure material and the pure ego of the artist, mirroring Rosenberg's famous remark concerning the painting act.


Refer to Part 1, This Thesis.


. . . . Hence the importance of the mark, the stroke, the brush, the drip, the quality of the substance of the paint itself, and the surface of the canvas as a texture and the field of the operation - all signs of the artist's active presence. . . . . . The act-painting is of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's existence. . .
One expects to find a self-protective instinct in a discipline whose institutional loyalties are stretched across fine arts, to which it aspires, and the crafts, to which it owes its origins and idealism. The notion of retreating into self-imposed exile in order to preserve the integrity and identity of the artistic discipline summarises the very idea of a discipline under the rule of modernism. Medium-specificity has long been the ideal for printmaking. The definition of originality of prints is a method by which authors have insisted that printmaking proceed within its own pre-established borders or face its fundamental values being overrun by industrial aesthetics and machine production. The attempt by Hayter and others to embed these ideals in the fabric of fine art printmaking led these authors to herald the emergence of a new type of craftsman, called studio, and creative: the 'artist-printer'. But behind Hayter's affirmations lies a denunciation of technologised, mass-cultural aesthetics. In this, Hayter and those of like persuasion, were assisted by modernist art criticism, which throughout the fifties and sixties either ignored or falsified the centrality of technology to the historical avant-garde (Dada, Constructivism, and Futurism especially). Today's conservatism, witnessed in Imprint, descends, in large part, from this suspicion of technological thinking, a suspicion that has alienated printmaking consciousness from its own connections to historical avant-gardism. In one sense the hostility toward machine work and the reproduction can be understood as a mutual sublimation of technology as fundamentally destructive and opposed to nature. Furthermore, by emphasising an individuality by placing that in opposition to modern reproductive technologies appears as a particularly noble form of individualism, insofar as it always is already tempered by traditional values. One could simply say that printmakers embraced the anti-industrialism of the 50's and 60's back to nature movements, and leave it at that. Yet the shift from a Bauhaus inspired faith in the potential of machine technology to a suspicion of that same technology continues to infect avant-garde thinking. For cultural critics like Andreas Huyssen, the centrality of technology to avant-gardism is indisputable.

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... [technology] not only fuelled the artists imagination (dynamism, machine cult, beauty of technics, constructivist and productivist attitudes), but penetrated to the core of the work itself. ...

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Artistic practices such as assemblage, collage and montage are the result of an imagination impinged on by technology - a technological imagination. Unfortunately, printmakers do not seem to have grasped this. Furthermore, they have only advanced the technological ethos by condemning technology (characterised in a form of writing in journals such as *Imprint*, that printmaking is viewed as overtly technical). But by conflating the technological with the merely technical, criticism has missed the opportunity to redirect printmaking back to its avant-gardist roots. For printmakers it has always been a matter of wanting to talk about processes and materials and not wanting to talk about the historical contradictions in which printmaking participates that is the source of the fetish, the stumbling block to conceptual as well as polytechnological innovation.

Nelson's claims in 'Why Printmakers Can't Talk', discussed at the beginning of this chapter, when placed alongside statements of artists and writers talking about printmaking in *Imprint*, develops a theme which could be described as a 'false consciousness'.\(^{1122}\) It has become a tradition\(^ {1123}\) in *Imprint* since its very inception in 1966, to speak and write about the printmaking technologies from this one viewpoint. This raises the central and most difficult problem for printmakers: the circumstance that the so-called ideological superstructure has a vitality of its own, that it can become the origin of new structures that develop according to inner laws of its own, and come to have a value of its own which enjoys more than ephemeral validity. Unfortunately for the formation of new ideologies all tradition is a factor of inertia as Marx and Engels observe.\(^ {1124}\) It is beyond the scope of this thesis to do little more than point out that the rhetorical gestures developed in writing in *Imprint* reveals this underlying ideological framework: the products of

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. . . The tradition of all the dead generations weighs down on the brains of the living. . .
printmakers, above (or beneath) their character as works of art have an
organising function but that their organisational usefulness is confined
to their value as propaganda by a cultural power-politics which
maintains an apparatus of consumption based on the fetishistic
possession\textsuperscript{1125} of technology in order to participate in its ritual-religious
power.\textsuperscript{1126}

Within the context of the cultural power structures that future artists will be
confronting when contemplating or becoming directly involved in
production and reproduction in printmaking these points have a certain
significance. Certain questions arise: How does an artist confront an
apparatus of consumption based on the fetishistic possession of
technology? How does an artist employ the technologies of printmaking
without participating in its ritual-religious power?

Although it is not the intention of this thesis to provide answers to these
questions, printmaking as producer and reproducer of ritual-religious
power, might become a useful conceptual tool in the production of a
critical art which finds a certain value (even if ironic) in this role.

\textsuperscript{1125} Arnold Hauser in discussing the work of Engels and Marx suggests that in art, the
setting up or postulating of supertemporal and superpersonal values has something about
it of a 'fetishism', which Marx held was the essence of 'reification'. By setting up such
abstract values and the marking off of distinct mental faculties which goes with it: \ldots \textbf{that}
unity of the spiritual world which romantic philosophy of history discerned
in the so-called organic cultures. \ldots is finally destroyed. \ldots \textup{(Arnold Hauser,
'The Sociological Approach: The Concept of Ideology in the History of Art', in Modern Art
and Modernism: A Critical Anthology, op. cit., p.236)}

\textsuperscript{1126} Walter Benjamin suggests that this practice could be reversed if the author became
teacher as well as producer:
\ldots And today this is to be demanded more than ever before. An author
who teaches writers nothing, teaches no one. What matters therefore is
the exemplary character of production, which is able first to induce other
producers to produce, and second to put an improved apparatus at their
disposal. And this apparatus is the better the more consumers it is able to
turn into producers, that is readers or spectators into collaborators. \ldots
\textup{(Walter Benjamin, 'Author As Producer,' in Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical
Anthology, op. cit., p.216)}
Part 2

Chapter 5

Aboriginal Printmaking in the Context of an Encounter with the Technological.

'It could be said in many respects that what Cubism did figuratively for 'primitive' art, so Abstract Expressionism and Conceptual art did abstractly for Aboriginal art.' 1127

'A white blanket of forgetfulness covers the plight of the Aborigines from the emerging Australian Culture for almost seventy years'. 1128

Discounting the stencilling technique which has been described as the 'simplest form of printing,' 1129 by Chris MacKinolty, in 'Another Way of Doing Art' and which had been 'utilised by Aboriginal artists for at least 25,000 years in rock art as well as paintings on bark,' 1130 Pat Gilmour, in 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', 1131 wrote that 'the earliest examples of Aboriginal printmaking date from around 1970.1132 These were probably initiated by John Rudder, then a missionary on Elcho Island in the Arafura Sea, in 1970.1133 Chris McGuigan, writing in the Catalogue, New Tracks Old Land, 1134 asserted that the earliest known prints on paper are the lino cuts of Kevin Gilbert, made in prison in 1965.1135 However McGuigan confirmed that the first commercial Aboriginal venture was begun in 1970 by Tiwi Aboriginal artists Bede

1130 ibid.
1132 ibid., p 43.
1133 ibid.
1135 ibid.
Tungutalum and Giovanni Tipugwuti (the work of these artists was the
basis of 'Tiwi Designs'). Also in 1970 at Galiwinku, Manydajarri, Matjuwi
and Botu produced the first lino cuts by Arnhem Land Aboriginal artists.\textsuperscript{1136}
According to McGuigan, the first 'limited edition' prints to be widely
marketed were by Johnny Bulun Bulun and David Milaybuma with Larry
Rawlings of Port Jackson Press in 1979.\textsuperscript{1137} In 1981 Port Jackson Press
was instrumental in introducing desert artists to commercial printmaking.
\textsuperscript{1138} But it has probably been the printmaking Workshop at the Canberra
School of Art, under Theo Tremblay, that has provided Aboriginal artists
access to printing facilities and technical knowledge since 1980.

In 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', Gilmour
suggested that in the past there had been a certain hostility towards
Aboriginal printmaking in Australia.\textsuperscript{1139} In 1984, Theo Tremblay (then a
lecturer at Canberra School of Art), asked at a conference of Aboriginal
Arts in Contemporary Australia, mounted by the Australian Institute of
Aboriginal Studies in May 1984 at the A.N.G., whether anyone had tried
promoting Aboriginal printmaking. Tremblay later reported replies that
ranged through varying degrees of indifference to outright hostility.\textsuperscript{1140}
The lack of writing on Aboriginal printmaking may be an indication of
hostility or the lack of seriousness that writers have given to the work of
Aboriginal artists or may simply imply that prior to 1987 there was little
serious printmaking activity on the part of Aboriginal artists despite
their being engaged in it since the 1970s. However, despite the lack of
written material on Aboriginal printmaking a philosophical structure
appears to dominate the texts that do exist on Aboriginal printmaking
particularly in \textit{Imprint}.

The first historical account of Aboriginal printmaking, 'From Dream­
Time to Machine-Time', was in 1987 by Roger Butler of the A.N.G..\textsuperscript{1141}
As president of the Print Council of Australia, Butler initiated an
Australia-wide exhibition of Aboriginal graphic art in 1986 \textsuperscript{1142} which

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1136} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{1137} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{1138} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{1139} Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit.
\item \textsuperscript{1140} Theo Tremblay, 'Aboriginal Artists at the Canberra School of Art', \textit{Imprint}, Vol. 21,
3-4, Oct. 1986, p.15-16
\item \textsuperscript{1141} Butler's article, 'From Dream-Time to Machine-Time' was published in \textit{Imprint}, Vol.
\item \textsuperscript{1142} Butler mounted the first historical exhibition of Aboriginal printmaking at the
\end{itemize}
followed a show by urban Aboriginal artists (‘Aboriginal Australian Views in Print and Poster’) in 1986. In 1992 another Aboriginal Print exhibition - ‘New Tracks Old Land’ - was mounted. Lin Onus (the Chair of the Aboriginal Arts Management Association), Chris MacGuin, (Editor of the catalogue New Tracks Old Land), and Adrian Newstead (in the catalogue New Tracks - Old Land) all claimed that ‘New Tracks - Old Land’ was the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of Aboriginal prints ever organised in Australia for overseas exhibition. A duplicate exhibition also toured Australia during the same period (from November 1992).

Lin Onus raised the importance of technology to Aboriginal art when he claimed in the Introduction to New Tracks - Old Land that:

... The most significant development in the imagery produced by Australian Aboriginal people during the last sixty thousand years, has been the access to 'modern' media and technology.

However, beyond the significant contribution that technology has had on Aboriginal imagery, an analysis of writing in Imprint suggests that a concept of technology as exterior, dangerous and even fatal, has also significantly affected Aboriginal printmaking in more subtle ways. The title of Butler's first essay - 'From Dream-Time to Machine-Time' itself suggests that technology has been a corrosive force which has led to the demise of the 'Dream-Time' and therefore the demise of authentic Aboriginal culture. The fact that this title was also the title of the first show of Aboriginal prints suggests that the philosophical position (authentic aboriginal culture positioned against a dangerous Western technology) implied by the title existed both consciously and unconsciously in the minds of many Australians.

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Australian National Gallery's Drill Hall Gallery in late 1986.

Mounted by the Print Council of Australia with assistance from the Aboriginal Arts Board and curated by Chris Watson and Jeffrey Samuels, ‘Aboriginal Australian Views in Print and Poster’ began touring in July 1987. It was reviewed by Jennifer Isaac, 'Views in Print and Poster', in Australian and International Art Monthly, No. 9, April 1988, p.22-23.

Sally Price, in *Primitive Art in Civilised Places*, demonstrated that the West has exhibited a desire to force the anonymity and consequently the universality of the art of so-called Primitive peoples by insisting on the proposition that art is a 'universal language'. This proposition is based firmly on the notion that artistic creativity originates deep within the psyche of the artist:

... A widely accepted belief within this general scheme is that, more than any art from the world Great Civilisations (whether Western or Oriental), Primitive art emerges directly and spontaneously from psychological drives. ... Primitive artists are imagined to express their feelings free from the intrusive overlay of learned behaviour and conscious constraints that mould the work of the Civilised artist. ...  

It is as 'primitive' art that Aboriginal printmaking acquires its use-value in the structures of Western art. In *Imprint* such forms of decontextualisation include the promotion of the concept that all members of the tribe are artists, highlighted for example by Annie Franklin when she wrote concerning the making of prints in Pularumpi:

'... distributing etching plates and blocks of wood or lino to anybody who was interested in making their mark. The participants ranged from small children to old men. Simple and direct or highly decorated, the images produced in this short time utilised this new medium to express the stories which are inexplicably bound to Tiwi life, land and ceremony. ...'  

Such writing calls forth a 'tradition' of Aboriginality in order to decontextualise the work of an individual and is a way of reducing the work of individuals into a single stream in order to construe a western concept of 'primitiveness'. It is in this way that 'genuine traditions' are construed.

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1147 Annie Franklin, 'Making Prints in Pularumpi', *Imprint*, Vol. 27, No. 3, p.21
Ann Stephen, in a discussion of Australian Aboriginal Art has written that: 'ignorance of the meaning of Aboriginal culture is preserved as a positive value'. Historically in Australia, this has held true. The (mis)appropriation of Malangi's designs for the five dollar note is a classic example. When questioned on the (mis)use of Malangi's designs the governor of the Reserve Bank stated that he thought that: 'the work was of some traditional aboriginal long since dead.' Symes and Lingard, in 'From the Ethnographic to the Aesthetic: An Examination of the Relationship between Aboriginal and European Culture in Australian Art Between 1788-1988', suggested that for colonial Australians:

... the Aborigines were for all intents and purposes seen as a people without culture, philosophy or religion. ... There was even the naive perception among Europeans that the existence of culture is directly related to material and technological sophistication. ...

Echoing Symes's and Lingard's observations, Lin Onus, in the introduction of the catalogue to New Tracks - Old Land wrote that: 'Successive generations of white Australians were conditioned to believe that if, for example, Aboriginal people owned few possessions, they must like-wise possess few cultural values and abstract concepts.'

Erasure of all contexts can be observed at 'work' almost anywhere in writing on Aboriginal art. For example:

... Indeed [Tony Tuckson] states emphatically that it is quite possible to achieve an aesthetic appreciation of this [Aboriginal] art. ... without any knowledge of its particular meaning and original purpose. ...

1148 Colin Symes and Bob Lingard, 'From the Ethnographic to the Aesthetic: An Examination of the Relationship between Aboriginal and European Culture in Australian Art Between 1788-1988', op. cit., p.198.
1149 David H. Bennet, 'Malangi: The Man who was Forgotten before he was Remembered', Aboriginal History, 1980, 4(1): p.45.
1150 ibid.
1151 Lin Onus, in New Tracks- Old Land, op cit.
1152 Colin Symes and Bob Lingard, 'From the Ethnographic to the Aesthetic: An Examination of the Relationship between Aboriginal and European Culture in Australian Art Between 1788-1988', op. cit., p.203.
Margaret Preston, the harbinger of Modernism to Australian art asserted that: 'the student [of aboriginal art] must be careful not to bother about what myths the carver may have tried to illustrate.'  

Adrian Marie cited Tuckson's desire to see Aboriginal art in galleries rather than Museums because: 'it allows people to appreciate visual art without any knowledge of its particular meaning and original purpose.'

Aboriginality is often discussed in terms which disclose anonymous and universal traits. Tim Johnson, for example, distinguished between actual Aboriginal designs and the general use of the dot screen as a form of universalising, arguing that: 'dots of paint on canvas are a pretty universal way of making marks.' Although being: 'very aware of the imperialist problems involved with the unacknowledged use of Papunya designs', Johnson's appropriation, masked by his 'closeness with the people', and masked by his acknowledgement of appropriation, is a form of positing the 'universal language ideology.'

Johnson made no secret of his aim to tap the 'universal language'. Drawing on the Australian landscape tradition and the history of Eastern art, in particular Buddhist art from China, Japan and Tibet, Johnson asserted that: 'I am constructing images of desert with both Aboriginal and Buddhist presence.' Johnson's decontextualisation of Aboriginality included claims that: 'Eastern art styles are similar to Central Australian art styles' and these seem 'to coincide with Buddhist theory and practice.'

By erasing the philosophical beliefs of the Aboriginal people themselves (not to mention Eastern peoples), Johnson, by referring to Zen Buddhism and Eastern art styles, implied a co-incidence of Zen, existentialism and other Eastern art styles with the practices of Aboriginal peoples. Johnson's use of an 'imagined' Aboriginality as well as an

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1154 ibid.
1155 ibid.
1156 Colin Symes and Bob Lingard, 'From the Ethnographic to the Aesthetic: An Examination of the Relationship between Aboriginal and European Culture in Australian Art Between 1788-1988', op. cit., p.212.
1157 Tim Johnson, 'Space', catalogue essay for the exhibition 'Sighting References' curated by Gary Sangster, Artspace, 1987, p.68.
1158 ibid.
1159 ibid., p 68.
imagined 'Easternness' is an express example of the simultaneous decontextualisation and universalising of Aboriginal and Eastern art for the purposes of appropriation and (mis)representation and is identical to the decontextualisation of Oriental and Primitive art practised by the American Abstract Expressionists.\textsuperscript{1160}

Theo Tremblay, in 'Sacred Stones', reiterated notions of an authority invested in the technological and suggested that technology must be thought of as a catastrophe when he described the seduction of Yolungu youth by the 'electronic Pied-Piper of make-believe':

'. . . a vast web of underground optical fibre telecommunications lines and solar pulse-generator plants throughout the whole of the top end bring western culture's wandering eyes closer yet again to tribal lands. . . Pied-piped Yolungu youth are being electronically seduced into the approachable world of media make-believe. . . thought quite wrongly to be more potent than their own. . .'\textsuperscript{1161}

Tremblay's comments echoed those of Greenberg who, in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch ' (1939), raised the spectre of a false and misguided faith in technology.\textsuperscript{1162} By attacking and degrading the tools of capitalism - technological production - Greenberg was able to lace science and industry - sophisticated technology - together as the corrosive element of (the 'true', 'original', and 'pure') society.\textsuperscript{1163} For Greenberg, kitsch was the 'accidental' result of sophisticated culture.\textsuperscript{1164} Greenberg, treated the

\textsuperscript{1160} Refer to Part 1, this thesis.
\textsuperscript{1162} Clement Greenberg, in ' Avant- Garde and Kitsch ', \textit{Partisan Review}, Autumn 1939, p.40, wrote:
\textsuperscript{1163} For Greenberg, kitsch was the 'accidental' result of sophisticated culture.
\textsuperscript{1164} Greenberg condemned capitalism in decline because it:
\textsuperscript{1165} Greenberg claimed that because:
excesses of culture - politics, technology, kitsch - as swerves away from the 'aboriginal' and 'the 'natural'. In 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', Greenberg positioned the excesses of an accidental and sophisticated culture - kitsch - against what he had uncovered earlier in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon': Oriental, children's and primitive art.\textsuperscript{1165} When Greenberg called for a rejection of technology, he was indicating the direction in which artists should proceed: towards the decontextualised primitive unencumbered by the excesses of science, culture or its attendant technological evils.

Where Johnson advocated a decontextualisation of aboriginal spirituality and philosophy by asserting affinities between Aboriginal and Eastern art and Zen philosophy, Trevor Nickolls, as quoted by Ashley Crawford, in 'Trevor Nickolls: Form Dream-time to Machine -Time', appears to be in the process of decontextualising a 'native' Aboriginal spirituality and philosophy by claiming disassociation from (Western) technology. Nickolls was quoted as saying that: 'Aboriginal society is a culturally orientated society' \textsuperscript{1166} (one wonders what societies are not culturally orientated ), 'it was cultural and spiritual - the culture was religion'\textsuperscript{1167} ( in this he echoed Benjamin's, Rothko's, Still's, Pollock's, Gottlieb's and Barnett Newman's notions of a pure archaic art embedded in ritual\textsuperscript{1168}). This orientation, claimed Nickolls: 'sets it apart from most societies, even Eastern societies'.

As with Greenberg's hypothesis in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', that the excesses of culture, politics, and technology - kitsch - represented swerves away from the 'aboriginal' and 'the 'natural', and Tremblay's assertions in 'Sacred Stones,' that technology - the 'electronic Pied-Piper

\ldots it can be turned out mechanically, Kitsch has become an integral part of our productive system. \ldots in a way in which true culture could never be except accidentally. \ldots (Clement Greenberg, in 'Avant- Garde and Kitsch', op. cit., p.40).


\ldots To prove that their concept of purity is something more than a bias in taste, painters point to the Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal purity. \ldots


\textsuperscript{1167} ibid.

\textsuperscript{1168} Refer to Part 1, this thesis.
of make-believe' - seduced the Yolungu youth away from the 'natural', Nickolls's decontextualisation of Aboriginal art also explicitly derided technology and sophisticated culture in order to assert the primacy of a 'pure' archaic and 'natural' Aboriginality:

... The thing that is especially relevant today is the fact that Aboriginal culture is so intertwined with nature and we are today thinking about the problems with the ozone layer and the poison and pollution and disease that has been caused by man- its machine time. ...

In these statements Nickolls was suggesting that Western culture was not propelled by religion (he ignored the Christian ethic in Western culture and law) and conflated an imagined Western culture's secularism with technological growth which he called 'machine-time'.

Nickolls's notion of the industrial revolution as 'machine-time'\textsuperscript{1170} was a reiteration of Greenberg's declared hostility towards the products of a technocratic society.\textsuperscript{1171} For Nickolls, as with Greenberg, and Tremblay, it is the excesses of culture - science and industry - which corrode the 'true', 'aboriginal', 'pure' and archaic society (a society which both Nickolls and Greenberg hope for a return to) that reveals the underpinning Anglo-American philosophical structure in both Nickolls's and Tremblay's rhetoric.

Where American Abstract Expressionism primitivised Western art by 'tapping' into primordial forces deep within the human psyche, the 'traditions' and 'universality' of indigenous Australians are decontextualised to give impetus (from the other side) to the same conceptual frame work. Such a primitivising confirms and re-affirms that Aboriginals are indeed primitive-primordial and therefore anonymous-universal and therefore trans-cultural. The work of Aboriginal artists therefore can 'speak' to all peoples through all time (the primitive and

\textsuperscript{1169} Ashley Crawford, 'Trevor Nickolls: Form Dream-time to Machine -Time', op. cit., p.51.
\textsuperscript{1170} Ashley Crawford, 'Trevor Nickolls: Form Dream-time to Machine -Time', op. cit.,p.51:.
\textsuperscript{1171} I think we're all sort of in the same boat because it is only in our times that we've seen the industrial revolution - the machine time. ...
primordial is timeless) because their innate structures are necessarily primitive, basic and underlying, in the same way that the unconscious mind is basic and underlying. Such an Aboriginality supposedly springs from a consciousness which has not been contaminated by the excesses of sophisticated Western culture. This concept of otherness echoes (and perhaps is intended to confirm) the Jungian notion that the mind: 'bears the traces of evolution passed through'.  

Several statements by Koori artists confirm the infusion of a western concept of otherness - 'immediacy' and the 'natural' - and the erasure of other contexts. Raymond Meeks, for example, asserted his Aboriginal 'naturalness' when he stated that: 'I am born Aboriginal. . . I do not have to question who I am. . . Through my painting I am hunting for lost pieces of myself. . . and through my culture I have many answers. . . it is in my blood.' This sense of loss which also affected Nickolls also affected the half-caste Aborigine, Pooraar. Pooraar believed that the dilution of his blood has deprived him of 'the essential power that allows full blooded Aborigines to see their spirit ancestors - My molecular structure does not allow me to grip the world.'  

When Meeks suggested that his art was a universal language of symbols which connected him and others to his true identity: 'I create my own language of symbols. . . in this way people can relate to them directly. . . my strongest links [to identity] are through my dreams. . . to my essence', he echoed Jung's notion of a pre-figured primitive unconscious (through dream imagery and symbols) which similarly underpinned the work of many American Abstract Expressionists (in particular the work of Gottlieb, Rothko, Newman, and Pollock). Obviously for Pooraar and Meeks, 'authentic' Aboriginal art necessarily invites us to perform interpretation at the symbolic level in the same way that the authentic primitive-primordial did for Jung and the American Abstract Expressionists. 

\[1172\] W. J. Rushing, 'The Impact of Nietzsche and North West Coast Indian Art on Barnett Newman’s Idea of Redemption in the Abstract Sublime', *Art Journal*, Fall, 1988, p.188.  
\[1173\] *Boomali: Five Koori Artists*, Video, *Film Australia*, N.S.W.  
\[1174\] Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking,' op. cit., p.52.  
\[1175\] *Boomali: Five Koori Artists*, Video, *Film Australia*, N.S.W.  
\[1176\] Jung as quoted by W. Jackson Rushing, 'The Impact of Nietzsche and North West Coast Indian Art on Barnett Newman's Idea of Redemption in the Abstract Sublime', op. cit., p.188:
Meeks's search for an 'inner' identity: 'My culture had more to offer... I could feel it... it's like a spirit searching exercise',\textsuperscript{1177} is an echo of the American Abstract Expressionist search for the pre-figured primitive-primordial self. As with Tremblay's notions concerning the loss of authentic Aboriginality by the incursion of a seductive and dangerous technology on the Yolungu youth, and Nickolls's notions of (a dangerous) 'machine-time', Pooraar and Meeks imply a fall from grace with the advent of Western technology. Technology is thought of as an excess of culture, exterior and evil, but also effaceable.

J. Samuels, another artist of the Boomali group, stated in 'Boomali: Five Koori Artists,\textsuperscript{1178}' that: 'European art gives access to other cultures... It gives me opportunity to... paint in abstracted ways... that freedom to express.' Samuels also claimed that: 'a lot of students didn't understand it [Samuels' paintings]... because their subconscious couldn't understand it...\textsuperscript{1178}

Samuels, as with Meeks, favours a Western concept of the unconscious which is similar to that expressed by Barnett Newman who claimed that: 'The image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation, real and concrete, that can be understood by anyone who will look at it without the nostalgic glasses of history.'\textsuperscript{1179} The idea that 'messages' inherent in the work could be understood by anyone who loosened the shackles of history was a prevailing belief amongst many American Abstract Expressionist artists. Jackson Pollock put it like this:

\textbf{\ldots I think they [the viewer] should not look for, but look passively and try to receive what the painting has to offer and not to bring subject matter or preconceived ideas of what they are looking for.\ldots}\textsuperscript{1180}

\ldots This primordial experience, is the source of (visionary artists) creativeness... it offers no words or images... being essentially the instrument for his work, he is subordinate to it, and we have no reason for expecting him to interpret it for us... A great work of art is like a dream; for all its apparent obviousness it does not explain itself and is never unequivocal.\ldots

\textsuperscript{1177} Boomali: Five Koori Artists, Video, Film Australia, N.S.W
\textsuperscript{1178} Boomali: Five Koori Artists, Video, Film Australia, N.S.W
Nickolls positioned himself within an imaginary Aboriginal 'tradition' when he laid claim to universality, timelessness, instinct and intuition: 'I don't know a lot about tradition and the way of life and meaning behind the art, all I know is intuitive, I feel instinctively towards it . . You're talking about a culture which stretches over all time.' Nickolls's desire to return to a Rousseauist society that is archaic and 'pure', one that exists before sophisticated culture - technology or the 'machine-time' - characterises Nickolls's bad faith in technology.

Much Koori art is subjected to a Modernist primitivising which gathers force by depending on and promoting the autonomous force of objects. That is, that its complexities can only be revealed in purely visual terms: the idea that an art form 'speaks for itself' or that it is 'faithful to itself'. Pat Gilmour in 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', suggested that:

. . . art does not have to be overtly political to convey the Aboriginal message - in fact, Marcuse has argued that the case may be made more powerfully through the 'aesthetic dimension', or the potential of art in art itself. . .

This approach is a product of formalist rhetoric where the work is evaluated in its self-evidence as ('primitive') art. In other words, aesthetics for Aboriginal art is always already assigned and inscribed within the formalist frame. To place it within the formalist-Modernist context is to force it into the pre-determined aesthetics of so-called 'primitive' art where it must operate on the symbolic-archetypal level which Jung prescribed. In Aboriginal printmaking, this form of primitivism is always juxtaposed against the formal: technique, function, materials and processes in order to hide its ideological foundations.

There are many examples in Imprint of this form of decontextualisation. Anna Eglitis, in 'Printmaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre', for example suggested that:

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1182 Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit., p.43-54.
... From the beginning it was obvious that the lino cut was going to suit the linear patterns of the Aboriginal students, while the natural, inherited carving talents of the Islander students ensured deeply cut blocks which printed even the finest lines with a minimum of skill. ...  

Eglitis, as well as Gilmour, encouraged the viewer to speculate on the formal lexicon of the artist, one that is expanded by an unselfconsciousness: a 'truth to materials'. The disingenuous naiveté of the writer also implied a magico-ritualistic influence on the 'invention' of a wide variety of rubbing tools when she claimed that: 'the weight of the stone in ones hand had a satisfying feel, linking man and earth.' Even rejected river stones acquired magico-religious significance for this writer: 'The paper, positioned over the inked lino block, was weighted down with the rejected river stones, so they still had a part in the creation process.'

The suggestion that only Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders ('with natural inherited talents') could possibly think of using stones as weights somehow links these artists with a practical and obvious pragmatism to the spirit of the land (the universal mother). Eglitis even suggested that: 'the 'smoko' and tea breaks are rituals of deep and meaningful significance.' But what that significance was exactly we are never told.

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1184 It may be interesting to note that Gilmour, in discussing the earliest Aboriginal prints to have been made by Aboriginals - on Elcho Island with John Rudder - makes the comment that:

... there is a tradition of carved smoking pipes, made by 'V' cuts into soft hibiscus wood. Rudder gave blocks of linoleum to his artists/students and showed them that cutting into lino with safety razor blades was similar to the carving of their pipes. ...

Such a comment implies that it may well be predetermined by teachers what is 'traditional' and promote certain tools and processes in order that 'traditions' can be appropriated. (Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit., p.46.); In New Tracks-Old Land, op. cit., Manydjarrri's work is discussed in terms of transferring the incising with razor blades normally done on wood carvings into lino-cuts(p.24).

1185 Anna Eglitis, 'Printmaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre', op. cit., p.5-6.
1186 ibid.
1187 For Rousseau art is the Mother of all languages:... All our languages are the result of art... (Rousseau quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.247.)
1188 ibid.
Echoing Eglitis's strategy of positioning a natural-native pragmatic Aboriginality against sophisticated technology and dangerousness of technology: '[One student] refused to go near the mechanical creature [printing press]',\(^{1189}\) Theo Tremblay, in 'Aboriginal Artists at Canberra School of Art', also made much of the work processes of two Aboriginal artists in order to demonstrate their naturalness: 'England Bangala and Johnny Bulun Bulun chose to work on the floor, rotating the stone.'\(^ {1190}\) Similarly Roger Butler, in 'From Dreamtime to Machine-Time', was also quick to demonstrate how the 'naturalness' of Bulun Bulun and Bangala overcame the constraints of Western technology:\(^ {1191}\):

. . . In their bark paintings, both artists work in a traditional manner systematically applying one colour at a time to build up easily recognisable images of the animal and plant forms of their religion. A similar procedure was used in creating the screen prints with the artists sitting on the floor and applying block-out directly onto the screens with a twig brush. . . . Perhaps the process of working on the stone - creating the design by a combination of painting then scratching in the cross hatching - had more affinity with traditional modes of working. . . \(^ {1192}\)

In other words, technology is visited as a necessary evil, confirming that the student is indeed 'primitive', or technology is modified by the 'naturalness' of the artist. As with Eglitis, Tremblay and Butler, Pat Gilmour made the assertion that even after Windsor and Newton paints were introduced to the bark painters of the central desert Aboriginals that they:

. . . continued to apply broad areas of paint with brushes of frayed or chewed bark, fine lines by 10 cm lengths of fibre of human hair fixed to a twig, and dots by thin sticks softened at one end; they have used these implements in printmaking as well. . . \(^ {1193}\)

\(^{1189}\) Anna Eglitis, 'Printmaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre', op. cit., p.5-6.
\(^{1190}\) Theo Tremblay, 'Aboriginal Artists at Canberra School of Art', *Imprint*, Vol. 21, 3-4, p.16
\(^{1191}\) Jackson Pollock also abandoned the easel and worked on the floor.
\(^{1192}\) Roger Butler, 'From Dreamtime to Machine-Time', op. cit.
\(^{1193}\) Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking,' op. cit., p.44
Such attitudes echo those of Walter Benjamin, who claimed that authenticity was ‘outside the technical’. 1194 Trevor Nickolls, in 'Dream Time - Machine Time' (the title of both a painting, a series of paintings and a book),1195 revealed a similar polarised conceptual ordering when he collided concepts of the dream (nature) with that of the machine(culture) where nature was given as prior. Ulli Beier, in Dream Time-Machine Time: The Art of Trevor Nickolls, also favoured an 'inner' natural-native aboriginal art opposed to an exterior sophisticated Western culture:

... To me the most incredible thing about Aboriginal art is that it communicates an understanding of nature; such an understanding; such knowledge! And the Western World seems to have lost that. It has gone in the opposite direction; it is exterior and plastic. ... 1196

Theo Tremblay, in 'Sacred Stones',1197 also claimed an Aboriginal naturalness opposed to technology: 'Here the Yolungu live in harmony with their land as always... but a strong dependency on machines, processed foods and the media has emerged... and... The 'system' is slowly creeping into daily life.' 1198 For Tremblay, the Yolungu must be 'vigilant' in order to 'protect their land [and] preserve their culture'. 1199 From its first contact with Aboriginal people, Western culture is treated by Tremblay as a corrosive force - a dangerous supplement: 'From that moment onward, the proverbial 'innocence of the brush' was broken.' 1200 If we follow the logic of Tremblay's argumentation then we must also think the introduction of printing technology(however 'limited') as a 'fortuitous

1194 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit., p.222:  
... outside technical- and, of course, not only technical-reproducibility. Confronted with its manual reproduction, which was usually branded as a forgery, the original preserved all its authority; not so vis-à-vis technical reproduction. ... 1195 It is interesting and significant to note that the first Aboriginal exhibition survey of Prints, curated by Roger Butler was entitled 'Dream time-Machine time' and took its title from Nickolls' work. It is a title which suggests all the oppositions and the prior privileging discussed throughout this thesis. 1196 Ulli Beier, Dream Time-Machine Time: The Art of Trevor Nickolls, National Art Gallery of Australia. 1197 Theo Tremblay, 'Sacred Stones', op. cit., p.22. 1198 ibid. 1199 ibid. 1200 ibid.
accident' that also destroys authentic Aboriginal culture. This may account for Tremblay's statement that the hostility towards exhibiting Aboriginal prints by contemporary galleries as an 'unwillingness to experiment other than with art forms felt to be genuinely traditional'.

This contrast between a 'biological rapport' that the Aboriginal artists have maintained with their environment and Western materialistic patterns of ambition and behaviour that deny the environment and destroy, is done in order to stress the 'naturalness' of the Aboriginal and to claim that this 'innate naturalness' will overcome the threat of technology (the metaphor for sophisticated culture). Gilmour claimed that 'painting was even 'introduced to the Walpiri Children at Yuendumu to save Walpiri children from becoming like white people.' As with Tremblay's decontextualisation of a natural-native Aboriginality, Gilmour suggested that Aboriginals 'had a pattern of life' that 'offered . . . a remarkable degree of freedom . . . enjoyed an all-round activity . . . unimpeded access to natural resources . . . was destroyed . . . [by Western culture]'

Echoing Meeks and Nickolls, Eglitis asserted that printmaking in the hands of Aboriginal peoples is 'direct' and meshed to the 'inner' of the artist. Eglitis claimed that there was an immediacy which linked the mind of the artist to his hand:

... a direct translation between artistic idea and his hand holding the cutting tool. The immediacy of this transposing of an image is akin to the traditional flow in Aboriginal art, to body painting, and to the creation of designs related to ceremonial occasions. . .

Eglitis also linked immediacy with the indigenous and 'traditional' qualities, ritual, magic and nature, echoing Walter Benjamin's hypothesis: 'that the earliest art works originated in the services of ritual.' Eglitis's placement of contemporary Aboriginal art in conjunction with other

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1201 Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit., p.43.
1202 ibid., p.45.
1203 ibid., p.46.
1204 Anna Eglitis, 'Printmaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre', op. cit., p.6.
'traditional' arts-culture such as bark painting and body painting as if it is a natural extension of the ritualised life of these peoples is not uncommon. Gilmour inferred similar affinities between traditional Aboriginal art and Western art when she suggested that the Tiwi peoples' practice of leaving elaborately decorated burial poles out in the natural elements to decay shared short-lived aesthetic manifestations and had 'considerable affinity with process art and earth works art of the 1970's'.

Where Franz Kline rejected printmaking because of its connection to technology: 'Printmaking concerns social attitudes, you know . . . 'printing, multiplying, educating; I can't think about it. I'm involved with the private image,' Eglitis's message was to assert that an 'exterior' and dangerous technology can be overturned by the power of the 'natural'. Kay Vernon in 'Redback Graphix Retrospective' also claimed that the political posters of aboriginal artists subverted traditional printmaking practices and its attendant technological processes because of the use of 'natural' - 'non archival materials'.

For Eglitis, 'natural' art forms are a natural consequence of people who live in complete harmony with their environment: '[The Islands of Torres Strait] . . . offer endless inspiration to an artist . . . [And because of this] . . . All of these young artists have inherited the strong spirit of their islands, and of the songs and dances of their people.' Ironically, Eglitis ignored the fact that this 'spirit' is not so much inherited as is learnt through Western culture because most of the ancient artefacts were removed from their islands at the end of the last century and now repose in museums overseas. The Torres Strait Islander group that Eglitis claimed: 'are at the threshold of a contemporary art movement which will disclose a hidden world of ancient, and still strong, cultural beliefs' actually seek knowledge of their past 'through photographs and family memories. . . [through the Museum]. This suggests that Eglitis's Islander 'spirit' is being reconstituted and mediated by Western culture through

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1206 Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit., p.44.
1209 Anna Eglitis, 'Printmaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre', op. cit., p.5-6.
1210 ibid.
1211 ibid.
photographs and, perhaps more importantly, through a Western cultural institution - the museum - which enhances (Western) notions of a teleologically construed ‘tradition’ (which has ‘value’).

Theo Tremblay, in 'Aboriginal Artists at the Canberra School of Art,' claimed that most top distributors of Aboriginal art and craft:

... were reluctant to experiment with art forms other than those tagged 'genuine original', even though the ‘traditionalness’ of many of these articles may have lost the noble credibility they outwardly suggest. Even the humble bark painting, a recent newcomer introduced by marketeering missionaries has evolved into a form of currency, to be bartered for goods rather than to gain spirituality.\(^{1212}\)

Theo Tremblay’s suggestion that the authentic art of Aboriginal peoples is being diverted away from an enterprise which ‘gains spirituality’ and evolving into ‘a form of currency’ because of their use-value as commodity items (to be used as ‘bartered goods’) is another form of primitivising. Tremblay is suggesting a return to an imagined authentic Aboriginality embedded in ritual and religion. He ignores the fact that the bartering and exchange of goods was always part of authentic Aboriginal culture.

Tremblay also claimed that Aboriginal artists should make prints (specifically lithographs) because: ‘by popularising... certain artists and their images in both black and white society may help to foster direct communication between cultures.’\(^{1213}\) Tremblay’s claim that it is a point of honour not to profit from the assistance he gives aboriginal artists\(^{1214}\) is fraught with contradiction: Tremblay is engaged in a commercial venture. What Tremblay cannot think or admit to is that his own involvement is not

\(^{1212}\) Theo Tremblay, 'Aboriginal Artists at the Canberra School of Art,' op. cit., p.15-16.
\(^{1213}\) ibid.
\(^{1214}\) Pat Gilmour, in 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit., p.49, foot note 29, makes the claim that Tremblay:

... made it a point of honour not to profit from the assistance he gives. He retains occasional printer's proofs for himself or for the school and occasionally sells one to refund the cost of materials, or to pay for special papers. ...

However it must be pointed out that Tremblay's project was to encourage Aboriginals to make prints. It is later of course that printers, including Tremblay will profit. A recent conversation with Tremblay in November of 1992 confirmed that Tremblay will profit from the sale of Aboriginal prints which will be sold in America from exhibitions of these prints.
only a form of invoking a 'salvaging of the savage' but is also a form of
'marketeering'. Tremblay's interest in saving an imagined 'spiritual' use-
value of Aboriginal art works by encouraging them to make prints is a
particularly deceptive form of primitivising. When Tremblay claimed that
printmaking assists in: 'preserving the finest examples of contemporary
Aboriginal Art from being exported overseas,' Tremblay was setting in
motion the 'noble' enterprise of salvaging the savage for reappropriation
by the West.

It is here that we observe the mechanism of Western benevolence.
Tremblay's statement suggests a desire to preserve what is already
perceived as authentic Aboriginal culture in order to re-represent an
authentic Aboriginal culture to itself. In this way, Aboriginal printmaking
becomes a useful tool at the disposal of Western culture-making: 'finally
maturing into a useful extension of the classical bark-painting tradition'
which, like the introduction of painting to the Walpiri, is intended to 'save'
an authentic culture from the excesses and dangers of Western
culture.

Another interesting device used to project an 'authentic' Aboriginality is
Tremblay's use of signature. Pat Gilmour wrote that 'certain images are
described as belonging to individuals in a tribe where they are the sacred
property of that individual, handed down from generation to generation':
signatures. But when Johnny Bulun Bulun signed some of his prints
he used a cross as his mark. This by itself is not unusual. Many
Aboriginal artists cannot read or write. But what was interesting about this
incident was that Bulun Bulun also 'permitted the printers [Tremblay] at the
[Canberra] School of Art workshop to emboss each impression he made

1215 ibid.
1216 Refer to James Clifford, 'Of Other Peoples: Beyond the Savage Paradigm', in Hal
Foster, Ed., Discussions in Contemporary Culture, Bay Press, 1987, p122-130; Virginia
Dominguez, 'Of Other Peoples: Beyond the Savage Paradigm', in Hal Foster, Ed.,
1217 Theo Tremblay, 'Sacred Stones', op. cit., p.23.
1218 Bark Painting, according to Tremblay and Gilmour is a relatively recent phenomenon
and may have been introduced.(Pat Gilmour, The Potential of Australian Aboriginal
Printmaking, op. cit., p.44); For a short history on Bark Painting refer to Helen M. Groger-
Wurm, 'Historical Records of Paintings on Bark', Chapter 1 in Australian Aboriginal Bark
Paintings and their Mythological Interpretation, Vol. I, Eastern Arnhem Land, Canberra,
1220 ibid., p. 49
with a stamp made from his fingerprint.\textsuperscript{1221} In other words the fingerprint (the Western sign of legal presence) is used to supplement the sign of presence of the artist.\textsuperscript{1222} This form of 'authentication' - the cross and the print-of-the-finger - reinforces the Western concept of the primitive: it is a society of symbols, a society without language,\textsuperscript{1223} and negates the concept that the sacred images themselves are the signatures of the clan or artist.

The method by which Aboriginal art in printmaking has been decontextualised, is done in such a way as to support the curatorial case for a Modern/tribal affinity in art. Theo Tremblay, in 'Aboriginal Artists at the Canberra School of Art,' for example suggests a strong correlation between modern lithographic printing techniques and traditional Aboriginal bark painting:

... stone lithography which seemed to allow...the artist to paint directly... remove portions of the image by scratching, and so on... In the normal routine of developing a bark painting the artist generally silhouettes the main characters and later builds up both positive and negative space with cross hatching and dots. Oelified bitumen was use to paint in the solid black forms. Gum Arabic was used to paint in spots and cross hatched lines, and a dry point tool was used in some of the smaller prints to suggest cross-hatching. \textsuperscript{1224}

Eglitis, too, creates natural affinities between the Modern and a natural-tribal Aboriginality:

\textsuperscript{1221} ibid.
\textsuperscript{1222} This use of the fingerprint as sign of the presence of the artist in the context of collaboration is even more pertinent when juxtaposed against Aldo Croomlynk's absence of fingerprints, discussed in Part 2, Chapter 3, 'The Authenticating Structures of Collaboration', this thesis.
\textsuperscript{1223} Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.247:
... All our languages are the result of art. It has long been a subject of inquiry whether there was ever a natural language common to all; no doubt there is, and it is the language of children before they begin[have learned] to speak. This language is inarticulate, but it has tone, stress and meaning. The use of our own language has led us to neglect it so far as to forget it altogether. Let us study children and we shall soon learn it afresh from them... It is not the sense of the word, but its accompanying intonation [accent] that is understood... [Derrida's italics]
\textsuperscript{1224} Theo Tremblay, 'Aboriginal Artists at the Canberra School of Art,' op. cit., p.15-16.
... From the beginning it was obvious that the lino cut was going to suit the linear patterns of the Aboriginal students, while the natural, inherited carving talents of the Islander students ensued deeply cut blocks which printed even the finest lines with a minimum of skill. . . 1225

[Italics are mine]

It is in this way that the Aboriginal primitive is re-represented via printmaking as unpreoccupied with form and content. The art product is promoted as a natural encounter with Western technology. When writers focus on the obstacles and impediments of technology (signs of a sophisticated Western culture), it is a matter for congratulation that they are circumvented, and reflects the rightness of domination and subjugation to imply that aboriginal naturalness (always presupposed by the West) always overcomes the impediments of technology. In this way, Aboriginal art reflects Western concepts of other.

All affinities and, indeed, differences between Aboriginal art and Western technology are constructed in terms which construe an originary source as being necessarily primitive and natural; that this underlies all humanity - a modernist invention - the universality of art through all time for all time across all cultures: 'You're talking about a culture which stretches over all time.' 1226 To posit such an Aboriginality is also to re-discover Westerness - the real project, which absorbs even as it creates the native, the natural, the primitive, the tribal, the indigenous, the Aboriginal.

What Aboriginal art has become, via writing on Aboriginal printmaking, is a representation of the other which is visited in order to reflect concepts of Western otherness. As such, the West's reflected identity is recuperated even as it is by-passed through the imagined 'primitive'. However, this identity, mirrored as it is from a fabricated or imaginary other, is a (mis)taken identity. This idealisation of Aboriginality as other begins to approximate Leon Trotsky's claims in 'Literature and Revolution', that in

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1225 Anna Eglitis, 'Printmaking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centre', op. cit., p.5-6.
1226 Ashley Crawford, 'Trevor Nickolls: Form Dream-time to Machine -Time,' op. cit., p.51
the future (his article was written in 1957), nature would become 'artificial'.

When a counter discourse asserts itself from the imaginary other, as it does through writing on Aboriginal printmaking, it means that the counter discourse has taken up a stance circumscribed by the West's loss or fear of the other (one and the same). When Aboriginal artists admit to this complexity, then a certain kind of insight into Western culture by another has been made and acted upon. It comes in several forms: resistance, acceptance, reaction.

Such resistance, acceptance or reaction generates a certain conceptual territory which must be negotiated or colonised by one culture or the other, or both simultaneously. In this conceptual 'field', both cultures seek advantages, each seeking to exploit the other in the engagement. For example when Gilmour, in ‘The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Painting’, suggested that painting had become an 'important form of income which allowed traditional life to continue', it suggested that an archaic and 'pure' aboriginal culture would survive free from the (dangerous) sophistication of Western culture. But when Gilmour cited the use of 'coveted' land-cruisers as the result of income generated by the selling of aboriginal art she suggested that the archaic and 'pure' 'traditional' life (the West desires) was already eroded.

Western Art has given birth to several types of Aboriginal art: traditional and urban to name two broad distinctions. There is also another type of

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. . .In accord with the entire tendency of industrial culture, we think that the artistic imagination in creating material objects will be directed towards working out the ideal form of a thing, as a thing. . . This does not mean the doing away with "machine-made" art, not even in the most distant future. But it seems that the direct co-operation between art and the branches of technique will become of paramount importance. . . The wall will not only fall between art and industry, but simultaneously between art and nature also. This is not meant in the sense of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that art will become nearer to the state of nature, but that nature will become more "artificial". . .(p.465)

1228 Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking', op. cit, writes that: . . . In some communities . . . paintings have become an important form of income, enabling traditional life to continue by the purchase of four-wheel drive Land-Cruisers which are coveted. . .
Aboriginal art which Lin Onus, in the Introduction to *New Tracks-Old Land*, drew to attention to when he wrote:

. . . In Australia today, countless numbers of tea towels, T-shirts, Tablecloths and other ephemera worth tens of millions of dollars are sold annually. Often Incorporating stolen Aboriginal Imagery, or pseudo Aboriginal Imagery, to encourage the purchaser to think they are buying an Aboriginal product. . . Perhaps the greatest insult to Aboriginal Australia is that the registration of the boomerang was sold by the Australian Government to non-aboriginal interests. . .

Koori Art, in order to be accepted by Western culture, has made a claim both to the universality of all truly primitive arts by its racist claim that all its proponents are in fact Aboriginal by blood,\(^\text{1230}\) coupled with a search by those same proponents for a spiritual origin (a search never even contemplated by their precursors), and as well, the ability to overturn the excesses of Western culture by their natural affinity with nature. This search is the mark of Western influence. It is the search for origin and authenticity disguised as the search for Aboriginality or Aboriginal spirituality or for an Aboriginal naturalness: the search for ones roots. It is the search for identity.

John New Fong's statement, in *Boomali: Five Koori Artists*, a video publication, that 'Aboriginal people have been defined by others for too long',\(^\text{1231}\) is an admission that the psycho-sexual primitivist rhetoric in which Aboriginal art is inscribed has been forced upon them.

Contemporary Koori artists seem determined to create differences between themselves and traditional Aboriginal art, between themselves and the perceived Western art. However, the more one investigates those structures that are employed to determine these differences, the more one comes to the realisation that these differences are constructed so as to

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\(^{1229}\) There is also another type of Aboriginal art which Lin Onus, in the Introduction to *New Tracks-Old Land*, op. cit. p.5


\(^{1231}\) John New Fong, in *Boomali: Five Koori Artists*, Video, *Film Australia*, N.S.W, has said: 'Aboriginal people have been defined by others for too long'
create similarities which also stress their differences. This has created certain problems which Nicholas Baum, in *Art and Text*, has commented on:

... both the sameness and difference attributed to recent Aboriginal art generally work to reduce its meanings, thus reinforcing our own culture at the expense of the others. ... 1232

The insistence on positing Aboriginal art as always having more 'spiritual' content and polarising it against Western art because: 'That is precisely what is missing from our advanced civilisation.', 1233 is exactly that which leads to the decontextualisation of Aboriginal culture.

Aboriginal printmaking (particularly that described by *Imprint*) is always projected so as to confirm predominantly white Anglo-American aesthetic values based on medium specificity and spiritual aspirations. Cast in this light, Aboriginal art in galleries appears as a fetishistic discourse which marks the recognition by Western culture that it is threatened by the loss of otherness since it must appropriate a 'primitive' which always mirrors the 'authentic past' which Western civilisation would like to call its own. When contemporary Aboriginal artists employ the intellectual decontextualisation of the 'primitive' which underpins American Abstract Expressionism and (re)present this decontextualised 'primitive', it reveals the success of the project of cultural assimilation. The mirror that Western culture would create in order to reflect its identities savagely reflecting a mirroring of its own fabricated identities.

Despite claims by both Kevin Gilbert that 'All Our art is political', 1234 and Fiona Foley that 'All Aboriginal art in this country is political whether it is an abstract bark painting explaining the title deeds to land ownership or [of] a recognisable symbol', 1235 attention to the projection of an authentic Aboriginality by underscoring medium specificity and the encounter with 'sophisticated' Western culture (always in the form of an impingement of a

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1233 Andrew Pekarik as quoted by Nicholas Baum, 'The Interpretation of Dreamings: The Australian Aboriginal Acrylic Movement,' op. cit., p.112.
1234 Kevin Gilbert, as quoted in *New Tracks- Old Land* op. cit.(p.30)
1235 Fiona Foley as quoted in *New Tracks- Old Land*, op. cit.(p.62)
'dangerous' technology) begins to be suspected of a cultural-political manoeuvre whose intention is to depoliticise Aboriginal art in the same way that art was depoliticised, prior to the rise of American Abstract Expressionism and American printmaking as an autonomous discipline. The desire to locate a decontextualised 'primitive' by focusing on the dangers of a technologically orientated culture in order to explain Aboriginal art indicates that the mapping processes employed (to produce authorship or notions of an individual aesthetic) during the period of American Abstract Expressionism lie deep within the psychology of contemporary writers, artists and institutions.

Many Koori artists have denied any such association with the Aboriginal as other as conceptualised by the West, claiming that their position (the position that they have come to occupy) has been imposed and represents a system and power-politics beyond their control. Gordon Bennet, for example, has said:

... My position was highlighted for me by going to Maningrida. I've basically been conditioned to the Anglo-Australian worldview. My perception of Aboriginal culture has come in the same way as it has for most white Australians - through school, newspapers, general public comment... 

Such a statement implies that Aboriginal artists are continual prey to cultural power-politics. Of this encounter with Western culture and his situation in it, Bennet is painfully aware: 'I won't be appropriating any more aboriginal images because now I more fully understand the situation.' And when discussing his work Bennet suggested that his work was political 'in that it deals with how Australians have come to see themselves and how they come to see Aboriginal people.'

When Nigel Lendon, in his article 'Black and White', claimed that: 'In contrast to the rhetoric of postmodernism, in contemporary Aboriginal art

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1236 Refer to Part 1, Chapter 1, this thesis.
1238 ibid.
1239 ibid.
the question of authenticity and originality are construed in a different
costext [from Western art], he was attempting to assert the primacy of
the political: notions of cultural identity and self-determination.
Unfortunately these assertions appear as a noble form of liberalism and
suggests the 'work' of a benevolent colonialism particularly when Lendon
claimed that: 'Each creative act is an assertion of both cultural and
individual identity, and is thus political in essence, whether in invention or
recovery of language forms.'

This claim echoes assertions outlined in Trotsky's and Breton's joint essay
entitled 'Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', (first published in
Partisan Review in 1938). This document outlined the defence of a
critical art that remained 'faithful to itself'. Trotsky and Breton outlined
the revolutionary position that artists would take by being true to
themselves: 'True art... insists on expressing the inner needs of man and
mankind in its time - true art is unable not to be revolutionary.'

Roger Butler has also suggested that the work of Aboriginal artists are
primarily political:

. . . The emergence of prints by Aboriginal artists must be seen
in the context of their demands for self determination, the
politics of the counter culture, and the development of
Printmaking in Australia. . . It was in this affirmative context,
and with a desire to preserve and promote their visual culture
and to achieve financial independence, that Aboriginals began
experimenting with Printmaking. . .

However, the emergence of the Aboriginal as printmaker has already
been high jacked by a powerful cultural politics at work 'behind-the-
scenes'. The desire for the preservation of an 'aboriginal' 'pure' and
archaic 'mother' visual culture is apparent within writing on Aboriginal
printmaking particularly that in Imprint and particularly when a concept of
technology as exterior and dangerous (to the 'pure' archaic society before

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1241 ibid.
1242 In August 1938 Partisan Review published a letter that Leon Trotsky had sent to the
magazine entitled 'Art and Politics', p.3-10.
1243 ibid., p.484.
the 'accident' of culture) is projected. Such claims draw attention to the fact that a concept of technology, developed during the American Abstract Expressionist period, has been placed at the disposal of writing on Aboriginal printmaking in order to give credence to the notion that this art is indeed authentic, universal, timeless and primitive-primordial. Placed in this context, Aboriginal art, as the shining example of all that is 'primitive and 'primordial', but simultaneously conceptual,\textsuperscript{1245} reflects the art that American Abstract Expressionists were alluding to when they expressed a spiritual kinship with primitives and archaic art\textsuperscript{1246} or when they drew on their concepts of primitive art.

Certainly, Aboriginal printmaking can be seen (as Roger Butler, Nigel Lendon, Gordon Bennet, John New Fong, Fiona Foley and Kevin Gilbert do) in the context of the desire for self-determination and the politics of a counter-culture.\textsuperscript{1247} However much writing appears in Imprint and elsewhere as a strategy to deploy the art of Aboriginal Australians, through these people to look into our past. The work of Aboriginal artists are projected so as to 'represent' an earlier stage or mode of human social organisation and cultural life, are 'living examples' of how we used to be, perhaps not exact replicas but close parallels.

\textsuperscript{1245} Pat Gilmour, 'The Potential of Australian Aboriginal Printmaking,' op. cit., p.52, writes:

"... This oral tradition demonstrates a high order of conceptual intelligence which allows Aborigines to survive for millennia in territory where white explorers quickly perished. ... the so-called "primitive" intellect was in no way inferior to that of contemporary man. ... and... embodied a mental construction more marvellous and intricate than anything on earth, a construction to make Man's material achievements seems like so much dross. ... (Bruce Chatwin, The Songlines, London, Jonathan Cape as quoted by Gilmour). By calling forth a 'tradition', Gilmour places all thinking, regardless of how intricate conceptually it might be, within the confines of an ethnocentric 'primitive-primordial' framework.

\textsuperscript{1246} Letter sent by Gottlieb and Rothko to New York Times, June 7, 1943.

Chapter 6:
The Impact of the Physicalist Approach to Criticism on Australian Printmaking

The exemplar of the rationalist approach to art criticism is Clement Greenberg. Analysis of his three pivotal essays, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', and 'Modernist Painting', suggests that the 'pure' art aesthetics that Greenberg called for in his historicising was the result of a rational act and not one based on a logic inherent in the history of art as both Greenberg and Hilton Kramer in 'A Critic on the Side of History' claimed. Greenberg's rationalising project of art outlined in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon' was clear: each discipline should become independent and autonomous with distinct intrinsic qualities in its various mediums and processes that they

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1252 Hilton Kramer described Greenberg's criticism in 'A Critic on the Side of History', in his The Age of the Avant Garde, Secker and Warbourg, London, 1974, p.504:

... In Mr Greenberg's criticism, the impersonal process of history appears in the guise of an inner artistic logic, which has its own immutable laws of development and to which works of art must conform....

This view of Greenberg has in turn been criticised by Michael Fried writing in 1965 (in 'Three American Painters', in Modern Art and Modernism, Ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, The Open University, 1982, p.115-121.) Despite his criticisms of Kramer, Fried writes that: 'the visual arts - painting especially - have never been more explicitly self critical than during the past twenty years', suggesting that Fried agreed with Greenberg's program and his formalist analysis of art outlined in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon.'

1253 The necessity of maintaining strict boundaries between the arts has been the essence of Modernism since Roger Fry's work in the 1920's. Refer to Vision and Design (1920) and Transformations (1926) in particular. But it was not until Alfred H. Barr's (Cubism and Abstract Art, Museum of Modern Art, 1937, and What is Modern Painting, The
should be 'hunted back...isolated, concentrated and defined',
identity restored by 'virtue of its medium... unique and strictly itself'.
Writing on printmaking both in America during the height of American Abstract Expressionism, and in Australia since 1966, also attempts to reduce printmaking to its essences in order to define and direct printmakers.

Greenberg's writing is imbued with traces or traits of Rousseau's supplementarity - what Derrida has called 'the 'logic' of the supplement'.

Greenberg's notions of kitsch as a product of a technocratic society 'out of control' - negative associations - and his suggestion that artists 'point to the Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal of purity' - positive associations - are both express examples of this supplementary logic which underwrite Greenberg's notion of quality.

Such rhetoric reveals a drive which shows how the mind takes possession of experience, relating thought to the object-of-thought through an act of structured perception.

Museum of Modern Art, (1943) and Clement Greenberg's desire to see each discipline achieving a 'purity and radical delimitation of their fields of activity' (Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', Partisan Review, July-August, 1940) that printmaking embraced the ideals of medium specificity and retreated into a self-imposed exile in order to preserve the integrity and identity of the artistic discipline that later became entrenched 'more firmly in its area of competence' (Greenberg: 'Modernist Painting', Modern Art and Modernism, Ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, The Open University, 1982, p.5.) According to Frascina, Greenberg 'refined and elaborated Barr's explanation and history of Modern art' (Francis Francina, ed., 'Introduction', Pollock and After, p.11) in opposition to the Marxist-based 'materialist conception of history' (p.14) as practised by Meyer Schapiro. This view of Greenberg is strengthened by Hilton Kramer's comment that: 'One sees in Mr. Greenberg's criticism the aestheticism of Roger Fry... fitted out with a principle of historical development from Marx.' (Hilton Kramer, A Critic on the Side of History... in his The Age of the Avant-Garde, Secker & Warburg, London, 1974, p.504.). However such comments must be evaluated in conjunction with Greenberg's own comments in respect to both Barr and Modern art. The few comments that Greenberg made about Barr and the Museum of Modern Art are negative and derogatory. Greenberg considered Barr 'an inveterate champion of minor art' (Clement Greenberg, The Late Thirties in New York, Art and Culture, Thames and Hudson, London, 1973, p.231) and Greenberg also believed that academicism, which he called Alexandrianism, had found a home in the Museum of Modern Art, which 'devoted more funds to this spurious kind of Modern Art' (Clement Greenberg, 'A Symposium: The State of American Art', The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 2, John O'Brian ed., The University of Chicago Press, 1986, p.288)

1254 Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69.
1255 ibid.
1257 Clement Greenberg, in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69
The American Abstract Expressionists, influenced by Greenberg, became the exemplars of this approach in the visual arts and American printmakers under the influence of Hayter quickly adopted this approach. Australian printmaking from 1966 onwards also pivoted itself around notions of medium specificity and the desire for creative autonomy urged by Greenberg's and Hayter's seminal writing. Writing in *Imprint* demonstrates the consequences of this Anglo-American orientation revealing its links to the same theoretical matrix underpinning American Abstract Expressionism: the desire to realise an authentic individual aesthetic mirrored by historically determined physicalist attributes given to the materials and processes the artist uses.

In support of his earlier stance outlined in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', Greenberg argued in 'Modernist Painting' that: 'the unique and proper area of competence of each art coincided with all that was unique to the nature of its medium.' Greenberg maintained that the 'essence of Modernism lay 'in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticise the discipline itself - not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence'.

Echoing Greenberg, Hayter urged in *About Prints*, that printmaking was: 'the emergence of an image by the exercise of a technique in the medium.' Hayter claimed that printmaking revealed a discipline-based aesthetic and that a print's originality was related to the medium and process, ironically ignoring his own warning that 'should the artist rely only on the mechanical use of technique, then the result would be the journalism of experience, not an experience itself.'

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. . . The theory that all significant empirical statements can be formulated as statements referring to publicly observable physical objects. . .

1259 Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', op. cit., p.5.

1260 ibid.


1262 S.W. Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, op. cit., p 277:

. . . only those qualities previously experienced by the artist can appear in the result. . . It is in the exposure of his idea and his plate to the accidents of method, to the immanent risk of destruction, that the greatest result may occur in the work and most valuable experience in the artist. . .
Like Greenberg who derided the practice of imitation, Hayter determined that truly original and authentic work in printmaking lay outside the realm of reproduction or imitation: 'The expressive possibilities of a process in the hands of an artist who has himself devised it can give results in the category of the print as a major work beyond any result to be expected from the ingenious adapters of other men's methods.' Hayter described the method for achieving a major work in print:

... Starting from an arbitrary position, action is continued in consecutive stages, at first rational but later becoming intuitive, in the absence of a concrete project, and further continued to the destruction of the plate.

For Hayter, 'controlled experiments' lead to aesthetic discoveries primarily concerning the 'inherent qualities' of the medium but in relation to the thought processes of the artist. By taking successive prints from each 'stage' of the process or 'experiment', the results could be analysed as steps of an individuals' conscious or unconscious thought processes. Following Greenberg's call that each medium of the visual arts was 'essentially psychological and sub- or supra-logical', and that artists should make 'progressive surrender to the resistance of its medium', Hayter was aiming at a psychological portrait of the artist by analysing the physical evidence left in the artists wake.

Chapters 17, 18 and 19 of Hayter's Book, New Ways of Gravure come under the main heading 'Implications of Gravure as a Specific Medium' with sub headings: 'Theory of Line', 'Descriptive Drawing', 'Specific Qualities, Textures, Plaster'. In these chapters Hayter directed artists towards the inherent qualities of the medium of printmaking - its physical characteristics. For Hayter, the process idiom revealed the inner mind of the artist: 'In my own manner of working I would consider the selection among these consequences rather to be unconscious than deliberately conscious.' For Hayter, the observed differences of the various print

1264 S.W. Hayter, About Prints, op. cit., p.104
1265 S.W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, op. cit., p.218.
1266 Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69.
1267 ibid.
1268 S.W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, op. cit., p.279
stages was the key to analysing the personal authentic. Technology (the mechanical) and cognition, were to be viewed as conjoined and exterior. The unconscious, on the other hand, was imbued with having a prior access to natural experience. For Hayter, the authentic self was embedded in the unconscious and could only be revealed by the artist's relation and reactions to the process, 'captured' in the printing of the various stages. Hayter stressed that such experiences were outside the mechanistic. Hayter simultaneously elaborated and reinforced this point by calling on the notion of 'play'.

Hayter's allusion to the universalism of the child and play however, as with Greenberg's allusions to children, primitive art and Oriental art, was a rhetorical gambit. Within this rhetorical structure, the child-like (the universal child) was meant to represent innocence, naiveté and an uncontrolled spontaneity and was positioned against the 'preconceived', the rational and logic:

... the enriching of the artist's experience, can only occur as he plays with his process with a certain detachment from the result; the painful and accurate execution of a preconceived plan can only involve those means already familiar to him and offer no new ones. ... 1269

However, advocating a regression to a state of detachment effected by play and simultaneously negating rational thought, logic and the cogito is to pre-suppose the technological process as a dangerous supplementarity - a declared Rousseauism,1270 and also is to presuppose that authentic selfhood resides in what opposes culture's sophistication - also a declared Rousseauism.

Barnett Newman, in a discussion in Imprint1271 of his involvement with lithography, as with Greenberg and Hayter, also accented the notion of play as if play could rein in rational thought:

... To me ... lithography is. ... is an instrument. ... Nor do I consider it to be a kind of translation of something from one

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1269 ibid., p.280.
1270 Refer to Part 2. Chapter 7, this thesis.
medium to another. For me it is an instrument that one plays. . .
so in lithography, creation is joined with the 'playing'...

Newman's statement about the processes of creative lithographic
reproduction conjoined Greenberg's notions concerning the creative
autonomy of each medium as well as both Greenberg's and Hayter's
notions of play. And, as with Greenberg and Hayter, Newman was
suggesting that rational and cognitive thought was dangerous.
Continuing with Hayter:

... The point that distinguishes this workshop [Atelier 17]... is
the shared conviction that technique is an action in which the
imagination of the user is excited, whereby an order of image
otherwise latent becomes visible; and not merely a series of
mechanical devices to produce or repeat a previously
formulated image on paper... 1273

Hayter, and Greenberg continually hold off cognition, rational thought and
the preconceived in order to privilege the unconscious imagination - the
artist's 'inner' - over the mechanical and technological. This order of
privilege has emerged from the tendency to postulate a fundamental
difference between the realm-of-the-mind on the one hand and physical
nature on the other. Hayter explicitly acknowledged the separation of the
physical (outer) from the 'mind-of-the-artist' (inner):

... there exists a general truth, as a common value beyond
the control of individual desire or speculation: but that objects,
things in the phenomenal world, have an order of reality which
is less concrete than the reality of a human reaction to them. I
want to distinguish the pursuit of reality from the pursuit of
objects, and to combine the immediate experience with the
experience of the imagination... 1274

For Hayter, the technologies of printmaking, its physical characteristics,
represented dangerous and seductive swerves away from an aboriginal

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1272 ibid.
1273 S.W. Hayter, About Prints, op. cit., p.94.
nature, the centre of which was found in opposition to the physical, technology, the mechanistic, preconceived ideas, imitation and mechanical reproduction.

Ruth Weisberg's essay, 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', (published in the Tamarind Papers) as with Greenberg's search for a syntax of painting, is a search for a pure syntax which remains true for all prints, is a search for a syntax for all printmaking upon which the print aesthetic could be mapped or superimposed. Her approach, as with Greenberg's rationalist approach and Hayter's methodological approach, is a search for: 'a discipline-based aesthetic'. By rationalising printmaking to three logical and reductive principles - 'function', 'process', and 'material' - which 'subsume among them all factors relevant to printmaking', Weisberg erected the fence in which to understand and negotiate the 'essences' of print. This

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1276 The Tamarind Papers are a technical - historical and theoretical journal produced by the Tamarind Institute (University of New Mexico) and are readily available in Australia. Like the Australia Council's publication Imprint, The Tamarind Papers were produced with a specific educational mission inevitably bound up with the 'restoration' of Lithography in America. In Part 2, Chapter 1, the question of power-politics (in relation to the deformation of the archive) was raised in connection with Print Workshops and American Abstract Expressionists making prints (mainly lithographs) through collaboration of a type promoted by the Tamarind Institute) and perhaps more importantly how the notion of Originality in Prints (the law which is not a Law) introduced in 1961 in America and 1966 in Australia, has impinged on the American Abstract Expressionism - Printmaking inter-discursive configuration. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss the effect of the Tamarind Institute on Australian printmaking except to point out that many Australian artists have visited and enrolled in courses at the Tamarind Institute since 1961 and this has been recorded and acknowledged in Imprint(Berris Richardson, 'Report on the Tamarind Master Printer Programme', Imprint, No. 3, 1981.). Further, Fred Genis, a Master Printer at Tamarind has lived in Australia since 1978 (Sonia Dean, 'A Collection of Printer's Proofs', Imprint No.1 1983). Pat Gilmour has written extensively on American Printers most of whom have been involved with the Tamarind Institute. Gilmour was also the curator of Prints at the Australian National Gallery till 1991 and became the editor of the Tamarind Papers shortly after. There is plenty of circumstantial evidence that suggests that the influence of American attitudes concerning medium specificity, refined in the period 1950-1961, prevail in Australian printmaking. Writing in the Tamarind Papers continues to impinge on the consciousness and unconsciousness of Australian printmaking in subtle ways.

1277 Clement Greenberg, in 'Towards A Newer Laocoon,' op. cit., sees the problems of painting as: 'first and foremost problems of the medium' (p.67) and that these had eventually been overcome by: 'the avant-garde arts achieved a purity and radical delimitation of their fields of activity' (69) this led to: a willing acceptance of the limitations of the medium of the specific art' (p.69); Also refer to: Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', Partisan Review, 1939.

1279 ibid.
discipline-based touchstone is the basis for Weisberg's aesthetics of printmaking.

In 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', Weisberg's intention was to re-create an aesthetic 'field' based on a rational-reductionist ideology which would reflect the subject. Weisberg's strategy was a duplication of the strategy exploited by Alfred Barr Jr. in the 'Machine Art' exhibition of 1934 which also aimed at creating a technological aesthetic, a 'machine aesthetic.' Weisberg's project is enthralling because it comes 50 years after the 'Machine Art' exhibition, 48 years after Greenberg's essay 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' and 47 years after Greenberg's 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', 37 years after Hayter's New Ways of Gravure and 27 years after the definition of originality in prints. This is not to criticise Weisberg's reversion to a fundamentally Modernist approach in order to define a syntax of the print, but rather to trace its historical evolution and acknowledge that this logico-reductionist approach is embedded in an ideology formed in the same period as the philosophical underpinning of American Abstract Expressionism was established.

By defining the syntax of the print as being embodied in notions of 'function', 'process', and 'material', Weisberg re-animated Barr's and Johnson's formalist approach and Greenberg's 'pure' aesthetics, a Kantian notion that is based on the assumption that each medium, because it is unique, will define its own arena of responsibility and so redefine and develop its own aesthetic: 'It is by virtue of its medium that

1282 Greenberg, in 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., wrote that it was in the plastic arts that had been 'most closely associated with imitation, and it is their case that the ideal of the pure and abstract has met most resistance'. (p.69) Greenberg made this statement in 1940. Weisberg's essay was published in 1986. This could imply that American Printmaking had been resistant to notions of medium specificity outlined by Greenberg and Hayter up to the time of Weisberg's essay in the Tamarind Papers or may imply that Printmaking's response to postmodernity in the late 1980's was reactionary. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore this notion. However it must be noted that writing in Imprint by its singular lack of response to the questions which postmodernity has raised (or negative reaction to articles which raise certain questions, in the form of letters to the editor - see for example: Imprint Summer 1990) implies that the readership, Imprint's financial supporters, are reactionary. Comments and writing in Imprint since Weisberg's essay of 1986 imply that Imprint continues to aggrandise the concepts involved with medium specificity whether or not this is a sign of a reactionary stance is open for debate.
each art is unique and strictly itself.³³ Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69.
³³ Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', op. cit.
³³ T. J. Clark commented that by 1940 Greenberg had 'staked out the ground' for his 'later practice as a critic'; his 'famous theoretical study' of 1961, 'Modernist Painting' takes 'up directly, sometimes almost verbatim' the argument of his 1940 article 'Towards a Newer Laocoon.' (T. J. Clark, 'Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art', in Pollock and After, ed., Francis Francina, Harper & Row, London, 1985, p.47.)
which encourage an attitude towards the dichotomy: realm-of-the-mind versus physical nature.

Without delving into the problems for analysis which any attitude towards the dichotomy heralds, the Kantian-Greenberg-Hayter-Weisberg logic ignored the fact that these logically well-behaved objects (process, material, function, technology etc.) are already themselves historicised. Weisberg's historicism (like that of Greenberg and Hayter (Chapters 14, 15, & 16 of Hayter's New Ways of Gravure describe a history printmaking which makes sense of Hayter's project in terms of a physicalist history), is one towards a recovery of quality - a recovery of humanism in the Kantian tradition. That is, 'the impersonal process of history appears in the guise of an inner artistic logic'.

Weisberg's statement: 'it is valuable to consider each medium's intrinsic properties and visceral appeal', is explicit confirmation that Weisberg had adopted an attitude towards the dichotomy, 'realm-of-the-mind' pivoted against physical nature. The terms 'visceral appeal' - gut feeling - about 'intrinsic properties' (of specific print materials, mediums and processes) raises questions regarding Weisberg's objectivity. It is at this point that we can determine that Weisberg's essentially structuralist project is a project whose aims are the search for foundation and origin by focusing on the dichotomy between physical properties (which may

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1289 Ed. Allan Bullock, Oliver Stallybrass and Stephen Trombley, The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, Fontana Press, 1977, second edition, p.531, describe four main attitudes to the problems of analysis which, they also claim, may in fact be insoluble, whenever an attitude towards the dichotomy is taken. Briefly:
1. Physical monism reduces all phenomena of the mind and body to the laws of Physics and Biology; 2. Neutral or Mental monism holds that all is mind, and that the concept of nature is itself a construct of mind that can only be known through hypotheses tested by reference to experience. This view is expressed as a methodological principal, based on the premise that, since nature cannot be known directly by the mediation of the human observer, one defines nature and mind alike by the kinds of observations one makes and the nature of the inferences one draws - whether these refer to a postulated 'external' system of physical nature, or to the 'internal' system called mind.; 3. Interactionism holds that there are two interacting spheres, mind and body; 4. Psychological parallelism, is the view that physical and psychic events run a parallel course without affecting each other. There is also a fifth, less widespread view called epiphenomenalism. For more detailed explanation refer to the Fontana Dictionary of Thought.


1291 Weisberg, 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', op. cit., p.52-60.
already have been historically assigned) and the mind which encounters them. The very logic which Weisberg's structuralist project employs shows that the physical signs that are uncovered or recovered are already inscribed in a deferential system of meaning. There is no internal self-sufficiency in the terms that Weisberg recovers. The insistence of giving the 'breath of life'; animating indicative meaning with an expressive meaning in order to locate a syntax of the print founded on the assumption that 'process', 'function' and 'material' embrace the whole of the print aesthetic is given over to system and concept.

The insistence on describing printmaking by focusing on certain physical attributes (as if these were the only attributes) and then insisting that these are the core of printmaking aesthetics reveals Weisberg's desire to position the 'mind-of-the-artist' or the 'mind-of-the-viewer' against certain predetermined physical attributes of the discipline.1292 Joseph Margolis, in 'The Interconnection of Art and History', calls such writers, art historians and theorists 'physicalists'.1293 Margolis writes that the important consideration is that for the physicalist:

... the world can be adequately and exhaustively described . . . in purely physical terms; or more strenuously, the actual world is nothing but the physical world. Such theories are said to be physicalist. . . for the physicalist, physical events have actual histories and those histories preclude intentional complexities, regardless of whatever other difficulty we may have with a physicalist rendering of our historical representations of scientific findings. Physicalists and non-physicalists (dualists, idealists, neutral monist, possibly other

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1292 The exemplar of this pre-modernist mentality in art history is Ernst Gombrich who supposes that the field is composed of determinate objects whose properties may be discerned with a certain necessary skill, and to be relatively unchanging through the process of history. Refer to: E. H. Gombrich, 'Illusion and Deadlock', Modern Art and Modernism, Ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, The Open University, 1982, p.149-156; E. H. Gombrich, 'Expression and Communication,' Modern Art and Modernism, Ed. Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, The Open University, 1982, p.177-189; E. H. Gombrich, 'Meditations on a Hobby Horse,' Phaidon Press, 1971.  
more ingenious theorists, even materialists) cannot share the 
same conception of history). . . 1294

The desire to develop a physicalist approach to printmaking is prevalent 
throughout much writing in Australia, particularly in *Imprint*. The 
insistence on orientating the reader to the physical attributes of the 
print (the reader is also alerted to the artist’s intentions in regard to 
overcoming the difficulties, threat, seduction of such physical 
properties1295) and of printmaking is the result of a (conscious or 
unconscious) calculation. Insistence on the physicalist approach (terms 
such as function, materials, process and technique are physically derived 
and focus attention on the physical positioned against the ‘realm-of-the-
mind’) is designed to overwhelm the reader with rationalist argumentation 
so that no other radical alternative is possible. But while such writing 
marks a desire to augment the subject by describing the physical qualities 
of printmaking and how these might reflect the subject - how, in fact, 
subjecthood is derived by erecting and manipulating a self-imposed 
physicalist border - such argumentation serves another function: it keeps 
mainist criticism at bay.

The physicalist approach argues that the real history of events (as 
opposed to history as the representation of those events) could be 
formulated without recourse to intentional categories of any kind. It is at 
this point that the Hayter-Weisberg analysis can be critiqued. What has 
been suppressed by Weisberg and Hayter in the recovery of the terms 
‘function’, ‘materials’ ‘processes’ and ‘technique’ - their frames of 
reference - is the ‘force’ or animating pressure of intent (the search for 
foundations and origin) which exceeds all the bounds of structure. Hayter’s 
and Weisberg’s recovery of mediums and techniques, function, process 
and materials, as aesthetic-forming terms or concepts, are narrativised 
orderings, or representations of orderings, of actual intentional properties. 
In the words of Richard Wollheim, ‘there is no such thing as the innocent 
eye’.1296 This is not to argue that Hayter’s or Weisberg’s analysis, or the 
physicalist approach to printmaking history (such as that found in *Imprint*) 
should be abandoned. Rather, by holding to the formal unifying strategies

1294 ibid., p 22-23.
1295 Refer to Part 2, Chapter 4, this thesis.
1296 Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 
1987, p. 9.
proposed by such physicalist writers and theorists and by permitting their substantive unity (the print's 'internal' or 'intrinsic' nature) to be specified in whatever way is required in order to accommodate printmaking's historical existence, its possessing intentional properties (either conscious or unconscious), a critique on a practice of unifying strategies is possible: printmaking is a result of the practice of historical and critical interpretation and re-interpretation. The value of this approach lies in that, in understanding a particular print, we may validly attribute it to determinate and intentional properties, properties incorporated into its physical characteristics, but in attributing such properties we may consistently admit the further historically open-ended meaning and semiotic significance of those properties. This strategy does not condemn the Hayter-Weisberg (the physicalist) approach. Rather it seeks to locate the conscious and unconscious intentional properties inscribed in, or circumscribed by, these physically derived terms and concepts which are, in themselves, unifying concepts and which when mapped, describe a critical strategy not without its own dangers.

Greenberg's prescription for a pure aesthetics was flawed by a blindness and a refusal to acknowledge the indebtedness of the detour through kitsch or the decontextualised 'primitive' in order to formulate and describe a pure abstract aesthetics. Hayter's description of creativity relied on overcoming technology by invoking the field of 'play', the invocation of the 'inner' to the debasement of the 'outer', the physical. Weisberg's argument is similarly flawed. Weisberg pre-determined the radius of the printmaking discipline, a radius which calculatingly ignored the desire for an authority invested in materials and processes upon which to reflect notions of an individual aesthetic. Weisberg's search for a syntax to discipline the practice becomes the social disciplining of printmaking.

In his definition of pure abstract art aesthetics, Greenberg's overwhelming desire to recover an essentially Greek humanism by polarising kitsch, ruined a critical stance which would otherwise have acknowledged the mere materiality of the medium. Greenberg decided that only an art of quality could communicate 'truth-of-self' and that kitsch could not. In doing so, Greenberg excluded kitsch as a material institution and promoted the qualities inherent in the 'flatness' of the medium of painting as having metaphysical properties - a higher aesthetic - which he
equated with the art of children, the Orient and the naïveté of primitive peoples.\textsuperscript{1297} Hayter echoed Greenberg by likewise animating the 'serious play' of the universal child. As Hayter saw it: 'There is no lack of seriousness in this attitude - what could show greater seriousness and concentration than a child playing an elaborate game?'\textsuperscript{1298}

Weisberg does not seem intent on a primitivised printmaking aesthetic but nonetheless this reduction to a taxonomy, to the pure essences (function, process and material), is a form of primitivising and universalism. Weisberg's philosophical stance is framed with primitivising intent.

As signs are reduced they still function as signs of affect, or of 'expressivity'. That is, they represent, as it were, primitive orders of feeling out of reach of ordinary consciousness. This is their so-called transcendence, not their supposed symbolisation of a mysterious, absolute or logical order of being. It is their primitiveness that is the point of their clarity and distinctness, which is derivative from that primitiveness. In the context of an absolute print aesthetics, the reductive forms of function, process and especially material, are signs as primitively expressive as so-called gestures. In different ways each suggests the obsessive tendencies - the one dimensionality- of the primitive psyche.

Weisberg's intention, far from wanting to rationalise printmaking or to reduce it to any logical order, is in fact creating a criticism which wards off such rationalist assaults. Weisberg's criticism is bent on preserving the uniqueness of printmaking by fencing it off within the bounds of its own rhetoric. Weisberg's structuralist approach to critical analysis has its own special kind of dangers. Subjectivism is not the only trap that must be avoided. The concept of structure, as we have seen, can easily be immobilised by assuming it to have some kind of objective or self-validating status.

The Kantian-Greenberg-Hayter-Weisberg approach to criticism is a naming of categories. It is a reduction to order for the purpose of naming a taxonomy in order for a further understanding, in order to locate a meta-

\textsuperscript{1297} Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69
\textsuperscript{1298} S.W. Hayter, \textit{New Ways of Gravure}, op. cit., p.280.
language or the meta-narrative. Its purpose is to fit the meta-narrative. By acknowledging Weisberg's intent - the drive for a 'being-in-the-world', the motivating force behind Weisberg's critique of printmaking - the envelope of her essentially physicalist syntax of the print can be negotiated.

Process as art, or art as process, is a self-binding metaphor. According to Hayter and Weisberg, the processes of printmaking allows the mind of the artist, the artists 'real' (unconscious and psychological) intentions, to be made visible. Hayter claimed of his method:

. . . Instruction consists of involving a student in experiments in conditions completely unfamiliar to him in which development, not necessarily by logical means, is carried on until the plate is destroyed. As the 'state' proof of each stage of development is kept, a complete record exists; development by metamorphosis rather than by accretion. . . The object of all this is to arrive at knowledge which really belongs to the person. . . These experiments are in a sense more psychological than mechanical. . . In fact the whole system is based on a sort of game of consequences, not necessarily rational. . . Together with this activity, more advanced research into new methods of expression is being carried on. . .

Weisberg similarly invests meaning into the processes of print:

. . . The final image is the visible consequence of all ones decisions. . . For the reviewer, the evidence of decisions, additions, alterations, deletions, can reveal directly the artist's intentions and mental process. . .

Hayter's teaching method revealed how process was thought by the formalist critique, how it valued the psychological and the irrational by positing the technical process as pre-conceived, rational, cognitive and

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1300 Ruth Weisberg, 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', op. cit., p.52-60.
mechanical. This notion has (directly and indirectly) impacted on *Imprint* and on Australian art.

When Rose Vickers described Earle Backen's and her own approach she described an approach to printmaking that resonated with Hayter's and Weisberg's physicalist approach:

> ... you use the technique to develop your ideas rather than do your drawing and then translate your drawing into a print. You actually evolved the image through your stages of using the technique... you actually have feed-back from the image as you scrape it off and start again and until you eventually get what your going to get... you would use all the techniques and you would modify the plate, take a proof, modify the plate, take a proof, modify the plate, make a proof, adding and subtracting the techniques... Techniques were in the service of the evolving image... My perception of how technology fits into being an artist is that it is a very intrinsic part... you have to be able to think in terms of the medium you're working in...

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Backen was even more explicit about the influence of Hayter's methodology:

> ... One would be following more or less through the variations following through with the Hayter method, of working taking a plate and working on it till the plate more or less disintegrated... I think [self-expression]... has to be a complete integration of material, technique and concept...

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Udo Sellbach, writing in the Australian Print Council's journal *Imprint*, in ‘Printing Processes Versus Medium Possibilities’, essentially a paraphrasing of Hayter's last Chapter of *New Ways of Gravure*, suggested that a psychological profile of the artist could be a result of manipulating the medium. In his article Sellbach suggested, like Hayter, that the processes intrinsic to printmaking held more creative and expressive

1301 G. Cornwell, Transcript of an Interview: A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92, Refer to the Appendices, this thesis.

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potential than the mere application of printmaking technologies as a reproductive printing method: 'prints bear all the marks of an artist's aesthetic intention, unchanged by mechanical interference'\textsuperscript{1303} This claim was reiterated when Sellbach commented on the work of Noel Counihan:

\ldots Printmaking. \ldots has at its best always been concerned with the reduction of ideas into simplified form, expressing ideas and feelings in direct communication. \ldots Form and content, stripped of the imitation of outer reality, speak a language of universal symbolic meaning. \ldots \textsuperscript{1304}

The process art idiom, art in which making procedures are treated as subject matter, in which 'means' become 'ends', where the 'act of making' is dramatised, can be traced to the Surrealists and Automatism, or abandonment of conscious control. The process as a reductive mechanism acted as a signifier which referred to the natural mental processes in the 'mind of the artist' - the 'inner'. For Weisberg process reflects a psychological profile of the artist: 'because of the process. \ldots there is no place to hide and no-one covers your errors'.\textsuperscript{1305} Hayter also valued the psychological, and inner above cognition: 'In my own manner of working I would consider the selection among these consequences rather to be unconscious than deliberately conscious'.\textsuperscript{1306} According to the conceptual, process and performance artist Mike Parr, printmaking is a 'process of excavation. \ldots I think of drypoint in terms of braille and excavation. \ldots I am more interested in expression as a product of process than in traditional concepts of distorted contours'.\textsuperscript{1307} Suggested by Hayter, Weisberg, Vickers, Backen and Parr is the notion that process reduces the artist to a pure being controlled by the ritualising inherent in the process. Barbara Hanrahan also described the processes as the 'marvellous ritual' of printmaking.\textsuperscript{1308} Echoing both Hayter and Weisberg, Janine Burke, writing on Alun Leach-Jones in \textit{Imprint}, claimed that 'the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Udo Sellbach, Noel Counihan, \textit{Imprint} No. 2, 1970.
\item June Wayne as quoted by Ruth Weisberg, 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', op. cit., p.58.
\item S.W. Hayter, \textit{New Ways of Gravure}, op. cit., p.279.
\item Mike Parr in the Exhibition Catalogue to \textit{Prints by Mike Parr}, Australian National Gallery, 1990.
\item Alison Carrol, 'Barbara Hanrahan: A Self Portrait,' \textit{Imprint}, No. 3,1978
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
process will determine the result'. Such statements answer Greenberg's call that each medium of the visual arts was 'essentially psychological and sub- or supra-logical', and suggests that many Australian artists had made a 'progressive surrender to the resistance of [the] medium'.

Artists such as Allan Mitelman who claimed that his 'interest in printmaking... lies in its mark-making possibilities', or Elizabeth Cross who claimed that Mary MacQueen's facility was 'reconciled with the delicate textured surface of lithography' or Alison Fraser's comments about the work of Basil Hadley: 'a near tactile exploration of the surface... interest in the recording of surfaces and types of surface', Greg Moncrieff who, when discussing his use of photography in prints, claimed that 'I like to think that I am able to use... photographic process as a tool,' or Joanna Mendelssohn's comments concerning Ruth Faerber's 'experimental approach... the need to challenge materials has led her from etching and lithography to experiments with the nature of paper. Her most recent work threatens to challenge the very concept of limited edition prints,' or Jenny Zimmer's comments that '[Printmaking] has established its own realm of modernist activity... to reinforce this position, to give it credence, and to fuse it with its own traditions, the exponents and proponents of the print medium seem to be pursuing its origins and idiosyncrasies with a great persistence, also suggest that Australian artists were indeed surrendering to the resistance of the print medium as Greenberg and Hayter had called for.

The argument that the processes of printmaking is one of ritual is not new and implies that the product from such an exercise is 'authentic' art since

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1310 Janine Burke, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', op. cit., p.69.  
1311 Ibid.  
1312 Suzanne Davies, Allan Mitelman, Imprint, No. 2., 1977  
1313 Elizabeth Cross, Mary MacQueen, Lithographer, *Imprint*, No. 4, 1977  
1314 Alison Fraser, 'Writing on the Wall: Imagery in Recent Prints by Basil Hadley'. *Imprint* No. 3., 1980.  
1315 Greg Moncrieff, as quoted by *Imprint*, No. 4., 1984, p.11  
it is associated with 'magic' and 'ritual'.\textsuperscript{1318} Writers commenting on the work of such as Tony Pacot, have claimed alchemical qualities for the processes of printmaking: 'by breaking down the process the material becomes emotive in the tradition of the alchemist'.\textsuperscript{1319} Rita Hall in 'Edition + Addition' has made similar references to magic and ritual: 'To be a printmaker is to think in a curious way. It is to see the world once removed. . . it is to be seduced by the magic and charm of the printmaker's technique.'\textsuperscript{1320} Jan Davis, in 'A Print Educator's Perspective', 1990, also claimed that in Australia there was an underlying philosophical position taught in art schools which emphasised the physicalist approach to art making: 'We have an area of arts production which relies heavily on process and technical skill. It involves seductive rituals and materials which can become an end in themselves.'\textsuperscript{1321}

Taken to its logical conclusion, this argument would pre-suppose that even mechanical reproductions, by way of the complicated steps and processes necessary to reach their realisation, would also have to be described as part of a ritualised process. Even mass produced books, magazines and newspapers would fall under the rubric of ritual\textsuperscript{1322} and therefore be re-inscribed with expressive meaning, a notion that 'fine art' printmakers traditionally cannot tolerate.\textsuperscript{1323} In fact, the carefully constructed code-of-originality implies that only prints made by the 'hand of the artist' can be worthy of being treated as signifiers revealing the 'mind-of-the-artist.' Certainly in writing in \textit{Imprint} there appears a presupposed mystical intent for the printmaker in the ritual-religious attachment to process and technology. When artists and writers attribute ritual and magical properties to printmaking processes and materials they are intentional properties inscribed with expressive meaning. They are a form of rhetoric.

\textsuperscript{1319} Tony Pacot, 'Alchemical References', \textit{Imprint} Vol. 25, No. 2, 1990, p.14
\textsuperscript{1321} Jan Davis, 'A Print Educators Perspective', \textit{Imprint}, Vol. 25, No 1, 1990, p.10.
\textsuperscript{1322} Udo Sellbach, 'Printing Possibilities Verses Medium Possibilities', op. cit., writes: \textit{... The technical possibilities of photo-mechanical reproduction, hereto taboo in the realm of the artist print, are invading this sanctuary with increasing force. ...}
\textsuperscript{1323} John Walker, \textit{Art in the Age of Mass Media}, Pluto Press, 1983.
Writing in *Imprint* contains many examples which echo Hayter's methodological approach and Weisberg's fundamentally physicalist determinations of process. From *Imprint's* very beginning's in 1966, it was the avowed intentions of the journal: 'to offer short essays by various local artists elaborating the particular medium in which they themselves predominantly work.'\(^{1324}\) This intention was echoed later in *Art and Australia*,\(^{1325}\) in a new section devoted to 'The Printmakers' whose main purpose was:

... to bring to the notice of our readers the work of printmakers who have an established reputation or are following an experimental attitude. ... in this issue we have asked the artist to explain the technique used relating to the print illustrated. ... \(^{1326}\)

Accordingly, David Rose, Elizabeth Rooney, Sue Buckley, Geoff la Gerche, Grahame King, Ann Newmarch, Jock Clutterbuck, Noela Hjorth, Ruth Julius, Mary MacQueen, Earle Backen, and Graham Kuo complied, and from then onwards 'The Printmakers' became a regular feature in *Art and Australia*.\(^{1327}\) However, in 'The Printmakers', artists' prints are only ever discussed in relation to the technical processes which make them possible. Already ingrained in the editorial policy of *Art and Australia* was a philosophical position which determined that prints were defined by their relationship to various technologies, their physical characteristics, rather than by content.

In *Imprint* the physical attributes of various media were exploited to their fullest. Udo Sellbach even claimed that the term 'medium possibilities'

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\(^{1325}\) Refer to: *Art and Australia*, Vol. 19, No. 2., 1981


Despite the editorial intentions of *Art and Australia*, Vol. 19, No. 2., 1981, to show the work of printmakers through this special section there has been no publication of a printmakers section between 1986-1990. From *Art and Australia’s* beginning’s there have been very few articles on printmaking. They have in fact featured irregularly rather than regularly. This can be interpreted in several ways. That printmaking is regarded as a minor art, there is no serious writing on printmaking, *Imprint* is regarded as the venue for articles on printmaking. Whatever the reasons which may be a combination of all cited above, content in prints has been excluded from *Art and Australia* but its technical difficulties and idiosyncrasies have been emphasised.
was 'a term that may be used to indicate a medium orientated attitude.' Murray Walker, when discussing engraving in *Imprint* No. 2, in 1967 claimed that the processes' difficulty was a defining factor: '[engraving's] intrinsic difficulty gives engraving much of its strength'. Walker's comment that print is certainly not a medium for 'sketchy' vague ideas, coupled with the technical descriptions of processes in *Art and Australia* suggest that Australian printmaking during the 1960's - mid 70's had embraced Greenberg's notion expressed in 'Towards A Newer Laocoon' that there was 'a necessity to escape from ideas, which were infecting the arts with ideological struggles of society'. Alun Leach-Jones reinforced this notion when he claimed that printmaking defined a focus which:

... is narrowed to the technical possibilities and how they can be broadened. This involvement with technique can often take pressure off one's conceptual thinking. ... I start something of which I have no clear picture of the end result for the process itself will determine it. ...

Ann Stephen and Suzanne Davies in discussing Bea Maddock's work in 1974, wrote that Maddock's work of the last four years: 'achieves an internal coherence through urban images conceived in serials and executed within the formal discipline of Maddock's printing techniques,' suggesting that techniques and processes defined Maddock's aesthetic. Charles Mereweather claimed that Noel Counihan set out to 'exploit the medium': 'You have to be open when you approach the medium so that one is responsive to the particular dictates of that medium.'

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1330 ibid.
1335 ibid.

... exploit, in a supposedly simple medium such as lino, its possibilities. ... in each case the print is treated differently but in all of them the feeling of the block is strongly maintained, as would be the case if I were cutting into wood or another material. ...
Charles Mereweather, writing on Noel Counihan, in 'The Force of Commitment: An Article/Interview with Noel Counihan', claimed that the materials had an aesthetic: 'another point with printing from relief blocks is the aesthetic result'.

Allan Mitelman has stated in an interview with Suzane Davies that his interest in printmaking lay 'in the medium's varied mark-making possibilities' and that this might relate in some way to 'the direct process of drawing and wash application'. Lilian Wood believed that the material itself could overtake an artist's intentions. When discussing the work of James Watson, for example Wood claimed that 'the end product proved to be the block itself'. Similarly Elizabeth Cross suggested that Daniel Moynihan's treatment and exploitation of the inherent qualities of print processes successfully exposed the aesthetics of the materials: 'there was also a dynamic exploitation of the peculiarities of the bitten surfaces of the etching plate. . . 'they[the prints] are a return to the qualities of etching I was interested in. . . that really rough biting of plates. It's something I'm still interested in. . . it's also a very linear medium.'

Such comments give credence to Nelson's claims in 'Why Printmakers Can't Talk' that 'Printmakers can't draw. . . or if they do they do so evasively, in a special language of marks which deflects the perceptual onus of traditional drawing practice'.

The materials and processes of poster making are also charged with properties which imply an aesthetic. When Julie Ewington claimed that 'a tradition of the Tin Sheds' is one of 'fine disregard for object preciousness, which shows up in the papers used. (Expensive paper is anyway pointless when the poster is ephemeral)', she was claiming an identity outside of fine art traditions for the poster maker. 'Butchers paper, discarded cardboard used for cigarette packets and computer print out paper [that make] Tin shed people . . . conscious of the politics and

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1336 Charles Mereweather, 'Noel Counihan, The Force of Commitment: An Article/Interview with Noel Counihan', Imprint, No. 3, 1976; . . . another point with printing from relief blocks is the aesthetic result.

1337 Suzane Davies, 'Allan Mitelman', Imprint, No. 2., 1977.


1339 Elizabeth Cross, 'Daniel Moynihan: a conversation with Elizabeth Cross,' Imprint, No. 3., 1982, p.3 - 6.


1341 A Sydney Printmaking Workshop attached to the University of Sydney Fine Arts School.
economics of recycling, and use their salvage with ironic satisfaction'. \(^{1342}\) These carefully chosen materials and the process of Silk Screen itself - which embody notions of the commercial industry - were used by Ewington to inscribe the medium with an anti-authoritarian and anti-institutional aesthetic and therefore, by implication, the political orientation of the artist, factors which Tony Ayers also recognised in certain materials and processes:

... The fact that the process [silk screen printing] is quasi-mechanical tends to work against the idea of the genius of the individual touch. ... There is also a logical link between silk screening uses in fine art contexts, and industrial/commercial contexts. It is within this space that most political posters dwell. ... \(^{1343}\)

Stephanie Wallace suggested that: 'Printmaking is very much concerned with pressure. ... with the reasoning of the mind shaping the material substance of the print.' \(^{1344}\) As with both Bill Meyer and Daniel Moynihan, Wallace also believed that the medium or process created its own demands. Obviously for Wallace, Meyer and Moynihan the materials of printmaking are acted upon by the 'reasoning of the mind' shaping the 'material substance', confirmation of their physicalist approach.

When discussing the work of Petr Herel, Elizabeth Cross was also concerned to emphasise the physical aspects of printmaking in order to reveal the 'mind of the artist': 'the degree of intensely realised surface and. ... the elaborate, intricate, interplay of line, tone and dimensionality. ... the images transpose the physical reality [of the medium] into the symbolic, the allegorical.' \(^{1345}\) In discussing the work of Mary MacQueen, Cross again treated materials and techniques in a way which emphasised physicalist properties:

... While these agitated, unquiet surfaces impede some clear resolution for which the eye seeks - in Gestalt terms the

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\(^{1342}\) Julie Ewington, 'Political Posterizing in Australia', *Imprint*, No. 1., 1978.


presence of a figure-ground relationship - they are sometimes a strength. For in that they are referential, i.e. nominally descriptive of terrain, these semi-articulate surfaces can provoke the viewer into resolving the geography...  

In a discussion of his work with Craig Gough, Ray Beattie explicitly gave attributes to the physical characteristics of the print: the sensuality of explicit detail and the placement of textures. Having found the latter a good surface controlling device as any'.  

Roger Butler writing on Henry Salkauskas also emphasised the importance of the medium and material in order to reveal an inner juxtaposed against materials forgetting that the 'expressiveness of the gesture' were attributes which were already inscribed with indicative and historical meaning.

Alison Carol, when discussing the work of Barbara Hanrahan, attributed expressive potential to the processes and techniques when she claimed that Hanrahan 'revels in the physical processes of printmaking and in the expressive use of different techniques'. Similarly, Paul Jolly claimed that Udo Sellbach's 'expressive means [were] limited to the most mechanical aspects of the medium of etching'.  

Ian McLean when discussing the work of Ian Friend, claimed that 'imagery quickly assumes a few basic shapes that run through various permutations in accord with specific limitations and qualities of the materials and media being used.' McLean, Jolly and Carol all suggested that materials were either an inhibiting or necessary factor of expression.

Mike Parr, in his 1990 catalogue for his print show at the A.N.G., seemed to sum up many artist's notions concerning the deployment of the physical characteristics of materials in shaping an individual aesthetic when he wrote:

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1346 Elizabeth Cross, 'Mary MacQueen: Lithographer', *Imprint*, No. 4, 1977
1347 Craig Gough, 'Ray Beattie', *Imprint*, No. 1, 1977, p.2:
1348 Roger Butler, 'Stencil and Screen Print in Australia', *Imprint*, No 3-4, 1985, p.9:
... it is as though the self-portrait is already embedded in the copper ground. The physicality of the process is also extraordinarily complete since it is hard to distinguish in one's response between an impulse to extract a contour and one that is attacking it. . .  

Weisberg's third descriptive term in the triangular logico-reductive construction of her printmaking aesthetics, 'material', can also be shown to disseminate meanings which exceed all boundaries. Weisberg, while admitting that 'it is difficult to divide material from process,' attributed certain qualities to materials which suggested that certain materials had already been loaded with meaning: 'the making of an intaglio is just an excuse to work on the seductive metal plate. . . varying from the raised lines of intaglio to the silky veils of lithography'. Weisberg's allusion to otherness through a material's seductive qualities ignored the fact that these 'seductive' qualities are themselves fabricated. Craig Gough writing on Ray Beattie also described the use of materials in terms of their sensual qualities:

... whilst my analysis oscillates between the firm outline, the sensuality of explicit detail and the placement of textures. Having found the latter a good surface controlling device as any, I see it features fairly dominantly in my work. . .

A material is a material is a material. One cannot track down seductiveness by tracking along a surface. Within the 'rational' limits proposed by Weisberg, of course the materials are properly seductive and dangerously so. For Weisberg, as with Gough, Parr, Leach-Jones, Mendelssohn, Jolly, Sellbach and so on, the artists which inhabit Imprint's pages must tread warily through the seductive qualities of both 'material' and 'processes'(ritual). Materials, as with processes, are treated as dangerous supplements.

Raw or literal surfaces seem to provoke deep sensuous experiences without any real effort. Such experiences are intensified when those

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1353 Mike Parr in the Catalogue to the exhibition ‘Prints by Mike Parr’, op. cit.
1355 ibid., p. 60
1356 Craig Gough, 'Ray Beattie', Imprint, No. 1, 1977, p.2
surfaces are painted or drawn over. It heightens the absoluteness of rawness and the literalness of the surface: 'The transformation of a vibrating surface into an agitated (anxious) surface - that is the formula of primitivism 'civilised' or used for modern purposes.' According to Donald Kuspit, the lessons of modernism suggest that only the most immediate surfaces communicate the artist's intentions in the way in which the concept of immediacy generates self-hood. It is the fiction of immediacy, carried out on literal surfaces that catalyses meaning and feeling:

... primitivism in its modern use is a mode of liberation from repression. It claims to offer expression - which makes it seem to speak in an unknown tongue - to repressed feelings. The most primitive of all means for effecting a generalised sense of the lifting of the censorship of repression is the exaggeratedly raw surface, destructive of whatever representations rest on it. Raw surface becomes suggestive of the inherent ambivalence of feeling disrupting all objective relations. ...

Mike Parr echoed Kuspit when he claimed:

... Because I think of the mark as a kind of system or else as a parallel impulse a process to the 'likeness' I also regard the raw plate as a kind of image in its own right. ... Consequently I treasure the inadvertent scourings and imperfections of the surface. ... What I am really talking about is the meaning of difficulty or better the contents that difficulty facilitates and of a direct relationship to materials embodied the objective correlative of repression. ...

For Parr, the material is the object that allows the artist to become visible in the way they attack it, echoing Weisberg's notion of material, a literal surface that is treated as seductive and threatening that needs to be contained. Meyer's notion that 'Printmaking is concerned with pressure.'

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1358 ibid.
1359 Mike Parr in the Catalogue to 'Prints by Mike Parr', op. cit.
1360 ibid.
with the reasoning mind shaping the material substance',\textsuperscript{1361} or James Mollison's comment that 'the print was quickly subdued with successive veils of skilfully applied aquatint',\textsuperscript{1362} is also reflected in Parr's statement.

The Kantian-Greenberg-Weisberg philosophical discourse attempts to locate the syntax of the print by a logico-reductive naming is flawed by the excesses inherent in naming, and the multiplicity of meanings which exceed all the logical boundaries in the very terms ('function', 'process', and 'material') themselves. Encapsulated in Weisberg's syntax of the print is an example of how the history of art is not dominated by any philosophy. As Derrida has noted in the \textit{Truth in Painting}:

\textldots One can thus already say: as far as history, we shall have to deal with the contradiction or the oscillation between two apparently incompatible motifs. They both come under one and the same logical formality: namely, that if the philosophy of art always has the greatest difficulty in dominating the history of art, a certain concept of the historisticity of art, that is, paradoxically, because it too easily thinks of art as historical. \ldots \textsuperscript{1363}

In other words, any system of arrangement that would disentangle a 'pure' aesthetics from a cultural practice is bound to reveal and entangle the arrangement of the system, its ideology and the cultural politics it masks. Greenberg's, Hayter's and Weisberg's rationalising intent discloses an inter-discursive practice.

Attention to the internal specificity of the organisation of printmaking as an autonomous discipline - for example, the oscillation between the seduction of technologies, their processes and materials - their necessity - leaves to chance the passage from one structure to another. This chance may be thought in the negative as a catastrophe( for example, when the processes - whether it is seductive or not- of technology is regarded as a barrier to be overcome), or affirmatively as play (where the recuperated - often psychological - naturalness of the artist allows the artist to transcend

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{1362} James Mollison, 'Fred Williams-Printmaking Voyages', \textit{Imprint}, Vol. 23, No. 1-2.
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the barrier). This structuralist limit and power has an ethico-metaphysical convenience - it allows for the emergence of self-hood defined against the negative. The emergence of a new system of inscription is a supplement of which one learns only the additive aspect (it happens unexpectedly) and the noxious influence (it arrives ill-advisedly, from the exterior - technology is physical and external). Not to attribute any necessity to its historical appearance is at once to ignore the appeal of substitution and to think the physical as a surprising, exterior, irrational, accidental and therefore an effaceable addition.

Within the writings discussed on printmaking's processes, materials and function, the movement of supplementary representation points to origins as they remove themselves from the source of origin. In writing such a Weisberg's, concepts of process, materials, function are presented in the realm of 'object-as-object' - as exterior - and redeployed through historical representation, in their reappropriated form, as indicators of self-presence ('Total alienation is the total reappropriation of self-presence').

Now we can appreciate the project of such writing in Imprint. These traces intend to create an authority in the physical characteristics of the materials, technologies and processes of print with unreserved alienation and thus unreserved representation. It is the project of such writing to wrench presence absolutely from the terms 'function', 'processes', 'materials', the technologies of printmaking and then absolutely re-present it to itself. To enable this to occur it relies upon the naïveté of representation. It asks us to criticise the signs of cognition - technology, process, materials, function and so on - by placing us within the self-evidence of the distinction between self-representation and presentation, within the effect of this fissure; between material, process, function and their meanings (seduction, ritual, social consequence etc.) the productive movement of differences which Derrida calls 'différance'.

Weisberg's argumentation, as with much of what is written into Imprint (situated within the effect of différance) relies on the transformation of the logic of material into a logic of seduction; the logic of process to a logic of...
ritual or disruption; and the logic of function to a logic of social consequences. It is within the represented effects of materials, processes and function, and often in spite of them, that the individual aesthetic is characterised and an identity defined, but not without effacing the effects (always posited as exterior, irrational, accidental, disruptive, evil, seductive, etc.) of process, materials or of function. The project, to forge an identity by manipulating and then effacing the language that characterises it.

The various examples of a particular orientation towards history - the one that places a 'truth to materials'/medium specificity as central - as espoused first by Barr and then Greenberg in a general way, and then by Hayter and Weisberg specifically in relation to printmaking, and then those exposed in the texts of *Imprint* and *Art and Australia*, reveal a physicalist theory of printmaking (underlying much writing). Printmaking technologies, materials, processes and their properties (of function-consequence; processes-ritual and materials-seduction) are not enough. Even within these quite ordinary examples, when the properties are discussed what is meant is representational properties which lie open to quarrel and historicised change, without threatening the reality of the property in question. As we have observed, the physicalist theory underlying the texts which have been examined fails because it does not accommodate history's intentional complexities. Weisberg's 'unifying' theory fails or at least an aesthetic derived from her logical determinates is a fiction because it logically depends on actual prior history. The relational history of aesthetics which is implied by Weisberg's form of analytical historicism - one which is peppered throughout *Imprint* - must also fail since it is constructed only by virtue of an interest in certain actual entities that do not adequately account for our own history; history is treated as a form of rhetoric.

Greenberg's, Hayter's, Weisberg's, underlying physicalist theory and *Imprint's* ectype of that theory reveals a reiteration of the American Abstract Expressionist relationship to printmaking where intentional properties (representational and expressive properties) were admitted in both painting and printmaking, marking off their individual uniqueness as autonomous disciplines, bordered and disciplined so that they could be deployed and set one against the other.
It is not the purpose of this chapter to argue for one type of history (a relational history) over another (physicalist history), but only to point out that in the case of Australian printmaking history, as it is written into the texts and examples which have been examined in this chapter, there is clear evidence that a physicalist theory inherited from America has been a motivating force. That is, these thinkers and writers are inclined to view the field of inquiry they favour as one composed of well-defined, stable, bordered objects, whose physical properties remain unaffected by historical changes in order to generate concepts of unique individuality.

It is not a question of arguing whether or not the physicalist theory underpinning the texts examined is a result of an 'historical accident', Richard Wolheim's notion, but is it to argue that certain writers are in fact commentators forcing a 'pre-modernist' conception of art and history: the reduction of the history of art to temporary features or constant fortuitous accidents whose truth or falsity cannot be denied. Rather it is to proffer the notion that the 'history' of printmaking in Australia, in *Imprint*, is a narrativised account of those terms which have already been individuated: 'technique', 'medium possibilities', 'process', 'function', 'materials' - its intentional properties; or it is the narrativised career of these referents.

It is important to note that for the authors of the texts examined in this chapter, physical events and properties have actual histories and those histories preclude intentional complexity. This leaves us free to explore the nature of the historicised intentional attributes that have been ascribed to prints and their properties via *Imprint* and other texts. We may validly attribute to such art determinate intentional properties which might be manifest (so-called 'intrinsic qualities') in certain physical properties (such as function, process, materials, techniques etc.) but in attributing such properties we must further admit the historically open-ended meaning or semiotic significance of those very properties, particularly since such

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... the objective study of art is not the history of that art [but]... criticism: given the small progress that art-history has made in explaining the visual arts, I am inclined to think that the belief that there is such a feature is itself something that needs historical explanation: it is an historical accident...
qualities are recognised only within the framework of a critical strategy. Such an approach to Australian printmaking could have far reaching and positive effects not only on aspects of interpretation in terms of art historical writing, contemporary analysis or criticism but also on the way in which contemporary artists approach printmaking.
Part 2

Chapter 7:

The Significance of Derrida's Deconstruction of Rousseau's Essai, sur l'origine des languages in Of Grammatology.

1. 'These three ways of writing correspond almost exactly to three different stages according to which one can gather men into a nation. The depicting of objects is appropriate to a savage people; signs of words and of propositions to a barbaric people; and the alphabet to a civilised people.'

- J-J Rousseau, 'Essai, sur l'origine des languages'.

2. 'The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical - and, of course, not only technical-reproducibility. Confronted with its manual reproduction, which was usually branded as a forgery, the original preserved all its authority; not so vis-à-vis technical reproduction.'

- Walter Benjamin, 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.

3. 'Advances in culture no less than advances in science and industry corrode the very society under whose aegis they are made possible.'

- Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch'

4. 'To prove that their concept of purity is something more than a bias in taste, painters point to the Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal purity.'

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5. ‘We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth... That is why we profess spiritual kinship with primitives and archaic art.’

- Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, A letter to the New York Times, 7 June, 1943

These five quotes focus attention on an ethnocentrism which has controlled the concept of self expression, especially since the advent of American Abstract Expressionism with particular regard to printmaking, not only in America during the period 1934-1961, but also in Australia since 1966. These quotes also locate a metaphysics of expression of a 'true' self which, in the process of imposing itself upon the world, controls:

1. The concept of expression in printmaking where expression must misrepresent its own history even as it is produced.
2. A history of metaphysics which has assigned the origin of truth to a 'language' of the 'inner' to the debasement of the cogito.
3. The concept of an 'authority' inscribed within the technological which has always been determined as 'logic' - a philosophical concept, even when the practice of invoking that 'authority' leads inevitably and almost directly to the project and conventions of the predetermination of the 'authority' and 'law' which that authority determines.

By reining in the metaphors observed in the discourse under interrogation, this five-sided circumscription announces and discloses the dislocations and describes the styles of an historical movement which was meaningful - like the concept of history itself - but only within an historico-metaphysical epoch.

A certain concept of signs of self expression, and the concept of the relationships between certain expressive signs and meanings which they herald have already been assigned. It is an insistent and tenacious relationship to the point where, in spite of its privilege, its necessity, and the field of vision that it has controlled (from 1940-61 in America, and from


1966 in Australia), it produces its own dislocations and proclaims its own limits and enables us to glimpse its closure.

It is Derrida's reading of Rousseau, in *Of Grammatology*, that provides us with a general 'grammatology' (the science of relating knowledge to metaphor) which enables us to exercise the traditional philosophical dualism which opposes mind-soul-spirit balanced against the body, materialism and the technological (the 'inner' in opposition to the 'outer - Nature/Culture dualism), in the texts of printmaking. It is Derrida to whom this thesis is indebted for revealing that Rousseau's dualism is a result of desire.

Derrida's thesis argues that Rousseau is pre-eminently the philosopher of origins; he wishes to restore language to a natural state of simplicity, innocence and grace. This desire of Rousseau's carried across into politics, his ethics and his notions of historical development. For Rousseau it is always a matter of setting up some cardinal opposition between nature and culture, with everything authentic and original on one side and everything false, modern and degenerate on the other. Nature for Rousseau is the source of all goodness and virtue, while culture represents an inherently corrupting influence, a perpetual fall into error and bad faith. Rousseau attempts to describe what life would have been like had culture not intruded its alien artificial values. However much Rousseau wishes to posit his concept, he is constrained to give evidence that nature or the concept of nature is a cultural representation. This, according to Derrida, is Rousseau's greatest virtue - that his writings hold firmly to logocentric and ethnocentric values even while subjecting them to an involuntary auto critique.

This process is easily observable in Rousseau's theory on the origins of language in his essay *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, where he argues that a language of passions or of primitive instinct must have come first. This language, according to Rousseau was a natural language, an

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authentic means of expression which properly avoided the dangers impinging on other more sophisticated speech-forms. Which is to say it existed at the furthest possible remove from writing (understood to be a highly sophisticated code or cultural convention which contrives to communicate at a distance). For Rousseau, writing threatens to invade the utopian community of free and equal discourse which exists among primitive peoples. It gives rise to all those evils that attend the birth of modern civilised society. Rousseau can only account for these effects by evoking some primal catastrophe, some accident that has befallen mankind, the perverse addiction to false ideas of social and intellectual progress. What Rousseau cannot think is the notion that these evils have always existed as far back as the origins of human society. This is precisely Derrida's claim: that the blindness in Rousseau's theories are produced by the 'workings' of what Derrida has named 'a supplementary logic' which effectively suspends and disqualifies all recourse to a notion of Origin. Derrida imputes a significance to Rousseau's texts which contradict their express meaning:

... Rousseau's discourse lets itself be constrained by a complexity which always has the form of a supplement of or from the origin. His declared intention is not annulled by this but rather inscribed within a system which it no longer dominates. The desire for the origin becomes an indispensable and indestructible function situated within a syntax without origin. ... 1375

Rousseau is obliged to treat all signs of human cultural emergence, even at the most 'primitive' level, as pointing to a kind of aboriginal swerve away from nature. His refusal to acknowledge this predicament is the cause of the tensions complicating his texts which lend themselves to the purposes of Derrida's deconstruction in Of Grammatology.

According to Derrida, what is in question in Rousseau's texts is a powerful mythology of human nature which can only be asserted (as Rousseau asserts it) by forgetting or effacing the signs of its cultural production. To acknowledge these signs would be to set in train a series of disruptive shifts and reversals whose effect would be to reach back to the postulated

origins of man, language and society. Rousseau cannot help but acknowledge these, despite his project of maintaining the 'natural' order of values. But always there is a falling away from nature, identity and origin which makes it impossible for Rousseau to maintain what he intends. This leads Derrida to write:

\[ \ldots \text{Therefore this property } [\text{propre} ] \text{ of man is not the property of man: it is the very dislocation of the proper in general: it is the dislocation of the characteristic, the proper in general, the impossibility - and therefore the desire - of self proximity; the impossibility and therefore the desire of pure presence.} \ldots \]

\[ \text{Man calls himself man only by drawing limits excluding his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity. The appearance of these limits is at once feared as a threat of death, and desired as access to a life without différance.} \ldots \]

Derrida does not simply latch onto isolated metaphors in Rousseau's text in order to develop a new interpretation of Rousseau. Derrida's goal is to expose a completely different logic that determines the detail of Rousseau's argument. The Rousseauian 'supplement' is insistently there in the text 'named even though it is never (as it nowhere is) expounded.'

For Derrida, it is a question of locating precisely the divergence between logic and rhetoric that twists Rousseau's meaning against his avowed intentions.

It is the divergence between logic and rhetoric that this thesis similarly interrogates and latches onto in the texts of printmaking that allows us to locate an inter-discursive configuration. It is in the metaphors inherent in writing on printmaking that develop a theme of a source of origin in

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1377 ibid., p.213.
1378 'Writing' is in the process of being redefined in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p9. Derrida writes:

\[ \ldots \text{For some time now as a matter of fact, here and there, by gesture and for motives that are profoundly necessary, whose degradation is easier to denounce than it is to disclose than their origin, one says 'language' for action, movement, thought, reflection, consciousness, unconsciousness, experience, affectivity, etc. Now we tend to say 'writing' for all that and more: to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and} \ldots \]
spite of the contamination of technology - the mythology of human nature. But the organisation of the logical resources available to printmaking, despite or against its manifest drift, serve to implicate a thematic exposition. In other words, the declared intentions of artists and writers involved in printmaking are not annulled by the constraining complexity which takes the form of a supplement of or from the origin, but is rather inscribed within a system which it no longer dominates. That is to say that the more stridently printmakers and writers strain to posit an origin by polarising that against its supposed opposite - the technological (mechanical and mass reproduction in particular) - the less the intentions of the author are made clear. What is at issue is not the intention of the artist or writer but the belief that 'texts' must always point back to origins, their source in a moment of pure authenticating, self-authorised meaning. These metaphors reveal that 'language' and meaning are not confined to the intentions of the artist. This is particularly noticeable when certain 'dangers' of technology are emphasised as in writing about photo-mechanically or computer derived images in printmaking. These 'dangers' reveal the swerves away from an aboriginal nature and project them as attendant 'evils' of a society or culture diverging from the utopian community of free and equal discourse. That is, they reveal a declared Rousseauism.

One of the myths or logical fallacies, false assumptions or metaphysical ruses that writing on printmaking employs is that technology is somehow external to the 'inner' language of expression of the artist. That technology (process, materials included) represents a threat (a destabilising presence) which must always be countered by the stabilising presence of 'immediacy' - an example of this is revealed in the way artists excuse drawing (the 'hand' of the artist) in combination with technology. By proposing the contrary notion (already accepted in the logic of its own discourse) that technology is already stabilised and well established within the frame of articulation a challenge is made to the view propounded by writing in *Imprint*. This is why technology and the 'logic'

also, beyond the signifying face, the signed face itself. And thus we say 'writing' for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural 'writing'. One might also speak of athletic writing, and even with greater certainty of military or political writing in view of those techniques which govern those domains today. . .
of the technological (the metaphor of the cogito) is always passed through by way of a detour to the site of Origin.

In fact, the concept of technology - of the 'authority' inscribed within technology - reveals itself as repressed - a blind prejudice - which then reasserts itself quite forcibly through the detours and twists of implication in *Imprint's* manifesto (couched in a pedagogic frame of authority), repeated continuously since 1966.

Derrida's reading of Rousseau is important to this thesis in that Derrida has opened up a discourse in which the mystique of origins and presence can be challenged by annulling the imaginary boundaries of discourse, the various territorial imperatives which mark off 'literature' from 'criticism', or 'philosophy' from everything that stands outside its traditional domain. This means that texts can be read not so much for their interpretative 'insights' as for the symptoms of blindness which mark their conceptual limits.

In other words, the language which dominates *Imprint*, even though it is vigilant and self aware, is unable to effectively escape the conditions placed upon thought by its own prehistory and ruling metaphysics. The supposed autonomy of printmaking text is actively invaded by a new and insubordinate style of commentary which puts into question all the traditional attributes of meaning. This is especially true of writing in *Imprint*. When writers set out to interpret an artist's activity in printmaking, they invariably reveal the dangers of technology. In doing so they disclose a feared 'writing' of technology which for them must be cancelled because it erases the presence of the artist. Technology is established as a false sophistication of culture corrupting nature, which is why it must be contained. It is the containment of technology which reveals the desire for the unity of the 'subject'. This is precisely what determines the concept of the technological as supplementary. And it is the 'logic' of supplementarity itself which reveals the perceived lack in the 'original'. The technological contains within itself the trace - the invisible element:

1379 Writing in the radical sense developed by Derrida: the total compositional practice and program of printmaking - a 'species of writing' (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p 8)
'gramme' or the 'grapheme' of the 'origin of meaning in general'. It is added on in order to show the path to Origins.

It has been relatively easy to trace the Rousseauism that is exposed as soon as one interrogates the texts which determine printmaking as a discipline in Imprint - in the way in which technology, as the corrupting influence in the inter-discursive configuration is contained or suppressed. The definition of originality in prints in 1966 was the first concrete example of a fundamentally anti-technological notion of art and set the pattern of what was to follow in Australia. Other examples of this trait (the deployment of the 'logic' of the supplement) are witnessed in the way in which collaboration between artist and printer is written and thought. The concept of originality in prints and collaboration are interconnected by a rhetoric which dissembles a fetish of a fundamentally anti-technological notion of art and provides a structure to overcome the dangers of technology impinging on the artist.

In all cases 'immediacy', the metaphor of or for or from the Origin, is forced into consciousness by surrounding it with an entire constellation of concepts that shares its system but which are placed in opposition to it and diverge or swerve away from such Origin. According to Rousseau these are a: 'negativity of 'evil' [and] will always have the form of a supplementarity. Evil is exterior to nature. But always by way of compensation for[sous l'espece de la suppleance] what ought to lack nothing at all in itself.'

Thus, the Natural ought to be self-sufficient. But it is not. The keystone to 'immediacy'(the originary metaphor) always appears in the guise of technology, always treated as a menacing aid that must be overcome, combated, employed, deployed, utilised, coerced, forbidden and interrupted - an addition of an artificial technique or ruse - used in order to generate a presence which is actually absent. Thus we can appreciate that the 'Natural' needs to be supplemented despite Rousseau's claims to the contrary.

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1380 Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.9.
1381 Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.145.
1382 According to Derrida, Rousseau claims that: . . . Nature's supplement does not proceed from Nature, it is not only inferior to but other than Nature. . . (Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.145.)
Critical writing (predominantly that of Clement Greenberg but also that of Walter Benjamin, Leon Trotsky and Stanley William Hayter) prior to 1960, prior to the introduction of a definition of originality in prints also discloses a declared Rousseauism. It was writing which concerned itself with American Abstract Expressionism as well as writing concerning printmaking preceding the definition of originality in prints that generated concepts of self-expression by opposing preconceived cites/sites of authentic self-hood against the preconceived, the rational, cognition and logic; opposing painting to printmaking and generated a concept of 'immediacy' in opposition to technology which was crystallised in the definition of originality. The metaphors of authentic self-hood - 'immediacy' and the gesture - in a constellation with the metaphors of sophisticated culture - the technological, mechanical reproduction, the rational, preconceived etc. - witnessed in the various definitions, are a duplication of the rhetorical figures of refusal and denial by painters of printmaking observablo in the height of the rhetoric of self-expression (American Abstract Expressionism between 1940-1960).

The writings of Walter Benjamin, Leon Trotsky, Clement Greenberg, S. W. Hayter as well as that of artists and other commentators of that period reveal traits and traces of certain metaphors - how self expression through 'immediacy' always comes in the guise of a 'dangerous' technology - which needs to be effaced.

When Rousseau writes, he attempts to define the limit of possibility whose impossibility he describes: the natural voice or the inarticulate language. The model of this impossible 'natural voice' he gives several names. At least two of them relate to childhood and God. The two predicates are united: it is a matter of language uncontaminated by supplementarity. Rousseau writes:

... All our languages are the result of art. It has long been a subject of inquiry whether there was ever a natural language common to all; no doubt there is, and it is the language of children before they begin [have learned] to speak. This language is inarticulate, but it has tone, stress and meaning. The use of our own language has led us to neglect it so far as
to forget it altogether. Let us study children and we shall soon learn it afresh from them. . . It is not the sense of the word, but its accompanying intonation [accent] that is understood. . .  
[Derrida's italics]

As Derrida has pointed out, 'to speak before knowing how to speak', is the limit towards which Rousseau directs his origin. 'The child speaks before knowing how to speak' and has language:

. . . To speak before knowing how to speak, not to be able either to be silent or to speak, this limit of origin, is indeed a pure presence, present enough to be living, to be felt pleasure [jouissance] but pure enough to have remained unblemished by the work of différance, inarticulate enough for self-delight [jouissance de soi] not to be corrupted by interval, discontinuity, alterity. Indeed Rousseau thinks that this experience of a continual present is accorded only to God: given to God or to those whose hearts accord and agree with God's. It is indeed this accord, this resemblance of the divine and the human that inspires him when he dreams, in the Reveres, of that experience of a time reduced to presence, 'where the present lasts forever, without marking its duration in any way, and without any trace of succession. . .

What Rousseau believes is that children are heirs to a pure language uncontaminated by the sophistication of culture. The movement is towards an inarticulate speech:

. . . a speech before words, alive enough to speak, pure, interior, and homogenous enough to relate it to no object, to gather into itself no mortal difference, no negativity. . . it is the difference between our experience and that of God Himself. . .

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1383 Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.247.
1384 Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.247.
1385 ibid.
1386 ibid., p.249.
1387 ibid., p.250.
After declaring the centre of origin, that there is one zero point of origin in the history of languages, Rousseau speaks of a formation and deformation of his 'pure' language:

... In primitive times the sparse human population had no more social structure than the family, no laws but those of nature, no language, but that of gesture and some inarticulate sounds. ...

Of this primitivism Derrida has this to add:

... The expression 'primitive times', and all the evidence which will be used to describe them, refer to no date, no event, no chronology. One can vary the facts without modifying the structural invariant. It is a time before time. In every possible historical structure, there seemingly would be a prehistoric, pre-social, and also pre-linguistic stratum, that one ought always to lay bare. Dispersion, absolute solitude, mutism, experience irrevocable destined to a pre-reflexive sensation, immediate, without memory, without anticipation, without imagination, without the power of reason or comparison, such would be the virgin soil of any social, historic, or linguistic adventure. ...

Rousseau's 'savage' found in the 'Discourse', wanders (before 'primitive times') in the forests 'without industry, without speech, and without home'. The 'Barbarian' of the essay has a family, a cabin and a language, 'even if he is reduced to gesture and some inarticulate sounds.' As Derrida points out in Of Grammatology, these are not two different and successive states that Rousseau is describing. It is rather a natural milieu entailing no true institution and having no language. Derrida shows how Rousseau wants us to sense or mark beginnings of the movement.

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In regard to printmaking practices most writers writing in Imprint seem to take the view that technology and especially the sophisticated photographic technologies are deformations of the 'pure' and therefore need to be countered, usually by the introduction of 'hand-drawn' or other 'hand-crafted' technologies.

Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, in Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.252.

Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.252.

Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.252.

ibid.
within a society being-born from the state of pure nature. It is the 'almost society' that Rousseau describes when he names the 'savage' life of hunters and the 'barbaric' life of the pre-agricultural shepherds. The intention according to Derrida: 'sharpens and radicalises the characteristics of virginity within the state of pure nature.'

There is a continual sliding and shifting that describes the transition from pure nature to the birth of society. But we must agree with Derrida:

... The evidence is not so simple. For no continuity from inarticulate to articulate, from pure nature to culture, from plenitude to the play of supplementarity, is possible. The Essay, having to describe the birth, the being-born of the supplement, must reconcile the two times. The departure from nature is at once progressive and brutal, instantaneous and interminable. The structural caesura is trenchant but the historical separation is slow, laborious, progressive, imperceptible. ...  

This for Rousseau, is the catastrophe. As mankind emerges (due to a little push entirely exterior to Nature) into the negativity, the origin of evil, of society, of articulation, presence is surprised by what threatens it. It is this 'surprised' that motivates printmakers to castigate the very technology which is the necessary ingredient of their production. Derrida writes:

... The passage from the state of nature to the state of language and society, the advent of supplementarity, remains then outside the grasp of the simple alternative of genesis and structure, of fact and principle, of historical and philosophical reason. Rousseau explains the supplement in terms of a negativity perfectly exterior to the system it comes to overturn, intervening in it therefore in a manner of an unforeseeable factum, of a null and infinite force, of a natural catastrophe

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1394 ibid., p.255.
1395 Derrida writes:
... it is imperative that this exteriority of evil be nothing or nearly nothing. The little push, the slight movement produces a revolution out of nothing.
... The origin of evil or of history is thus nothing or nearly nothing...
(Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.256)
that is neither in nor out of Nature and remains non rational as
the origin of reason must (and not simply irrational like an
opacity within the system of rationality). . . 1396

For Rousseau, the catastrophe of supplementarity is that which procured
for society the possibility of reason and language and becomes the 'fatal
advantage' and even the 'fatal accident' (Rousseau's 'barbaric' society
was propelled by 'some fatal accident'1397 ) which pushes society into a
situation where it is caught between a state of nature and the state of
society. It is in this way that Rousseau constructs the logic of his hierarchy
and dualism to be found underlying that hierarchy of his explanation of
languages; it is a Nature opposed to Culture. For Rousseau, it is actually
the sophistication of culture (to which mankind is addicted1398 ) which
seduces mankind away from nature. According to Rousseau:

. . . As man's first motives for speaking were of passions, his
first expressions were tropes. Figurative language was the first
to be born. Proper meaning was discovered last. . . 1399

And art for Rousseau is the Mother of all languages: 'All our languages
are the result of art.'1400

It does not require much of a conceptual leap to follow Rousseau's
reasoning woven through the textual play of Walter Benjamin's 'Art in the
Age of Mechanical Reproduction', (1936), an essay which is unique in that
it is a cultural assessment of the interrelation of art, technology and mass
society. Like Rousseau's 'primitive times', Benjamin1401 harks back to 'pre-


1396 Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.259.
1397 Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.259.
1398 Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.256:
. . . Supposing eternal spring on the earth; supposing plenty of water,
livestock, and pasture, and supposing that men, as they leave the hands
of nature, were once spread out in the midst of all that, I cannot imagine
how they would ever be induced to give up their primitive liberty,
abandoning the isolated pastoral life so fitted to their natural indolence, to
impose upon themselves unnecessarily the labours and the inevitable
misery of a social mode of life. . .
1399 Rousseau quoted by Derrida, Of Grammatology, op. cit., p.271.
1400 ibid., p.247.
1401 Walter Benjamin was a member of the very influential Institute fur Sozialforshung in
Frankfurt, later called the Frankfurt School which also included Theodor Adorno(Irving
Wohlfrath, 'Hibernation: on the Tenth Anniversary of Adorno's Death, Modern Language
Notes, 94, Dec. 1979, p.981-982.).
historic times' in order to posit an authenticity, and purity of presence, to a
time of pre-literate signification\textsuperscript{1402} in the language of art (the mother of
language). Benjamin elaborates:

\ldots This is comparable to the situation of the work of art in
prehistoric times when, by the absolute emphasis on its cult
value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic. \ldots The
elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his
cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow
men, but in the main is was meant for the spirits. \ldots \textsuperscript{1403}

And as an instrument of magic 'meant for the spirits', pre-historic ('Stone-
Age') man was able to communicate with his God via his arts. This for
Benjamin, is evidence of Origin. Benjamin elaborated:

\ldots The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its
being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. \ldots Originally the
contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in
the cult. We know that the earliest works of art originated in
the service of ritual - first the magical, then the religious kind.
It is significant that the existence of the work with reference to
aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function. In
other words, the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has
its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value. \ldots \textsuperscript{1404}

Benjamin then suggests that the introduction of mechanical reproduction
techniques, particularly photo-mechanical reproduction affords us an
insight: 'For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction
emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual.'\textsuperscript{1405}

In his essay, Benjamin introduces history as progressive, that mankind
slowly emerged out of nature: 'the mode of human sense perception
changes with humanity's entire mode of existence,'\textsuperscript{1406} but not only out of

\textsuperscript{1402} Since the operation of writing reproduces that of speech, the first \textit{grapheme} will
reflect the first speech: figure and image. It will be pictographic.
\textsuperscript{1403} Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' op.
cit., p.225.
\textsuperscript{1404} ibid., p.223-224.
\textsuperscript{1405} ibid., p.224.
\textsuperscript{1406} ibid., p.222.
nature but 'by historical circumstances as well'.\footnote{ibid.} Benjamin's notions of an emergence of society from out of nature echo that of Rousseau's where society was propelled by 'some fatal accident',\footnote{ibid. as quoted by Derrida, \textit{Of Grammatology}, op. cit., p.259.} often described as a 'fatal advantage' and even that 'dangerous supplement'.

And how does Benjamin think technology as a dangerous supplement? By acknowledging the threat of technology to the 'presence' of the subject:

\ldots Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space.\ldots \footnote{Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', op. cit., p.220.}

\ldots The whole sphere of authenticity is outside of the technical - and of course not only technical - reproducibility.\ldots \footnote{ibid.}

\ldots That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of a work of art.\ldots \footnote{ibid., p.221.}

\ldots the quality of its presence is always depreciated.\ldots \footnote{ibid.}

For Benjamin, the uniqueness of a work of art is embedded in tradition, ritual, magic (all attributes of Rousseau's 'barbarian'\footnote{Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, \textit{Of Grammatology}, op. cit., p.313: \ldots An ancient tradition passed out of Egypt into Greece, that some god, who was an enemy to the repose of man-kind, was the inventor of \textit{sciences}.\ldots} emerging from savagery), the site of authenticity, aura and presence. The advent of technology destroys as it 'emancipates the work of art [from] its parasitical dependence on ritual'.\footnote{ibid., p.225.} Furthermore, 'with the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that a quantitative shift between its two poles[ ritual and political] turned into a quantitative transformation of its nature'.\footnote{ibid., p.224.} In other
words, for Benjamin, technology has meant a shift in function of the purposes in art: away from speaking to the spirits and the gods (the 'natural' language) towards servicing society. He gives film and photography as examples.\textsuperscript{1416}

Where Rousseau values the dependence on this nearness to the natural, Benjamin, in a wrenching reversal (perhaps motivated by a political agenda), sees it as parasitical. Whichever view one opts for - valuable necessity or parasitical dependence - 'sophisticated culture', in the guise of technology and mechanical reproduction intersects, intervenes, impinges, encroaches, invades, intrudes and disturbs the presence of the 'pure' subject, corrupts communion with the 'spirits' and the 'natural'. According to Benjamin, mechanical reproduction changed the function of the art work. Originally its practice was in ritual, magic and religion. With mechanical reproduction: 'Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice - politics.'\textsuperscript{1417}

Politics are conjoined with reproduction, society with technology: sophisticated culture exemplified. The natural, spiritual, magical and ritualistic are impinged on, deformed or degraded by the invasion of politics (bought about by mechanical reproduction and technology). The age of mechanical reproduction, 'separated art from its basis in cult.'\textsuperscript{1418} In this way Benjamin's insightful reading of art and technology actually discloses the acknowledgement of supplementarity: technology is a manifestation of culture and 'distances' the cult object to a condition of 'unapproachability.'\textsuperscript{1419} In other words, technology is to be thought of as a threat to aura and self presence; a wedge which separates man from nature. This is its 'advantage' as a tool of politics. Technology, in the form of photography became an objective method of viewing society. 'It is the death and the perfect alienation of the instrument of civil order: for the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens.'\textsuperscript{1420}

\textsuperscript{1416} ibid.
\textsuperscript{1417} ibid., p.224.
\textsuperscript{1418} ibid., p.226.
\textsuperscript{1419} ibid., p.243.
\textsuperscript{1420} ibid., p.219.
Such observations did not go without criticism. Theodore Adorno, in *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, first published in 1944, wrote: 'Interested parties explain the culture industry in technological terms' And: 'A technological rationale is the rationale of domination itself' Such statements reveal that for some cultural observers the explanation of culture in technological terms was already under suspicion. Adorno distrusted Benjamin's analysis of culture and believed that much of Benjamin's analysis was a result of technological determinism.

What is inescapable is that both Rousseau, who saw nature as lost and irredeemable through the intervention of culture ("so that he could have departed from it only through some fatal accident, which for the public good, should never have happened" - something that should never have happened has come to pass), and Benjamin, who seized the interruption of ritual, magic and art as an opportunity for political exploitation (Benjamin wishes to politicise art), feel that the interruption has been caused by a sophistication of culture at the expense of man's attachment to nature.

Both see the two modalities -necessity and non-necessity - inscribed within a global logic where the supplementarity of technology can only work within the fatality of an historical game. Both Rousseau and Benjamin resign themselves to it. The sophistication of society creates a split between nature and a 'natural' culture. For Benjamin, an optimist, the process is reversible. One has only to recognise the political advantage of such a tool of emancipation and put it to work politicising art: 'Communism responds by politicising art'.

Unfortunately for Benjamin, the key figures of American Abstract Expressionism had become disillusioned with politics - both of the left and the right. Rather they responded to the 'middle road' proposed in

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1423 ibid.
1937 by *Partisan Review*, who's editorship worked gradually towards a disengagement and abandoned proletarian literature and instead tried to establish an intellectual community. In 1938 *Partisan Review* published a letter that Leon Trotsky had written entitled *Art and Politics*. This letter was an attack on Stalinism's totalitarian conception of art and an approbation of an independent art, free of politics. Trotsky's writing is riddled with Rousseauisms. Writing on the evils of society, Trotsky disguised the fear of society and culture-threatening art by invoking art as the metaphor of the natural and free:

...Generally speaking, art is an expression of man's need for a harmonious and complete life, that is to say, his need for those major benefits of which a society of classes has deprived him... 

For Trotsky, politics was a product of sophisticated culture and should be abandoned. Such and abandonment, according to Trotsky, was rebellious and revolutionary in itself. Such a stance would redirect culture back to that 'harmonious and complete life' before the swerves away from nature by a culture that 'deprives', invades and degrades humanity. It was the duty of art, in this social climate, to remain independent:

...Art like science, not only does not seek orders but by its very essence, cannot tolerate them. Artistic creation has its laws - even when it consciously serves a social movement. Truly intellectual creation is incompatible with lies, hypocrisy and the spirit of conformity. Art can become a strong ally of revolution only in so far as it remains faithful to itself... 

As with Rousseau who had suggested that art had intrinsic laws given to it in 'primitive times' and Benjamin who suggested that these had been

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1427 Leon Trotsky, 'Art and Politics', a letter to the editors of *Partisan Review*, August-September, 1938.
1428 Leon Trotsky, 'Art and Politics', a letter to the editors of *Partisan Review*, August-September, 1938, p.3.
1429 ibid.
1430 ibid., p.10.
given in 'prehistoric times', Trotsky was suggesting that Art must remain faithful to its own 'natural' intrinsic laws which had been given it when '[society] was harmonious and free'. These 'natural' Laws were ultimately defined by delineating them against the supplementarity of culture: technology.

Both Andre Breton and Diego Rivera collaborated with Trotsky to publish 'Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', also published in 1938 by *Partisan Review*. In it they write: 'True art is unable not to be revolutionary, not to aspire to a complete and radical reconstruction of society.'

But this 'radical reconstruction' can now be seen to be a nostalgic yearning for an imagined 'harmonious and free' past. Both the magazines, *Partisan Review*, and *Marxist Quarterly* which published Meyer Schapiro's article 'Nature of Abstract Art' (in 1937) advocated that artists needed to work independently of political parties and totalitarian ideologies. In doing so the oppositional construction of art against politics - the metaphor of a sophisticated culture - was heightened.

Schapiro's article was particularly influential. It allowed for the use of art that was abstract. And further, because it posited that an artist's work encapsulated the artist's preconceptions and social situation in an abstract 'language', it became possible, in theory at least, for abstraction to be used as a critical language. This opened the way for firstly Breton and Trotsky (in 1938) and then Greenberg (in 1939) to posit their concepts of a critical art that was abstract and avant-garde, further removing art from the confines of political dogma and message making despite Greenberg's own fervent denials that he was the epitome of a formalist critic, and

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1431 Andre Breton and Diego Rivera, 'Towards a Free Revolutionary Art', *Partisan Review*, 6., No. 1, Autumn 1938, p.50.
1434 Rousseau's notion that art was the mother of all language is returned to. Now, not only is art a language but it could be composed entirely of itself as a 'critical language'.
despite Greenberg's call for 'a return to politics... The revolution against politics has been too extreme and... defective.'

Schapiro's article broke the opposition between the idealist formalism espoused by Alfred. H. Barr and socialist realism as espoused by a communism which was under attack because of Stalinism. Communist criticism up to that time had implied that abstract art was the product of an ivory tower, bearing no relation to society.

But Shapiro, in 'The Nature of Abstract Art', argued that abstract art was rooted in the social fabric of society and was a product of social conditioning. Therefore, it was possible (in theory at least) for left-wing artists to use abstraction. This certainly paved the way for a re-evaluation of abstraction. According to Serge Guilbaut, Schapiro's article: 'liberated American Painters tired of their role as propaganda illustrators.'

In 1937, Partisan Review and its new editors took a definite political stance. They maintained that the role of the artist was a difficult one. The artist must be an artist and a citizen. The artist must understand the difference between public life and private life:

...The estrangement of the intellectual was the justification for his withdrawal from real politics, but it was also an explanation for his ability to rise above the mundane and reunite art and politics into a vision of revolutionary culture. The alienated man became the radical man...

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Thus the independence of the artist and art from politics was crucial if the artist hoped to avoid becoming a tool of propaganda (politics became a metaphor of a sophisticated culture). Therefore, the background was set for a non-propagandist art. It would be an art that was individualistic and would not attach itself overtly to any politics, neither left nor right. Individualism became the centre piece of liberalism. Overt propaganda (Printmaking fell into this bracket) was shunned since it tied artists to a political mechanism that had been posited as anti-humanist, and anti-individual.

It was Clement Greenberg, writing in 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', in 1939, who re-enforced this view of the artist's role. Greenberg's rationalising approach, adopted by the American Abstract Expressionists, was to historicise painting firstly in terms of painting's drift towards a 'materiality', from which he then construed its essence: 'flatness'. Greenberg then formulated his concept of 'quality' by juxtaposing and polarising it against the concept of 'kitsch'. A term which covered, broadly speaking, all the excesses of industrialisation, the excesses of the bourgeoisie which were in turn caused by the loss of a social cultural elite. In short, kitsch was a product of a post-war, technocratic Western Culture.

Implicitly, Greenberg determined that kitsch was an 'evil' product of the excesses of culture in the clutches of a politics gone wrong and that nothing could save culture except a return to nature through a type of primitivising inherent in the object-as-object. Greenberg's project was to simultaneously decontextualise the primitive and juxtapose it against a similarly formulated technocratic Western culture posited as being 'out of control': A machine aesthetic 'gone mad'.

In 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' Greenberg claimed that only an avant-garde could save a culture of quality from the invasion of kitsch and 'keep culture moving in the midst of ideological confusion and violence.'

Again, Rousseau's fear of culture's 'evil' is manifest in Greenberg's writing. Greenberg lacked the political confidence of Benjamin or the

\[1^{443}\] Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', op. cit., p.36.
optimism of both Leon Trotsky \textsuperscript{1444} and Andre Breton \textsuperscript{1445} who, like
Greenberg, blamed the cultural crisis on the decadence of the aristocracy
and the bourgeoisie, but who had seen in the independent artist the way
to overcome the crisis. But where Trotsky and Breton saw artists
independent from political parties as artists taking 'eclectic action',
Greenberg saw the avant-garde artist as being independent from politics
itself. Pessimistically dismissing Trotsky's 'eclectic action', Greenberg saw
the artist as a 'modernist avant-garde.' \textsuperscript{1446}

By invoking the avant-garde, Greenberg was able to pose as the defender
of quality and the champion of progress against academicism while
renouncing political struggle and sanctioning a conservative mission to
rescue bourgeois culture ( albeit in the traditional terms he outlined in his
essay 'Towards a New Laocoon') from the clutches of the 'evil'
technocratic culture. The fall from grace would be countered by a return to
a natural art unencumbered by cultural sophistication.

In Greenberg's view, the greatest threat to culture lay in academicism, the
essence of which was epitomised in kitsch. Greenberg defined kitsch as
the result of a mass culture stemming from the industrial revolution. In
other words, kitsch represented all the excesses of a technocratic society.
Greenberg believed that the artist's task was to make a stand against
these excesses, in essence to repel the technological and the
mechanical:

\ldots Kitsch, using for raw material the debased and
academicalised simulacra of genuine culture, welcomes and
cultivates this insensibility. It is the source of its profits. Kitsch
is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious
experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to
style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all
that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to
demand nothing of its customers except their money - not even
their time...\textsuperscript{1447}

\textsuperscript{1444} Leon Trotsky, 'Art and Politics', \textit{Partisan Review}, Spring, 1938.
\textsuperscript{1445} Diego Rivera and Andre Breton, 'Towards a free Revolutionary Art,' \textit{Partisan Review},
Autumn, 1938.
\textsuperscript{1446} Joseph Margolis, 'The Interconnection of Art and History,' \textit{Journal of Philosophy and
\textsuperscript{1447} Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch', \textit{Partisan Review}, Autumn 1939,
Theodore Adorno,\textsuperscript{1448} working simultaneously and independently of Greenberg but who was, like Benjamin, part of the Frankfurt School, wrote a theory of modernism which markedly resembled Greenberg's in several respects. Adorno shared with Greenberg a Marxist-derived interpretation of culture which favoured an elitist modernism, emphasised the disparity between the avant-garde and kitsch and opposed the Dadaist fascination with popular culture in the same way that Greenberg attacked Surrealism:\textsuperscript{1449}

. . . Today. . . every phenomenon of culture. . . is liable to be suffocated in the cultivation of kitsch. Yet paradoxically it is to works of art that has fallen the burden of wordlessly asserting what is barred to politics. . .This is not a time for political art, but politics has migrated into autonomous art, and nowhere more so than where it seems to be politically dead. . .\textsuperscript{1450}

Obviously these writers regarded kitsch as an excess of 'high' capitalism. Like Trotsky and Benjamin, Adorno saw in art the potential for a political program of intervention. For Greenberg, the term 'modernism' signified art that imitated the avant-garde, that appropriated its 'look' but not its ideology - what later Greenberg was to call 'middlebrow kitsch'. Comparing kitsch to avant-garde art he asserted that 'kitsch imitates its


\textsuperscript{1449} Clement Greenberg, 'Surrealist Painting', \textit{The Collected Essays and Criticism}, Volume 1, p.225, writes:
. . . The orthodox Surrealists have stood firm on Socialism, yet their stand has not kept Surrealism from becoming largely identified with the younger generation of smart international bohemia. . . the desire to change life on the spot, without waiting for the revolution, and to make art the affair of everybody is Surrealism's most laudable motive, yet it has led inevitably to a certain vulgarisation of modern art. . . The anti-institutional, anti-formal, anti-aesthetic nihilism of the Surrealists - inherited from Dada with all the artificial nonsense entailed - has in the end proved a blessing to the restless rich. . .

Greenberg's early use of the terms 'modernism' and 'avant-garde' were carefully chosen to advocate an anti-Stalinist but pro-Marxist line also being simultaneously undertaken by *Partisan Review*. When Greenberg initially used the term 'modernism' he meant, like other pro-Marxist writers, the cultural arm of the decadent bourgeois culture. When Greenberg used the term 'avant-garde' he politically loaded it and employed it to describe the 'genuinely new'. Both of these terms Greenberg used together to attack a production of capitalism - 'kitsch' - that ingratiated itself with the latest fashion which, Greenberg felt, threatened the avant-garde.

Benjamin's use of 'modernism' is a simple adoption of Baudelaire's usage. In the addendum to the 'Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire', Benjamin explained how the main feature of Baudelaire's heritage, 'art for art's sake' and the 'taste' of the most advanced art, 'reflects' the capitalist forces of production which surround it.

With hind sight, it is relatively easy to track the 'logic' of Benjamin's, Adorno's, Trotsky's and Greenberg's program. What was spurious at that time was anything produced by technology because technology was seen to be in the control of capitalism which showed all the signs of being invaded either by capitalism veering towards fascism (like that of Mussolini) or under threat of Stalinism (a dictatorship which did not serve the people). Generally, man's technology had exceeded itself.

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. . . For years [Mussolini]. . . built modernistic railroad stations and government-owned apartment housing [because] Fascism wanted to show its up-to-datedness, to conceal the fact that it was retrogression. . .

1457 Trotsky regarded the dictatorship which he and Lenin had established as justified because it was exercised in the interests of the proletariat, and so was quite different from that of Stalin's dictatorship, which he condemned not because it was undemocratic but because it acted only in its own interests (Allan Bullock and R.B. Woodings, *The Fontana*...
The Russian Revolution, Stalinism, the Spanish Civil War, the First World War, the Hydrogen Bomb were all testimony to that fact.

Greenberg carried Leon Trotsky’s defence of a critical art that remained ‘faithful to itself’ one step further, maintaining that while the avant-garde did indeed do critical work, it was criticism directed within, toward the work of art itself, toward the very medium of art, and intended solely to guarantee the quality of the production. Such criticism, according to Greenberg, was necessary because capitalism does not tolerate quality:

...Capitalism in decline finds whatever of quality it is still capable of producing becomes almost invariably a threat to its own existence. Advances in culture no less than advances in science and industry corrode the very society under whose aegis they are made possible... [Italics are mine]

Where Rousseau treated language and society as dangerous excesses of culture, Greenberg, Adorno, Benjamin and Trotsky, treated the excesses of technology and science as corrosive forces that eroded culture and removed what positive aspects an archaic and pure society once had. In relation to kitsch, Greenberg drove his message even further by writing:

...Because it can be turned out mechanically, Kitsch has become an integral part of our productive system... in a way in which true culture could never be except accidentally. It has been capitalised at a tremendous investment which must

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In August 1938 Partisan Review published a letter that Leon Trotsky had sent to the magazine entitled ‘Art and Politics’, p 3-10.


Matei Calinescu, in Faces of Modernity, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1977, p.41-42 notes that:

... The doctrine of progress, the confidence in the beneficial properties of science and technology... the cult of reason, and the ideal freedom defined within the framework of an abstract humanism... all have been associated in various degrees with the battle for the modern and were kept alive and promoted as key values in the triumphant civilisation established by the middle class...

Obviously Greenberg conflated the middle class with the bourgeois and everything that they represented became a target.
show commensurate returns; it is compelled to extend as well as keep its markets...\(^{1461}\)

[Italics are mine]

Obviously for Greenberg, 'true culture' is a culture wary of all that 'can be turned out mechanically'. Rousseau's 'fatal accident' reappears in Greenberg's writing. Not only is kitsch an 'accidental' product of technology and culture but is also interwoven with capitalism and politics in such a way that it is able to reproduce itself. The metaphors of the fall and swerve away from nature cannot be lost on us. But for Greenberg, because this phenomenon was 'accidental', artists true to themselves could save the situation and put culture back 'on course'.

In this way Greenberg, like Walter Benjamin before him, believed that art as a product of nature suffers under the imposition and impingement of culture, a point which Greenberg was to later emphasise in 'The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture', \(^{1462}\) However, even though Greenberg treated culture as an exteriority, unlike Benjamin or Adorno, Greenberg did not believe that an overt left-wing politics was the answer.

In agreement with Adorno, Greenberg believed that kitsch was a by-product of capitalism. By attacking kitsch, Greenberg turned art in on itself, deflecting artists away from the political turmoil within which they found themselves yet, at the same time, providing an ideologically sound program. As a result, an oblique attack on capitalism would come from a 'pure' aesthetics. Greenberg was able to achieve this by charging technological methods of reproduction, the mechanistic and technological, with negative qualities(mirroring Benjamin's loss of authenticity and 'aura'). This was necessary in order to create the technocratic 'field'(described as 'kitsch'), the background against which


\(^{1462}\) Clement Greenberg, 'The Present Prospects of American Painting and Sculpture', *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, John O'Brian, ed., The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1986, Vol. 2, p.164 when he wrote:... a society as completely capitalised and industrialised as our American one, seeks relentlessly to organise every possible field of activity. ... it is this kind of rationalisation that has made life more boring and tasteless in our country. ...
'quality' and the 'individual' could be projected. Greenberg seized upon technology in order to propel his concept of quality embodied in the individual aesthetic. Thus an artificial opposition of terms and concepts was created, echoing Benjamin's notion of an 'authority of the object' pitted against a decontextualised 'primitive' outlined in 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.

The article, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' formalised and rationalised the intellectual position already adopted by many painters, albeit in a confused way. By making kitsch the target and, because it was tied to totalitarian powers (through technology), the symbol of evil, Greenberg showed a direction for artists. Greenberg appealed to socialism to save the dying culture in order to carry on the artistic tradition. His message was to reject the capitalist induced technocratic culture producing 'kitsch' without once referring directly to what he had placed in supposed opposition. He masked the opposition of 'quality' of the hand-made to the technological by promoting his concept of kitsch, the by-product of sophisticated culture. However much Greenberg's, Adorno's, Benjamin's or Trotsky's notions of the position of art in the control of an avant-garde may have diverged ideologically in relation to modernism, there is no denying that their attacks on culture were made within the same aesthetic matrix that Rousseau also occupied: the fear of technology disguised as the fear of cultural excess. In other words culture's excesses - in the form of kitsch - was treated as supplementary.

Many artists, sick of politics, took this inward looking, self-critical, anti-technological step very seriously, as is attested in 1943 when Gottlieb, Rothko and Newman set a five point aesthetic program that was well attuned to the new critical stance outlined by Greenberg. In this they write:

. . . We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth. . . . We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless. That is why we profess spiritual kinship with primitives and archaic art. . .

[italics are mine]

Rousseau's deadly supplementarity is named in opposition to primitive and archaic art. This attitude had already been taken up by John Graham in 'Primitive Art and Picasso' which appeared in the Magazine of Art in April 1937.

... *Primitive races and primitive genius have readier access to the unconscious mind* than so-called civilised people. It should be understood that the unconscious mind is the creative factor and the source of the storehouse of power and of all knowledge, past and future... Therefore the art of primitive races has a highly evocative quality which allows it to bring to our consciousness the clarities of the unconscious mind, stored with the individual and the collective wisdom of past generations and forms... an evocative art is a means and a result of getting in touch with the powers of our unconscious. *It stimulates us to move and act along the intuitional line in our life procedure.* Two formative factors apply to primitive art: first, the degree of freedom of access to one's unconscious mind in regard to observed phenomenon, and second, an understanding of the possibilities of the plain operating space. The first allows an imaginary journey into the primordial past for the purpose of bringing out some relevant information; the second permits *a persistent and spontaneous exercise of design and composition as opposed to the deliberate which is valueless.* ..

These points Greenberg was also to later qualify in the essay ‘Towards a Newer Laocoon’, also published in *Partisan Review,* in 1940. As Greenberg put it:

...To prove that their concept of purity is something more than a bias in taste, *painters point to the Oriental, primitive and children's art as instances of universality and naturalness and objectivity of their ideal purity...* 1465

[Italics are mine]

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Hayter, in *New Ways of Gravure*, published in 1949, wrote:

...this account will make my point about the attitude of play in elaborating an idea as distinct from the mechanical and repetitious execution of a frozen scheme by the methods of work. As I see it there is no lack of seriousness in this attitude—*what could show greater seriousness and concentration than a child playing an elaborate game?*... \(^ {1466}\)

[Italics are mine]

Hayter's allusion to the universal child was rhetorical. Like Rousseau's 'natural language' of children, \(^ {1467}\) Hayter's reference was an appeal to a metaphor of (a virgin state of) nature which represented innocence, naïveté and an uncontrolled spontaneity uncontaminated by the sophistication of culture. It is towards a pure language, an inarticulate speech which Hayter also directed printmakers. This he placed in opposition to technology. Technology, and that which it represented—the cogito—needed to be effaced in order that the artist's 'inner' natural self could be articulated. Hayter elaborated his methods in *About Prints*, \(^ {1468}\) where he described 'Five Degrees of Originality' in prints which, in themselves, disclose 'work' of the supplementary logic which Hayter deployed.

In *New Ways of Gravure*, \(^ {1469}\) Hayter, as with Greenberg, Benjamin and Rousseau calls upon an archaic and pure society upon which to base his concept of the origin of printmaking:

...Perhaps before speech had reached the point of development when it could adequately impart command or describe experience, the scratching of lines into bone, horn, and stone served as a means of communicating ideas and recording experience.... \(^ {1470}\)


\(^ {1467}\) Rousseau as quoted by Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p.247.


\(^ {1469}\) S. W. Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, Oxford University Press, 1966

As with Rousseau who believed that art was the mother of all language, Hayter's description of the development of engraving harks back to a time without cultural sophistication, pure and free. Echoing Benjamin, Hayter also suggested in the Chapter 'Theory of Line', an attachment to ritual and magic:

... in examples of prehistoric art from the earliest times we find two different adaptations from the function of line as a line. ... all lines could be said to be descriptive of things not in themselves linear. ... the purposes of images was of the nature of imitative magic, that primitive man made such drawings to obtain power over the objects he represented. ...

Hayter's philosophical position culminated in his 'Five Degrees of Originality' where authentic self-hood was positioned against the metaphors of the threat of sophisticated culture: mass reproduction, cognition, the rational and the preconceived. In this way Hayter was able to radicalise the characteristics of virginity and purity within the state of nature.

Alfred H. Barr and Phillip Johnstone appropriated Roger Fry's formalism in order to explain the 'Machine Art' exhibition of 1936, but they did so in terms which emphasised a 'Platonic' technophilia. Walter Benjamin's analysis of 'Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' is essentially an example of technological determinism. Clement Greenberg's notion of kitsch which he developed in 'Avant -Garde and Kitsch' in order to juxtapose an art of 'quality' disclosed a rampant technophobia. The claims that American Abstract Expressionists made on behalf of their work also exploited notions of a negative concept of the technological in order to derive authentic self-hood. The rise of printmaking in America, the revival of lithography and the rejuvenation of collaboration, the writing of Stanley William Hayter coupled with the definition of originality in 1961 marks a period of intense exploitation of a concept of authentic self-hood in a dynamic relationship with a negative concept of the technological.

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1471 S. W. Hayter, New Ways of Gravure, op. cit. p 240-241.
1472 S. W. Hayter, About Prints, Oxford University Press, 1962; Refer to Part 1, Chapter 2 this thesis.
Throughout this fragmentary and brief history of American Abstract Expressionism and the resurgence of American printmaking, Rousseau's supplementary logic was put into operation.

An examination of Ruth Weisberg's essay: 'The Syntax of the Print: In Search of an Aesthetic Context', published by the *Tamarind Technical Papers* in 1986 reveals an allegiance to Fry's and Greenberg's formalism and is an echo of Barr's and Johnstone's 'Platonic' technophilia.

Beginning with Udo Sellbach's notions expressed in *Imprint* in his essay, 'Printing Possibilities versus Medium Possibilities', an examination of writing in *Imprint* has revealed that Rousseau's legacy is repeated, duplicated and re-produced in the period of post originality in Australia, the period of closure.

In all of these writings, specific attention to detail has been given to constructing a site of purity and uncynical from which a speech uncontaminated by the sophistication of culture could be articulated. When writers and artists point to the dangerousness of technology, materials and processes they are in fact shaping and radicalising the characteristics of purity in the natural, the imagined site of authentic selfhood.

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Conclusion

What has emerged, as we have stepped outside art philosophy's self-imposed system of logic to question the history of printmaking and its relationship with a dominant discourse, why we wish to know, on what type of division(s) a certain will to self-hood is based, something like a system of exclusion emerges. In 'L'ordre du discours', Foucault sets out an initial hypothesis:

...in any society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a number of procedures whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to master the unpredictable event. . .

Foucault then describes a number of 'procedures of exclusion' operating in discourse: prohibition (the taboo of the object, the ritual of circumstance, the privilege or exclusive right of the speaking subject), division and rejection, and the opposition between true and false. All of these procedures - systems of exclusion - have been encountered in this analysis of the Anglo-American influence on Australian printmaking.

The first part of this thesis, Part 1, set out to cross the boundaries of the printmaking and painting disciplines, to link American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking together, and to re-interpret them. It showed how the systems of American Abstract Expressionism and of printmaking have emerged from the immediate, unreflective experience of the period; how this system was arranged. Part 2 shows how these systems break up, disappear or are reshaped in new ways, how ideas and themes move from one domain, one period, to another. These two roles of history are articulated one upon the other and are dominated by three major themes: genesis, continuity and totalisation.

By abandoning the physicalist approach to the history of art and systematically rejecting its postulates and procedures a different history from that which artists and critics have emphasised has begun to emerge. Here is an archaeological enterprise in keeping with Foucault's theory of

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1474 Michel Foucault, Trans. Rupert Sawyer, 'Orders of Discourse', Social Science Information, X 2, April 1971, p 7-30
1475 ibid., p 10-11.
the archaeology of knowledge\textsuperscript{1476} which focuses on the attribution of innovation, the analysis of contradictions, comparative descriptions and the mapping of transformations.

This archaeological analysis has involved a comparison at two levels: comparison of one discursive practice with another and a discursive practice with non-discursive practices (institutions, political events, economic and social processes) that surround it. Part 1 compared the states of several discursive formations during a particular period, but not with a view to reconstruction. The intention was to reveal a number of specific relations existing between a limited set of discursive formations. These formed an interdiscursive configuration which, in turn, related to the analysis of representation, the general theory of signs and ideology and, in particular, the relationship between a concept of art and self-hood lodged in immediacy, positioned against a concept of technology. The second part of the comparison was to link Australian printmaking with the discovered interdiscursive configuration outlined in Part 1 and to show how Australian printmaking reveals a system of articulation between discursive and non-discursive practices that avoids the citing of structurally fundamental similarities and coincidences.

This archaeological analysis is a description of change. It has not been enough to simply indicate changes and relate them to the aesthetic model of creation (transcendence, originality, invention), or to the psychological model of sudden acts of awareness or to a model of evolution (biological or cultural). The notion of change, brought about by the emergence of American Abstract Expressionism, or by certain technological or cultural developments in Australian printmaking as either a general container for all events or the abstract principle of their succession, is replaced by the analysis of different types of transformation. The aim has been not to overcome the differences (registered as failures in the eye of the traditional approach) created by the focusing on certain discontinuities but rather to analyse these and to chart in detail the shifts (minor or major) and changes occurring in the interdiscursivity uncovered. This analysis has not frozen the continuous flow of history in the synchronic system that remains motionless between one transformation and the next.

\textsuperscript{1476} Refer to Michel Foucault, Trans. Alan Sheridan, \textit{The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language}, Tavistock Publications Ltd, 1972.
It is the coherent manner in which American Abstract Expressionism deploys its system of exclusion as a method to derive and then maintain its own philosophical position that the entanglements of a theoretical practice may be negotiated.

Part 1 has argued that the philosophical underpinning of American Abstract Expressionism, that is, the concepts revolving around notions of 'immediacy' was only able to be articulated by polarising 'immediacy' against its supposed opposite - technology. By simultaneously rejecting technology and by refusing printmaking processes, American Abstract Expressionists revealed the fabrication of the structural tensioning of their own philosophical concepts, how these concepts were in fact brought into play, how 'immediacy' reached conceptual dominance; how a system of referral and transaction was superimposed and erased by the rejection of the technological, the metaphor for sophisticated culture.

Part 1 was a recovery of the structures generated by a system of exclusion. Part 2 discovers that the same discursive practice of exclusion operates within the scene of writing in Australian printmaking. Structures exhibited in the relationship between American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking (during 1940-1966) have been reproduced in Australian printmaking and since 1966 have operated from a self-imposed margin in order to perpetuate a site of production of 'authentic' self-hood.

Heralded is an isomorphic conceptual model to which both printmaking and American Abstract Expressionism are bound. By analysing the system of duplication and reproduction, the architecture and arrangement of the general system of operating concepts can be demonstrated: how both American Abstract Expressionism and Australian printmaking axiomatically belong to this 'field' or system of exclusion.

Australian printmaking not only enfolds the refusals of American Abstract Expressionism, it actually embraces the basic and underlying philosophical tenets expressed by that system of exclusion, duplicating them in its own structures of systematisation. By embracing these underlying philosophical concepts, printmaking (both during the American Abstract Expressionist period and later in Australia) engenders
a rhetoric which fabricates and preserves its favoured status of non-self presence for the technological.

This determined desire to continue the philosophical drive of American Abstract Expressionism in Australia, through a system of exclusion is both repeated and reinforced by the structural tensioning witnessed in the definition of so-called 'original prints', 'unique prints', 'mono prints', the differentiation between each of these, and as well, definitions of 'limited editions', 'collectors items', 'reproductions', 'photo copies', 'mass reproductions', 'mass-media', 'high-tech', 'computer generated art' and so on.

By arresting the system of exclusion, an analysis and appraisal of its constituent parts can be made of the underlying architecture - the infrastructures of the praxis. Such an appraisal awakens the latent 'forces' confined by the self-imposed conceptual ordering which brought about the hierarchical positioning in the first instance. This analysis or critique limits the scope of the general operating concepts and the 'force' of hierarchical positioning which have been 'at work' obscuring the desires of artists visiting the institution of printmaking: the desire for self-presence.

The facade printmaking presents, brought about by certain museological requirements to teleologically 'construct' a 'history' of 'quality' through the 'hand-made' as opposed to the 'machine-made' becomes transparent as soon as the discipline is shown not to be the 'arrowed', 'orientated' or 'progressive' discipline that its literature would otherwise claim. As such, it demonstrates in its 'scientific' and systematic 'history' of otherwise entirely unique concepts, the fallacy of its own architectural configuration, the tensioning and the systematisation of referral and transaction upon which it relies in order to promulgate notions of 'pure' subjecthood from a negative concept of the technological. As the system begins to fold and collapse the territory of referral between 'immediacy' and that which it would oppose, 'the technological', can be negotiated.

What has been revealed is that the prevailing concepts of printmaking theory are not 'grounded'. They are arbitrary, loosely configured, articulate no authority, are without foundation, because its basic tenets are flawed. Much of the formalist approach to art criticism denies its ideological
nature, while at the same time is secretly ideological. Denial of the ideological origins of aspects of art is itself ideological.

The American Abstract Expressionists' denial of printmaking was a calculated naiveté whose intention was to ensure that the 'life' of American Abstract Expressionism, and printmaking would go unexamined or, if examined, then only in the most superficial terms. This formula is most evident in printmaking where the underlying infra-structures and ideology are masked by a criticism which always informs us in terms of its immediate and superficial appearance. It is the ideology of the exploitation of 'the visible as evidence'. This approach to criticism is what Donald Kuspit, in 'Art and Ideology' has called the 'informational approach' and includes facts such as the general manner of its presentation (which includes its stylistic or art-historical orientation) or the manner of its execution. It is this approach to criticism that leads writers in Imprint to focus on the 'surfaces' of printmaking practices: 'qualities' of the medium, 'qualities' of the processes, 'qualities' of media and of re-production, the materials used and so on, in order to render the aesthetics of printmaking in terms which are self-referential and justifiable. In other words, printmaking exposes its own code - the one that pretends to be uncoded. By exposing the informational approach to art criticism riddled throughout Imprint this analysis shows how such a criticism was ideologically founded.

By analysing the formalist-traditionalist notion that printmaking is an isolated discipline tied to its own formalist and 'historical' traditions, by exposing the matrix upon which printmaking is based, a praxis is unveiled. This praxis, formally suppressed by the erection of certain 'logical' or 'rationalist' barriers in order to create the extravagant model under interrogation, contains, in its heterogeneous and 'free' state, an entirely different conceptual model of interwoven practices.

Beginning with an incision into both American Abstract Expressionism and printmaking, provided by an advertisement, this thesis broaches a conceptual model, a configuration which has imposed itself upon the

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1477 Kuhn as quoted by Linda Hutcheon, The Politics of Postmodernism, Routledge, 1989, p.44.
1478 Donald Kuspit, 'Art and Ideology', Art in America, Summer, 1981.
1479 Donald Kuspit, 'Art and Ideology', op. cit., p.94.
consciousness and unconsciousness of art in Australia for, at very least, a quarter of a century, and possibly longer. In this doubling of the configuration, we witness that printmaking in Australia is engaged in the reproduction of the structures of a system of exclusion. In this instance, printmaking is not a discipline whose desire is reproduction, but rather printmaking becomes a 'tool' in the service of a discourse whose task is in reproducing a site of authentic self-hood.

The implications of this speculation point unwaveringly to a failure on the part of the pedagogical institutions, in America and Australia, to evaluate the influences impinging upon them. A call is made for re-evaluation of the role of certain pedagogical institutions such as Galleries, printmaking departments within Art Schools, Imprint and the role art teachers have had and continue to have in relation to disseminating an ideology which has been destructive of thought rather than begetting of thought, that establishes and reinforces notions of a discipline of printmaking based on a 'feared' concept of technology in order to create notions of individual self-hood, that refuses any approach excepting the physicalist approach to theory and history and, in so doing, avoids whole continents of potential knowledge and creative thought (all the while simultaneously reproducing the structures which perpetuate the regime that is already in place by laying claim to the ruse of having no ideology or underlying philosophy because the discipline is at the mercy of the dominant discourse).

It is to the scene of teaching - to the institution as a political organisation, including its support structures (the apparatus of presses and journals, as well as print workshops, art galleries, museums and art schools), in short, to the power relations of the knowledge industry (within printmaking in the art industry)- where this thesis commits itself to strategic alliances with the current modes of cultural and ideological criticism. It is by the (violent and clandestine) introduction of heterogeneous forces into the 'teaching body' in order to deform and transform it that this thesis implies is the method by which the prevalent ideologies found in printmaking - as taught in Art Schools and reinforced by journals such as Imprint - where certain concepts exposed or underscored in this thesis might undergo rehabilitation, reconstruction and ongoing transformation rather than be reproduced, where printmaking could become a site of invention and transformation rather than merely of reproduction.
Consequently this analysis demonstrates a rethinking of printmaking, and calls for a speculation on the possibilities of the images that flood a technological society and on the possibilities of reproduction in the wider context. Further, it demonstrates an approach to art history and practice which takes into account ideology, and the operations of a powerful cultural politics, opening the way for a continuing discussion and transformation of the subject.
part 3
appendices
Introduction to Appendices

Included in these Appendices are documents, images, diagrams, transcripts of conversations which support the arguments of the thesis. Also included is a Bibliography.

Appendix 1: The Advertisement, is that advertisement which was placed in *Imprint* by the Australian National Gallery for the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition of 1987.

Appendix 2: The ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ contains a list of the artists involved in that exhibition. It shows where those artists were working at the time the prints included in the ‘Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era’ exhibition were made. It shows which were American Abstract Expressionists and those who were considered outside of the movement even though they might have been considered part of the various European abstract expressionist movements.

Appendix 3: Images, contains images which are referred to in the main text of this thesis.

Appendix 4: The Australian Print Survey Catalogue, is a duplication of that Catalogue. Although this exhibition is significant to this thesis in that it was the first Australian Print Survey exhibition, the catalogue is included because it contains details of the artists exhibiting and mentions those who were involved primarily with painting or printmaking prior to 1966. This thesis lists these artists because they were the dominant figures in printmaking at the time when the discipline was transforming itself into an "autonomous discipline" in Australia and were instrumental in forming the philosophical and ideological base of printmaking in Australia. It should be noted that of the 74 artists listed in the exhibition, 43 (over half) are listed as being 'chiefly painters'. The distinction is an important one because several writers, beginning with James Mollison in *Art and Australia*, in writing about this particular survey show in *Art and Australia*,
stress the point that traditional printmakers labour the technique whilst painters tend to bring attention to the concept in the print. This notion and the ramifications of this debate is discussed in the main text.

Also, this survey exhibition introduced the concept of original prints as it was defined by the American Print Council. It broached the subject of a Society / Print Council in Australia as a distinct body who would educate and promote this concept. The exhibition is important because it marks the beginning of a period of intense activity in printmaking in Australia, but, more importantly, it marks a period of definition of an autonomous discipline in Australia.

Appendix 5: Transcripts, contains transcripts of conversations with Vickers and Backen about the influence of Hayter’s teaching on Backen and, subsequently, his students in Australia.

Appendix 6: Originality in prints, lists several important definitions of Prints which have been used in Australia - Imprint in particular: The definition of the Third International Congress (1960); The Print Council of America (1961); The Print Council of Australia, Imprint (1966), and other definitions which have found their way into Imprint.

Appendix 7: Bibliography to this thesis lists all those authors and titles which are quoted from or made reference to by this thesis.
Appendix 1

The Advertisement for the Spontaneous Gesture Exhibition
Australian National Gallery
International Prints, Posters and Illustrated Books
Co-Ordinating Curator: Pat Gilmour

The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era
6 June - 13 September 1987

The first retrospective to be held anywhere in the world of European and American Prints of the Abstract Expressionist Era, a style which dominated contemporary art for more than a decade and eventually spread to Australia, Canada, South Africa and Japan.

One of the Myths that surrounded this legendary style is that Abstract Expressionist artists did not make prints. In fact they made a great number of lithographs, etchings and illustrated books. Among the works featured in the Spontaneous gesture are many by the most famous artists of the post war period including Pollock, de Kooning, Wols, Soulages, Hartung, Jorn, Alechinsky, Krasner, Sonderborg, Scumcher, Childs, Francis, Tobey, Hayter, Frankenthaler, Jenkins, Tapies, Vedova, and Yunkers.

About 125 Prints will be on display. They are drawn from the gallery's own holdings which include one of the worlds most comprehensive collections of prints in this international style.

Appendix 2

Spontaneous Gesture:
Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era
### Spontaneous Gesture:
**Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artists</th>
<th>No. Prints</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wols</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Fautrier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Hartung</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Kainen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>U.S.A. ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Diebenkorn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>U.S.A. ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Lobdell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>U.S.A. ³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henri Michaux</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>(European)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karel Apel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Alchinsky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asger Jorn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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¹ Not regarded as an American Abstract Expressionist. Not of the New York School.
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<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.R.H. Soderborg</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>(European)</td>
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<td>Emil Schaumacher</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>(European)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1952</td>
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<td>Jackson Pollock</td>
<td>1945</td>
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<td>1956</td>
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<td>U.S.A. 8</td>
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<td>Franz Kline</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S.A. *</td>
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4 Hayter was living in Europe in 1955
5 Not regarded as an American Abstract Expressionist
6 American Sculptor, not regarded as an American Abstract Expressionist.
7 All six of these intaglio prints were printed after Pollock's death.
8 Not regarded as an American Abstract Expressionist
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<td>Zao Won Ki</td>
<td>1967</td>
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<td>1973</td>
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<td>Jean Messagier</td>
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<td>Kumi Sugai</td>
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<td>Joan Miro</td>
<td>1961</td>
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<td>Sam Francis</td>
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<td>Mark Tobey</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1970</td>
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9 Not regarded as an American Abstract Expressionist
10 ibid
11 ibid
12 ibid
13 ibid. This work was printed in France.
14 Not regarded as an American Abstract Expressionist. These works were printed in Paris.
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<td>Philip Guston</td>
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<td>Lee Krasner</td>
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<td>Adolph Gottlieb</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Louise Nevelson</td>
<td>1965</td>
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<td>Grace Hartigan</td>
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<td>Helen Frankenthaler</td>
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<td>Alan Davie</td>
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<td>Jean Paul Riopelle</td>
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<td>Antonio Saura</td>
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* Indicates those artists regarded by this thesis to be First Generation American Abstract Expressionists.

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15 | bid
16 | Ibid
17 | Second Generation American Abstract Expressionist.
18 | bid
19 | bid
20 | bid
21 | bid

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Appendix 3

Images
Fig. 1. The Printers Mark of Godfridus de Os
Fig. 2. The Printers Mark of Phillipe Pigouchet
Fig. 3. The Chop of the Tamarind Institute
Fig. 4. Albert Durer, The Printer with the Press Closed
Fig. 5. Death and the Printers, from the *Danze Macabre*, Lyons, circa 1500
Fig. 6. Yashustoshi Ishibashi (TMP, 1981) talks with artist John Brenan. Yashi earlier printed in Japanese Workshops with Hitoshi Takasuki, formerly a printer for Sam Francis
Fig. 7. The Printers mark of Mathais Goes, Antwerp
Fig. 8. Frontispiece to Jacques Millet, L'Istoire de la Destruction de Troye, Paris 1484.
Appendix 4

The Australian Print Survey Exhibition
The catalogue entries give edition number, technique, size, and where available, when each print was made. Sizes are in inches, height first then width. They measure the plate or the block, or when this is not apparent, as with linocuts, the picture area is measured.

Edition numbers. If, for example, a print is inscribed 12/50, it indicates that this would be the twelfth print out of a total edition limited to fifty original prints, all variable. Linocuts, and all approved by the artist whose signature appears, are normally numbered or otherwise counted. Artists' proofs are either unnumbered or not available. In the latter case, the printing which is reached or before the edition of replaceable originals is commenced. The term unnumbered is here used to indicate that no more than a few proofs were printed.

The Family
1. Glencoe

Rembrandt
2. Noontide

St. John the Baptist
3. The Sacrifice

The Virgin and Child
4. The Family

The Resurrection
5. Maria Vox

The Family
6. The Family

The Family
7. The Family

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8. The Family

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<td>Flight of the Night Bird</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>7/25, 1114 x 1114</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pointing the Bons No. 1</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
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<td>Stone Head Variation</td>
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<td>Studio</td>
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<td>Landscape</td>
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<td>Darkened Way</td>
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<td>The Snail</td>
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<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Blind Man</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage Patch</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Eucalyptus Plants</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
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<td>One of two Whitcly Kline prints</td>
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<tr>
<td>Landscape tripsichroich</td>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
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<td>Landscape Triploich</td>
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<td>The Blind Man</td>
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<td>7/15, 1114 x 1114</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Some of the prints in this exhibition, or additional copies of them, are available for sale. Particulars of prices and selling agent can be provided on application.


Leo Conlan Born Melbourne 1915. Studied at National Gallery School, Melbourne where he was a member of the Royal Hibernian Academy. Exhibitions at the Curwen Studio. London. 1961-63. Included in their "Aru in Australia" series.


Judy Drysdale Born Melbourne 1920. Studied painting at George Bell School and National Gallery School, Melbourne. 1946-47. In Europe 1951-53, studied at Slade School, London. Chiefly a painter, has had occasional exhibits since 1957. First this study technique at the Slade, later developed it at R.M.I.T. One or two linocuts and lithographs have also been made.


Boy Tittko Born London 1921. Brought to Australia 1926. Studied art in Sydney part time before war, full time on ex-service scheme, completed 1950. Chiefly a painter, he made about 30 linocuts since 1950. Also worked actively in monotype.


Kertha Klagst-Pott. Born Berlin 1934. Studied wood-engraving at Central School under Emil Wachter taught printmaking, and in U.S.A. till 1961, then Sydney; and to Spain again 1963. Chiefly a painter and theatre designer, he acquired his very few serigraphs have not been exhibited, his chief interest. Prints regularly one day after war, and design in Geneva, Perugia and London. Exhibition of his works of architecture drawn by John Halas. Worked as an illustrator. Exhibited drawings, paintings and woodcuts in Rome and London. Returned to Aus-

Margaret Preston Born Adelaide 1883. Studied painting in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Munich and Paris. She left Adelaide for Europe again in 1912. Married and settled in Sydney 1920, taught at the Art School, died in Sydney 1963. Chiefly a painter, there is some early painting which is rare. After her marriage she was also a printmaker. An early softground etching is known, there are a few linocuts and woodblocks from the twenties onwards. By the early forties she had become experienced in deep etching and published two independent prints beside etched illustrations for two editions of ‘Blue Haze’, with 22 and 12 etchings respectively. Chiefly a printmaker, exhibiting since 1959.

David Strachan Born England 1890. To Victoria 1922. Studied painting in Melbourne with George Bell, and Paris during the late 1930’s. Lived in Sydney from 1930-42. In Paris in 1940-60, since then in Sydney again. Chiefly a painter, worked with Jacques Bell and began experimenting in printing lithographs for other artists in Paris 1948-50. He produced about 20 linocuts (manoole and linocuts), and about 8 aquatints (etchings, engravings, and drypoint on both metal and paper). Included in print section of Australian exhibitions 1950-60. Chiefly a printmaker, exhibiting since 1959.


Leah Hale Born Ballarat 1937. Studied art in Kaunas where he specialised in printmaking. Wood-engravings exhibited in many international exhibitions in Europe and America, including a Diploma of Honour at Paris 1957. Many wood-engravings done in collaboration with artists in Lithuania, and more especially in Germany after the war. Conservator of art at M.K. Ciurlionis Gallery. Returned to Lithuania in 1949. Came to Paris 1949, settled in Sydney 1954. Besides wood-engravings he has made a few linocuts in Australia, and began painting from c. 1959. Chiefly a painter, took occasional etchings and some serigraphs in Adelaide. His first etchings were made there as well.


Elizabeth Mooney Born Sydney 1929. Studied painting there at National Art School, and etching 1951-56. Worked in Sydney with Grant and Leek. Exhibits wood-engravings and linocuts as well as etchings, having completed about 75 plates since 1960.


Introduction

The original print has recently come to new life in Australia. Beginning here in the 1880's with the occasional etchings of Livingston Hopkins, Julian Ashton and others, a black and white tradition culminated in the 1920's with Sydney Long, Norman and Lionel Lindsay, Sydney Ure Smith and John Shillow. An energetic Australian Painter-Etchers Society was formed, many exhibitions were held, and later the magazine Art in Australia records considerable printmaking activity. No work in that tradition is now being exhibited.

Today many prints are in colour, not black and white, and many other techniques are popular besides etching. Editions, too, are smaller, and the prints more personal than during the etching boom of the twenties.

The woodcuts and linocuts of Margaret Preston, Murray Griffin and Eric Thake included in this exhibition represent something of what the pre-war avant-garde was like. But since there is scarcely any trace of the fruitful printmaking activity of the earlier post-war years, this exhibition aims to record the recent past as well as to survey the work of nearly all the artists currently printmaking.

The print collections of the State galleries are the only places to study post-war developments. The galleries in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth each have print curators, whose buying has inevitably provided encouragement. In particular, Dr. Hoff's department in Melbourne seems to have collected almost everything worthwhile done in that city over the past twenty years. Sydney, without a print curator but with a Director, Mr. Missingham, who was himself an occasional lithographer, also buys local prints extensively.

The State galleries have, besides, imported many print exhibitions from abroad, and Mr. Missingham has, since 1960, arranged Australian representation in the major international print exhibitions, the biennials at Tokyo in Japan and at Ljubljana in Yugoslavia. Although the print records the encouragement from the institutions, it is of course the artists themselves who, by the quality of their work, have begun to interest the dealers and the public.

Scholarship winners Janet Dawson and Earle Backen, for example, have returned from study in London or Paris, where their considered printmaking talents emerged in an artistic climate especially favourable to the original print. Another tradition, a German one never before directly influential in Australian art, has come with the post-war immigrants, the New Australians. Salkauskas, Kubos, Ratas, Kluge-Pott, Keky, Schepers and Sellbach all had German training. The strong and distinct German tradition of graphic art has given the contribution of the printmakers perhaps greater significance than that of the New Australian painters.

It is the presence of these new skills from Paris, London or Germany which helped the existing occasional practitioners coalesce about three or four years ago. The Sydney Printmakers, an exhibiting society welcoming all local work, was formed in 1960. In Adelaide a similar society was formed the following year, though unlike the Sydney group, it embraces drawings and monotypes as well as repeatable prints. There is little activity to record in Tasmania and Queensland, while Western Australia is represented only by the Grey-Smiths, Melbourne, however, seems to have been the most active printmaking centre. The Technical College (now the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) has made its facilities available to painters like Boyd, Blackman, French and Laycock throughout the 1950's. Tate Adams, at present lecturer there, has also been commissioned to prepare a book on Australian printmaking. A second book has been commissioned from Janet Dawson, whose gallery A is the one gallery in Australia to specialise in original prints, and which is about to publish editions as well. A second teaching focus is Kenneth Jack's department at Caulfield Technical College. And finally, Melbourne has two exhibiting groups, a fluid one which first showed in 1960, and a small selective group, "Studio One", comprising Adams, Brash, Kluge-Pott, Dawson, King, Williams and Senbergs, which underlined the nature of the print when it was launched in 1960 with simultaneous and identical exhibitions in a number of different cities.

Exhibition Itinerary

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<td>Tasmanian Museum &amp; Art Gallery, Hobart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Kangaroo Island</td>
<td>November-December 1964</td>
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Acknowledgments

This exhibition has been collected and catalogued for the State galleries by Mr. Daniel Thomas of the Art Gallery of New South Wales with the help of Mr. Ron Appleyard in Adelaide, and of Mr. Tate Adams, Miss Janet Dawson and Mr. Harley Preston in Melbourne.

Thanks are due for the loan of certain prints from the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of South Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, Mrs. Violet Dallet (41, 50), Mr. Hal Missingham (26, 29), Mr. Daniel Thomas (18, 55, 90), and the Rady Komen Gallery (9).
Appendix 5

Transcripts:

Rose Vickers: A Conversation with Graeme Cornwell
6/7/92

Earle Backen: A Conversation with Graeme Cornwell
13/7/92
Questions:
Rose Vickers

* Who and what were the dominant influences on Print Making in Australia in the early 1960's and early 70's.

* You were a student of Earle Backen. What struck you about his teaching methods?

* Do you see the technologies of Print Making as affecting the artists individual aesthetic? If so how?

* Does the Process of Print Making have an esthetic outside of the artists individual aesthetic? How is this/should this be treated?

*. What do you see as the dominant influences impinging on artists involved with Print Making today as opposed to those impinging on yourself when you were a student?

* What was the emphasis of the teaching of Earle Backen?

7. What is the emphasis of your teaching today in the 1990's and how has this changed from that of Backen?

* Are you familiar with the teaching methods of William Hayter? Through Backen? Have they relevancy for today's students?

* How has the increase of the number of technologies incorporated into Print Making affected what is taught today as distinct from Backen's teaching for example?

* Many art schools seem to be adopting an 'inter-disciplinary' approach to art making. How has this affected your teaching?
What has been the value of a definition of prints (Imprint defined 'Originality' in prints in 1966)?

What does this definition answer?

What value are definition's in an era which espouses an inter-disciplinary approach to creativity?

Do you think that there is an underlying philosophy within Print Making practices? Has there ever been one?

What is the value of an interdisciplinary approach?

What do you think is the role of a Print Making dept. in an Art School today?

How important was the notion of 'truth to materials' in the late 1960's- 70's. Is the notion relevant for today? How?

What has been the value of Imprint?
Transcript of an Interview:

A Conversation with Rose Vickers, 6/7/92
G.C. Who and what were the dominant influences on Print Making in Australia in the early 1960's and 1970's?

R.V. Well I'm speaking from the perspective of having been a student... and began art school in 1960 which makes it rather nice and neat. When I first came to art school my knowledge about Print Making had been gained at high school through a teacher called Ruth Ainsworth. Now at that particular point I didn't realise that Ruth Ainsworth was anybody in particular but I later discovered that she had in fact worked seriously as a Print Maker, particularly in making Relief prints before she became a teacher in the school that I was a pupil... 1957, 58, and 59. And when I did the Leaving Certificate there in art she was one of my teachers. And her particular field of interest was Relief Printing. Now the sorts of prints that were introduced to as High School students were fairly simple black and white prints. And in fact I was more interested at that stage in painting and drawing. In fact I can identify her being my first acquaintance with a serious professional Print Maker in that High School context. When I arrived in art school, Print Making at that point was not a particularly well known activity in the art school context.

G.C. Which Art School was that?

R.V. This was the old National Art School in Sydney - East Sydney Technical College.

After I had been at art school for a few years I was able to see more clearly how art school fitted into the bigger art scene in Sydney which at that particular stage contained...
people like Colin Lancely and John Olsen. The art school scene was a relatively a conservative one, particularly in the area of changes to the curriculum. There were in fact at the art school, two people - Earle Backen and David Strachan who had a very good experience of Print Making in Paris. Both David Strachan and Earle Backen had spent time in Paris in the late fifties and had come back to Sydney and were working there but they weren't teaching Print Making rather they were both teaching Painting. It wasn't until I had been at art school for several years (about 1963) that I became aware of David's and Earle's interest in Print Making. David Strachan taught me painting and I only later saw prints that he had made while he was in Paris and became aware that he was interested in Lithography. And the same with Earle. And it was Earle who actually set up an etching press. But before that happened which was in about 1964, Print making activity at the art school was mainly centred around relief printing. And there was some Screen Printing also. Screen Printing was taught by Arthur Freeman, I'm not sure whether he is still alive... at that point screen printing was increasing in popularity. When I think about it now the sorts of stencils that were used was very primitive but it was the beginning's of the development of Screen printing. When a few years later David Rose came on the scene, he having been a Forestry... He had a strong interest in the technical aspects of screen Printing and was in fact he who introduced Photographic Silk Screen technique to the art school. And in the late 60's (about 68) when I first was teaching there(after I had come back from overseas) David was teaching Silk Screen and he had introduced photographic techniques through the art school and they were enthusiastically embraced. And in his own work he was showing prints using photographic techniques much earlier than that. So I would say that the late 50's early 60's... you had a strange situation where someone like Margaret Preston was alive...but her work was not very
known about... or her fame rested more on her painting... Daniel Thomas praises her as a painter but makes no mention of her as a printmaker to me that's just extraordinary... in the early 60's when she had done an enormous amount of prints and shown regularly and generally some of her best work is in prints and that is not even mentioned in her obituary by Daniel Thomas... So there is if you like an interest in Printmaking growing slowly being fuelled by people like Earle and John Olsen.

G.C. When did Earle start Teaching Print Making?

What happened was that he had come back from Paris where he had spent three or four years working with Hayter in a very intense way. But then he came back to Australia he was teaching painting and drawing because there was not an etching studio.

G.C. So there were no facilities for that kind of work?

R.V. Exactly. Nothing. He actually decided in my final year at art school that he would set up a very small press. I'm talking about something that had a bed about 18' x 24' he had been using for his own work in his own studio for several years before that and showing that work in Macquarie Galleries and getting recognition from that. But it was this first little class which was an evening class which included me - there were nine students altogether - and we didn't even have proper etching ink. We had to use Relief printing ink or litho ink - commercial inks which of course had to be modified with linseed oil and extra pigment to make it possible to print. And so he then commenced to teach us and over the next couple of years it was so enthusiastically received and embraced by the students that and because of his own interest in it that it rapidly expanded. With lithography it was a bit slower... for although there was a primitive lithography press in bits hanging about. And although David Strachan knew how to
do lithographs (and etchings) he and Earle dug their toes in and said we're not going to set this up unless you give us a separate room. And a separate room was not forthcoming. But that meant that lithography was left standing until the early 70's.

G.C. In Earle's teaching, was the influence of Hayter obvious?

R.V. Yes. I mean at the time he used to talk about his work in Hayter's studio but we only knew what he told us. But later on when I went on study leave I actually stayed with a number of other students that had worked with Hayter at around the same time that Earle had and became aware of that method of teaching and philosophy (if you like) had spread all over the world. New York, South America (goodness knows). Earle conveyed it to us which was actually quite... really absurd... because we as students were concentrating on painting. The Diploma at that particular stage was a five year Diploma where you specialised.... and in our case it was painting.

And the idea that was (as I understand it) is that you use the technique to develop your ideas rather than do your drawing and then translate your drawing into a print. You actually evolved the image through your stages of using the technique. Which in my mind is what you do with an oil painting, you actually have feed-back from the image as you scrap it off and start again and until you eventually get what your going to get. Now the way that Earle taught is that he would get his students first of all do a trial plate where you would have the copper or the zinc and you would use all the techniques and you would modify the plate, take a proof, modify the plate, take a proof, modify the plate, make a proof; adding and subtracting the techniques. And when I later got to know how Fred Williams worked: that's how he worked too. And the sorts of marks that you could achieve with an aquatint or dry...
point or whatever... as it were suggested to you how the image would evolve.

G.C. That was a kind of Process orientated approach?

R.V. Yes absolutely. And Earle was very adamant in that one should not try and reproduce the marks you made when did drawing or that you could get in painting, say. That you shouldn't try to copy it across. We all took that in. My perception was that Earle had a very fortuitous combination of a good technical range and he was able to teach techniques but he never forgot that techniques were in the service of evolving the image. And he may have been down right pedantic about clean edges and preparing a plate and printing techniques. If you like lesser students get stuck with that but better students will quickly catch onto the fact you at least know how to do [the technique] that and once you know how to do that you then its at your service. It works for you.

Earle very rapidly gained an enthusiastic following. It was at about that time that he and others started the Sydney Printmakers (1960) a group of people who formed who promote and to educate the general public what fine art prints were as opposed to reproductions and the people who were part of that group were the people who were making prints at that particular time. (before 1964 - before the Print Council got off the ground) and the people who were in that original group were quite small in number. . . only about twenty or thirty original members. And they were all people who had begun as painters and who had gradually got interested in making prints and making prints in this particular way where they editioned their own prints and used these concepts to evolve the image and that philosophy of printmaking very much permeated the approach to print. So the students who then began to come out of the art school at this stage - and in Sydney
printmaking was only something you did as a minor. they began to produce their own work and built on from there.

G.C. It became an autonomous medium?

R.V. Yes. It became a more acceptable as a creative way of producing art work and simultaneous with Melbourne there was a development around people like George Baldessin who was much younger than Earle and had been working with Hayter. He began to make prints and to work with him. That was a more publicised and knowing influence if you like down there. And in Adelaide Udo Sellbach doing his stuff and I don't know about Brisbane what was happening up there.

During the middle to late 60's you had quite an upsurge of activity and at that point - 1966 - was when the Print Council got under way. And if you've seen the early issues of *Imprint* (they are only about two pages) and it then got bigger and bigger and bigger.

The people who were initiated into etching by Earle were people who had done screen printing and some relief printing so it wasn't as if they were ignorant about printmaking as an activity. They had got the tail end of the period of Relief printing - activity - of Margaret Preston - the Formalist approach - and screen. Relief printing had been popularised by Margaret Preston but as she died at that point it [Preston's printmaking] was still considered to be not a rival to her painting at all. But there it was if you knew where to look for it. Screen printing was still evolving technically. In the fifties there were not many people making screen prints. Etching was a real unknown quantity because although Norman Lindsay etchings were around it was not taught in the art schools and it wasn't exhibited that much. And what was exhibited was not very interesting. It was rather watery - 'Charm School' - small and gum trees - illustrative type - And the
experience saddens me because I never was aware of someone like Jessie Trail at that point. She was there but we did not know about her. Its very exasperating when you realise many years after the event that there was such interesting people doing such interesting work. But it wasn't particularly available. And we were in an art school. It should have been available to us. But it wasn't.

In the later part of the 60's when my generation finished art school we went overseas. When we arrived overseas - in New York, London or where ever and discovered that indeed that there was upsurge of print making several year ahead of what was happening in Sydney. I went to London and there was David Hockney (1966) He was finished being student and he was showing his . . . series of prints based on William Hogarths the Rakes Progress. I began to broaden my perception of what print Making could be. When I came back from overseas( and this was the case for a number of Earle 's students) we came back with his insights plus what we had garnered from overseas. And what we had garnered from overseas was partly an approach to subject matter - Pop art and a more figurative, narrative kind of approach rather than what Earle had been teaching which was at that point a variety of Tachisme (Abstract Expressionism) or Abstraction. My first prints with Earle were that sort of print.

G.C. You were dealing with materials rather than with ideas.

R.V. Yes exactly. He pushed the exploration of how to make a mark. Although I did do figurative prints , the subject matter was not particularly relevant. They weren't political or feminist or personal, they were, if you like a bit decorative. What Sydney was in the grip of was what was called the Charm School where the subject matter of Charm School was a bit trivial. That whole thing of Sydney - Melbourne and Melbourne doing the more
Australiana and Antipodean, influence by expressionism. Sydney a bit more 'Donald Friendy', 'Brett Whitely', 'Sally Hermany' etc Sydney got that slightly light weight subject matter. So that when I went to London I discovered the Pop Art influence which was here embodied in artists like Colin Lancely but Colin Lancely very rapidly jumped on the first plane he could get on to and went over there for fifteen years. He was actually ahead of me at art school and won a prestigious prize and he went off to London to do Pop Art. So we... Earle's little group of students if you like, went overseas and came back. They had all the other ideas about what print making could be. I won't say that they forgot about technique but technique got put to one side: it was possible to do other things.

G.C. Technique became secondary?

R.V. Not quite Secondary. But I'm thinking what did I find out in London that was interesting for me in terms of technique was the possibility of doing some photographic etching for example. I had a friend who was at the Royal College (R.C.A.). I wasn't at the Royal College but I used to hang out down there. And I saw my first photographic etching plate which wasn't available to students. You had to send out to a commercial plate maker to make it and then you get it and fiddled with it. Also things like shaped plates and more personal subject matter and quite so much preoccupation with keeping the edges clean. And using materials and techniques which weren't quite kosher in the terms of what Hayter had done. But it widened the possibilities of what you could do. So by the end of the 60's in Sydney and in Melbourne and indeed everywhere prints were getting bigger and dirtier around the edges, incorporated more technical pieces and generally the discussion was how far could you push the boundaries of what a print might be. That eventually ended up a bit further down the track with what about mono-types, mixed-media and now the Fremantle prize...
where we've got sections on new techniques and unique state prints etc. So there was that progression towards that theory of art. But I think that through people working in Sydney people like David Rose and Earle Backen who were good enough at both the techniques and able to teach them so that they weren't a barrier and had an interest in the mark saying something. And that got people off to a start and having got to that point then they started to be open to all these other things that were possible. Now where we are now - in the 90's - with Post modernism and all that stuff is yet another ball game which we might get to after...

G.C. Lets go back to that question that I asked before about an esthetic of the print technique 'outside' of that of the artist's aesthetic. . . The idea of technology being servant of the artist implies that the technology has an esthetic and the artist has another. And the kind of battle which goes on between the two.

R.V. Well I suppose, and I've given this a bit of thought, I would need to identify my own point of view which I am aware is a product of my own particular time and experience. And it is that,. . . it is for me. . . a reason why a print is a good print which is connected with relationships between what an artist is doing and their knowledge of the techniques and the materials which they are working. So that I am looking at and taking in one global perception. The paper that they've used, the wiping techniques that they've used, their choice of techniques their subject matter and how they have chosen interpret it. But I'm not looking at the story that the subject matter is telling me, I'm looking at the way in which the person has used the subject matter and technique in a kind of marriage where they are so closely intertwined that you can't take one away without it affecting the other. And I intellectually enjoy work where the aesthetic aspects of it are down played and in fact sometimes specifically
worked against. I can intellectually enjoy that. I find that there is a delight in pieces of work - whether its music or prints or paintings - where that mysterious relationship between what it looks like and what the message is that you can put into words. You know that relationship with enjoyed by me and thought by me in my own work. And when its missing no matter how intellectually I enjoy whatever it is I'm looking at, I miss it. Because I've always been a practitioner rather than a writer or a studier of art theory. I don't, I'm not able to explain that very well. Its probable that today's student is much more exposed to theory and the ideas behind that than we were because we were certainly. History and Theory was a very low priority in our work.

G.C. In that time the idea that Earle Backen had - and Hayter of course - of creating Print making into an autonomous medium and autonomous creative process. It certainly helped to define disciplines. And here today we have this idea of an interdisciplinary approach, in most of the art schools in New South Wales anyway, How does this affect your teaching and how you deal with the notion of a 'discipline'? 

R.V. I have a particular point of view about where technology fits into the scheme. I'm a person, partly because I'm a woman and women in our society are supposed to be ham fisted with technology - and I fit into that stereo-type quite well. But even though I have if you like, that wiring whether its culturally 'put on me' or whether its. . . I don't know and don't care. . . My perception of how technology fits into being an artist is that it is a very intrinsic part. I was watching on T. V. the other day, this documentary. . . about this scientist called Pauli - P. A. U. L. I. and he as a scientist becoming interested in what Jung was doing and to writing to each other....and discussing dreams that he had where he'd had insights into his particular [area] of quantum
mechanical interests. And on that programme there was a quote by one of the scientist along the lines that artists discover things by making. That seemed to me to be a very pertinent quote. I think there is a way of creating things and getting knowledge - whatever that might be - that you do in a wordless way. Your hands make the thing and there it is. And suddenly there is this thing that wasn't there before. And to do that you need to have . . . you need to be utterly comfortable with the technique that your dealing with so that its invisible; so that you've forgotten about it.

G.C. So that it doesn't impinge?

R.V. Absolutely. If its piano playing or violin playing or putting on an aquatint it needs to be so built into you that its like driving a car and your changing gears and you don't even know that your changing gears.

G.C. So you think it's a relationship with technique?

R.V. Yes. I think if you can, and more than that with good other things too. . . I've always been a bit grumpy with painters. . . I trained as a painter for five years. . . and I know how to do all that stuff. . . and. . . I think that is just as complex in its way as any aquatint, acid bath fiddle faddle that your going to do. To be a painter you need to know how to scumble and glaze and know what the colour is going to look like if you do this or that to the point that you've forgotten about it when your actually doing it. As a Print Maker you need to be able to think in terms of the language of the print medium in which your working in. When I've got a good student and my own self I look forward to the moment when we get over the hump of the technique and you can forget about it. Once you've got there you can play your little violin and produce art. And the people who are not happy with that and who want sidestep it by getting someone else to do it or doing such
simple things that they don't have to worry about the techniques I feel a bit disappointed with. Having said that along the track comes all this new technology. . . computers, photo-stat machines, canon colour copiers. . . and all of that stuff which is pretty mysterious. But I think that it is certainly not beyond the capacity of all of us, particularly not our young students who take it on board and it just becomes part of their reality.

G.C. If I could introduce this thing about 'Originality' in prints. . . 'Original' prints are defined in contradistinction to reproductions and here today we have reproduction technologies being used by artist - printmakers. Do you think the Definition of 'Originality' in prints was adequate? (as it was published in Imprint ?) And is it adequate today?

R.V. I would have to say that particular definition, the one advanced by Imprint. . . and the ones that are discussed between various bodies of Print Makers - Sydney Print Makers for example - I see those definitions as being a kind of departure point. We have a society which has various levels of knowledge about art activity, including the making of prints. And we live in a society where the ability to reproduce, to replicate, to make copies is all pervasive whether your talking about designer clothes which have many copies in Coles, Woolworths, or cars or editions of newspapers. I think that bodies like Imprint and Sydney Print Makers cobble together a Definition and once you have digested that anyone who is seriously interested in prints whether as a practitioner or as consumer, very rapidly builds on that definition and challenges it deconstructs it - all the words you want to use - . . . and gradually arrives at the larger picture which is that definition of 'Originality' is a tool which allows you to explain and discuss certain activities. But artists are constantly challenging definitions. Which is exactly what they should be doing. The artists that I talk to the sort of
artist I want to be . . . the sort of practitioner I want my students to be are the ones that are able to go beyond that useful definition and explore and come up with other alternative definitions and widening of perceptions of about what a reproduction or original might be in the wider philosophical context.

G.C. You know how we were talking about the artist as Master of technology or technology as servant. And you were talking about computers interfacing with people. . . . Do You want to elaborate on that?

R.V. I made as comment that when you are learning a technique in art the aim is to master the technique so well that it doesn't trip you up when your executing your particular piece of work. Whether its playing the violin or figure skating or putting on an aquatint. But I would also . . . I remember seeing that film 2001 where the monkey picks up the bone and uses it as a tool. That from the word 'go', our relationship with technology has formed us both mentally and physically as well and that is going to continue to happen. Maybe after a while we'll be just brains in bottles with no legs and arms because all the reality that we will need will be delivered to us via a hyper reality machine which we will clip on our eyes and that will be it. It will happen quickly or slowly. I guess I sort of take that for granted that there is an interaction between what we invent and what then do with it. One could say the same for language. I've not studied linguistics but I think I understand a way of using words that we have available to us that they have an influence on us. . . . they way in which we think. Who we are. In that case I think language has been described correctly as a tool. We invented it. Now it shapes us and how we deal with things. So Yes. Whether its an aquatint or the T.V. or the computer. . . we are formed by it and we make another adjustment and then it adjusts us too.
G.C. *As you inhabit technology it inhabits you?*

R.V. Yeah

G.C. *So to finish off, What has been the value of a magazine like *Imprint* in the context of Australian Print Making?*

R.V. Well I would say on one level its been part of a very welcome proliferation of magazines and publications which arouse artists to speculate and be informed on their particular field of art activity. In a sort of wider way than what is happening in Sydney. It's provided a forum for ideas. We've briefly discussed that it did seem to have a few geographical limitations because it's located in Melbourne and it's sometimes inconvenient for people to travel from Adelaide or Brisbane and to take part in some of the discussions which produce the kind of information which *Imprint* conveys. But more and more because of fax machines and telephones and travel being a bit easier it has become a very successful - Australia wide - discussion platform. It has mirrored the development of Print Making in Australia over the last few years. Based on things like what's happening in technology and also the spread to regional centres of what is happening, is interesting. It has made it much more diverse and interesting situation.

G.C. *Any major criticisms?*

R.V. If I've got any criticism it is probably people who aren't in Melbourne have been a little lazier than they perhaps could have been in contributing to the debate. And I think that sometimes the inevitable territorial power struggles; sometimes unconscious assumptions about what is interesting and not interesting. But all in all it is something that I am happy with and hope will continue.
Questions:
Earle Backen
Questions:
Earle Backen
1. When did you work at Hayter's Atelier 17?
2. What would you describe as Hayter's most important contribution to print making?
3. What impressed you most about Hayter's methods?
4. After working at Atelier 17 and the experience of working under Hayter what was your interest in Print making?
5. Did you adopt a more experimental attitude towards the materials that you were using? Why?
6. Did you believe at the time that Print making technologies exhibit an esthetic? (Machine esthetic)
7. Did you view the Print making technologies: as a medium to be overcome, dominated, or its esthetic allowed to be brought to the surface?
8. How does an artist reconcile the esthetic of a medium/technology with their intentions?
9. What is the significance of taking proofs at each stage/step of the process?
10. Did you use Hayter's Teaching methods (outlined in New Ways of Gravure) on your return to Australia in your teaching?
11. What are the chief obstacles to self-expression in Print making?
12. Were you aware of Hayter's views on Originality in prints in 1959 when you worked at Atelier 17?
13. Do you have any thoughts on the definitions of 'Originality' in Prints?
14. What is the most important aspect in regard to print making that you brought back to Australia?
15. When you worked at Atelier 17 were you aware of Formalist analysis/the Formalist critique (Greenberg)?
16. Did you read Clement Greenberg's essays?
17. Were you aware of developments in America in Print making during the 40's and 50's?
18. How did these developments affect you?
19. Do you think Australia has been indirectly influenced by SW. Hayter's attitudes?
Transcript of an Interview

A Conversation with Earle Backen, 13/7/92

Graeme Cornwell: Did you study Print making before you went to France?

Earle Backen: I had just studied Drawing and Painting. I worked with Dattilo - Rubbo and later I went to the Ashton school. . . John Passmore was there and. . . in 1954 I won the travelling art scholarship and then I went to London and again I just did painting. . . I was working with Keith Vaughan and. . . then I went to Paris I think in 1956. . . and again I was doing Painting. . . with Henri Gertz. . . It was probably then about 1956 that I started going to Hayter's.

G.C: So then he [Hayter] would have just come back from America then?

E.B: No. I am not sure of the dates. I had an idea that he had been there (in Paris) some time. He went to America during the war. . . and I think in the late 40's. . . I could always check it up but. . . I am not sure when he went back to Paris.

E.B. 1950

E.B. He returned to Paris in 1950. Leaving in New York a team which carried on the work for another five years.

G.C. What made you go to Hayter?

E.B: Well I had friends who were there and I liked what they were doing and I just got interested.

G.C.: Did you know anything about him [Hayter] before.
E.B.: No.


E.B.: That was later... Oh well it might have been in the same period... I am a bit confused about dates there. I think that would have been about 1956. So it would have been about the same time. But that was about painting.

G.C.: Well they didn't make prints until after 1960 did they?


E.B.: No. It all came later.

G.C.: So in reference to Hayter what do you think his major contribution to has been in terms of Print making?

E.B.: I think that the big thing that he and [Atelier 17] his workshop did was open up the perimeters or parameters of what you could do. Most people still here they think that etching is something to do with black and white line - you know? But he took it far beyond that he related that to painting and sculpture and also he saw the possibility of colour... So they are as far as I am concerned the great contributions. He was really marvellous... he was very conscious of the importance of the material you were working with... so he made you start off working with the material of the plate and not imposing a preconceived idea of what you wanted.

G.C.: And I guess you took on his teaching methods did you? When you came here [Australia]
E.B: Yes. Because when I came back - in 1960 - and then I was teaching at East Sydney Tech - the National Art School - and they didn't have any Print Making at all then. They did have a small press. And I think that some years before I came back there had been some teaching... but it would have been in the very traditional methods.

G.C. So what year would that have been?

E.B: We didn't start teaching [etching]. It was not actually being encouraged for some reason or other. So it wasn't probably until about 1963 - by then David Strachan had come back as well and then David and I set up the Print Room The Etching Room and about the same time they set up the silk screen printing. Well we just battled on with Screen Printing and etching then really until the mid 70's I guess because in the mid 70's I what happened was that the old diploma courses were taken out of the tech and put into a College of Advanced Education. And I was one of the people who went over and that was in 1975. Well it was after that they set up a litho studio at East Sydney Tech and we then set up lithography and etching at the - what's now called City Art - College of Fine Arts.

G.C: Do you think that the reason why Print Making was not taught was something to do with the refusal of technology by painting at time?

E.B. It did not happen in Melbourne. Melbourne never lost the tradition of Printmaking. Where as we did in Sydney. I have no idea why. people were throwing presses out. Nobody wanted them.

G.C: So after working with Hayter what was your interest in Print Making? How did it orientate itself?

E.B: It was a matter time at ones disposal. I didn't do much painting although I kept on Painting but not very much. I
concentrated on Print making and when I say Print Making I mean Etching. There was all sorts of interesting things happening. . . it was the beginning of the use of photography...photo processes and things like that and a lot of that sort of thing I was doing with students. . .

G.C: I spoke to Rose Vickers actually - she was a student of yours - about that period and she described the approach as very experimental. Can you elaborate on that?

E.B: All I can say is what I did and what I like to do. Although I encouraged students to do the experimental always. . . I nevertheless less expected them to do that when they had a more classic grounding in techniques anyhow. Yes what I used to do was set three major projects. One would be following more or less through the variations following through with the Hayter method, of working taking a plate and working on it till the plate more or less disintegrated. The second plate would be an ordinary etching using line and the Third Plate would be engraving using the various engraving tools. And then having done those three basic things they would by then have done soft ground, aquatint spit biting a little bit of everything - sugar lift. After that I would encourage them to go whichever way they wished to go. One of the problems is actually is to get students to feel free enough to experiment because so many students actually already know what they want to do before they start. Its a matter of liberation. You've got to try a liberate them so that they can let the plate teach them a thing or two.

G.C: I often hear about Print Makers or artists talking about actually being liberated from the medium itself or from the technique. Is that what you mean?

E.B: I've been listening to the piano competition lately. Admittedly in the music field one has had to keep to a
more classical background. But the thing is that once you actually know your technique You are either then liberated so that you forget it - a bit like driving a car - Once you know how to drive a car you stop thinking about it your not thinking about it at all when your driving. And I would think the same thing with Print Making.

G.C: Do you think that Prints have an esthetic of their own outside of that of the artist? That technology exhibits some kind of esthetic that has to be overcome by the artist?

E.B: I am not quite sure what you mean. If you mean that the aesthetic content is more important than the technique Is that what you mean? If that's the way your looking at it in that case I think I would have to agree. But at the same time I think that the most exciting artistic concept is limited if its actually produced with an inability to understand the medium and the materials. And this is what interests me with people like Picasso and Braque and various people. They actually worked in a workshop - they really worked. . they didn't do what some people do in Sydney. They turn up at a workshop saying 'I want to do a print' never having done one and work on a plate and get somebody else to do all the work for them. I don't believe that an artist can properly express themselves that way.

G.C: So its a relationship an artists builds up with knowledge of the techniques?

E.B: Yes. I think it has to be complete integration of material, technique and concept. There has to be an interrelationship with your tools. I think you can see it more clearly with painting because there you just have paints and a brush.

G.C. How does an artist reconcile medium and technology with their intentions?
E.B. My attitude is that the artist to get the best result out of any idea he or she might have - the best way to resolve the concept must know the materials he or she is working with. And I think that there are a lot of non-sensical notions going around now that says that does not matter. And it does matter.

G.C: When you were working with Hayter he produced a book - About Prints - in 1962.

E.B. He actually wrote one called 'New Ways of Gravure' and I thought he published it much earlier than that. And then he published the other in the early sixties.

G.C: In the one [About Print] published in the early 60's he has a Chapter called Five Degrees of Originality - it's about originality in prints - did he talk to you as students about the concept of Originality? It was a big question then, it had yet to be defined by the Third International Congress of the Arts.

E.B. I don't actually remember.

G.C. I had wondered if he [Hayter] as part of his course spoke about 'originality' and what an original print was. Even if he talked about his American experience.

G.C: Did he talk about the New York Experience?

E.B: Not really. He was very strong on things like the use of line; the use of accident.

G.C: He was very involved with some of the Surrealists wasn't he?

E.B: That's right. And things like the 'gesture'

G.C. And he didn't mention much about that?
E.B: Oh he talked allot about it but he didn't talk much about the American experience. He was always talking about the result of a spontaneous action in relation to where your brain is at and what your thinking about and so on. He used to talk about that. One of the interesting things too is the use of direction and the plate is in reverse and so on.

G.C. What I've read of his teaching methods where he taught in different stages he says somewhere in his book that the image is a logical outcome of the process and the artist's relationship with that. In spite or despite the process the artist unconscious will come out.

E.B: That was all part of his Surrealist background. But all of this is still bound within the limitations of the medium. He was very conscious of that. Once you had gone through these basic things you could do anything you liked. Absolutely anything. . . but there were certain restrictions. If you were going to put on an aquatint it would have to be an aquatint - things like that. You could play around with it and do what you liked. So there was a whole lot of experimental discoveries going on.

G.C: Were there other Australians at Hayter's when you were there?

E.B. Not when I was there. I went away for a few months. Ron Miler he went there for a while but I wasn't there when he was. Felicity Marshall was there she was an Australian She stayed on in France.

G.C. Its mentioned several times in Imprint that several artists went there to Hayter's either visiting or to study there.
G.C: Do you think Australian Print making has been influenced by Hayter.

E.B: For a long time I had taught almost everybody who is now about. I have taught almost everybody. But most of them have gone their own way so I can't say that the Hayter... Hayter himself was really following the career of the Abstract Expressionists anyhow. He was applying it to etching. It is true that when people did the basic course with Hayter, they all did absolutely the same thing but from then on they went their own way.

G.C. Hayter mentions several times in his books this phrase 'truth to materials'. Can you elaborate on this idea?

E.B. I do believe in that very much. If a sculpture is a bronze it should look like a bronze. If its marble it should look like marble and nothing else. A water colour is a water colour it should not look like an oil painting. And yes I would take it as far as Print Making. I think that the great strengths of all the areas of Print Making are their limitations and then working within those limitations. I think its a great pity if somebody's etching actually looks like a lithograph. But its curious how a metal plate no matter what the metal is there are qualities that do come out... line engraving and so on.

G.C: Were you aware - before you went to Paris - of Greenberg's writing?

E.B. No. Because when I was a student here - the early 50's - the people who had the strongest influence in Sydney anyhow apart from local artists would have been school of Paris I would think. The influence of America did not really develop until the 60's.

G.C. Were you involved with that?
E.B: Only in that I was utterly confused. And [it] through a lot of people I think - the American Abstract Expressionist push - during the sixties and early seventies it was pretty well all that you could do in Sydney - you had to be Abstract Expressionist - It was an academy in itself.

G.C. So you would have come into contact with Greenberg('s writing) then?

E.B: Yes. Actually Greenberg's aesthetics I really approved of very much. I still do. And in a curious way he really is upholding the classical tradition as I see it. But inevitably you're going to be picking up the vibrations of various movements which are going on all the time.

G. C.: What was the important thing that you gained from the Paris experience in terms of your own work?

E.B: That's a big question. I wouldn't know where to start. When I studied in Sydney... The people whose work I really admired were I suppose the followers of Cezanne. That before I went to John Passmore - he was very much a Cezanne man. Then I went to London and worked with Keith Vaughan. Now Vaughan had been a friend of Passmore's in London. Now Vaughan I think was a very good painter and a very good teacher. His emphasis was a structural approach which was essentially post cubist. So that was what interested me. And then people like Nicholas de Stael came along and fitted into that... because he was flattening out the space... flattening out form and the entire canvas was integrated with a structural integration. Then going to Hayter's he put... us onto this whole thing where chance and accident played an important part and I found that very liberating... very liberating indeed.
G.C: Was that about the same time as the Tachist movement?

E.B: Yes The Tachist's were really Abstract Expressionists... French movement... which was going on in Paris as well.

G.C: Were you interested in this movement at the time?

E.B: Yes because there again it really related to what Hayter was talking about and the importance of things like brush strokes and their integrity as a form in space anyhow. The problem was then to try an integrate that with what I had always done before.

G.C: You work was figurative then?

E.B: Yes but I'm thinking more of the structural thing.

What one of course has always known is that one should always be true to ones self. But its very hard when you have a big push going on. And the big push was Abstract Expressionism. And then later Pop Art.

Later
E.B: I have not gone back to etching because I have not seen how - with my background in etching - how I can actually do what I'm actually doing in painting without making an etching of a painting. Which is what I object to.

G.C: Is that because you see Print Making as an autonomous medium and it should be a creative tool?

E.B: Yes I do think that . But it has to be an extension of what you are doing anyhow - It has to be. But I really, in my mind can see how the etching would end up and so there's no point. I've really not known how to do it so I've
been doing water colours and drawing but slowly coming round to thinking about etching... and I realise that as an artist I am limited. I realise that and I like to relate what I do to my visual experience.
Appendix 6

Originality in Prints
Originality in Prints

Originality No.1:

Pat Gilmour in 'Originality' Circa 1960: a time for thinking caps', Tamarind papers, Vol 13, 1990 p3 foot note 5: writes:

'The definition of an original print was agreed at the Third International Congress of Artists, Vienna, September, 1960. In 1963, the U.K. National Committee of the International Association of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers (Association Internationale des Arts Plastiques) reprinted the definition with a few additional modifications of the Vienna definition. . . The French National Committee on Engraving under Marcel Guiot at the International Exposition of 1937 had ratified the judgement of the French Customs service that only prints 'conceived and executed by hand by the same artist shall be considered as original engravings, prints and lithographs, regardless of the technique employed, with the exclusion of any and all mechanical or photo mechanical processes'. On Dec. 1964, a meeting of La Chambre Syndicale de L'Estamp et du Dessin endorsed this earlier definition and circulated a report of its proceedings in Nouvelles de L'Estamp in Paris in Feb. 1965.'

Originality No.2

The following definition was agreed at the Third International Congress of Arts, held in Vienna in September 1960. The definition was published by the International Association of Art in 1963.22

THE DEFINITION:

1. It is the exclusive right of the artist-printmaker to fix the definitive number of each of his graphic works in the different techniques; engraving, lithography, etc.

2. Each print, in order to be considered an original, must bear not only the signature of the artist, but an indication of the total edition and the serial number of the print. The Artist may also indicate if he is the printer.

3. Once the edition has been made, it is desirable that the original plate, stone, wood-block, or what ever material was used in pulling the print from should be defaced or should bear a distinctive mark indicating that the edition has been completed.

4. The above principles apply to graphic works which can be considered originals, that is to say to prints for which the artist made the original plate, cut the wood-block, worked on the stone or any other material. Works which do not fulfil these conditions must be considered 'reproductions'.

5. For reproductions no rules are possible. However it is desirable that reproductions should be acknowledged as such, and so distinguished beyond question from the original graphic work. This is particularly so when reproductions are of such outstanding quality that the artist, wishing to acknowledge the work materially executed by the printer, feels justified in signing them.

**Originality No.3:**

*Print Council of America* issued this version of Originality in prints in 1961.\(^{23}\)

An original Print is a work of graphic art, the general requirements of which are:

1. The Artist alone has made the image in or upon the plate, stone, wood block, or other material for the purpose of creating a work of graphic art.

\(^{23}\) ibid.
2. The Impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions.

3. The finished print is approved by the artist.

**Originality No.4:**

William Hayter, in 'About Prints' (Oxford University Press, first published 1962) argues, like Walter Benjamin, the case for degrees of originality in prints. In fact chapter eleven of his book 'About Prints' is entitled 'Five Degrees of Originality in Prints'. He defines and classifies these degrees, in order, thus:

'Category (A). . . is in reality a method of reproduction being employed by the artist himself. [and .]. . .in which the emergence of an image by the exercise of a technique in the medium. . . 24

'This category, (B), which I should like to call 'the Autograph. . . is where it is most unlikely that the technique contributes in any way to the transposition of idea on the part of the artist. . . 25

'Category (C). . . in which the work is still executed on the plate, blocks, screens, or whatever surface is being used, by the hand of the artist, but . . . he will apply to one of the excellent firms of artisans such as Lacourier and Mourlot where very competent advice will be offered in the techniques of reproduction . . . 26

'The fourth category, (D), is that in which the artist has gone to a competent firm of craftsmen with a gouache, drawing water-colour, or painting which he or his dealer would like to see in the form of a print.27

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24 William Hayter, 'About Prints'. Oxford University Press, first published 1962, p131
25 ibid
26 ibid.
27 ibid.
... All of this results of course in a hand-made reproduction in which the exercise of the technique at its maximum perfection can almost equal the quality of the original, but under no circumstances could be expected to surpass it... 28

The last Category, (E), is frankly a reproduction, frequently done by mechanical means, photographically or otherwise... 29

Hayter arrived at these categories by talking to 'experts':.

... During the preparation of this book [About Prints] I have interviewed hundreds of print experts, engravers, lithographers, dealers and artists... 30

Hayter admits later on in his book to the difficulty of distinguishing one print (the original) from the other (the reproduction).

... One of the nightmares haunting even experienced connoisseurs of prints is the fear of being fooled by one of the methods of reproduction which so perfectly resembles the effect of original work that it is extremely difficult to distinguish... 31

Originality No.5:

The Print Council of Australia began publishing Imprint in 1966. Its goals were laid out and a definition based on the American Print Councils definition of Originality in Prints was published in this first paper. Along with a commitment to an educational programme about

28 ibid.
29 ibid.
30 ibid., p 126
31 ibid., p 136
Print Making was incorporated into the aims of the new magazine. These bear a striking resemblance to the programme the American Print Council set its self in the late 1950's and Imprint acknowledges this influence.

Imprint No. 1 Vol 1 1966:

'Our aims are to... stimulate further activities and to encourage understanding and appreciation of the original print'32

'We know that there is confusion between the print as a multi-original work of art and a print as reproduction of a work of art with the result, that many people are still blind to the particular qualities of the original print. Following the example of the Print Council of America, we speak of an original Print if:

1. The artist alone has made the image in or upon the plate, stone, wood-block or other material for the purpose of creating a work of art.
2. The impression is made directly from that original material by the artist or pursuant to his directions
3. The finished print is approved by the artist.

An original print(wood-cut, etching, engraving, lithograph or serigraphy) belongs to the category of multi-original works of art, limited in edition to anything from a few, to several hundred originals, each as fine as the others. Its aesthetic qualities correspond directly to the image the artist has imparted to the printing block, plate or stencil and its scale follows exactly the dimensions of the drawn image. Unlike photo-mechanical process for reproduction, the printing process for original prints requires the artist himself to produce the printing surface in a suitable material so that the resulting prints from that surface

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32 Udo Sellbach, Aims and Program of the Print Council of Australia Imprint, Vol 1 No. 1, 1966
become the originals. Whether printed by hand or with the help of printing presses (which are sometimes motorised) the making of the printing surface must be made by hand and not by a mechanical process. The resulting prints are checked by the artist and approved by him. Hand signed, numbered and often printed on specially selected paper, original prints bear all the marks of an artist's aesthetic intention, unchanged by any mechanical interference.\footnote{Udo Sellbach, What is an Original Print?, \textit{Imprint}, No. 1 Vol. 1, 1966}

\textbf{Originality No. 6:}


Meyer writes:
'There have been numerous attempts to define a print, all of which have been hindered as much by the philosophies of what constitutes an art object, as by the innate conservatism of printmakers themselves worrying more about technical definitions than about the relationships of content, medium and form. The more mercenary aspects of printmaking and commercial reproduction are not what concern us at the Print Council of Australia. We are concerned about the spate of misleading advertising by a number of publishers of purportedly Fine Art Reproductions and Prints which is exacerbated by the definitions. As the only formally constituted national printmaking organisation in Australia, representing both artists and members of the public, the following is submitted to assist in determining guidelines for the recognition of original prints:

\textbf{Definitions for Original Prints:}
i) An Original print is conceived by the artist specifically for editioning in a chosen medium (Intaglio, screen, relief, lithographic, collotype etc.).

ii) The entire edition is considered as a divisible but unique art object and is copyright as such.

iii) The edition is not a reproduction of a pre-existing art object in another medium.

iv) The edition is printed by the artist or under his supervision from a bon a tirer release print approved by the artist.

v) The signed, numbered and titled prints meet the artists standards, (this includes the possibility of inking variations and so forth)

vi) The print may take any form and includes three dimensional work, xeroxes or photos, in which case, the term 'multiple' should be used.

vii) The use of chop mark, embossed sign or IMP cannot be made obligatory although they can be helpful in establishing authenticity.

viii) It is recommended that a certificate of authenticity and provenance be issued with each print distributed. This certificate should contain all the information recommended in the U.S.A. legislative proposals recently debated in U.S.A. (presented to the Senate of the State of New York to amend the general business law in relation to the sale of visual art objects produced in multiples.

A reproduction of an existing art work (painting, drawing etc.,) should be embossed or have printed under the image 'Facsimile' or 'Reproduced from the Original (title of work) by (artist) printed by (printer).

Artists Unions in England, the U.S.A. and Australia have also been examining the legal avenues for defining and limiting the misleading trading of prints and reproductions. Provenance Certificates are already obligatory in Belgium. If the buyer knows what he is being
offered in this way, and agrees to the price, there can be no belated cries of 'rip off'.

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Appendix 7

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