

Framing the Text: An Investigation of Collage in Postmodern Narrative Illustration

Joanne Halse

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SUPERVISORS: Ms Lize van Robbroeck
Prof Keith Dietrich



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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Abstract

Collage, as a verbal and visual medium, epitomises the heterogeneity, indeterminacy and fragmentation of the postmodern moment. In this thesis I argue that visual collage – in the context of book illustration – presents an ideal form with which to illustrate the state of contemporary (postmodern) narrative. Postmodernism, as a term or concept, evades any form of absolute or definitive account. Hence, in my discussion of the postmodern condition I move towards an understanding of this complex theoretical and cultural phenomenon. Postmodern cultural artifacts reflect the state of a modernised, Western-orientated, globalised consciousness, which resists arborescent structures in past and contemporary texts. In both postmodern narratives and in literary fictional narratives the condition of artifice is amplified. Thus, this thesis explores various characteristics evident in postmodern fiction in order to understand and demonstrate the changes manifest in contemporary narratives in general. Many of the stylistic and figurative devices employed in the postmodern novel foreground the excessive appropriation and self-reflexive textualism of contemporary texts – these literary devices often reflect particular collage-like tendencies or characteristics.

Contemporary literary theory, in addition, provides many useful terms and concepts with which to describe visual texts and, for the purposes of this discussion, narrative illustration. This thesis is centred primarily on an analysis of the practical component completed as part of the Master of Arts degree in Fine Arts. The discussion of the practical work is embedded in the wider fields of book art – particularly the postmodern artist's book (*livre détourné*) – and in contentious debates around the role of visual narrative illustration. In both the thesis and the illustrated book objects, I challenge the secondary and supplementary position traditionally held by illustration in the context of the book. I argue for a form of visual narrative that is not required to function as a mere translation of the primary verbal text. Instead – working within the context of the artist's book and through the utilisation of collage as a visual (and verbal) medium – I demonstrate that illustration may complement, supplement or subvert the written text. Furthermore, I show that illustration may assume the role of the primary text in the context of the codex.

Finally, this study creates a space for a creative and participatory reader who, through the intertextual processes made evident in the book objects, becomes an active 'reader-writer' of the visual and verbal narratives under discussion.

Opsomming

Collage, as beide 'n verbale en visuele medium, verpersoonlik die onbesliste, gefragmenteerde, heterogene moment van postmodernisme. In hierdie tesis voer ek aan dat visuele collage, binne die konteks van boekillustrasie, 'n ideale vorm van uitbeelding bied om die toestand van kontemporêre (postmoderne) narratief te illustreer. Postmodernisme, as 'n term of konsep, ontwyk enige volslae of beslissende betekenis. Gevolglik poog ek in my bespreking van die postmoderne toestand om nader aan 'n begrip van hierdie komplekse teoretiese en kulturele fenomeen te beweeg. Postmoderne kulturele artefakte reflekteer die toestand van 'n gemoderniseerde, Westers-georiënteerde, geglobaliseerde bewustheid wat liniêre strukture in tekste uit die verlede en die hede weerstaan. In beide postmoderne narratiewe en fiktiewe literêre narratiewe word die gesteldheid van kunsskepping toegelig. Dus ondersoek hierdie tesis verskeie opvallende eienskappe van postmoderne fiksie ten einde die veranderinge wat in die algemeen in kontemporêre narratiewe manifesteer te verstaan en te demonstreer. Vele van die stilistiese en figuratiewe tegnieke van die postmodernistiese roman plaas die oormatige toe-eining en self-refleksiewe tekstualisme van kontemporêre tekste op die voorgrond; dié literêre gebruikswyses reflekteer dikwels bepaalde collage-agtige tendense of eienskappe.

Hierbenewens, bied kontemporêre literêre teorie vele nuttige terme en konsepte waarmee visuele tekste sowel as, vir die doel van hierdie ondersoek, visuele narratiewe, beskryf kan word. Hierdie tesis is hoofsaaklik gevestig op 'n analise van die praktiese werk wat deel van die Magister Artium-graad in Beeldende Kunste uitmaak. Die bespreking van die praktiese werk is veranker in die wyer terreine van boekkuns – spesifiek die postmoderne kunstenaarsboek (*livre detourné*) – en in kontensieuse debatte oor die rol van visuelenarratief-illustrasie. In beide die tesis en die geïllustreerde boekobjekte bevraagteken ek die tradisionele siening dat illustrasie binne boekkontekse 'n sekondêre of aanvullende posisie inneem. Ek argumenteer ten gunste van 'n vorm van visuele narratief waarvan daar nie bloot verwag word om as 'n beskrywing van die primêre verbale teks te funksioneer nie. In plaas daarvan, deur binne die konteks van die kunstenaarsboek te werk en deur collage as 'n visuele (en verbale) medium te benut, demonstreer ek dat illustrasie die geskrewe teks kan aanvul, daartoe kan toevoeg of dit kan ondergrawe. Verder toon ek dat illustrasie die rol van die primêre teks in die konteks van die kodeks kan inneem.

Laastens skep hierdie studie die geleentheid vir 'n kreatiewe en bydraende lesers – vanweë 'n intertekstuele proses wat in die boekobjekte aan die lig kom – om as 'n aktiewe 'leserskrywer' van die visuele en verbale tekste onder bespreking op te tree.

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Words move, music moves
Only in time; but that which is only living
Can only die. Words, after speech, reach
Into the silence. Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness.
Not the stillness of the violin, while the note lasts,
Not that only, but the co-existence,
Or say that the end precedes the beginning,
And the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now. Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still. Shrieking voices
Scolding, mocking, or merely chattering,
Always assail them. The Word in the desert
Is most attacked by voices of temptation,
The crying shadow in the funeral dance,
The loud lament of the disconsolate chimera.

T.S. Eliot

According to the Greeks, trees are alphabets. Of all the tree letters, the palm is loveliest. And of writing, profuse and distinct as the burst of its fronds, it possesses the major effect: falling back.

Roland Barthes

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Introduction

In *Image, Music, Text* (1977), Roland Barthes distinguishes between the terms 'work' and 'text'. Barthes (1977:156-157) states: 'The difference is this: the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field.' Barthes, basing this distinction upon Jacques Lacan's differentiation between 'reality' and 'the real', continues further:

... the one is displayed, the other demonstrated; likewise, the work can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses), the text is a process of demonstration, speaks according to certain rules (or against certain rules); the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of discourse (or rather, it is Text for the very reason that it knows itself as text); the Text is not a decomposition of the work, it is the work that is the imaginary tail of the Text; or again, *the Text is experienced only in an activity of production*. It follows that the Text cannot stop (for example on the library shelf); its constitutive movement is that of cutting across (in particular, it can cut across the work, several works) (Barthes 1977:157).

The dichotomies that Barthes sets up in the above citation are interesting in that they not only raise the status of the text as for ever indeterminate, but also present ideas about the materiality of the book object. The delineations proposed here resonate with my ideas and aims, which are reflected through the practical and theoretical components of this study.

1.1 Scope and Nature of Area of Study

The Master's Degree in Fine Arts comprises two equally weighted components: a practical component and a theoretical component. In both these components I critically investigate the correlations between collage and postmodern narratives.

For the practical component of this study I created five illustrated artist's books, each comprising two volumes (an illustrated book and a counter-book). Each of the illustrated (collaged) books visually portrays a different narrative (the contents of all five texts deal with bird deaths), and each individual narrative is a fragment or piece taken from another text. The counter-book comprises the remnants of the collage (cutting) process from which the illustrated book was made; these leftovers are bound into a new book and annotated with suggestive titles. The counter-books, when read in conjunction with the illustrated books, serve as an index or key in the apprehension of the collaged narratives. Working within a cultural context that celebrates heterogeneity and the idea of the fragment, I felt that collage was the ideal medium with which to illustrate and reflect the fractured nature of contemporary texts. The illustrations are composed from the cut-up pages of old books. The decision to use old books as source material was initially made for aesthetic reasons, but as the creative process developed these

'raw materials' rapidly exhibited other dimensions and conceptual implications. With the progress of the construction of the book objects an associative shift occurred in the relationship between text and image in the context of the codex.

The thesis, by contrast, pursues theoretical issues raised in the practical component of the study. The first of these issues involves the investigation of collage in a postmodern narrative context. In this discussion I argue that collage is an ideal medium with which to illustrate the fractured nature of postmodern narrative. The second concern questions the current position of illustration, as secondary and supplementary to the verbal text, in both the context of the codex and visual arts discourses. I demonstrate in my book objects and through a discussion around these books that illustration may be positioned (in the context of the book) as a viable primary text in relation to the associated verbal narrative.

Through the course of the study I alternated between periods of working on my practical and theoretical interests, the particular relationship between the two components taking shape through an ongoing interplay between practice and theory where the two mutually informed and enriched each another. In order to engage in theoretical debates around the series of book objects, I drew on two broader fields of study, namely literary theory and contemporary texts dealing with the concept of the artist's book. The practical and theoretical investigations undertaken for this study occurred within a specific Western-orientated contemporary cultural climate, which is predominantly described as postmodernism. Thus this thesis deals extensively with debates around the idea of postmodern culture and its related discourses, post-structuralism and deconstruction.

Literary theory (with a focus on postmodern literary theory) is vast and complex. Hence, for the purposes of this thesis, it must be stressed that I have concentrated only on the various tenets that are related to and support issues around collage (in both its verbal and visual forms) as it operates within a postmodern narrative context. A large part of this thesis focuses on a discussion of postmodern fiction. I use the postmodern novel as a vehicle to understand and describe contemporary narrative, which is centred on the textualism of the text. There is a close affinity between what is described as 'typical' postmodern narrative forms and the conventions of literary fiction. Mark Currie (1998:100) describes this likeness as follows:

... postmodern narratives at large are organised around the same poles as fictional narratives, one being realistic, transparent and aiming to disguise the codes and conventions that mark its textuality while the other is overtly artificial, declaring its textuality by exposing its codes and conventions. And just as in the postmodern novel there is a convergence of these poles within the same work, it might be speculated that postmodern culture in general has witnessed the same kind of convergence of realistic and ironic modes within other domains of representation.

Through an understanding of the self-reflexive construction of fictive texts, in which the condition of artifice is amplified in the postmodern context, the potential and relative instability of language and the text (narrative) is foregrounded.

The use of various literary concepts and terms became vital in unpacking the relationship between the verbal and visual narratives contained within the book objects. I use literary theory as a foundation by which to analyse the artist's book, but focus extensively on the form of the book, rather than on the book's narrative content. Many of these literary terms, for example 'metafiction', 'nesting' and the various elements of paratext, perform specific and intricate operations within the verbal text that cannot be transferred to the visual text with the same complexity. In a literary context, the term 'nesting' refers to 'narratives within narratives', and I have used it as such in a visual narrative framework. However, the nested narratives in the literary text also imply 'embedded narratives', which draw impetus from the Narrative Communication Model. (This model functions within narrative theory and is detailed beyond the requirements of this thesis. For more reading, see Lothe 2000:11-48.) In complex terms such as this one, developed specifically for the verbal text, I have utilised and transferred a more general understanding of the term into the visual realm. When applied to the visual texts, these literary concepts often take on marginally different but equally complex natures.

It is important at this stage to clarify that many of the critical characteristics and stylistic devices described in this thesis, for example allegory, metaphor, parody, pastiche and even metafiction, are not exclusive to a postmodern context. Many of these critical devices have well-established and documented histories, functioning in different modes and under different guises, dependent on the stylistic and theoretic tendencies manifest throughout various cultural conditions. For the purposes of my argument, I focus exclusively on the functioning of these tropes and concepts within a postmodern context. Notwithstanding this delineation, my discussions and descriptions of the contemporary permutations of these concepts and tendencies are not intended as definitive, all-inclusive accounts, as much of our apprehension and formulation of postmodernism depends on our understanding of modernity and Modernism. I briefly make reference to specific Modernist 'characteristics' and dispositions. The transfigurations witnessed in contemporary cultural artifacts are a result of a movement from and questioning of (but not a complete break with) Modernist ideologies.

A study of postmodernism and the concept of postmodernity involves the navigation of a complex set of ideas and a mass of theoretical discourses which resist definition and closure. Theory and criticism follow cultural trends and the condition of postmodern culture 'is characterised by no grand totalizing narrative, but by smaller and multiple narratives which seek no universalizing stabilization or legitimisation' (Lyotard, cited in Stevens 1996:33). Consequently, my discussion of postmodernism is not intended to concretise the phenomenon, but rather moves towards a definition of various

contemporary creative characteristics. A similar difficulty arises in a discussion of the practical component of this study, where no description, critical statement or interpretation of the artworks can be accepted as final. In his book *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity*, Victor Burgin (1986:198) explains the reason for the present state of indeterminacy in critical writing:

... what have expired are the absolute guarantees issued by over-riding metaphysical systems. 'Certainties' and 'necessities' are now seen as inescapably *positional*, derived from, and applied within, complex networks of mainly local and contingent conditions.

Therefore, the proposed readings and interpretations of the visual illustrations are not to be understood as *the* definitive and final meanings of the artworks. Instead, the discussions around the visual narratives suggest a 'preferred' reading of the work, which exists as one of a potential infinity of interpretations.

In *Postmodern Culture* (1985), Hal Foster differentiates between what is described as a more 'conservative' form of postmodernism and an 'oppositional' or 'critical' postmodernism. In this thesis I have undertaken a discussion of postmodernism that describes both of these manifestations. However, in my critical discussion of collage and the artist's book, I have adopted the more critical form, which according to Foster (1985:xii) functions

... as a counter practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the 'false normativity' of a reactionary postmodernism. In opposition (but not *only* in opposition), a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo-historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them.

From this stance the collages and artist's books created during this study aim to question and challenge various accepted conventions and codes in culture, language and the construction of knowledge systems. Rather than exploit past cultural forms (formally and conceptually) through excessive recycling and quotation, the books objects reflect a productive re-introduction of past cultural forms in order to create something new, by means of a critical distance.

1.2 Aims and Problems

In this study my aim was to create a body of practical work within the conventions of book art and to engage in theoretical discussions around these books. The illustrated book objects were created with a view to challenge the parameters of illustration (in the context of the codex). I set out to question the secondary and supplementary position traditionally held by visual illustrations in the context of the book, and more specifically to demonstrate the pivotal role played by collage in postmodern illustration and writing. This process involved explorations of both the form and content of my book

illustrations, as well as the manipulation and subversion of various traditional elements found in the conventional book form.

In her book *The Century of Artists' Books*, Johanna Drucker (1995:1) describes the artist's book as the 'quintessential' art form of the twentieth century. This is attributed to the 'flexibility and variation of the bookform' exhibited by the book object, 'rather than to any single aesthetic or material factor' (Drucker 1995:1). The avant-garde illustrated artist's book (*livre détourné*) is described as a product of postmodernism, as it shares postmodern culture's preoccupation with the

... absence of traditional generic distinctions and its questioning of reading conventions. This is evidenced in the indeterminacy of the text (is it to be read or seen?) and its relationship to illustrative elements, as well as in its shape (Hubert 1985:519).

More than any other visual art form, the illustrated artist's book combines and integrates text and image, and thus creates a valid space in which to investigate the tensions between the verbal and the visual. René Riese Hubert, in her article *Readable — Visible: Reflections on the Illustrated Book* (1985:519), states that frequently the challenge in reading these books is a result of the reduced verbal and visual mimetic and referential dimensions. As witnessed in my own book objects, there is a shifting of the boundaries between text that is read as text and typography that is read as image.

As a medium for illustration, collage is an ideal form to meet the challenges of the avant-garde artist's book. Collage maximises indeterminacy through its fragmented and fractured nature. Through the incorporation of a variety of verbal and visual textual sources, collage invites the reader to assimilate a heterogeneity of textual layers by imbricating verbal and visual language and experience.

Illustration, as a term or concept understood within a postmodern context, raises interesting debates for both the illustrator and the illustrated-book reader. Illustration in this context becomes polemical, since it is used as a means to interrogate the pre-established hierarchy between text and image in the book.

1.3 Premise and Review of Relevant Literature

The theoretical foundation on which the discussions and debates around the book objects are premised belong to two discourses closely related to postmodernism, namely those of post-structuralism and deconstruction.

Post-structuralism (like structuralism) was founded within debates in literary theory, and like postmodernism recognises the fragmented state of culture and cultural artifacts. Post-structuralist theory proposes that

... even so-called basic structures can be broken down into further underlying structures, and that the unifying centres themselves can be broken down. All that remains is a free play of relationships between signs (Stevens 1996:36).

The theories of post-structuralism based on the above premise mark a change in the reception and assimilation of cultural artifacts. The literary text or illustration, for example, is no longer viewed as closed system of interpretation, dictated and delineated by the author or illustrator. Instead, as Victor Burgin (1988:73) explains, these texts are regarded as dynamic interpretative spaces

... made up of endlessly proliferating meanings which have no stable point of origin, nor of closure. In this concept of 'text', the boundaries which enclosed the 'work' are dissolved; the text opens continuously into other texts, the space of intertextuality.

Post-structuralism, like postmodernism exhibits a propensity for pluralism in reading, meaning and interpretation. The post-structural recognition of the inherent plurality of cultural artifacts has been received both positively and negatively. A negative judgement is adopted by audiences who perceive a process of infinite interpretation with no closure or conclusion in sight a futile exercise. The negative judgement of polysemy also criticises it for its implicit extreme relativism. In this thesis, I take a positive view of the 'infinity of meanings' post-structuralist discourse argues for, and I use the concepts of 'decentring' and the 'absence of finality' to discuss the visual texts contained in the book objects.

Deconstruction may be viewed as a product of post-structuralism, which highlights the absence of central meaning or truth in texts (both visual and verbal). Jacques Derrida, who developed this theory, aimed to show that:

The pure expression of truth, if there were such a thing, would be *immediate*: it would not rely on anything external to it, since the utilization of some outside aid would always threaten to contaminate its purity. But the utterance of truth – or of a statement making a truth-claim – is in fact always *mediated* by language, language which has its own sedimented history, structural properties and figurative potential. The truth in language, is never simply present; it always has to pass through space and time, and this means that the context in which it is produced is always different from that in which it is received (Attridge 2000:107).

Yet, there does exist an important difference between post-structuralism and deconstruction. Post-structuralism 'is a term for a variety of attitudes and approaches', while deconstruction 'offers a particular approach, although it is a rather indefinable one, often presented in complex writing styles' (Stevens 199:38). Deconstructive texts make particular use of paradox, employ a variety of different writing forms, erasures and brackets. However, deconstruction must not be understood as a 'method'.

Rather, it may be described as a way of approaching a text that allows for (and accepts) the natural unfolding of a multitude of textualities.

The most important aspect of Derrida's writings that I would like raise here involves his conception and understanding of the term 'text'. Derrida (cited in Royle 2003:64), in his work *Living On*, describes the 'text' as

... henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity, but rather making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines) – all the limits, everything that was to be set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what not, every field of reference – to body, or mind, conscious or unconscious, politics, economics, and so forth).

I have used the various characteristics Derrida assigns the 'text' ('writing', 'trace', 'supplement', '*différance*', 'the remnant', 'iterability', 'the mark') in discussions around my book objects, particularly his definition of the text as a system of 'marks, traces and referrals'. However, the most important point raised in this quotation is that not 'everything is just writing' ('reality is merely a text'). Instead Derrida implores the reader to 'think in new and different ways about "limits", about margins, frames, boundaries and borderlines' (Royle 2003:65). In other words to reconsider the limits of reference, and in doing so to acknowledge that all reference is textual in nature. I have adopted deconstruction in the sense that Paul de Man (cited in Stevens 1996:40) describes it:

Deconstruction is not synonymous with *destruction* ... It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word *analysis*, which etymologically means 'to undo' - a virtual synonym for 'to de-construct'. The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another.

From this excerpt, deconstruction may be understood as an evaluation of interpretation itself and not an investigation into textual validity. Both post-structuralism and deconstruction interrogate the textual nature of the verbal text, yet the use of these concepts has filtered into all forms of textual and narrative analysis, including the critique of visual arts.

In this thesis I use deconstruction as a source for themes to raise issues around the textualism of texts and language – highlighting the impossibility 'of a pure, pristine, and original text/language' and to reveal the text or language's 'enmeshment in extraneous meaning-systems' (Taylor & Winqvist 2001:302). This is achieved through the introduction of concepts such as absence and presence, the

logic of supplementarity, inside and outside, the trace and so forth. Yet, these terms and concepts are used for discussions around the form of the book objects, and in descriptions of the processes employed in their creation. The composition of the artist's book represents a physical 'deconstruction' or 'undoing' of the form of the source texts. I have not used deconstructive theory in terms of examining the divide between literature and philosophy, to subvert the scientific goals of structuralism, or to analyse the narrative content of the appropriated texts in order to expose inherent contradictions. I have also used the deconstructionist tenet in my discussion of the reading and writing processes involved in the apprehension of the illustrated books and counter-books: 'Meaning emerges as a product of the infinite, unchecked play of signifiers permitting no final resolution between rival interpretations'(Sim 1995:82).

Review of Relevant Literature

Many authors were consulted in the process of writing this thesis, and here I provide a condensed survey of the seminal authors and texts that informed my thinking. In the field of literary theory (with a focus on postmodern literary theory) I found the writings of Brenda Marshall particularly relevant. In her book *Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory* (1992) Marshall discusses concepts such as representation; subjectivity; intertextuality, counter-memory and historiographic metafiction, through analysis of specific contemporary literary texts. Brian McHale provides a similarly detailed account in *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), with a particular focus on the role of the materiality of the book in postmodern texts. Niall Lucy's *Postmodern Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1997) provides a comprehensive study of this field. Patricia Waugh (in *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984)) examines the concept of metafiction in its various forms within the literary text, as does Linda Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988) with particular focus on 'historiographic metafiction'. Paul Cobley's *Narrative* (2001) is particularly informative, providing an excellent comparison between Classic realist forms of narrative and more contemporary permutations, as does Jakob Lothe's *Narrative in Fiction and in Film: An Introduction* (2000). Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1989) provided an appropriate point of departure for my writings on my own visual narratives – although much of Bal's writings differ from Derridean deconstruction. For detailed writings on specific literary tropes, such as pastiche, parody and allegory in their different forms, I found Marjorie Rose's *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-modern* (1993) useful.

With reference to postmodernism, Barry Smart, in his book *Modern Conditions Postmodern Controversies* (1992), delves into the complex relationship between Modernism and postmodernism, providing a useful starting point in understanding contemporary cultural and theoretical derivations. Hal Foster's *Postmodern Culture* (1985) and Terry Eagleton's *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (1996) provide in-depth critiques of postmodernism and alternatives to the prolific generalised descriptions of

contemporary culture. The various writings of Ihab Hassan, especially *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* (1987) provide a thorough explanation of the postmodern in culture and go far in developing a postmodern aesthetic. An excellent discussion of various postmodern cultural forms, including the postmodern novel, and detailed accounts of postmodern theories by contributing authors may be found in Stuart Sim's *The Icon Critical Dictionary of Postmodern Thought* (1998). In writing about post-structuralism and deconstruction in general, and within the postmodern context (with particular reference to the verbal and visual text), the writings of Roland Barthes (*Image, Music, Text* (1977)) and Jacques Derrida (*Writing and Difference* (1978) and *The Truth in Painting* (1987)) were crucial. Nicholas Royle and Christopher Norris provide excellent secondary texts on the writings of Derrida. Jonathan Culler, in both his books, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (1981) and *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* (1982), gives detailed explanations of terms such as intertextuality, metaphor, signs and the frame, with reference to the writings of other theorists; and in the process unleashes the antagonisms bound within many of these concepts. Umberto Eco provided relevant background reading within a wide variety of different areas from interpretation to semiotic codes. Many of Eco's texts were obtained from Stefan Collini's *Umberto Eco: Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (1992).

For texts on the artist's book I relied primarily on the writings of Johanna Drucker, a maker of artist's book and key theorist in the field. Her book *The Century of Artists' Books* (1995) provides a detailed history of the development of the codex and the contemporary fascination with subverting the conventions of the book. Renée Riese Hubert also provides an extensive study of the book object in her article *Readable – Visible: Reflections on the Illustrated Book* (1985), and in *Surrealism and the Book* (1988). Theoretical writing on the status and predicament of contemporary illustration is limited, and the most definitive writing on this topic is to be found in Colin Richard's article *Illustration: Antagonising Chauvinisms* (1993), which provides a broad overview of the development of illustration with reference to contemporary theory. For a comprehensive study of collage in the visual arts, I made reference to Brandon Taylor's *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* (2004).

1.4 Exposition of Contents

Chapter One (Towards a Theory of Postmodernism) provides a broad 'definition' of postmodernism. The very nature of postmodernism/postmodernity defies any absolute or definitive account. Rather, this discussion of the postmodern provides a description of a contemporary Western cultural climate that has witnessed and fostered evident changes in the production and consumption of verbal and visual narratives. This chapter serves as a framework within which to situate my discussion of the postmodern novel, and focuses on various paradigm shifts in society, academic discourse and culture in general. The first part of Chapter One provides a historical background to postmodernism, which may be regarded as a late-modern phenomenon. Hence, a brief discussion of the theories dominating

the modern era is provided. This is followed by a delineation of terms and concepts (for example ‘the delegitimisation of metanarratives’ and ‘the death of history’) which are used frequently in discussions of postmodern culture and its cultural artifacts. A description of the critical characteristics of postmodernism follows. Here I discuss various stylistic and figurative devices most commonly used in the creation of contemporary cultural artifacts. It must be stressed that many of these devices (like parody, pastiche, irony and allegory) are not exclusive to postmodernism and my discussion deals only with their formal behaviour in a postmodern context. The last part of this chapter highlights the polemical nature of ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ texts within a contemporary context. Here I introduce concepts like ‘the death of the author’ and ‘the birth of the reader’.

In Chapter Two (Towards a Theory of Postmodern Narrative in Fiction) I consider themes pertinent to contemporary literary narratives. In this chapter, I use the postmodern novel to describe the nature of contemporary narratives in general. This discussion, in turn, provides a foundation for the analysis of narrative and aesthetic devices used in the creation of the illustrated book objects. The literary conventions and stylistic devices selected for discussion in this chapter all exhibit collage-like tendencies within the context of contemporary narratives. The first section of this chapter highlights the complexity one encounters when trying to provide a ‘definition’ of the characteristics of postmodern fiction, which exists as part of the evasive broader concept of postmodernism. This section also briefly introduces narrative theory and the debates around the study of narrative. The discussion of narrativity is followed by a description of the development of post-structuralist and deconstructionist discourses, looking specifically at the writings of Derrida. A large part of Chapter Two analyses, defines and discusses various conventions used in the postmodern novel, for example fragmentation and language disorder. This discussion takes place within a broader understanding of the ‘meta-levels’ associated with contemporary texts, concepts like ‘metanarrative’, ‘metalanguage’ and ‘metafiction’ are delineated. The second half of the chapter deals with the concept of ‘intertextuality’ (which is introduced via the writings of Roland Barthes), and the figurative and stylistic devices and tropes commonly used in the postmodern novel. These devices (literary pastiche, allegory and metaphor) are described according to how they function in a postmodern, intertextual context. The final part of Chapter Two deals with the politics of reading and interpreting texts in a postmodern climate. Here I make reference to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of the ‘rhizome’.

Chapter Three (Framing the Text) deals with the practical component of this study, namely the illustrated book objects. This chapter begins with a contextualisation of illustration within postmodernism and in the context of the illustrated book (including book art). I examine, inter alia, the traditional hierarchy between text and image. This is followed by a discussion of collage, including a brief historical contextualisation and development of collage as a visual medium. I look specifically at the early avant-garde *papier collés*, Dadaism and the Surrealist collaged illustrations (specifically in

the context of the book, in Max Ernst's *Une Semaine de bonté* (1934)). I then move towards a theory of collage in both its verbal and visual forms, bringing together concepts such as fragmentation, absence versus presence, the 'trace', palimpsest, the negation of linearity, and self-reflexivity. In the second half of the final chapter I analyse my illustrated book objects, which are contextualised within the broader field of book art. In this discussion I introduce the concepts of 'counter-collage' in the form of the counter-books; '*ergon*' and '*parergon*'; code changing; and Gerard Genette's concept of the 'paratext'. The final section of this chapter, with reference to my own collaged book objects, investigates the processes involved in the 'reading' and the 'writing' of the artist's book.

Through the various issues and discussions this thesis raises the extensive indeterminacy and textuality of postmodern cultural artifacts is foregrounded. This thesis demonstrates that the concept of postmodernism resists definition and irrevocable characterisations, in opposition to Modernist ideologies of authority, progress, universalisation, rationalisation and systemisation. Through a study of postmodern fiction (from a post-structuralist perspective), it is shown that postmodern cultural artifacts challenge realistic notions of representation and Modernist and structuralist preoccupations with 'pure' form and fixed, deep underlying structures. Instead, it is made evident that self-reflexive contemporary narratives embrace modes of dynamic play, synchronicity, liminality, fragmentation and appropriation. These literary texts echo the postmodern 'celebration of the fragment', and through various figurative and stylistic devices highlight the textual and intertextual nature of their construction. It was also demonstrated that many of the literary devices employed by contemporary fiction exhibit elements or characteristics of collage, which are used to rupture the text and create multiple fictional 'realities'.

The book objects demonstrate that collage used as a visual illustrative medium not only complements and supports the state of contemporary verbal texts, but also subverts and adds to the verbal narrative thereby expanding the intertextual field and interpretative space. Through the creation of the illustrated artist's books the traditional secondary position of illustration is additionally subverted. The result of this process demonstrates that illustration may exist as a legitimate primary text in the context of the illustrated book (and that the verbal narrative may assume a supplementary state). The form of the book objects, through processes of code changing, evidently display the textual construction of our 'realities' and all narratives.

A Brief Note on Terminology

For the purposes of my argument, I have spelt the term ‘postmodernism’ with a lower case ‘p’ and the terms ‘Modernism’ and ‘Modern’ with an upper case ‘M’. The reasons for this choice are supported by my discussion of postmodernism and Modernism in Chapter One (Towards a Theory of Postmodernism). The chief decision for adopting the aforementioned spellings is based upon the postmodernist critique of Modernist ‘particularism’ and ‘foundationalism’:

... postmodernist critique amounts to a radical rejection and demystification of the foundationalist and consecrated categories of Western thought: for example Reason, Self, Gender, Mimesis, God, Telos, and Nation. It cogently articulates its sense of the contingent, thus explaining human experience, not in terms of some principle beyond the reach of change and chance, but in terms of the variability and diversity of historical, local, and random forces (Taylor & Winquist 2001:303).

Postmodernism avoids the inclination to name and label or to create absolute ideologies or universal systematisations. Hence, the choice to spell ‘postmodernism’ as such avoids concretising the moment as a comprehensive and definitive set of absolutes. In this thesis I describe postmodernism as a ‘contemporary climate of thought’, hence I have used the terms ‘postmodernism’ and ‘contemporary’ interchangeably in my discussions.

The spelling of ‘Modernism’ and ‘Modern’ as such serves to differentiate early twentieth-century Modernism (and this particular Modern phase) from other modern periods throughout history. Early twentieth-century Modernism also refers to a

... relatively late development in the history of modernity. By the middle of the nineteenth century, modernity had so thoroughly established itself that the sense of scandal and challenge which it once suggested has to some extent been displaced by a belief in progress and evolution. Modernism is a response to these developments which keeps alive an awareness of the conflict, upheaval, and even destruction involved in modernity and modernization (Sim 1998:319).

As defined in the following chapter, Modernism generally refers to a collection of intellectual and artistic movements that emerged during the middle of the nineteenth century, and which by the start of the twentieth century dominated and attempted to define all literary and artistic practices.

In discussions of the text/literature and image/illustration, I use the terms ‘verbal’ and ‘visual’ text to differentiate between written and illustrated texts or narratives (the ‘text’ in postmodernism refers not only to written narratives but to all representational endeavours). I have also used the terms ‘text’ and ‘narrative’ synonymously in my discussions of various aspects of literary fiction and in discussions of

my own work. However, in the strictest sense of these terms, as defined by Mieke Bal in *Narratology* (1989:5), a ‘text’ is

... a finite, structured whole composed of language signs. The finite ensemble of signs does not mean that the text itself is finite, for its meanings, effects, functions, and background are not. It only means that there is a first and a last word to be identified; a first and a last image of a film; a frame of a painting, even if those boundaries ... are not watertight ... A *narrative text* is a text in which an agent relates (‘tells’) a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof.

A text refers to narratives in different forms. As regards my discussion narrative assumes the forms of the postmodern novel and collaged illustrations.

Postmodernism is often placed in opposition to Modernism in terms of the activity of interpretation. Modernist discourses appear to support the projects of interpretation and reading, as opposed to postmodernist conjectures which are described as being ‘against interpretation’ and ‘misreading’. Derrida (cited in Newton 1990:76) distinguishes between two forms of interpretation:

There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of freeplay. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth or an origin which is free from freeplay and from the order of the sign, and lives like an exile the necessity of interpretation. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms freeplay and tries to pass beyond man and humanism ...

In this thesis I have taken the stance that postmodernism is not against interpretation *per se*, but is against fixed and definitive readings of texts. The postmodernist reader accepts the notion that ‘[a] text is an open-ended universe where the interpreter can discover infinite interconnections’ and the postmodern reader aims to ‘salvage the text ... to transform it from an illusion of meaning to the awareness that meaning is infinite’ (Eco 1992:39). Based on this understanding and use of the word ‘interpretation’ in a postmodern context, I use the terms ‘reading’ and ‘interpretation’ interchangeably. (In this thesis the terms ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ are used synonymously in specific discussions involving the apprehension of contemporary narratives; this usage is based upon Barthes’ concept of the *lisible* and *scriptible* – which will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three.)

Finally, the ‘artist’s book’, the ‘book object’ and ‘book art’ are all terms used, in this thesis, to describe cultural artifacts which challenge the conventions of the traditional book form.

Lastly, the terms ‘society’ and ‘culture’, that have been used throughout this thesis are used as abbreviated forms of modernized, Western-orientated, globalised societies and cultures.

A Note on Referencing

The referencing system used in this thesis is based upon the Harvard Method presented by Marlene Burger in *Reference Techniques* (1992).

A Note on the Title – *Framing the Text*

The title of this thesis, *Framing the Text*, was arrived at independently. Subsequent to this, the title of Jonathan Culler's book *Framing the Sign* (1988) was brought to my attention. I acknowledge the likeness between these titles; however, the similarity is purely incidental.

Chapter One

Towards a Theory of Postmodernism¹

There are varying debates as to whether postmodernism is a break from Modernism, a continuation of Modernism or a constitution of both. The 'post'² preface in the word 'postmodernism' implies that it succeeds 'Modernism'. Stephen Toumlin, in his book *The Return to Cosmology*, takes the position that postmodernism is the result of a break with the past:

We must reconcile ourselves to a paradoxical-sounding thought: namely, the thought that *we no longer live in the 'modern' world*. The 'modern' world is now a thing of the past. Our own natural science today is no longer 'modern' science. Instead ... it is rapidly engaged in becoming 'postmodern' science: the science of the 'postmodern' world, of 'postnationalist' politics and 'postindustrial' society – the world that has not yet discovered how to define itself in terms of what it *is*, but only in terms of what it *is* has *just-now ceased to be* (cited in Truett 1996:3).

Charles Jencks, a major theorist of postmodernism, supports the notion that postmodernism represents both a break with and a continuity of Modernism, that 'post-modernism is fundamentally the eclectic mixture of any tradition with that of the immediate past: it is both the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence' (1991:27). Yet another postmodern author and theorist, Umberto Eco, describes the term 'postmodern' as 'a term *bon a tout faire*', a term 'that is applied today to anything the user of the term happens to like' (Eco 1996:31). It becomes apparent that the term 'postmodernism' and what it represents holds certain ambiguities, particularly regarding its relationship with Modernism and modernity.³ What is clear is that 'postmodernism', as a term, may be understood as 'a name for the series of social and cultural tendencies provoking the definition of modernism' (Brooker 1992:3). Definitions of 'Modernism' and 'postmodernism' thus appear to have taken shape in relation to one other.

¹ The very nature of postmodernism/postmodernity does not allow for absolute and concrete definition. Hence, I have made conscious use of the word 'towards' in my title. I have tried to move towards an understanding of the complexity of postmodernism. Terry Eagleton, in his book *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (1996), makes a distinction between the terms 'postmodernism' and 'postmodernity'. Eagleton proposes that postmodernism generally refers to a form of contemporary culture, whereas postmodernity 'refers to a style of thought' (1996:vii). I will discuss this differentiation in my definition. However, as Eagleton has done, I shall use the more familiar term 'postmodernism' to cover both aspects of this condition, as they are closely related.

² Even with regard to spelling, the term has been spelt variously as 'Postmodernism', 'POSTmodernism', 'postMODERNism', 'post-modernism' and 'postmodernism' (Powell 1998:6). For the purposes of this thesis I have adopted the following spelling of the term: postmodernism. I have espoused this spelling to avoid any emphasis of the 'post' preface or the word 'modern' within the term 'postmodern'. The reasons for this choice will become clear as my argument proceeds.

³ Previously I differentiated between 'postmodernity' and 'postmodernism'; I have made a similar distinction between the terms 'modernity' and 'Modernism' – Modernism is a discourse of modernity. The term 'modernity' may be understood as the economic, social and political consequences of a mode of thinking which shaped society during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century., 'Modernism', conversely, is a 'a blanket term for an explosion of new styles and trends in the arts in the first half of the twentieth century' (Powell 1998: 8).

There appears to be some agreement among theorists and commentators that ‘Western civilization, its cultural forms and practices, are undergoing an accelerating process of irreversible transformation’ (Smart 1992:141).⁴ It is this period or process of accelerating transformation that may be said to characterise both modernity and postmodernity. By investigating the attributes of this transformation, insight is gained about the condition of society and culture today. For the purposes of my definition I am going to invest in the idea that the postmodern ‘... constitutes a cultural development which remains broadly within the logic of modernism’ (Smart 1992:155). Although postmodernism contends the definition of Modernism, it is not a ‘transcendence’ or ‘critical overcoming of the modern’ nor does it allude to an ‘historical period after modernity, or a “temporal overcoming” of the modern’ (Foster, cited in Smart 1992:178-179). As I shall explain in this chapter, the concept of postmodernism rather signifies a new relationship with the modern and the ideas of modernity.

1.1 Historical Background to Postmodernism

Since postmodern culture may be regarded as a late-modern phenomenon, familiarisation with the dominant theories and characteristics of the modern era is essential to the understanding of the many themes addressed within postmodern culture.⁵ Modernism is a cultural phenomenon of the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. However, ‘precisely when the modern age began or the modern chapter of Western history might be considered to have commenced has remained a matter of debate’ (Smart 1992:144).⁶ The widely accepted beginnings of modernity are associated ‘with the advent of the “tradition of reason” at the turn of the eighteenth century’ which is identified as ‘the Enlightenment’ or ‘the Age of Reason’ (Smart 1992:145). During this age value was placed upon reason, progress, morality and universality. The aim of the Enlightenment philosophers was to

... cultivate objective scientific inquiry and knowledge, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their respective inner logics, the principle objective being to achieve a ‘rational organisation of everyday social life’, to facilitate control of natural and social phenomena and forces, enhance understanding, promote progress, and increase the happiness of humanity (Smart 1992:149).

It followed that the world could be rationally ordered, if we represented it correctly, thus the emphasis on scientific and mathematical endeavours and investigations. Various binaries were mobilised to

⁴ ‘Both Modernism and postmodernism are phenomena, primarily, of twentieth-century Anglo American and European culture, though with a changing relationship to that culture’ (Brooker 1992:xi).

⁵ I will not be dealing with the concept of Modernism or modernity in depth. I am merely touching on the issues in and surrounding modern culture in order to move towards a definition of postmodern culture. For more in-depth discussions and debates around Modernism and modernity see Smart 1992:143-167.

⁶ Reference is made to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – the discovery of the new world, the Renaissance and the Reformation – as various proposed origins of modernity (Habermas, cited in Smart 1992:145).

prove social progression: reason versus emotions and intuition; science versus religion and magic; truth versus prejudice; rationality versus affectivity and the rule of custom (Bauman, cited in Smart 1992:149). This created a culture obsessed with reason, rationality, objectivity, truth, centres, labelling, identifying and absolutes.⁷ The Enlightenment was an attempt to order the world with 'incontestable', 'static' knowledge.

Knowledge, however, proved to be contestable – not every thinker was optimistic or convinced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. Smart (1992:149) discusses these less optimistic views and doubts:

Alongside the various celebrations of modernity there have been a number of more sober reflections which have questioned both the feasibility and desirability of the project. The assumption of an increasing growth of rationality and its equation with a conception of historical progress began to be questioned towards the end of the nineteenth century, as did the costs and problems which were increasingly recognised to be a corollary of the benefits.

The influential German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, radically questioned the beliefs of modern society. Nietzsche 'had no tolerance for Enlightenment values' (Powell 1998:10) and claimed the 'Death of God', Christian morality and metaphysics. By making these claims he assisted in the destruction of the central symbols, institutions and belief systems of Western culture that had already been challenged by the Enlightenment (Powell 1998:11).⁸ The central 'truths' of society were cast into voids of doubt. The often quoted lines of the poet William Butler Yeats help to concretise the atmosphere of the modern era: 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world' (cited in Powell 1998:8).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Western culture was deprived of uncontested centres. This lack of a centre or aporia at the heart of modernity led to fragmentation and chaos within society. The logocentric and purposive nature of Western culture created a need for new centres and 'truths':

The absence of timeless or universal criteria meant that modernity, constituted through a process of disarticulation from antiquity, had to confront the problem of grounding itself, of creating its own criteria of normativity. This general problem is first addressed in the realm of aesthetic criticism ... (Smart 1992:148).

⁷ This mode of ordering knowledge has generated a 'linear' perspective of various phenomena. From a critical postmodern position, the chronological or linear arrangement of human progress, development and history has been affiliated with Western dominance.

⁸ Freud and Simmel were among other thinkers to criticise the modern age (see Smart 1992:149). These theorists were merely challenging the inherent incongruencies of modernity. Other figures, such as Marx, supported modernity, believed in progress and envisioned that the modern age would result in a Utopia. Francis Bacon 'saw progress taking the form of a wise, ethical and science-minded elite who would be the guardians of knowledge and who, though living outside the community, would nevertheless influence it' (Powell 1998:9).

This ‘realm of aesthetic criticism’ aided the development of Modernism – ‘a paradigm change in the arts’ (Lash, cited in Smart 1992:150). Modern artists – writers, painters, architects, musicians – searched for eternal values beyond the chaos. Aesthetics became central; the arts became self-absorbed and self-possessed, exploring their own primary possibilities (Powell 1998:13). Modernist art and literature became increasingly self-reflective and epistemological, resulting in a solipsistic view of existence.⁹ Modernist art became more complex as innovations multiplied and self-referentiality became pervasive. Consequently, an aesthetic tradition evolved which divided the viewing public into ‘Highbrow’ and ‘Lowbrow’.¹⁰ The accepted authenticity of an artist or author’s genius, distinctive style and vision, evolved a form of elitism associated with High Modernism and the Modernist artist. This sought to exclude the lower and middle classes who were unable to understand the rarified intellectual principles of the movement. A ‘priesthood’ of scholars and critics bore the responsibility of explaining Modernist tenets (Powell 1998:16). Art criticism, philosophy and science had thus moved beyond the layman’s understanding of the world, which contributed to a culture of uncertainty.

‘The dismal outcome of the utopian ideals that opened the twentieth century’ (Heartney 2001:7) only served to accelerate the awareness of the inherent weaknesses of the project of modernity. The World Wars stand out as periods where a significant shift in human consciousness developed.¹¹ In the following decades (1945 onwards) a new critical paradigm surfaced.¹²

⁹ Modernism was an aesthetic response to the thought systems of modernity, which entailed the rejection of tradition through the negation of traditional aesthetic forms. This movement was shaped by new artistic styles, techniques and ideologies that aimed to explore the position of the artist and art within society. The artists and authors created with the poet Ezra Pound’s notion ‘Make it new’ as part of their doctrine (Powell 1998:13). They discarded challengeable cultural forms from the past and instead created new texts, in search of new truths – unchallengeable truths. A primary characteristic of Modernism was a belief in the autonomy of the arts, involving an active attempt by the artist to isolate the creative process, agency and form from ideology, in order to focus entirely on the aesthetic medium itself. In each sphere of the arts – painting, writing, architecture, and music – the aim was to experiment exclusively within *that* aesthetic medium. This resulted in an obsession with form and a break with representation and Realist modes. The artist was now free to explore purely aesthetic goals. This preoccupation with form, technique and new ‘pure’ languages resulted in the production of highly self-referential work – work about itself and its own artistic form – rather than commentary on the social world and the artist’s perception of it. The value of Modernist art rested on innovation and purism of form, but also reflected modernity’s pursuit of cultural differentiation, with various disciplines following their own inherent logic. Powell discusses the way in which each discipline ‘tried to represent the eternal’, the purest aspects of all phenomena and how aesthetics tried to fill the central voids of the era (1998:11-16).

¹⁰ During the Modernist period artists were forced to sell their work within the open market system. This led to an internal struggle within Modernism – should art be produced to cater for the commercial market or should art continue to strive for aesthetic autonomy?

¹¹ A range of sociocultural and intellectual changes, as well as a ‘dispersal and deterritorialisation of economic production within an increasingly global economy; an erosion of the sovereignty of the nation-state and national politics, a proliferation of new political movements ... a dissolution of the “unity” of society’ (Smart 1992:181-182) all contributed to a change in the temporal climate of the moment. These changes divided Modernism into two different and opposing (yet frequently overlapping) poles: a Formalist Modernism, endeavouring to explore primarily aesthetic concerns, and an avant-garde Modernism, which sought to revolutionise culture through assault on the institution of art, which had become corrupted by the monumental changes within society. However, it is important to realise that the avant-garde artists remained bound within Modernist ideologies, the idea of the visionary artist and the notion that the particular language of specific mediums act as an autonomous bearer of meaning.

¹² ‘Modernism and postmodernism are not separated by an Iron Curtain or Chinese Wall, for history is a palimpsest, and culture is permeable to time past, time present, and time future’ (Rose 1991:48).

With this perspectival shift new thinkers and writers emerged. It was these theorists who began to articulate the changes manifesting in so-called 'postmodern society'.¹³ Before I proceed to the philosophies and theories pertaining to postmodernist discourse, I refer to Stuart Sim to summarise the major changes in thought. Sim (1998:2) provides a summation of a 'cluster of effects' related to postmodernism:

Scepticism about the enlightenment view that reason may rely on a firm founding for deciding between truth and falsehood, a tradition closely bound up with science.

Uncertainty about traditional humanism and ideas of progress.

An absolutely unprecedented development in the mass media ... since 1950.

The weakening of any sense of central authority in favour of a plurality of acceptable ethics and lifestyles.

However, these changes in modes of thought, as Steinar Kvale (1996:19) illustrates in his article *Themes of Postmodernity*, did not 'designate a systematic theory or a comprehensive philosophy, but rather diverse diagnoses and interpretations of the current culture, a depiction of a multitude of interrelated phenomena.'

If we look at Eagleton's understanding of the term 'postmodernism', we begin to see why this term should not be regarded as a 'systematic theory' or a 'comprehensive philosophy':

Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frame works, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of scepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities (1996:vii).

Postmodernism attempts to transcend the modern era's tendency to identify, essentialise and objectify. It therefore follows that it presents a conundrum to define the essential characteristics of

¹³ Although the idea of the postmodern emerged in the decades after World War II, it was not until the 1970s that an 'attempt to thematize the postmodern' (Powell 1998:78) occurred. In America it was Charles Jencks, an architectural critic, who, in his book *The Language of Postmodern Architecture*, first began to theorise the concept of the postmodern (Powell 1998:78). 'Since the 1970's there has been a proliferation of theorising on the subject of postmodernism' (Smart 1992:168). But it was not until the emergence '... of Lyotard's report on the postmodern condition of knowledge that postmodernism and postmodernity have found a prominent place on the European intellectual agenda' (Smart 1992:169). Postmodernism first manifested itself in the artistic trends of the 1960s: Pop Art; Minimalism; Conceptualism and performance. It is sometimes argued that it manifested even earlier in the work of the Dadaists, Duchamp, De Chirico and Picasso (see Heartney 2001:11-12).

postmodernism. However, as Radhakrishnan (cited in Marshall 1992:6) points out, naming also serves a purpose:

The very term 'Post-Modernism' is a necessary misnomer; a misnomer, since it attempts to 'periodize' a break, and necessary, since the language of the break has initially to mention and problematize its immediate antecedent before it commences its own projects.

The term, however, does not need to be periodised as an 'ism' or 'defined chronologically' (Marshall 1992:5). From Eagleton's understanding of the term we can ascertain that postmodernism is not something complete, unified or totalised. Postmodernism should be understood rather as a 'moment in logic than in time'; 'a temporal space'; 'a rupture in our consciousness' (Marshall 1992:5); or as Lyotard describes it, a condition.

1.2 Definitions

To understand some of the central themes and issues pertaining to postmodernism, it is pertinent to turn to the writings of postmodern theorist Jean-Francois Lyotard. In a report entitled *The Postmodern Condition*,¹⁴ Lyotard (cited in Smart 1992:170) states that the term postmodern 'designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts'.

The principal 'transformation' outlined in his report regards 'the way in which forms of knowledge are legitimated' (Smart 1992:170). Lyotard has two major criticisms with regard to modernist ideologies. The first is a critique of the 'totalising claims of reason',¹⁵ or stated differently, the incredulity towards grand or 'metanarratives'. These narratives of 'mythic proportions' claim to be able 'to account for, explain and subordinate all lesser, little, local narratives' (Powell 1998:29). Lyotard proposes that the legitimation of knowledge 'through references to metadiscourses or appeals to grand narratives' (Smart 1992:170) has become problematic in our current cultural climate. Lyotard's other concern regards the 'truth claims' of knowledge, the process whereby knowledge is made unequivocal.¹⁶ Lyotard structures his polemic around the 'growing importance of language in a sociocultural and

¹⁴ A report prepared for the *Conseil des Universites* of the Government of Quebec. In this report Lyotard commented on the changing condition of knowledge 'in the most highly developed societies' (Smart 1992:170). The report surveys the status of science and technology in society. This report was published in 1974, but translated to English from French only in 1986.

¹⁵ 'Lyotard draws on Nietzsche's critique of the totalising claims of reason to argue that this goal is without moral or philosophical grounds, or "legitimation"' (Brooker 1992:139).

¹⁶ Here Lyotard draws upon the early work of the philosopher Wittgenstein. 'Lyotard argues that the criteria regulating the "truth claims" of knowledge derive from discrete, context based "language games" not absolute rules or standards' (Brooker 1992:139).

economic context' that has been dynamised by the 'increasing prominence of information and communication' (Smart 1992:170).¹⁷

Liotard makes a distinction between narrative discourse and scientific discourse. Narrative discourse is seen as self-legitimising. The narrative is legitimised in the telling and, accordingly, the narrator and the society within which the story is narrated are legitimised.¹⁸ Scientific discourse is denotative and cannot legitimise itself. Therefore science relies on narrative to prove itself. The narratives contemporary science rely upon are the metanarratives of the Enlightenment and the discourses of modernity, founded upon the notions of universal reason.¹⁹ The many failings of the modern era proved the insubstantial nature of these grand truths. Consequently, science was forced to legitimate itself and this, in turn, had the result that scientific discourses could no longer be regarded as pure, objective and absolute knowledges.²⁰ With the dissolution of the grand narratives of modernity, postmodern society foregrounds many micronarratives. These narratives seek no legitimisation from grand narratives outside themselves.

Liotard's thesis provided a summation of and a verdict on the Enlightenment project/modernity. This verdict greatly influenced our present understanding of postmodernism and contributed substantially to definitions of this difficult term. Truett (1996:216) summarises these perspectives as follows:

The verdict on the Enlightenment project is that it was a brilliant, ambitious effort, but that its field of vision was limited ... The universe now seems, if not infinite, at least infinitely complex and mysterious. Our eternal truths now appear to be inseparable from the cultures that created them and the languages in which they are stated ... It begins to look like the individual mind is pluralistic ... naturally predisposed to function in many modes.

I have already described the postmodern as 'an awareness of being within a way of thinking' (Marshall 1992:3). This recognition does not allow one to name absolutely the terms of the postmodern condition, to concretise something may only occur from a position outside a moment.²¹ To understand the postmodern means a recognition that there is no 'outside' from which to 'objectively name the present' (Marshall 1992:3). Thus it entails an awareness of being within a language and a

¹⁷ Lyotard critically analyses the past few decades, in which science, computers and technology have increasingly changed the nature of language, linguistic theories and communication. Lyotard discusses how these technological advances have impacted knowledge. He predicts that no knowledge (traditional or contemporary) will survive, unless it is able to be translated into quantities of information, legible by computer technology (Powell 1998: 22-23).

¹⁸ An example of a narrative discourse would be a myth (see Powell 1998:22-33).

¹⁹ Scientific reality was based upon two chief grand narratives, those of the French Enlightenment and the German Knowledge narrative (Powell 1998:29). Examples of grand/master narratives of modernity include the Christian Salvation narrative; the Marxist narrative; the narrative of Emancipation; the narrative of Progress.

²⁰ Instead science sought to legitimise itself through 'performativity' (Powell 1998:31). Rather than search for truths, science is concerned with performing or generating more related research.

²¹ Otherwise one would be subjectively positioning or naming a condition.

particular historical, social, cultural framework. Society and culture have given up on grand truths and now focus on local and provisional truths. Peter Brooker sums up the postmodern perspective in a sentence: 'What you get is what you see from where you stand' (1992:5).

Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* proposes the final delegitimation of metanarratives.²² However, postmodernists unlike Modernists do not try to fill the 'absence' of lost 'presences'. They do not try to create new and fixed centres. Instead contemporary culture celebrates the 'absence' of centres, and allows many new dynamic, local and varied narratives to coincide in the 'absence' of dogma. Instead a 'pluralist methodology' – the principle of 'anything goes' – is adopted. Paul Feyerabend describes this idea in his article *Anything Goes* (1996:197)²³ in which he argues how society and culture have become

... an ever increasing *ocean of mutually incompatible (and perhaps even incommensurable) alternatives*, each single theory, each fairy tale, each myth that is part of the collection forcing the others into greater articulation and all of them contributing, via this process of competition, to the development of our consciousness. Nothing is ever settled, no view can ever be omitted from a comprehensive account.

If 'no view can ever be omitted from a comprehensive account', postmodernity may then be described as 'the age of over-exposure to otherness' (Truett 1996:6). The implication of this 'over-exposure' is that we no longer live '... within the context of a single coherent cultural package' (Truett 1996:5). Rather we are confronted with diverse and contradictory fragments of stories, manifest through various cultural texts – both visual and written.²⁴ Postmodern thought is closely linked to the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy: 'the growing consensus that ideas cannot be understood apart from the language systems that produce them' (Truett 1996:6).²⁵ Thus in order not to perform a selection process, develop a hierarchal system of awareness or participate in any form of domination, a postmodern thinker needs to consider the complexity and indeterminacy of a text. Consideration needs to be taken of the many voices or subjects hidden within the labyrinth of cultural codes. Postmodern

²² It is important to realise that the grand narratives of modernity have not and will not simply cease to exist. Postmodernity rather aims to see them 'profoundly transformed' (Waugh 1992b:9).

²³ It was Lyotard who originally described postmodernism as a movement in which 'anything goes'.

²⁴ Truett (1996:4-5) describes what a 'multistoried world' may look and sound like, projected through an important postmodern medium, the television:

All you have to do is turn on your nearest television set and flip randomly from channel to channel: Listen to the religious prophecies, the political messages, the forecasts of ecological and/or economic doom just a commercial break away from cheerful promises of brighter tomorrows. Notice that with each channel you briefly enter the subculture of another ethnic group, another age level, another profession or interest or lifestyle. Consider the impact of a similar array of messages being beamed to every part of the world – people everywhere being bombarded by the sermons, the commercials, the vivid images of other people living quite different kinds of lives.

²⁵ French philosopher Jacques Derrida is described as a postmodern and post-structuralist thinker who developed theories regarding the deconstruction of texts. He was interested in 'free play' within language and texts. If attempts are made to freeze the play (deconstruction) in texts, discourses will tend towards fixity, institutionalisation, centralisation, totalitarianism and exclusion. Free play within discourses allows for no privileged voice/s and hence no marginal voice/s.

texts are seen as multivalent, simultaneously saying many things, as opposed to univalent modernist discourses. Postmodern texts are described as intertextual, because they are ‘woven from other texts: references, citations and quotations tumbling together in disorientating superabundance’ (Sim 1998:285).²⁶

The multivalence of the postmodern text points to another aspect (one that is frequently criticised) of postmodern culture namely the depth/surface relationship.²⁷ Postmodern culture is often referred to as being ‘all surface and no depth’. Utz Riese (1992:157), in his article *Postmodernism: Symptom, Critique, or Solution to the Crisis of Modernity? An East German Perspective*, describes postmodernism as being characterised by the ‘flatness of its discourses, by the surface structures and the lack of deep structures in its texts ...’ Fredric Jameson²⁸ also believed ‘that what characterises the contemporary period is loss of depth: the belief that there is nothing to uncover only surfaces to inhabit’ (cited in Waugh 1992b:114).²⁹ Jameson’s discussions examine societal changes, for example the economic systems that govern Western culture – so-called ‘consumer capitalism’. This form of capitalism is critically explained by Heartney (2001:15) as

... an economic system that obliterates national and psychological borders, undermines social bonds, and fragments the individual psyche, all in the name of turning active citizens into passive consumers. In the cultural sphere according to Jameson, it has produced a world dominated by the twin conditions of pastiche and schizophrenia.³⁰

²⁶ The concept of ‘intertextuality’ was derived from post-structuralist thought, and signifies:

... that language can be transformed, translated, transferred, but never transcended. Words gain their meaning not by referring to some object present to the mind of the language user but from the neverending play of signification (Sim 1998:285).

Postmodernism fosters an extreme form of intertextuality ‘in which the play of meaning is infinite’ and the ‘limits of interpretation are set only by the boundaries of the imagination’ (Sim 1998: 285). I will discuss the concept of ‘intertextuality’ in greater detail in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

²⁷ I have already made mention of some contrasts – presence/absence; and depth/surface – in order to compare the general characteristics of Modernism with postmodernism. These pairs (and others which appear later in the thesis) have been derived from Ihab Hassan’s schematic table (see Addendum A), which appears in his article *The Culture of Postmodernism* (1985). The table provides guidance to the ‘obvious’ contrasts between Modernism and postmodernism. However, it has been criticised as being a ‘binary analysis’ which post-structuralism and postmodernism should have made obsolete. ‘Also whether this set of contrasts means postmodernism disposes of or radicalises modernism is uncertain’ (Brooker 1992:11-12). I find this table useful in moving towards an understanding of the relationship between Modernism and postmodernism. It illustrates how postmodernism builds itself upon the ideals it disclaims. The pairs I have highlighted are concerned particularly with our contemporary cultural climate and those that may be applied to discussions on literature and illustration – these are discussed at length in Chapters Two and Three. I will not discuss various other aesthetic disciplines (for example painting and architecture) in great detail.

²⁸ A postmodern theorist with a Marxist background, Fredric Jameson discusses his accounts *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). Unlike Lyotard who celebrates the ambivalent nature of postmodern society, Jameson distrusts it (Powell 1998:34-35). I have included Jameson in this section, as I find aspects of his theories relevant to my discussion on the interpretation of collage (see Chapter Three). Another theorist/sociologist Jean Baudrillard broaches the inherent problems of a consumer-based society. However, his discussions on the ‘hyperreal’ nature of postmodern culture and his related ideas on ‘simulation/simulacra’ are not entirely relevant to my consideration of postmodernity (see Sim 1998:193-194 and Rose 1993:217-230).

²⁹ Jameson lamented the loss of historical depth, affective death and symbolic death, see Waugh 1992b.

³⁰ Jameson discusses these ideas in his article *Postmodernism and Consumer Society* (1984). He forms his theories with the intention of explaining ‘the sudden eruption of a new style of painting that borrowed promiscuously from history and

Because it has abandoned centres, has dislocated and fragmented narratives, and included both the global and the local, postmodernism has been described as ‘schizophrenic’ and ‘superficial’. It has become simultaneously everything and nothing. Jameson (cited in Heartney 2001:15) describes this schizophrenic condition as a condition in which ‘... isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers ... fail to link up into any coherent sequence’.³¹ This state does not mean that postmodern cultural texts have nothing to say or are incapable of coherent expression. It is rather, as Lipshitz (2003b:6) describes it, an understanding

... that we are never outside of discourse, that knowledge and representation are caught in an indeterminate (unstable) play of coding and decoding in which signifiers continually summon and displace contexts, visual codes and conventions. Artworks are textual sign systems in which meaning is always ‘already present’, multiple and fragmented, and is activated only through the viewer’s participation in the act of viewing, which is in itself, never stable or complete.³²

Texts comprising many other texts, demanding pluralist, subjective and dynamic readings, secure meaning in an ‘intertextual slippage of signifiers’ (Lipshitz 2003b:7). This play of readings implies that everything is derived from previous discourses; the notion of authenticity and originality is therefore radically interrogated. This form of cultural recycling was seen by Jameson as a ‘failure of the new’, an ‘imprisonment of the past’ (cited in Lipshitz 2003b:7) and ‘a loss of a sense of reality ...’ (Jameson, cited in Easthope 1998:22). The rejection of centres or grand narratives may be termed as the end of history, which allowed for such sentiments as ‘History is dead and everything is permitted’ (Dostoyevsky, cited in Heartney 2001:14). This so-called ‘death of history’ led to the use of various stylistic devices in the creation of contemporary cultural texts.

1.3 Critical Characteristics of Postmodernism

Postmodern stylistic devices can be seen as counteractive to the characteristic tenets of Modernism. Postmodernism maintains links to the earlier aesthetic conventions of Modernism, while concurrently breaking sharply with other tenets. Postmodernists, like avant-garde Modernists, spurn the conventions of realism, mimesis and linear forms of representation. Unlike Modernism, however, postmodernism blurs the boundaries between ‘high’ and ‘low’ cultural forms with an aesthetic of pluralism and populism. Postmodernist artists negate the obsession with innovation, originality and

mythology’ (Heartney 2001:14). Although Jameson’s work focuses largely on the aesthetic tradition, his theories may be applied in general to the condition of postmodernity in various disciplines.

³¹ Jameson is influenced by the ideas of post-structuralist psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

³² Lipshitz’s citation speaks of ‘artworks’ and ‘viewing’. For the purposes of this discussion I shall replace the term ‘artworks’ with ‘texts’ and ‘viewing’ with ‘reading’. ‘In postmodern thought, “text” refers not only to written materials but also to painting, architecture, information systems and to all attempts at representation, whatever form this may take’ (Sim 1998:370). All of these different texts may be read and interpreted in diverse ways.

authoritative authorship, and advocate tradition, quotation and audience participation, and are less concerned with deep significant meaning and are thus more surface oriented.³³ In the following subsection, I discuss stylistic devices used within contemporary cultural texts to politicise the nature of knowledge, language and narrative and so enhance the above-mentioned postmodernist antagonisms.

1.3.1 Parody, Pastiche, Irony, Allegory and the Concept of 'History' and the Past

Parody and pastiche are two devices often used within this context of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity. Both are forms of imitation or repetition and thus question the Modernist grand narratives of originality and authenticity.³⁴

The concept of 'reflexivity' is crucial to the understanding of these devices. Postmodern culture is often described as being reflexive or self-referential. Lipshitz (2003a:private correspondence) explains this predilection:

To be reflexive in postmodernism suggests that the representation reveals the traces of its production and so declares itself a construct of multiple or interrelated meanings (strictly speaking, an ever-generating chain of signifiers, constrained or anchored only by its framing context).³⁵

Postmodern parody may be described as a form of 'repetition with critical distance' (Hutcheon, cited in Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence). The parodied text aims to highlight its differences from, rather than similarities to its source text. The creation of new meaning is achieved by the 'parodic relocation' (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence) of the new text. 'It is in this change ... through formal alteration as well as contextual ... that the original meaning is altered, and the viewer is drawn to this alteration ... as the site of signification (the production of meaning) (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence). Pastiche, instead '... emphasises the similarities to its source text rather than its differences...' and does not '... sufficiently alter the usage of its quotation to generate an ironic

³³ It is imperative to realise, however, that roughly two postmodern strains exist within the postmodern condition: a playful, ironic and eclectic postmodernism and a more critical postmodernism. The latter manifests, through deconstructionist theories and the demystification of meaning, resulting in an embracing of intertextuality and the social construction of meaning. This strain of postmodernism is much influenced by the avant-garde element of Modernism (see Foster 1985). This more critical form of postmodernism is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, with regard to the changes evident in literary theory and narrative.

³⁴ 'Despite its more recent history and differences from parody, pastiche has also been used as a synonym for parody.... Pastiche, however, is not only a much more recent term than parody, but differs from the latter in describing a more neutral practice of compilation which is neither necessarily critical of its sources, nor necessarily comic'(Rose 1993:72). It is important to recognise that parody and especially pastiche serving as '... postmodern strategies of representation ... purposefully avoids set definitions because of the general tendency to disavow or refuse fixity or certainty of meaning' (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence).

³⁵ 'Reflexivity or self-referentiality can refer to the means of representation (collage, for example, becomes the trace of the process of its making and active quotation, and thereby formally and visually creates an unstable network of possible sources and expanding meanings). It also refers to the way in which those meanings set up a dialogue across the conventionalised or dominant meanings of a signifier' (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence). See also Hutcheon (1988:124-140).

opening out of meaning' (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence).³⁶ For this reason, Jameson closely identifies pastiche with the postmodern – 'the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture' (Jameson 1991:17-18).³⁷ Pastiche in the context of postmodernity may be described as the quotation, imitation and reference to and from the past. However, postmodern pastiche's allusion to the past is a form of 'allusive and elusive plagiarism' (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence) merely using its referent to speak through and to speak with.

It is material here to consider postmodernism's relationship with Modernism. Modernism was concerned with experimentation, innovation, originality and purity of form. Postmodernism rejects this Modernist imperative and thus returns 'to the use of older styles and artistic methods' and encourages 'a dialogue between past and present' (Sim 1998:339-340). Postmodern pastiche subverts Modernist tenets by returning to tradition, the vernacular, and the reference. Postmodern pastiche is a self-conscious form of historicism that undermines the authority of the author and denies the authenticity of the artifact. 'Such reappropriation and recontextualisation of older forms and styles, often referred to as retro, has become a hallmark of the postmodern aesthetic ...' (Sim 1998:350).

Another stylistic device closely associated with the postmodern moment is that of irony. If postmodernism is understood not as a break with modernity or the past, but as Marshall describes it 'a

³⁶ Pastiche also '... involves the reproduction of both the form and the content of a work, and such ... will be seen to differ from parody ... defined ... as the imitation of the form of a work involving a change to its content'(Rose 1993:73).

³⁷ If one follows Jameson's ideas on the loss of 'historical reality', parody is replaced by pastiche. The formation of a 'field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm'(Easthope 1998:22) has resulted in this replacement:

Whereas formerly parody imitated another style with the firm intention of mocking, satirizing or at least making a judgement on it, today pastiche reproduces formal features for the pleasure of citing them, in a practice of 'blank irony'. Increasingly, representation of the past ignores historical specificity and renders only a sense of the pastness of the past (Easthope 1998:22).

Contemporary culture's understanding of pastiche is most often derived from the writings of Jameson. Hence, pastiche is often regarded negatively, congruent with the descriptions of postmodern culture as 'superficial' and 'depthless'. However, pastiche is a complex term, with a complicated history. Debating the various critical changes pastiche has undergone during the last couple of centuries is beyond the scope of this article. However, a condensed comprehension of these changes will aid in understanding the term's position in contemporary theory. I have thus made use of Rose's summary, describing the different aspects of this term through time. Rose compiled this summary for her more recent book, *The Post-modern and the Post-industrial* (1991:232), therefore, references are made to her past writings:

... in *Parody/Metafiction* the term pastiche, when applied to works of art, has been described as deriving from the term *pasticcio analogen* and as the 'compilation of motives from several works'. In French criticism it has been used as a synonym for parody, but in English-language texts it has also sometimes been used to refer to a form of 'counterfeit'. Confusing these different meanings of pastiche, or adding value judgements to the description of its functions, has also led to descriptions of pastiche in art and architecture as forgeries or fakes ... But there's nothing 'fake' about building in an established tradition, or in trying to revive one. Further ... it should also be noted that pastiche understood as a compilation of artistic or architectural elements may be found in several modern and *pre-modern* periods of both art and architecture, and *contra* Jameson, in both satiric works of art and in earlier architecture, while Jencks himself (in his *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, p.128) has also distinguished between the 'vague pastiche', or 'weak eclecticism'. of some 'pre-post-modern' works and the strong eclecticism of what he describes as 'Post-Modern' architecture. As is the case with parody, pastiche may in general be described as a device which has been used for several different purposes in a number of different periods by a variety of artists and architects, and a post-modern use of it one which uses it for some specifically defined post-modern purpose such as the 'dual-coding' of a modern style or work of art with another.

It is the 'dual-coding' or intertextual nature of pastiche that I shall discuss in the following chapter.

rupture in our consciousness', the function of irony in contemporary texts may be better understood. Eco (1996:32) states that the 'postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognising the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence ...' Consequently, the past will continuously be revisited. Hutcheon (cited in Marshall 1992:130) describes how postmodernism 'signals its dependence by its use of the canon, but reveals its rebellion through its ironic abuse of it'. Employing the infinite new perspectives postmodernity offers, the past cannot be celebrated innocently or represented objectively. Instead past styles, forms and conventions are treated with irony. The postmodern mind is aware of its immanence in the culture it describes, but instead of attempting to master this culture, a form of acceptance prevails.

Postmodernist discourse deals extensively with the concept of 'history' and the past, largely because postmodernism is defined through its relationship with the past. The postmodern critique of history (as a grand narrative) involves the following consideration:

Representations are not simply the products of an age; they are themselves productive, engaging with and often subsequently altering the forces that brought them into being. Nor is history the stable and incontrovertible backdrop to the work of literature assumed by the monological historical scholarship (Sim 1998:263).

Postmodern modes of representation and understanding allow one to read history 'not simply as neutral transcriptions of reality', but rather history, the past, is available to us 'in "textual traces", with all the concomitant rhetorical strategies which characterize textuality'(Sim 1998:263).³⁸ The postmodernist's copious recycling of the past recognises that no language may ever escape a historically composed web of intertextuality. Such claims as 'History is dead and everything is permitted' allows the contemporary to recycle the past with subjective, imaginative authorship, simultaneously exhibiting a self-conscious propensity for conventionality, derivativeness and artificiality. This notion also allows for the reader's subjective interpretation of various texts, subverting Modernist Realist notions that representations are objective and simple.³⁹

³⁸ 'History becomes a plurality of "islands of discourse", a series of metaphors which cannot be detached from the institutionally produced languages which we bring to bear on it. Alternatively, history is a network of agonistic language games where the criterion for success is performance not truth. The implication of this is that truth cannot be separated from fiction...' (Waugh 1992b:6). I will be dealing with this implication in Chapter Two – 'metafiction' and 'historiographic metafiction'.

³⁹ Postmodernism's reevaluation of the past has given rise to such discourses as postcolonialism and feminism. This is a result of the evident perspectival shift between Modernism and postmodernism, and structuralism and post-structuralism (see theorists: Roland Barthes; Michel Foucault; Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida).

The postmodern negotiation of the past has been described as an ‘allegorical impulse’.⁴⁰ Walter Benjamin (cited in Owens 1984:203) stated in his article *Theses on the Philosophy of History* that ‘[e]very image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.’ Allegory functions as having a ‘conviction of the remoteness of the past, and a desire to redeem it for the present’ (Owens 1984: 203).⁴¹ In postmodern texts allegory occurs when one text is doubled by another – ‘one text is *read through* another’ (Owens 1984:204). Hence, allegory within a postmodern context may be said to function as a palimpsest.⁴² However, in postmodernism allegory does not restore the original meaning of the text or quotation. Instead it adds multiple other meanings.⁴³ It is inconsequential how ‘fragmentary, intermittent or chaotic’ (Owens 1984:204-205) the relationship between these texts may be; the impetus is rather on a series of recordings that may be awarded a critical and oppositional tone.

Hence, the postmodern moment, by resisting innovation, originality, authenticity and the autonomous stature of the author, employs parody, pastiche and eclecticism to extract contemporary texts from the past. The postmodern author/artist functions as a *bricoleur*, combining fragments from a multitude of sources. Rather than inventing new materials and delving into the inherent complexities of this collage of collected texts, the postmodern author/artist recycles and parodies them. Subverting the concepts of singular, significant creation, the collected sources are endlessly reproduced in a complex intertextual network. The variety of different and conflicting texts woven into this intertextual network highlights the postmodernist resistance to deep underlying structure, continuity and teleological relations. Instead a proliferation and celebration of disorder, discontinuity, indeterminacy, chance and play come into the arrangement of contemporary texts.

1.3.2 ‘Reading’ and ‘Writing’ the Postmodern Text

Since it exists as a construction of a multitude of texts from a multitude of sources, the postmodern text is multiperspectival, purporting that no single perspective, theory or aesthetic frame can elucidate the complexity of the world or the *text*. Writing or reading a text is subjectively dependent upon the

⁴⁰ I have taken this term from Craig Owen’s article entitled *The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism* (1984). ‘Allegory is sometimes used as a catch-all term for intertextual reference making in postmodernism’ (Lipshitz 2003b:3). Postmodern culture, with its allusions to multiple readings and meanings, is hence described as displaying an impulse towards the allegorical. In my understanding of the compositional structures underlying postmodern cultural artifacts, I categorise the stylistic devices of pastiche; parody; irony; eclecticism; appropriation; intertextuality, all as manifestations of postmodernism’s ‘allegorical impulse’. I will discuss allegory again in Chapter Two and Chapter Three with regards to allegory in literature and collage respectively.

⁴¹ The use of allegory is not restricted to postmodern texts. Allegory as a stylistic device may be traced in many cultural and artistic movements throughout history (the past), for example in history painting, see Owens 1998:210.

⁴² A palimpsest may be described as a manuscript in which an original text has been removed in order to create space for new writing; a suggestion of the original text is always present. The concept of the palimpsest, in both literature and the visual arts, is discussed in the following chapters.

⁴³ Allegory may be viewed as a ‘... parallel strategy to parody but without its specific reliance on irony for effect and affect ... Allegory ... veils rather than changes and adds dimension through its indirect pointers or allusions to multiple meanings’ (Lipshitz 2003b:3).

many authors/readers of a text. Hence, the stylistic devices implemented to create significance within a text are not fixed by the writer or creator of a postmodern text, but the reader or interpreter's perspective also gains import.

Postmodernity is associated with Roland Barthes'⁴⁴ concept of the 'death of the author'.⁴⁵ This notion announced 'the end of the author as an authority figure responsible for the meaning of his or her work' (Sim 1998:187). Instead the balance of power is shifted towards the reader. In keeping with Enlightenment concepts of subjectivity, modernity assigned the author of a text authority.⁴⁶ Consequently, reading, learning and interpretation were considered a passive and secondary process. The postmodernist and post-structuralist's death of authority acknowledged that readers are active and creative in the process of interpretation. In a postmodern climate the reader becomes 'fully engaged in the production of textural meaning' (Sim 1998:221). Consequently, a postmodern text is never written in full or absolutely read or interpreted. There is no closure, but an eternal play of signification.

Postmodern culture embraces the condition of 'flexible accumulation' (Powell 1998:122)⁴⁷ Postmodern artifacts are a reflection of a condition dominated by 'ephemerality, collage and fragmentation' (Powell 1998:122). This contemporary climate is a result of changes in space and time relationships; globalism; altered power relations; shifting world capital; a new technological age; electronic media and a continually expanding consumer-based culture.⁴⁸ These changes resulted in a displacement of differences:

... the Other increasingly encroaches upon what had once been our private space ... postmodern thought has to do with this encroachment of the Other – whether the Other is Other individuals, Other groups, Other species, Other races, the Other of the 'male', the Other of 'the West'... the

⁴⁴ Roland Barthes (1915-80) was a cultural critic. 'In his successive phases in his career Roland Barthes appears before us as the Marxist literary critic ... a semiologist ... a structuralist ... and as a playful poststructuralist, celebrating the quasisexual pleasures of the text' (see Sim 1998:191-193).

⁴⁵ Sim (1998:187) states that from 'structuralism through to postmodernism, there has been a downgrading of the author's reputation in continental philosophical thought, particularly in France'.

⁴⁶ 'Modernity encouraged the notion of the entrepreneurial subject exploiting the world of nature and bringing it under his ... domination. Rights and privileges could be ascribed to the subject, whose development and self-realization came to be regarded as a central objective ... of Western culture' (Sim 1998:366). This idea of the modern subject/author as a '... rational, unified, powerful and controlling being ...' (Sim 1998:366) has since been challenged. Postmodernism rejects '... the concept of the individual, or "subject", that has prevailed in Western thought for the last few centuries' (Sim 1998:366). For Levi-Strauss (death of man); Barthes (death of the author); Foucault; post-structuralists and postmodernists the subject/author is instead seen as '... a fragmented being who has no essential core of identity, and is to be regarded as a process in a continual state of dissolution rather than a fixed identity or self that endures unchanged over time'(Sim 1998:367).

⁴⁷ Opposed to modernity's condition of 'fixed accumulation'.

⁴⁸ 'What we think of as the "postmodern condition" speaks to a complex conjuncture of conditions. For example it encompasses the vestigial personal revolutions in self-liberation and communal participation initiated by the countercultural movements of the sixties *just as* it entails the dramatic, postwar restructuring of capitalism in the West and in the multinational global economy; it involves the everyday effects of the new media and communication technology *as well as* the great redistribution of power, population, and wealth that has accompanied the new structures of commodity production'(Ross, cited in Marshall 1992:8-9).

Other of the conscious mind, the Other of the rational mind, the Other of modernism, the Other of 'ourselves' or in 'ourselves' (Powell 1998:150).

Contemporary culture is thus dominated by heterogeneity, polyvocality and polysemy, achieved through double-coding in postmodern texts.⁴⁹ I have adopted the term 'double-coding' to describe a postmodern cultural text's ability to neither 'repudiate nor slavishly imitate' (Sim 1998:233) history. Instead, contemporary texts present us with 'traditional' conventions that have been worked upon on a number of levels.⁵⁰ This results in a layering of meanings and perspectives, which is achieved by looking backward to the past and sideways to local cultures:

Postmodern art or postmodern thought may now be seen as a symptom of wider cultural changes: either complicit with what is viewed as a change for the worst, or a possible mode of liberation from or insight into the blindnesses of modernity and Modernism (Waugh 1992b:3).

Waugh broaches the notion that the postmodern may be understood 'as a change for the worst' – 'as a term to designate the cultural epoch through which we are living (and largely viewed in apocalyptic terms)' – or as a liberation through the critique of and opposition to Modernism. I acknowledge two distinct veins within postmodern discourse – a highly historicist postmodernism and a more critical postmodernism – both of which work together to interrogate the state of contemporary actuality. The historicist form of postmodernism revels in playing with language, images, forms and structures appropriated from the past (history). This play takes the form of linguistic and formal subversion in the guise of various stylistic devices used in the process of writing or reading. The more overtly political form of postmodernist discourse questions and deconstructs, rather than ingenuously exploits past cultural artifacts. Both of these forms of postmodernism are self-reflexive (self-referential), one on a more formal level, the other involving political issues in society. It is ultimately the audience, however, who maps the effects of the text. The reader who becomes the author destabilizes a text, simultaneously decoding and encoding the text according to their subjective ideologies.

1.4 Conclusion

Waugh speaks of the postmodern as a 'symptom of wider cultural changes', because any attempt '... to "map" the postmodern will encounter endless contradictions' (Waugh 1992b:9). In my research I have found many books and articles purporting to define the postmodern, but as Marshall (1992:3) points

⁴⁹ It was Charles Jencks who first used the term 'double-coding' with reference to architecture – 'where a deliberate attempt is made to appeal to both specialists and the general public by mixing together old and new architectural styles in one building' (Sim 1998:350). Later Jencks extended his theory to include other cultural disciplines – painting and fiction writing. Hal Foster (1985) also speaks of 'recodings', where by old cultural forms are recontextualised and thus are rewritten and reinterpreted.

⁵⁰ Defying accusations of postmodernism's superficial, depthless nature.

out 'you will never find total agreement, but you will find moments where the definitions bump into and nod at one another.' McHale (1992:1) defines one of postmodernism's characteristics as 'a failure to satisfy the criteria of objecthood', and that postmodernism 'exists discursively, in the discourses we produce about it'. Thus if one attempts a definition of the postmodern, this definition needs to be articulated in the 'mode of solidarity' (McHale 1992:25). The resultant definition cannot and should not assume the role of a 'truth'. Particularly if one understands postmodernism as Eagleton (1996:viii) describes it: '... a portmanteau phenomenon that anything you assert of one piece of it is almost bound to be untrue of another'. Eagleton (1996:21) also points out:

If postmodernism covers everything from punk rock to the death of metanarrative, fanzines to Foucault, then it is difficult to see how any single explanatory scheme could do justice to such a bizarrely heterogeneous entity.⁵¹

Although the postmodern existence has been questioned by various theorists and cultural critics,⁵² I support Marshall's (1992:2) proposition:

That many contemporary artists ... and theorists share a common discursive space in which these concerns are raised, and that these concerns make enough sense to us today for us to formulate them, is one indication of the postmodern moment ...⁵³

The postmodern moment is very often viewed negatively – postmodern thought is often seen as '... simply nihilistic, having no purpose other than to undermine all world views, derail all quests for common ground ...'(Truett 1996:215). But as Truett (1996:215) later states, it is much more than that: 'It is an attempt to map out a much larger landscape of the mind ... and to locate a deeper commonality.' Postmodernism is thus involved in both the process of construction and deconstruction.⁵⁴ Jencks (1987:11) proposes that 'it entails a return to the past as much as a movement forward'.

⁵¹ It is important to understand that the postmodern involves social; political and cultural life; aesthetics; architecture; communications; science; epistemology; morality and ethics, among other divisions (see Smart 1992). Consequently there are 'many Postmodernisms, so must there be a variety of theoretical precursors and historical trajectories' (Waugh 1992b:1).

⁵² Questions are raised such as: Does postmodernism exist? Has there been a break with modernity/Modernism, or are we still in a condition of Late Modernism rather than postmodernity? See Waugh for more discussion on these debates.

⁵³ Postmodernism is also viewed as a transitional period between the end of the modern age and something new, which is still developing. See Vaclav Havel (1996:208)

The distinguishing features of such transitional periods are a mixing and blending of cultures, and a plurality or parallelism of intellectual and spiritual worlds. These are periods when all consistent value systems collapse, when cultures distant in time and space are discovered or rediscovered. They are periods when there is a tendency to quote, to imitate and to amplify, rather than to state with authority or integrate. New meaning is gradually born from the encounter, or the intersection, of many different elements.

Havel gives examples of such periods in history: the Hellenistic period and the Renaissance (Havel 1996:209).

⁵⁴ Vattimo (cited in Smart 1992:179) describes the postmodern as being both 'something new in relation to the modern, but also ... a dissolution of the category of the new'.

This discussion of postmodernism provides a foundation for my discussion of changes in the use and conception of narrative, as a result of postmodern culture's questioning of Knowledge and knowledge systems. The textual form that most coherently reflects the changes manifest within contemporary culture, including its processes of construction and deconstruction, is the postmodern novel. But it must be noted that I am not highlighting postmodern fictional writing at the expense of other 'typical' postmodern mediums, for example the television or computer. However, I do support the notion that the subversion of narrative conventions readers were exposed to in early postmodern novels aided their understanding of later postmodern texts.⁵⁵ Postmodern fiction, as a component of contemporary postmodern culture, is influenced by post-structuralist discourse and questions the integrity of narrative's ability to *re-present* and self-legitimate. Most significant, however, is the way postmodern novels challenge their readers to become part of the process of textual signification. The following chapter will exemplify changes within literary narrative conventions and the authority afforded the written text's audience. I will argue that these shifts have resulted in the constructive re-emergence of the illustrator and illustration. The role of the illustrator as author, employing such characteristically postmodern media as collage, to visualise the fractured narratives of contemporary culture will be discussed in the third and final chapter of the thesis.

⁵⁵ See Cobby (2001:201-228). This section (*In the End: The Beginning*) deals exclusively with the impact literary changes in narrative have had on later communication models.

Chapter Two

Towards a Theory of Postmodern Narrative in Fiction

Chapter One provided a broad ‘definition’ of postmodernity which serves as a framework within which to situate my discussion of the postmodern novel. In this chapter I consider themes pertinent to contemporary literary narratives. To achieve this, I needed to make use of narratology (narrative theory/narrativity), a discipline developed by literary critics.⁵⁶ While Chapter One illustrated various paradigm shifts in Western society, academic discourse and culture at large, this discussion focuses on what narrative theory proposes about the postmodern novel. This consideration of postmodern fiction, in turn, provides the basis for a discussion of narrative and aesthetic devices adopted in postmodern (literary) illustration in artist’s books in Chapter Three. The centrality of narrative is best described as follows:

... narrative is ubiquitous in the contemporary world, in fact so common place that it would be difficult to think about ideological issues and cultural forms without encountering it ... culture not only contains narratives but is contained by narrative in the sense that the idea of culture, either in general or in particular, is a narrative (Currie 1998:96).

The apprehension of issues pertinent to postmodernist thought and discourse is fundamental to the understanding of the literary tendencies that emanated from this climate. Postmodern fiction, however, should not simply be regarded as the conscious product of the postmodern period. Just as there was

⁵⁶ ‘Narratology is the theory and systematic study of narrative. It has been with us in one form or another throughout the twentieth century, and it has evolved into one of the most tangible, coherent and precise areas of expertise in literary and cultural studies. It began as a science of narrative form and structure, acquired a formidable dominance as an approach to literary narrative, overshadowed historical perspective for several decades and then, somewhere in the middle 1980s, ran into problems. After years of protest from the historicist camps and after two decades of assault from poststructuralists on its scientific orientation and authority, people started to declare the death of narratology’ (Currie1998:1). Andrew Gibson (1996:237) describes narratology as a ‘[d]iscipline which draws attention to the building blocks of narrative, exploring various combinations that can appear in narrative texts and the devices that readers come to learn and accept ... Although narratological studies proliferated after the 1960’s, narratology can also be seen as a continuation of work by analysts involved in structuralism and the structural study of narrative and myth ...’ There are many debates concerning the merits/pitfalls of narratology. Paul Copley (2001: 217) describes narratology as ‘... a discipline which provides crucial technical tools for narrative analysis’. However, narratology has also been criticised for its limited compass. Fludernik (cited in Copley 2001:217) suggests that narratology may have been ‘insufficiently “holistic”’. Gibson (1996:5) believes narratology’s strength lies in its structuralist roots, but its weaknesses ‘... include an overly geometric schematisation of texts, a drive to universalise and essentialise the structural phenomena supposedly uncovered ...’ in narratives. I have found aspects of narratological discourse appropriate, both to this thesis and to various contemporary cultural texts. Hence, I have adopted Currie’s (1998:1) viewpoint that there has been no death of narratology. Alternatively, this discipline has seen a ‘... transition from the formalist and structuralist narratologies of the recent past’. Currie (1998:2) describes three principles ‘... that can be used to summarise the transition in contemporary naratology ...’ – diversification, deconstruction and politicisation (see Currie 1998:1-14). I dissent, however, from Currie’s lasting use of the term ‘narratology’ (the suffix ‘-ology’ alluding to scientific discourse). ‘Studies before 1987 often use the word “narratology” in the title ... They are abstract grammars which declare their allegiance to linguistics at every turn ...’ I prefer the terms ‘narrative theory’ or ‘narrativity’, associated with ‘...less abstract, less scientific and more politically engaged’ (Currie 1998:6) texts. Often this type of text declares that narrative is everywhere – ‘... that it is a mode of thinking and being, that is not confined to literature’ (Currie 1998:6).

never a solid break between Modernism and postmodernism, there is no clear margin between Modernist and postmodernist fiction, as Michael Berube (2000:2) contends:

... every attempt to define postmodernist fiction in stylistic terms – as a form of writing that defeats readers' expectations of coherence, as experimental narrative that plays with generic conventions, as fiction that dwells on ambiguity and uncertainty – winds up being a definition of modernist fiction as well.

Postmodernist writing does not contain some single defining characteristic that differentiates it from a single defining characteristic of Modernist writing.⁵⁷ Brenda Marshall (1992:126) states, that '... no description can be exact, and it is precisely the nature of postmodern fiction ...' as a component of postmodernism '... to defy limits and to refuse description'.⁵⁸ Therefore, I cannot concretise the notion of postmodern fiction. The following comprises an abbreviated list of the conventions most commonly cited as characteristics of postmodern fiction, made apparent through the use of metafictional devices: an over-obtrusive, visibly inventing narrator; explicit dramatisation of the reader; over-systematised or overtly arbitrarily arranged structural devices; total breakdown of temporal and spatial organisation of narrative; infinite regress; dehumanisation of character; parodic doubles; self-reflexive images; critical discussions of a story within the story; continuous undermining of specific fictional conventions; explicit parody of previous texts whether literary or non-literary (Waugh 1984:21-61).⁵⁹ I have listed

⁵⁷ I am not going to discuss Modernist novels in detail. But a broad summary of general characteristics, presented here, will aid in elucidating the ensuing chapter. Niall Lucy (1997:18), in his book *Postmodern Literary Theory*, gives a brief summation of the attributes of Modernist literature:

Modernist literature is characterised by a loss of faith in human sensibility, which it portrayed as having been destroyed by industrialized mass culture ... generally, the typical features of the modernist literary text are its multiple points of view, discontinuous narrative, fragmentary structure, generic hybridity and absence of moral (or authorial) centre. Together these features, these particular formalist aspects of the text, trope a world of abject alienation ...

Modernist literature is also closely associated with the projects of psychoanalysis (see Lucy 1997:18-20). By citing this list of the general tendencies found in Modernist writings, I am not suggesting that Modernism 'should be understood as perfectly stable, internally consistent and homogenous' (Lucy 1997:19). (Such periodisation of cultural history is always problematic.) Numerous of the above-cited traits may sound characteristically postmodern, and are still attributed to postmodern writings. However, these attributes manifest in different forms or guises within contemporary literature, as shall be discussed in the following pages. These traits also function on very different levels within Modernism and postmodernism respectively. Changes in the narrative conventions of Modernist texts aim to raise ontological questions. Postmodern narrative subversions aim to raise epistemological and hermeneutical questions.

⁵⁸ Marshall (1992:16) does, however, contend that '... although fiction and theory within the postmodern moment use widely varying narrative strategies, they share the same discursive space. That is, they are often saying the same thing about and within the postmodern moment.'

⁵⁹ During my research on the postmodern novel, it occurred to me that there are two vantage points from which to access, read and delineate these particular texts. On one level postmodern fiction may be 'distinguished' by the linguistic devices used and/or by the physicality of the text. For example, what literary devices (metaphor, pastiche, allegory) are used and in what context? How have the conventions of narrative been subverted? How have the accepted concepts of plot and story been defeated? Is the text metafictional/self-referential/metadiscursive? How does the physical text appear visually? Has the text been broken or excessively fractured? Is there significant typographic play and manipulation? On another level the content of the text may be an indication of its postmodern quintessence. For example, does the novel question various modernist ideologies? Are the various debates surrounding the concept of language and representation broached? Does the text highlight the plight of the repressed 'Other'? Does the novel question Truth and Reality? Finally, does the text raise questions without prescribing final answers? Postmodern fiction may use various literary devices to raise these issues and questions, and illustrate the futility of legitimated solutions, or the absence thereof. However, in this thesis I shall be placing more emphasis on the literary devices used within postmodern texts, opposed to the hierarchies and grand narratives they aim to subvert. (For further reading on the political content of the postmodern novel, see Lin 1996:49-81). These two variant

only the conventions pertinent to my discussion and elements that appear similarly within the conventions of collage. It will become apparent that the conventions reflected in these fictional texts are reflective of contemporary culture at large. Currie (1998:68) reasons, 'Like a word or a person, no narrative is ever an island.' Postmodern novels are not consciously formulated with particular tenets in mind, but they do inadvertently articulate the climate of our times. Consequently postmodernist fictitious works '... are not really novels which contemplate *themselves* so much as novels which contemplate the logic and the ideology of narrative in the act of construing the world'(Currie 1998:68).⁶⁰ On the basis of the postmodern novel's propensity to deconstruct narrative and its conventions, I have moved towards a theory of postmodern narrative in fiction.

To understand the functioning of literary or narrative theory in the postmodern context, it is necessary to briefly consider the transition from structuralist to post-structuralist narratologies. Structuralism, in its most basic form, may be regarded as the understanding of '... narrative in which the overall "structure" of a narrative is thought to bear the fundamental meaning' (Cobley 2001:243).⁶¹ Once this 'structure' is identified, it may be considered a 'grammar', capable of generating new meanings or narratives.⁶² De Saussure also contended that language was composed of various signs which existed in two separate but related components: a signifier (word) and a signified (concept), 'which combined, in an act of mental understanding, to form the sign' (Sim 1998:4). No concrete relationship between the signifier/word and the signified/object named existed.⁶³ De Saussure admitted the relationship was arbitrary, but convention ensured that it remained constant: 'There was at the very least a relative stability to language and the production of meaning, and language was to be seen as a system of signs

projects within the postmodern novel relate to my previous discussion on a historicist postmodernism versus a more critical form of postmodern culture.

⁶⁰ Postmodernism made its initial appearance in cultural artifacts, like the novel, and only later in criticism and social theory as a 'definitive' movement. Generally changes in society and culture are first explored phenomenologically followed by a reflexivity in theory. Postmodernism, however, illustrates a dynamic intimacy between culture and theory, where developments in cultural artifacts influence theoretical discourse and where postmodern theory is directly illustrated within the arts. This shall become clear as the thesis progresses.

⁶¹ 'Structuralism takes its cue from the linguistic theories of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who revolutionised the study of linguistics in his posthumously published book, *Course in General Linguistics* (1916). De Saussure's major point about language is that it was above all else a system: a system with rules and regulations (or internal grammar) that governed how the various elements of language operated' (Sim 1998:4).

⁶² Jonathan Culler (1982:21) describes how structuralism and its 'categories and methods of linguistics, whether applied directly to the language of literature or used as the model for a poetics, enable critics to focus not on the meaning of a work and its implications or value but on the structures that produce meaning. Even when linguistics is explicitly enlisted in the service of interpretation, the fundamental orientation of the discipline, which does not devise new interpretations for sentences but attempts to describe the system of norms that determine the form and meaning of linguistic sequences, works to focus attention on structures and to identify meaning and reference not as the source or truth of a work but as effects of the play of language.'

⁶³ This concept of the sign was adopted by structuralists, and used to illustrate how literary genres were made up of signs (narrative conventions), signalling readers to respond in a specific manner (Sim 1998:358). No mention is made in this system of the 'referent' or the 'real' – the actual thing in the world. Instead, the concept of the thing or object is regarded as the referent. 'Thus, structuralism questions the commonplace idea that language has a natural connection to things "out there"' (Heartney 2001:9). Structuralism deduces that meaning in language is internal, resulting from an interplay between signifiers and signifieds.

which induced a predictable response on the part of the linguistic community' (Sim 1998:4).⁶⁴ Within structuralist thought, not only language was considered to be based upon a fundamental grammar. Society, culture and their various facets and components were all believed to exist as a result of fixed, deep, underlying structures. Sim (1998:4-5) describes this:

The linguistic model set up by Saussure formed the basis of structuralist analysis, which applied it to systems in general, making the assumption that every system had an internal grammar that governed its operations. The point of structuralist analysis was to uncover that grammar, whether the system in question was tribal myth, the advertising industry, or the world of literature or fashion.

Structuralists believed that these structures organised the world into a mass of interwoven systems:

Structuralism became an exercise in classification whose goal was the comprehensive mapping of all systems. In principle at least, the world was completely knowable through the analysis of its systems and their grammars (Sim 1998: 342).⁶⁵

It was structuralism's "unshakeable faith" in thought and the "promise of a rational ordering" (Culler 1982:24) that led to much criticism of its tenets.⁶⁶ Aspects of criticism against structuralism – projects now deemed post-structuralist – 'such as critiques of the sign, or representation, and of the subject, were manifestly already under way in the structuralist writings of the 1960s' (Culler 1982:25).⁶⁷ Post-

⁶⁴ 'Saussure questioned the basis of logocentrism by positing meaning as arbitrary and as determined by "difference" rather than as essential, invariable, self-identical' (Marshall 1992:21). Another aspect of De Saussure's thesis, his concept of 'difference', helped to formulate both structuralist and post-structuralist discourses. Marshall (1992:24) explains this concept:

Saussure would say that we can never think an 'original' sign: since meaning is determined by difference, every sign has to have something that is different from it in order to come to be, in order to make sense.

Language was previously understood as a medium which described a pre-existing reality. De Saussure proposed that in language 'a sign generates its meaning not by pointing to an entity in the world, but rather by pointing to other words in the language system which it is not ...' (Currie 1998:35). For example, the meaning of the sign 'hot' is defined by its relation to the sign 'cold', as 'not hot'. Thus:

... reference in language was not properly understood as transparency to an underlying reality, but was an effect of difference: reference was a function of language, generated by language, meaning that "reality" was an effect actively generated by language rather than a pre-existing state passively reflected by signs (Currie 1998:35).

⁶⁵ A correlation may be drawn here between structuralist and Modernist discourses. Structuralism strove to organise and absolutely solve various aspects of existence. Modernism was also accused of being 'seduced by the vision of a "final solution" to the problems of history, and of modernity' (Sim 1998:319).

⁶⁶ Charges against structuralism are diverse and particular, as Culler (1982:21-22) describes:

Some fault structuralism for its scientific pretensions: its diagrams, taxonomies, or neologisms, and its general claim to master and account for elusive products of the human spirit. Others charge it with irrationalism: a self-indulgent love of paradox and bizarre interpretations, a taste for linguistic play, and a narcissistic relation to its own rhetoric. To some structuralism means rigidity: a mechanical extraction of certain patterns or themes, a method that makes every work mean the same thing ... [or] to allow work to mean anything whatsoever, either by asserting the indeterminacy of meaning or by defining meaning as the experience of the reader ... others find that it abusively glorifies the critic ... suggesting that mastery of a body of difficult theory is the precondition of any serious engagement with literature.

⁶⁷ For this reason, one may be confused as to which theorists are strictly structuralist or post-structuralist. It is difficult to map or place the writings of various contemporary thinkers – Roland Barthes; Gilles Deleuze; Michael Foucault; Gerard Genette

structuralism – as the ‘post’ prefix denotes – succeeded structuralism.⁶⁸ However, similar to postmodernism’s relationship with Modernism, post-structuralism is not a refutation or transcendence of structuralism – structuralism and post-structuralism are not split entities. Instead, structuralist theorists’ ‘confidence in systematic thought’ (Culler 1982:24) distinguishes them from post-structuralists. Culler (1982:24-25) explains this position:

... structuralists and semioticians optimistically elaborate theoretical metalanguages to account for textual phenomena; post-structuralists skeptically explore the paradoxes that arise in the pursuit of such projects and stress that their own work is not science but more text.

This sceptical exploration of paradoxes and inherent ambiguities illustrates how post-structuralism uses and then critiques structuralism, just as the postmodern uses the structures and values it critiques. Concomitantly, there is a similarly close and confounding relationship between structuralism, post-structuralism, Modernism and postmodernism. Many critical writings portray post-structuralism and postmodernism as identical or homologous entities.⁶⁹ Other theorists purport that ‘poststructuralism is primarily a discourse of and about modernism’ (Huysen, cited in Marshall 1992:7).⁷⁰ For the purposes of this text, I have taken a similar position to Marshall, who suggests that ‘only from within the postmodern moment do the questions raised by poststructuralists have currency’ (1998:7-8).⁷¹ The founding tenets of structuralism manufacture the incertitude of post-structuralism. Marshall (1998:8) succinctly reasons:

... poststructuralist concerns and questions – specifically about language, texts, interpretation, subjectivity, ... specifically lend themselves to larger historical, social, and cultural questions

and Michael Riffaterre. Culler (1982:27) reflects on the attempt to place post-structuralist and structuralist theory in contrariety:

Although the conflict between the rational and irrational, between the attempt to establish distinctions and the attempt to subvert them, or between the quest for knowledge and the questioning of knowledge is a powerful factor in contemporary critical theory, these oppositions do not, finally, provide reliable distinctions between critical schools.

⁶⁸ ‘Poststructuralism is a generic term used to refer to all those theories that came to [contest] the principles of structuralism, which from the 1950s through to the 1970s constituted the major paradigm of French intellectual enquiry. Among the theories that came to challenge the stranglehold of the structuralist paradigm were deconstruction, feminism and postmodernism, all of which can be considered as poststructuralist in that they challenged the assumptions on which structuralism was based’ (Sim 1998:341).

⁶⁹ Brooker (1992:14) explains this stance:

The simultaneous appearance of new theory and new movements in art and culture has, not unexpectedly, suggested that poststructuralism and postmodernism are partners in the same paradigm. Together they are seen as exercising a joint critique of language, art and subjectivity, as upending old hierarchies and rattling political convictions. Both are said to share a ‘profound sense of *ontological uncertainty*’, but to conform this radical indeterminacy in an attitude of play and reconciliation, outdating the alienated modernist’s struggle for wholeness and autonomy.

⁷⁰ For greater understanding and further reading on this stance, see Marshall 1998:7-48 and Brooker 1992:14-15.

⁷¹ ‘Although Structuralism participates in a movement toward a postmodern logic in its critique of representation by way of its emphasis on meaning as relying on difference rather than on essence, ultimately, with its emphasis on closure, it resides outside the postmodern moment ... although structuralist logic denies the empiricist world view privileged by our tradition of Western metaphysical philosophy, it does not engage in the “play” or endless deferral of meaning that poststructuralism brings to the postmodern moment ... Structuralism most indicates a postmodern logic in its suggestion that meaning is based on relationships within a system, and is thus, social: we are defined by language, signs, structures’ (Marshall 1998:19).

which inhabit the postmodern moment ... poststructuralism provides many of the tools used for the decidedly political and historical questions of the postmodern moment.⁷²

Post-structuralists, like postmodernists, reacted against the rigidity and ‘apparent authoritarianism’ (Sim 1998:342) of logocentric,⁷³ structural systems. This reaction against systems or theories that offer universal explanations and totalising theories of actuality is achieved by means of various post-structuralist tenets. One such tenet entails the textual nature of knowledge – the belief that ‘knowledge is composed not just of concepts but also of words’ (Powell 1998:93).⁷⁴ Consequently, post-structuralists are concerned with reading the written condition of the text. Texts viewed in this manner produce a variety of mutually contradictory effects. In order to reveal this effect, theorist Jacques Derrida⁷⁵ proposes the engagement of ‘active interpretation’. Sim (1998:178-179) explains this concept:

Active interpretation is not so much a reading of the text (in the standard sense of a critical interpretation ... designed to reveal the text’s underlying meaning) as an exercise in creative writing, where the language of the text forms a pretext for imaginative play and the production of new meanings.

⁷² This will be illustrated – later in this chapter – with regards to ‘historiographic metafiction’ which combines post-structuralist tools with fictional narrative conventions to highlight historical enquiries.

⁷³ ‘Logocentricity is the assumption that words can unproblematically communicate meanings present in individual’s minds such that the listener, or reader, receives them in the same way as the speaker intended. Words and meanings are therefore considered to have an internal stability. This is a standard assumption of discourse in Western culture, but one that has come under attack from the deconstructionist movement’ (Sim 1998:307). The logocentric trend within Western philosophy and cultural theory was given impetus by the search for a ‘transcendental signifier’. The ‘transcendental signifier’ would function as a sign, *the* sign, which would give stable, unquestionable meaning to all other signs – for example God, the Idea, the Self and Matter. The presence of this ultimate signifier would provide a stable foundation for much of our thought, experience and understanding of the world. However, as this ‘ultimate’ signifier proposes to concretise our whole system of thought and language, it must exist outside of this system. It cannot be implicated in the system it aims to order. Thus Derrida and the deconstructionist movement argue that any ‘transcendental signifier’ and its resultant ‘transcendental meaning’ is a fiction, as we can never escape the language system/s that construct our reality (see following sections in Chapter Two).

⁷⁴ Brooker (1992:14-15), following the ideas of Alex Callinicos (philosopher and contemporary social theorist), distinguishes between two trends in post-structuralism:

The first he names, after the American philosopher Richard Rorty, “textualism” and associates especially with Derrida ... This seeks to place literature at the centre of culture; or more precisely, to extend the concept of textuality in its critique of theories of representation so as to suggest that all writing and knowledge are figurative and rhetorical. The second strand ... [he] associates particularly with Michael Foucault. This is a ‘worldly’ poststructuralism which recognises a distinction between textuality or discourse and non-discursive institutional structures of power’. (For a brief summary on Foucault, see Powell 1998:93-94.)

For the purposes of this text, I shall be concentrating on the work of Jacques Derrida and the concepts surrounding ‘textualism’.

⁷⁵ Jacques Derrida is said to have introduced post-structuralism to ‘the USA in 1966 at John Hopkins University, Baltimore ... at the conference “The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man” and in particular with the delivery of [his] paper “Structure, Sign and Play in the Human Sciences”’ (Brooker 1992:13-14). Derrida is best known for his work on ‘the relation between thought and language with its playful interrogation of the borders between philosophical and literary writing’ (Sim 1998:226). His most influential works, published between 1967-1972 [*Of Grammatology*; *Speech and Phenomena* and *Writing and Difference*], critically question the traditions of continental philosophy with a view to exposing their logocentricism. Derrida’s rigorous readings of texts ‘attend to those processes, *always already* operative in a text, which unknit its ideal unity’ (Sim 1998:227). These inherently active processes within a text that result in the undermining of a text’s stated claims amount to Derrida’s concept of deconstruction. See following pages.

The concept of active interpretation involves a form of critical writing within the broader idea of deconstruction: '[p]unning, wordplay and association of ideas, those staples of deconstructive writing manner, come into their own in such a context ...' (Sim 1998:179). It is through the dynamic interpretation of texts that post-structuralism differentiates itself most from structuralist teachings. Instead of the signifier referring to a signified (referent), it defers to another signifier. Thus meaning is produced in a highly unstable manner through an infinite chain of signification from signifier to signifier. In this process post-structuralism dismisses the signified and thus 'the meaning of the signifier is simply a matter of its relationship to other signifiers' (Heartney 2001:9).⁷⁶ In these terms, language becomes much more slippery:

In poststructuralism, we do not create language from our concrete experience of the world. Rather, it creates us, in the sense that a complex structure of codes, symbols and conventions precedes us and essentially determines what it is possible for us to do and even to think. Things are further complicated by the fact that meaning exists only in the relationship between signifiers. Thus it can never be precisely pinned down ... meaning is constantly deferred (Heartney 2001:9).⁷⁷

Within post-structural discourse, deconstruction serves to loosen 'the fissures which have opened up within meaning' (Heartney 2001:9).⁷⁸ Deconstruction offers a manner of reading, attentive to a text's multiple meanings:

Rather than attempting to find a true meaning, a consistent point of view or unified message in a given work, a deconstructive reading *carefully teases out* ... 'the warring forces of signification' at play and waiting to be read ... a mode of reading then which exposes a text's internal differences and attends to its repressed contradictions or inherent vulnerabilities ... (Sim 1998:222).⁷⁹

⁷⁶ The idea of an 'infinite chain of signification from signifier to signifier' is a result of Derrida's critique of De Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* and his theory of the sign. Derrida criticises and questions De Saussure's sharp distinction between the signifier and the signified – De Saussure's theory of the sign supports a logocentric and teleological approach to Western cultural texts and language. Derrida purports that the distinction may only be sustained if one of the terms is considered to be concrete and final, incapable of referring beyond itself to other signs and terms. However, Derrida has reasoned that there are no fixed or transcendental signs. The implications of this reasoning indicate that every signified is a signifier in turn, in an endless play of signification.

⁷⁷ Derrida undermines that 'meaning may be traced back to an originary intention' and that 'graphic modes of representation, be they in words or images, directly refer to a pre-existent reality' (Sim 1998:226). He questions the assumed relationship that word and world and word and deed coincide. Through his writings – analyses of the ways in which philosophers use language – Derrida illustrates that thought is never 'independent from its modes of expression' (Sim 1998:226). Hence, language can unconsciously reveal underlying belief systems or highlight ruptures in a text's logic.

⁷⁸ Deconstruction is a term or idea founded by Derrida in the late 1960s. It is interventionist in nature, and is used not only to unravel the mysteries inherent in various narrative genres, but also has an inherently political nature:

This is not only because of the ways in which a deconstructive reading can turn a text's logic against itself by showing how the logic of its language can differ from and play against the author's stated claims, but also because deconstructors tend to seize on the inconsistencies, inequalities or hierarchies which are expounded or glossed over either by a text, by a whole discourse, or even by an entire system of beliefs (Sim 1998:222).

Derrida is credited with the insight that a hierarchal system of binary oppositions has traditionally organised Western discourse.

⁷⁹ It is pertinent here to consider Derrida's contention that: 'Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one' (cited in Royle 2000:4). Derrida implores us not to use deconstruction as a systematised, structured method when approaching a text. The idea behind Derrida's assertion is best illustrated by Beardsworth (cited in Royle 2000:4):

Derrida describes this ‘mode of reading’, where there is a continuous slippage between the signifiers, as a form of ‘play’. Marshall (1998:70) describes the concept of ‘play’ within the postmodern and post-structuralist moment, indicating that it

... suggests a world not based on a closing-down of meaning through false acquiescence of power, but rather an opening-up toward the privileging of active interpretation. The endless play of language and of meaning suggests a postmodern moment in which meaning is acknowledged to shift and to function for particular purposes. The emphasis may then be placed on the use-value of language and on the agency behind that use-value. As a result, the responsibility of interpretation is highlighted, as opposed to the humanist ‘dream’ of reassuring foundation and presence.

An important aspect of Derrida’s concept of ‘play’ involves the contrasting pair: presence/absence. Post-structuralist thinking graduated from ‘a representational matrix that posits a closed system of direct reference between thing and word ...’ (Marshall 1998:68). This type of representational schema is made possible by the presence of a fixed centre. Post-structuralists instead *replace* the centre with a sign:

To say that the sign replaces the centre is to note that the sign, that language, always represents a lack; it stands in for an absence. Language does not re-present the world; it is not a moment of simultaneity. Rather, language stands in for, presents, something that is not present. Language functions in the space of absence (Marshall 1998:68-69).⁸⁰

Derrida and other post-structuralists believe ‘that the history of Western philosophy, and by implication the history of all discourse in the West, is marked by a commitment to ... “presence”’ (Sim 1998:316). This belief supports the idea that we can understand ‘meaning in its entirety, and that when we hear a word or phrase it is totally “present” to us in our minds’ (Sim 1998:316).⁸¹ If one supports the idea of a predisposed ‘presence’ of meaning in texts, one is placing faith in the stability of words and meanings. This tenet, as I have previously established, contradicts post-structuralist ideas

Derrida is careful to avoid this term [‘method’] because it carries connotations of a procedural form of judgement. A thinker with a method has already decided *how* to proceed, is unable to give him or herself up to the matter of thought in hand, is a functionary of the criteria which structure his or her conceptual gestures. For Derrida ... this is irresponsibility itself.

Rather deconstruction should be viewed as a tool, always inherently and interminably functioning within a text, highlighting (and celebrating) contradictions and inconsistencies.

⁸⁰ Cobley (2001:242) summarily defines what is designated by the term ‘sign’, with reference to narrative:

Narrative signs stand for the world by means of a relation of *re*-presentation: that is, *re*-presentation of relations of space, time and sequence. Thus, narrative signs can refer to specific fictional or real objects; they can prompt reference well beyond those objects; and they can serve the purpose of creating new worlds.

⁸¹ ‘Presence is therefore an unacknowledged metaphysical assumption that we make when we engage in communication with others’ (Sim 1998:316). Derek Attridge (2000:108) speaks of the

... much wider tendency in Western thought that prefers presence to absence, the immediate to the mediated, originals to copies, and nonfiction to fiction – and in doing so creates simple oppositions where there is something more complicated, and more productive, at work.

regarding the apprehension of discourse. In post-structuralist terms ‘language becomes more slippery’, ‘any given word has a cluster of associations around it that undermine its supposed purity’ (Sim 1998:316). Words, language and texts all contribute to an indeterminacy of reading and meaning.⁸²

A deconstructionist will read a narrative for subtle contradictions and will then aim to sustain these differences, thus undermining the seemingly seamless narrative’s claim to a stable structure, or determined meaning. Derrida is well documented for his ideas pertaining to the differences and *différance* of or within a text.⁸³ *Différance*, as a term in deconstruction and post-structuralism, ‘signals that a text is not an ideal unity’ but is rather ‘always subject to indeterminacies inherent in language’ which resist closure (Sim 1998:229). This *différance* in languages, or the caprice of language, creates room for interpretation(s):

Meaning, thus, takes place in movement, the movement by which signs defer to signs, a movement in which traces of other differing signs exist in every sign. Every meaning holds within itself the trace of those meanings from which it differs. Derrida’s view of meaning as *différance*, as the infinite play of differing and deferring, constitutes, then, a most radical attack on a classical view of representation: there is no locus for meaning, only movement, dynamics, play (Marshall 1998:75).

In the above citation Marshall makes reference to ‘traces of other differing signs’ existing in every sign. Derrida, in his writings, also speaks of the ‘trace’ and of ‘external fields of reference’.⁸⁴ A ‘trace’ attests to something that is no longer present, but has left an indication of its actuality or presence.⁸⁵ In Derrida’s terms, ‘trace’ needs to be understood ‘as a structure of difference, trace marks a relation to what is not present’ (Sim 1998:372). Previously, I discussed the idea that the structure or meaning of every linguistic sign is determined by absence. Consequently, Derrida proposes that the structure of the sign is determined by the trace of that which is never fully present or neither fully absent. It is this

⁸² Words, language and texts never have any moment of full presence (what Derrida describes as the ‘metaphysics of presence’). Derrida offers a reason for the ‘indeterminacy of meaning’, as Sim (1999:316) explains:

Part of the reason for this inability of words to achieve full presence can be found in the nature of time.

Derrida makes a great play of the fact that time rolls remorselessly on, and that words are constantly being exposed to new states of affairs. There can never be any moment at which full presence, or for that matter full identity, is possible. (Also see Marshall 1998:19-79.)

⁸³ The neologism ‘*différance*’ was coined by Derrida, and is a derivative of De Saussure’s ‘difference’. However, Derrida’s *différance* is

... a neologism, created from the French verb *différer* which means both ‘to differ’ and ‘to defer’, *différance*, referring to both senses simultaneously and therefore deliberately ambiguous, demonstrates that language is always indeterminate, and that meaning is always undecidable and thus endlessly deferred (Sim 1998:229).

According to Derrida, to ignore the difference between two terms or texts, ‘is to subsume two opposing terms in one fusion ... without preserving their radical alterity from, or difference from, each other, without accepting each “one” in its “many-ness”’ (Sim 1998:229). Thus Derrida created the variation ‘*différance*’. This term acts as an alternative to both unity and difference. Difference, when forced, evades multiplicity. Marshall (1998:65) describes Derrida’s *différance* as ‘that space, that location of otherness which allows meaning to take place’.

⁸⁴ Semioticians speak of ‘external fields of reference’. This form of reference ‘is not the kind of reference that attempts to derive authority from documentary data; instead it offers extratextual documents as traces of the past’ (Hutcheon 1988:156).

⁸⁵ Derrida derived his meaning of the term ‘trace’ from the French for track or footprint (Sim 1998:372).

conviction that aids the interpretation of meaning.⁸⁶ It is in this context that the idea of the palimpsest may be apprehended. A palimpsest may be understood as a text that is composed of several overwritings. A palimpsest involves erasure, thus each overwriting alters or hides the previous text/s. These overwritings or levels exist in the text as the traces of other texts. Through the contemplation of the text's multiple traces of previous texts the process of interpretation commences.

Derrida's most succinct description of the 'text' and its relationship to the idea of the 'trace' is found in his work *Living On*. Derrida states that the 'text'

... is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity, but rather making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines) – all the limits, everything that was set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what not, every field of reference – to body or mind, conscious or unconscious, politics, economics, and so forth)(cited in Royle 2003:64).

In his description of the 'text', Derrida highlights the interminability of this 'differential network', this 'fabric of traces' that composes the text. He also highlights the notion that 'speech, life, the world, the real, history ...' are all conditioned by preconceptualised notions of writing. He expounds the idea that 'the referent is textual' (Derrida, cited in Royle 2003:65), for when one contemplates the referent, one must realise that the referent is caught up or suspended in 'the logic of that particular "differential network" and "fabric of traces"' (Royle 2003:65). The text itself does not represent presence; instead it is constructed of a series of absences (traces) and thus remains imperceptible in its *entirety*. Understanding language and reading as temporal processes allows one to contemplate the continuous suspension and deferral of meaning, as Madan Sarup (1988:36) briefly describes:

When I read a sentence the meaning of it is always somehow suspended, something deferred. One signifier relays me to another; earlier meanings are modified by later ones. In each sign there are traces of other words which that sign has excluded in order to be itself. And words contain the trace of the ones which have gone before. Each sign in the chain of meaning is somehow scored over or traced through with all the others, to form a complex tissue which is never exhaustible.

Consequently 'meaning' is never identical with itself. Derrida describes this as the 'structure of repeatability' (cited in Royle 2003:67) or 'iterability'. A sign appears in different contexts, in different signifying sequences and can therefore never be read as the same. This iterability of the sign or text

⁸⁶ 'Breaking with the classical sense of an empirical mark standing for an original non-trace, its origin is equally a trace. A lack of nostalgia for what has been lost gives the term its postmodern distinctiveness: its differential relation to a non-origin' (Sim 1998:372).

ensures the multiplicity and the impossibility of the saturation of context, allowing a text to be repeated and recycled endlessly.⁸⁷

The last aspect of Derrida's writings that needs to be considered is his revisitation of the term 'supplement'.⁸⁸ Derrida utilised the term (verb) '*suppleer*' (root of *supplement*) as follows:

The supplement is an inessential extra, added to something complete in itself, but the supplement is added in order to complete, to compensate for a lack in what was supposed to be complete in itself. These two different meanings of *supplement* are linked in a powerful logic, and in both meanings the supplement is presented as exterior, foreign to the 'essential' nature of that to which it is added or in which it is substituted (Culler 1982:103).

Plainly expounded, a supplement may add to something or may take the place or substitute something. In a text 'presence is always deferred ... because of an originary lack ...' (Culler 1982:105). It follows then that texts may be considered as a series of supplementations. Derrida (cited in Culler 1982:105) describes this:

Through this sequence of supplements there emerges a law: that of an endless linked series, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing that they defer: the impression of the thing itself, of immediate presence, or originary perception ...

The above citation intimates that there is no existence or actuality outside of cultural texts, but that 'reality' is extant as 'more supplements, chains of supplements' (Culler 1982:105).⁸⁹ All the post-

⁸⁷ When Derrida uses the term 'context', he is simultaneously referring to 'the text'; 'writing'; 'trace'; 'supplement'; '*différance*'; 'the remnant'; 'iterability' and 'the work' (see Royle 2003:66).

⁸⁸ Derrida uses this term in his book *Of Grammatology* (1967) with reference to his reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who asserts that writing is always supplementary to speech. Rousseau, like Plato, believes that the written word merely echoes the spoken word – 'Plato distrusts writing because he sees it as a mode of communication which is always open to ... distortion in the absence of the originary speaker ...' (Sim 1998:227). Rousseau describes writing as a 'destruction of presence and disease of speech' (Rousseau, cited in Culler 1982:103). Hence, writing was regarded as secondary, unreliable and vulnerable to reinterpretation. Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, suggests 'that this rejection of writing as an appendage, a mere technique ... in effect, a scapegoat – is a symptom of a broader tendency' (Sarup 1988:39) in Western discourse – logocentricism. (He relates phonocentricism to logocentricism.) Derrida deconstructs Rousseau's text and illustrates how 'speech and writing exist in binary opposition in a "violent" hierarchy, in which positive value is always accorded to the first term' (Sim 1998:368). I have dealt with the aforementioned ideas summarily; however, this debate is far more complicated and fastidious, for more reading, see Culler 1982:103-107.

⁸⁹ The result of this supplementation puts into 'question the distinction between inside and outside' (Culler 1982:105). Probably Derrida's most famed declaration was his announcement that 'there is nothing outside the text'. This concept has been widely misunderstood and misrepresented. However, in postmodern terms this statement may be restated or understood as 'the world is constituted by text' – that is, we understand and articulate existence by language and within language. Thus, when Culler (1982:105) puts into question the distinction between the 'inside and the outside', he is referring to the impossibility of delineating a text from 'reality' – reality cannot be separated from language because language is part of reality. Marshall (1992:54) embroiders on this idea (within the postmodern context): '... perception of reality takes place first within language, and second, within the particular social, cultural, historical positions of the teller.' Trying to locate meaning only in language or only in the 'real' world, offers a simplistic solution:

... such an 'either/or' construct doesn't allow for the postmodern possibility that meaning may not lie in exactly one or the other frame of reference; rather, both world and language may be meaningful, and their meaning apprehensible, only in relation to one another (Marshall 1992:55).

structuralist concepts briefly outlined above are pertinent to the understanding of the numerous changes between Modernist and postmodernist narrative conventions, as exemplified in postmodern fiction. These tenets also raise questions about the function of illustration in a postmodern context. For example, I have adopted Derrida's concept of the 'supplement' in my reading of various texts. The idea of a supplement either adding to or taking the place of something allows one to explore the relationship between literature and illustration or text and image in the context of the book; thus enabling one to engage in debates about the proposed supplementarity of the illustration to the literary text.⁹⁰

The writings of Derrida have influenced and continue to influence perceptions of contemporary Western culture. Derrida's critiques of phenomenology and linguistics, Lacanian psychoanalysis and structuralism, have all dislocated Western culture from a phonocentric, logocentric and teleological past to a multifaceted, interminable present. Derrida continues to challenge contemporary society by displacing accepted foundations from Western textual frameworks. Before I conclude my short exposition of the ideas of Derrida, I will restate one of the key elements in his writings, since this facet of deconstruction is crucial to the following discussion on postmodern fictional devices, contemporary illustrative mediums and the concept of reader authorship. Derrida has supported much of his theories with a basic stratagem derived from Heidegger – the concept '*sous rature*' or 'under erasure'.⁹¹ This idea presents us with a multidimensional textual navigator.

As mentioned previously, within Derrida's view of language, the signifier does not yield up an automatic, fixed signified. Instead the signifier and signified are continuously changing roles in a perpetual chain of signification. Derrida concluded that there exists no fixed distinction between signifier and signified. The consequence of this realisation is that meaning can never be fully present in any *one* sign. Meaning is dispersed along a sequence of signifiers, hence interpretation may be derived from a constant appearance and disappearance of presence and absence together. Reading and interpretation involve a tracing of the continuous shifting of presence and absence in signs. The sign, and as a result the text, must be apprehended '*sous rature*' – *as* always inhabited by inestimable other traces which never appear as such. Reading and writing 'under erasure' allow for the perceptive, subjective opening up of meaning. This is fundamental to the practice of intertextual reading and writing.⁹²

Hence, there is no direct mastery of language or the world around us. Apprehension occurs through supplementation, signification and an acknowledgement of difference/*différance*. (See also Chapter Three section 3.3.1 *Ergon* and *Parergon*.)

⁹⁰ These ideas and questions will be dealt with in Chapter Three: Framing the Text.

⁹¹ 'To put a term "*sous rature*" is to write a word, cross it out, and then print both the word and deletion. The idea is that since the word is inaccurate, or rather, inadequate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary it remains legible. This strategically important device which Derrida uses derives from Martin Heidegger, who often crossed out the word Being ... and let both the deletion and word stand because the word was *inadequate but necessary*. Heidegger felt that Being cannot be contained by, is always prior to, indeed transcends, signification' (Sarup 1988:35).

⁹² The concept of 'writing under erasure' links very closely with the concept of intertextuality (see section 2.1.2).

The above movement from somewhat fixed structuralist methodologies to post-structuralist latitude was accompanied by a transformation in literary conventions. The Modernist novel, imbibing the climate of surrounding cultural and social projects, sought to be innovative, authentic, distinctive and monumental.⁹³ These novels aimed to create a sense of order and coherence out of the moral chaos and scepticism characterising modernity. Self-referential in nature and marked by distinctive authorial style, Modernist novels offered a redemptive vision, through contemplation of deep content and the domination of grand narrative structures. Postmodern novels contain many of the stylistic devices defined as characteristic features of Modernist fiction, a consequence of both Modernist and postmodernist writers working within the same text-based language and semiotic systems.⁹⁴ Yet, while Modernist writers apparently remained trapped within a field of fixed linguistic signification, postmodern authors appear to operate within a dense, socially fabricated, intertextual discursive network. The difference between these authors is their understanding of or approach towards the text and language.⁹⁵ Postmodern writers, in an attempt to evade the dimension of purity and finality in Modernist writings, employed various conventions to subvert the anticipation of narrative functionality. By breaking with narrative conventions, postmodern authors not only questioned the nature of knowledge, but also opened up the process of creation to the reader.

2.1 Conventions of Postmodern Fiction

In the preceding pages of this thesis, I have attempted to make clear the impossibility of specifying the tenets of postmodernism and its various cultural texts with any finality. Hence, the following sections

⁹³ The process of defining the 'typical' Modernist novel is as complex as moving towards a definition of the so-called 'postmodern novel'. It is important when providing a 'definition' or collection of either so-called typically Modernist or postmodernist novels not to take critical constructions themselves as truths (see Waugh 1992b:22-23). Yet, it may be said that the Modernist novel's most marked characteristic is witnessed through an evident departure from the Realist tradition of the nineteenth century. Randall Stevenson in *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (1992) provides a survey of authors that are commonly listed as Modernist writers, the list includes: James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Laurence, Ford Madox Ford and Joseph Conrad (among others). For further reading on the Modernist tradition in literature, its departure from Realism, its early avant-garde writings and novels that are simultaneously defined as exhibiting both Modernist and early postmodernist tendencies, see Hawthorne 1994:119-124; Nash 1987:1-47, Stevenson 1992:1-17 and McHale 1992:15-32.

⁹⁴ Here I include a list of authors who are most often described as 'typical' postmodern writers. However, I must stress, as does Raymond Federman (cited in Lewis 1998:123), that 'it cannot be said that these writers ... formed a unified movement for which a coherent theory could be formulated'. Rather, many of their writings have certain elements in common (selections of these common features are discussed in the following sections of this chapter). A list of postmodern authors is provided by Lewis (1998:123). I have made a selection from this list of the authors largely discussed in the sources that I consulted. The list includes: John Barth, Umberto Eco, William Gass, Jerzy Kosinski, Thomas Pynchon, Milan Kundera, J.M. Coetzee, Kathy Acker, Donald Barthelme, William Burroughs, Ronal Sukenick, Robert Coover, Angela Carter and Italo Calvino.

⁹⁵ Jackobson (cited in McHale 1987:7) describes a process of 'literary-historical' change in general, which may be applied to an understanding of the shift between Modernist and postmodernist literary texts:

In the evolution of poetic form it is not so much a question of the disappearance of certain elements and the emergence of others as it is the question of shifts in the mutual relationship among the diverse components of the system, in other words, a question of the shifting dominant. Within a given complex of poetic norms in general, or especially within the set of poetic norms valid for a given poetic genre, elements which were originally secondary become essential and primary. On the other hand, the elements which were originally the dominant ones become subsidiary and optional.

(2.1.1-2.1.1.4) are not formulated as a concretism of postmodern fiction. Rather, I have attempted to highlight conventions frequently used within this ‘discipline’.⁹⁶ This outline of postmodern fiction is therefore provisional. Conceiving postmodernism as a ‘climate of thought’ enables one to understand that the conventions used within postmodern fictional writing are not definitive and exclusive. Instead these conventions actively (and often unconsciously) inscribe a postmodern and often post-structuralist viewpoint.⁹⁷

2.1.1 Metanarratives

In Chapter One of this thesis, I discussed in detail the idea of the grand narrative, as a ‘[t]erm used by Lyotard to refer to philosophical narratives which “validate” scientific knowledge and which are seen to be in decline in the period of postmodernism’ (Cobley 2001:232). Lyotard describes the ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ as a chief characteristic of the postmodern. In his writings, Lyotard uses the terms ‘grand narrative’ and ‘metanarrative’ interchangeably. However, when one enters a discussion about literature and literary theory, a discrepancy arises between Lyotard’s use of the term ‘metanarrative’ and literary theory’s proposed definition and usage of the term.

The term ‘metanarrative’ needs to be apprehended in the context of its relationship with the term ‘metalanguage’. A ‘metalanguage’ is a language used to discuss another language: ‘a language about language’ (Hawthorn 1994:116). In literature for example, Gerard Genette spoke of the text, novel, or work as language and the secondary, literary critical text as the metalanguage.⁹⁸ In this example one is literally using language to discuss language.⁹⁹ When Lyotard speaks of a metanarrative, he is referring to philosophical narratives that are regarded as self-legitimizing and which ‘validate’ scientific knowledge. However, within literary criticism a ‘metanarrative’ is understood as ‘either a narrative which talks about other embedded narratives, or a narrative which refers to itself and to its own narrative procedures’ (Hawthorn 1994:116).¹⁰⁰ Many postmodern fictional texts, ‘in which traditional

⁹⁶ I have placed the term ‘discipline’ between quotation marks, as the term generally refers to a speciality structured by a fixed set of rules or relations. It is not my intention to portray postmodern fiction as a *discipline per se*.

⁹⁷ Cobley (2001:183) supports Hutcheon (1989:23-42) in reiterating the idea that ‘*Postmodernism* ... is generally thought to consist of the styles of representation and the characteristics of critical thinking which result from, or co-exist with, the material conditions of postmodernity’

⁹⁸ There is an interesting facet within this discussion on metalanguage, involving Derrida’s work on the supplement. Royle (2003:58) highlights this aspect:

The supplement provides a way of thinking about critical discourse or metalanguage ... Literary criticism and theory, for example, are clearly in some respects supplementary to their so-called object, the literary work... We rely on metalanguage, on the notion that there can be a language on or about another language. Metalanguage is in operation everywhere, from the realm of critical writing in general ... to the micrological example such as this sentence ... But the notion of metalanguage entails a logic of the supplement ... metalanguage is, in short, both necessary and impossible. We cannot do without it, but there is no metalanguage as a discrete language: it is both part of and not part of its so-called object language ... Metalanguage is a parasitism, inseparable from a logic of contamination. (See section 2.1.1.1 Metafiction.)

⁹⁹ As I will illustrate in section 2.1.1.1 literature itself may act as a metalanguage in the form of metafiction.

¹⁰⁰ ‘*Metafiction* is, literally fiction about fiction. To a certain extent the term overlaps with metanarrative because any work of fiction which contains a *metanarrative* will contain a metafictional element’ (Hawthorn 1994:117).

realist conventions governing the separation of mimetic and diegetic elements are flouted and thwarted' (Hawthorn 1994:117), may be described as metanarratives.

2.1.1.1 Metafiction

In order to thoroughly understand the development and behaviour of multivalent, self-reflexive texts, it is apposite to understand the concept of 'metafiction'. Waugh (1984:2) delineates this term:

Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text.¹⁰¹

Moving towards a theory of fiction through the writing and exploration of (self-reflexive) fictional texts helps one to understand such concepts as the 'author/s' of a text and the 'meaning/s' of a text. Metafictional writing achieves this by consciously debunking our expectations of narrative conventions.¹⁰² The internalisation of the concepts of metafiction aids in illustrating the motivation for and derivation of the commonly listed conventions used within postmodern fictional writing.

¹⁰¹ 'The term "metafiction" itself seems to have originated in an essay by the American critic and self-conscious novelist William H. Gass (in Gas 1970). However, terms like "metapolitics", "metarhetoric" and "metatheatre" are a reminder of what has been, since the 1960's, a more general cultural interest in the problem of how human beings reflect, construct and mediate their experience of the world' (Waugh 1984:2). The awareness of the 'meta' levels of discourse is largely a postmodern manifestation, described by Waugh (1984:3) as

... partly a consequence of increased social and cultural self-consciousness. Beyond this, however, it also reflects a greater awareness within contemporary culture of the function of language in constructing and maintaining our sense of everyday 'reality'. The simple notion that language passively reflects a coherent, meaningful and 'objective' world is no longer tenable. Language is an independent, self-contained system which generates its own 'meanings'. Its relationship to the phenomenal world is highly complex, problematic and regulated by convention. 'Meta' terms, therefore, are required in order to explore the relationship between this arbitrary linguistic system and the world to which it apparently refers ...

Metafictional practice has enjoyed a recent resurgence, particularly prominent in the fiction of the last twenty years. Many contemporary ('postmodern') writers have engaged in metafictional writing, using it to establish fictional illusions and then to expose those illusions, for example in novels like John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969); John Gardner's *Grendel* (1971) and John Hawke's *The Lime Twig* (1961) (see Waugh 1984:1-19). Postmodernism and metafiction share many sentiments, hence metafiction is considered a mode of writing within the broader cultural movement of postmodernism. 'However, to draw exclusively on contemporary fiction would be misleading, for, although the term "metafiction" might be new, the *practice* is as old (if not older) than the novel itself' (Waugh 1984:5). Also, see Waugh 1984:1-13.

¹⁰² The concepts related to the term 'narrative' and its conventions are numerous and complex, and beyond the scope of this thesis. I shall thus summarily discuss the term 'narrative' and the metamorphic changes it has undergone since Modernist Realist writings. Narrative is a 'movement from a start point to an end point, with digressions, which involves the showing or the telling of story events. Narrative is a *re*-presentation of events and, chiefly, *re*-presents space and time' (Cobley 2001:236). The 'story' consists of the events portrayed in the narrative, connected by a plot. These events are anticipated in a sequence (made up of signs), placed in a comprehensible frame of time and space. It is pertinent here to make a clear distinction between the terms 'plot' and 'story'. A plot is the 'chain of causation which dictates that story events are somehow linked and that they are therefore to be depicted in relation to each other' (Cobley 2001:239). The plot drives the story events. The term 'story' implies all 'the events which are to be depicted in a narrative and which are connected by means of a plot' (Cobley 2001:243). These elements comprising a narrative are understood as the conventions of narrative. Nineteenth-century fiction was written in such a form, and as such a sense of realism conveyed – hence the dominance of the Modern Classic realist text (see Cobley 2001:56-107). Postmodernism tries to subvert these narrative conventions. However, although Modernist fiction contains many of the commonly listed characteristics of postmodernist fiction, Modernist fiction

Metafiction draws on Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle', where 'it is impossible to describe an objective world because the observer always changes the observed' (Waugh 1984:3).¹⁰³ Accordingly, Heisenberg concluded that the observer may only describe his or her *relation* to the observed. Metafiction illustrates the uncertainty of this conclusion and ponders the impossibility of being able to describe anything absolutely. Waugh (1984:3-4) expounds on this idea:

The metafictionist is highly conscious of a basic dilemma: if he or she sets out to 'represent' the world, he or she realizes fairly soon that the world, as such, cannot be 'represented'. In literary fiction it is, in fact, possible only to 'represent' the *discourses* of that world ... language soon becomes a 'prisonhouse' from which the possibility of escape is remote.¹⁰⁴

From the above-mentioned inferences, the idea of a 'metalanguage' was developed:¹⁰⁵

A metalanguage is a language that functions as a signifier to another language, and this other language thus becomes its signified ... The 'other' language may be either the registers of everyday discourse or, more usually, the 'language' of the literary system itself, including the conventions of the novel as a whole or particular forms of that genre (Waugh 1984:4).

This awareness of linguistic conventionality results in a form of writing that 'displays its conventionality, which explicitly and overtly lays bare its condition of artifice, and which thereby explores the problematic relationship between life and fiction ...' (Waugh 1984:4). Narrative is integral to postmodernism because of the perceived crisis of representation. Metafictional writing –

remains mimetic in nature. Modernist writers also 'sought to displace the nineteenth-century forms of narrative by challenging the authoritative voice of the narrator in favour of presenting different consciousness. "Metanarratives", on the other hand, do not seek simply to open up Realist fiction in order to present different consciousness or amplify the experience of commonplace events. Instead, they indicate the *re-presentative* nature of narrative in toto' (Cobley 2001:174). Postmodern fiction has digressed from mimesis. This disparity arises from the different cultural tempers in which the texts are created and read. This is illustrated in the following sections.

¹⁰³ Werner Heisenberg's (German physicist) 'uncertainty principle':

... postulated that no observer can measure both the position and the velocity of any given electron. In other words, the more precisely the electron's velocity is delineated, the more vague its position becomes. Quantum mechanics therefore demanded a more flexible mathematical model not in order to resolve the uncertainty, but, on the contrary, to account for it (Sim 1998:252).

Sim (1998:345) continues with a further explanation of Heisenberg's work under a discussion of Quantum mechanics: Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, has it that since all our measurements are macroscopic and classical rather than microscopic and quantum, how can events at the subatomic level be measured by macroscopic means? If we take one classical parameter – position – and measure a subatomic particle accordingly, we not only sacrifice measurement of similarly classical parameters, such as velocity, but actually alter the behaviour of those particles. If we do not measure particles in this way, however, quantum events become undecidable catalogues of classically incompatible possibilities ...

¹⁰⁴ The ideas proposed in this citation are highly reminiscent of the writings of De Saussure and the founding propositions of structuralism, that

... reference in language was not properly understood as transparency to an underlying reality, but was an effect of difference: reference was a function of language, generated by language, meaning that 'reality' was an effect actively generated by language rather than a pre-existing state passively reflected by signs (Currie 1998:35).

¹⁰⁵ The linguist L. Hjelmslev developed the term 'metalanguage'. This concept links closely to De Saussure's distinction between the signifier and the signified.

understood as a product of postmodernity – contemplates the ‘crisis of representation’ through the interrogation of narrative tradition. One of the ways this is executed is through the subversion of a text’s creator – the author. Postmodern literature refuses the author sole control or ownership of a text. It ‘denies that a literary text is the expression of an author’s intentions, feelings and linguistic mastery’ (Lucy 1997:1). Initially authorial power shifted from the writer of the text to language itself.¹⁰⁶ This implies that an individual’s identity remains elusive, formed primarily through external, discursive structures. Hence, postmodern literature is concerned with demonstrating the ways in which language governs authorship.¹⁰⁷ Authorial power was also deflected from the author, by the awareness of a text’s reader.¹⁰⁸

The metafictional nature of the postmodern novel also accounts for descriptions pertaining to its self-reflexive or self-conscious nature. This reflexivity or self-consciousness does not simply imply texts directing back upon themselves or reflecting upon themselves, for in Derrida’s view the ‘idea of a text referring to itself, reflecting on its own language ... is always already at odds with itself’ (Royle 2003:89).¹⁰⁹ In Derrida’s view literature has always had a reflexive potential, an ability to ‘mark’ itself as literature, as Royle (2003:89) describes:

This is perhaps most easily illustrated in the context of what he calls the ‘genre-clause’... The gesture or ‘re-mark’ (implicit or explicit) by which a text designates itself as a novel, or a short story, and so on, at once belongs and does not belong to the text it designates. It is both part of and not part of the text. It is both inside and outside, and neither exactly one nor the other.

When a literary text ‘marks’ or ‘re-marks’ itself, it is consciously highlighting its own nature or artifice.

The concept of metafiction illustrates the changes in postmodern narratives, as exemplified in postmodern fiction. These changes in fiction’s narrative conventions are a result of the crises inherent

¹⁰⁶ This is described as the ‘Critique of the Subject’. ‘Here “subject” means the formation of individual identity, where any sense of the continuity of personality is replaced by analysis of the determining structures by and through which identity is articulated’ (Wheale 1995:192). In this instance, language would exist as the ‘determining structure’. Language would be followed by other ‘determining structures’ such as race, gender, culture and class.

¹⁰⁷ This insight entails a ‘Critique of Representation’. Marshall (1992:49) situates this idea for us within contemporary modes of thought:

Poststructuralist theory within the postmodern moment rejects the notion that ‘reality’ is directly apprehensible or that ‘truth’ is value free. In the framework of the postmodern moment, neither the observer (the subject) nor the observed (the object) are autonomous entities; rather, they are culturally constituted, culturally interpreted, and mutually referential.

The existence of these two critiques within postmodern fiction is apparent through the varying processes of supplementation and signification, giving postmodern fiction an ‘entire spectrum of undecidability’ (Wheale 1995:192).

¹⁰⁸ See section 2.1.2 Intertextuality, for greater detail on the writings of theorist Roland Barthes and his proposal of the ‘death of the author’.

¹⁰⁹ This discord is a consequence of the politics of the concept of ‘metalanguage’. Metalanguage is never pure, ‘there is always fissuring, internal division and contamination’ (Royle 2003:89).

in contemporary, postmodern culture at large. The subversion of narrative conventions, coupled with various post-structuralist conjectures, influence the way in which postmodern fiction is both written and consumed. This form of production and consumption is dealt with in the next subsections of this chapter.

2.1.1.2 Historiographic Metafiction

Historiographic metafiction combines post-structuralist theoretical tools and fictional narrative strategies, with the aim of interrogating discourses of the past.¹¹⁰ Historiographic metafictional texts revisit the past by rewriting history using fictional devices. Hutcheon (cited in Lewis 1999:125) argues ‘that postmodernist writing is best represented by those works of “historiographic metafiction” which self-consciously distort history’.¹¹¹ Postmodernism alerted the reader to the dangers of single, baronial narratives, while post-structuralism alerted the reader to the politics of language. This resulted in a rejection of historical texts from the past which were considered univalent, subjective and lacking in integrity (both authorial and linguistic). Historiographic metafiction, however, suggests that ‘truth and falsity may indeed not be the right terms in which to discuss fiction’ (Hutcheon 1988:109) or historical accounts. This form of writing instead poses ‘that there are only *truths* in the plural, and never one Truth; and there is rarely falseness *per se*, just others’ truths’ (Hutcheon 1998:109).¹¹² Postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or re-present the past in fiction (and historical writing) is ‘to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological’ (Hutcheon 1988:110). Contemporary fiction achieves this through three principal means: apocryphal history; anachronism and the blending of history and fantasy.¹¹³ This has resulted in postmodern fiction being ‘tainted’ by a ‘promiscuous fictional mixing’ (Wheale 1995:194) of history (the past) and the contemporary.

¹¹⁰ The term ‘historiographic metafiction’ was coined by cultural theorist Linda Hutcheon, and may be understood as a paradigm of the postmodern, contesting the boundaries between art and theory, as well as between fiction and history. Historiographic metafiction is a complex concept that merits much debate and attention. However, for the purposes of this thesis I shall only briefly expound on a few of the issues it raises. This concept is based upon the close relationship between historical writing and fiction writing, as Hutcheon (1988:105) explains:

They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth, they are both identified as linguistic constructs ... they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying texts from the past within their own textuality.

¹¹¹ Currie (1998:65) explains this reasoning:

Historiographic Metafiction [is] a new kind of experimental writing which is uniquely capable of fulfilling the poetics of postmodernism precisely because it is epistemological: it raises issues about the knowledge of the past and the bearing that narrative has on that knowledge. It has become more or less accepted in the world of literary and cultural studies that the postmodern novel is a philosophical novel ... because it is stuck in the orbit of fiction and narrative.

¹¹² ‘The interaction of the historiographic and the metafictional foregrounds the rejection of the claims of both “authentic” representation and “inauthentic” copy alike, and the very meaning of artistic originality is as forcefully challenged as is the transparency of historical referentiality’ (Hutcheon 1988:110).

¹¹³ Lewis (1999:124) cites the following examples, to explain the concepts of apocryphal history and the use of anachronism in postmodern writing:

Apocryphal history involves bogus accounts of famous events. Take Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day* (1979). This novel implies that a butler in a stately home played a small but significant role in the appeasement policy adopted by Britain towards Germany before the Second World War. Anachronism disrupts temporal order by flaunting glaring inconsistencies of detail and setting. In *Flight to Canada* (1976)

Postmodern fiction not only disrupts the past with its ‘infinite regress’, it also disturbs the temporality of the present. ‘It disorders the linear coherence of narrative by warping the sense of significant time, *kairos*, or the dull passing of ordinary time, *chronos*’ (Lewis 1999:124). *Kairos* is associated mostly with the works of Modernist literature, which focus at length on particular moments of consciousness. Postmodernist fiction, however, toys with time and space on many levels. In reading a postmodern work, one may not only travel back and forth through time, but may remain fixed in distended pockets of time beyond recognition.¹¹⁴ *Chronos* or clock time is subverted in postmodernist texts. A collage of events may appear to occur over a large or short period of time, just to be subverted by the following episode within the text. The break with diachronic time allows for the fragmentation of time, space and place in words. This break also encourages subjective interpretative distortion of existence through memory.

The disruption of traditional understandings of time and space within literary narrative conventions, has allowed for a form of collage to manifest in writing. The features of collage are used in order to present fractured realities and the possibility of multiple forms of simultaneous existence.¹¹⁵ This physical and temporal disruption of sequential story telling has changed the nature of the relationship between word and image/literature and illustration. Both the writer and reader of collage-laced cultural artifacts are freed from constrictive mimetic linearity. This multiperspectival/multidimensional addition to contemporary texts has created (restored) an equilibrium of power between the writer and the illustrator. The use of collage in writing and illustration has allowed for an excess of significant intertextuality. This is illustrated in Chapter Three of the thesis.

2.1.1.3 Fragmentation

In the preceding sections I have attempted to illustrate postmodern fiction’s departure from the accepted notions of narrative time and space. However, postmodern fictional devices further confound the reader through the fragmentation of a narrative’s plot.¹¹⁶ This has led critics, such as Baumbach

by Ishmael Reed, Abraham Lincoln uses a telephone, and his assassination is reported on television. Tom Crick, a schoolteacher in Graham Swift’s *Waterland* (1983), blurs history and fantasy by combining his account of the French Revolution with personal reminiscences and unsubstantiated anecdotes about his own family history.

¹¹⁴ To cite another literary example, Robert Coover’s *Gerald’s Party* (1986) has a ‘sheer abundance of incidents that occur over one night (several murders and beatings, the torture of Gerald’s wife by the police, and the arrival of an entire theatre group)’ (Lewis 1999:125-126).

¹¹⁵ The defining characteristics of collage are discussed in Chapter Three.

¹¹⁶ A further confounding of a text’s natural flow is introduced via the ‘rupturing effect’ in fiction. The term ‘rupturing effect’ was ‘used by Gunning to describe the way in which early film [Modernist] constantly established contact with a presumed audience, as performers interrupted their performance to address directly the camera and, by association, the cinematic spectator. In the process, performers provided a reminder that what viewers were watching was a film, constructed from a particular vantage point’ (Cobley 2001:240). The ‘rupturing effect’ is implemented within a text through ‘narrative levels’. The existence of narrative levels within a text affects the text or narrative in various different but affiliated modes.

(cited in Lewis 1999:126) to state that '[t]oo many times you read a story nowadays and its not a story at all, not in the traditional sense'. In the 'traditional sense', a narrative would have been expected to include the following technical elements:

... the unconditional adoption of chronological development of linear plots, a regular graph of the emotions, the way each episode tend[s] towards an end ... everything aimed at imposing the image of a stable universe, coherent, continuous, universal and wholly decipherable (Kearney 2002:126).

Every one of the elements listed above are in antithesis to the postmodern programme. This has resulted in huge alterations to the plot of contemporary fiction, and as a result many postmodern texts appear to resist closure.¹¹⁷ Postmodern fiction is often described as discontinuous. This discontinuity is manifest both as semantic discontinuity and physical, objective discontinuity, achieved through the disruption of narrative linearity, via processes of literary composition, textual collage or graphic layout. For example, many postmodern novels offer multiple outcomes for a plot. This may be achieved by providing the reader with alternative orders in which a text may be read, either by numbering the divisions in a book out of order, or the pagination and printing may run contrary to linear coherence. A collage which consists of a variety of conflicting textual fragments may disrupt the reader's expectations of coherent perspective. The textual content may also invite the reader to make a choice between alternative reading sequences or options.

Another form of textual fragmentation occurs when two or more verbal narratives are physically arranged in a parallel configuration. This may manifest as separate texts arranged on alternate pages or alternate lines. Split texts are sometimes described in terms of 'glossing', whereby the given narrative is divided into the 'text proper' and the 'gloss'. McHale (1987:192) describes two common forms of glossing a text: 'the text with marginal gloss, the text with footnotes'.

Whenever a text is split into text proper and gloss, whether marginal or in footnotes, questions arise about the relation between the two parallel texts. According to the conventions of scholarly and scriptural commentary ... the gloss ought to be accessory or supplemental to the text proper ... however, the postmodernists often flout this convention.

Hutcheon (cited in Cobley 2001:183) describes the 'rupturing effect' observed in contemporary writing as 'the simultaneous inscribing and subverting of the conventions of narrative'. Narratives characterised by rupturing are often understood as being metafictional in nature. Expounded simply, the 'rupturing effect' in fiction consists of the narrating agency revealing itself. This is realised by the subversion of the following entities: the real author; (the implied author); the real reader; (the implied reader) and the narrator and narratee.

¹¹⁷ McHale (1987:109) speaks of 'open' and 'closed' texts: 'Conventionally, one distinguishes between endings that are *closed*, as in Victorian novels with their compulsory tying-up of loose ends in death and marriage, and those that are *open*, as in many modernist novels.' The postmodern novel, however, is both closed and open with either multiple endings or narratives that follow circular paths – always circumnavigating their own endings.

Within the process of textual glossing a subversion of the ‘main’, ‘primary’ or ‘original’ text may occur. Often the supplementary texts contain narrative content irrelevant to the main story. The weight distribution between the texts may also be played with, whereby the main text serves as a pretext to the supposed marginal narrative. In turn the supplementary text may supplant or replace the main text.¹¹⁸ This form of textual fragmentation also highlights the physicality of the book. The splitting of narratives that need be read in conjunction implies a flipping back and forth through pages. This activity blurs the distinction between the book as construction of supposed reality, and the actual physical reality of the book.¹¹⁹

A further form of disturbing reading entails the manipulation of typographic spacing, which is often used as a means to ‘open’ up a text.

Postmodernist texts are typically spaced-out ... Extremely short chapters, or short paragraphs separated by wide bands of white space, have become the norm. Indeed so familiar has this new convention of segmentation become that we are apt to forget what an effect it has on our reception of texts ... (McHale 1987:182).¹²⁰

This process of fragmentation (disruption) of the text – ‘breaking up the text into short fragments or sections, separated by space, titles, numbers or symbols’ (Lewis 1999:127) – can develop further, allowing for the introduction of intertextual material, such as quotations, illustrations and textual pieces from a variety of sources and mixed media backgrounds. These ‘fragment the very fabric of the text’ (Lewis 1999:127). These collaged elements serve not only physically and temporally to fracture the appearance of the text and the formulation of a coherent sequence in the mind of the reader, but they also create yet another ontological hesitation within the audience, inducing the reader to contemplate the space between fictional text and material object, the book.

Textual fragmentation ensures the reader is not given the opportunity to reach a cohesive conclusion, since he or she is either disturbed by a choice of multiple conclusions, aroused by a variety of

¹¹⁸ Illustration is often perceived as the gloss text to the literary text proper. See the Chapter Three, section 3.1.

¹¹⁹ This consideration of the ontology of the book is representative of a postmodern obsession with the plurality of existence. By acknowledging the realm of experience alongside the fictional, discursive meaning established by the book, – the boundaries between fiction, reality, and the book object are blurred. Ronald Sukenick (cited in McHale 1987:180) states: ‘We have to learn to think about the novel as a concrete structure rather than an allegory, existing in the realm of experience rather than of discursive meaning.’

¹²⁰ It is interesting to note that Modernist Realist fiction writers recognised the implications of the physicality of the book – that its ‘material qualities and physical dimensions interacted with the word’ (McHale 1987:181). Consequently, authors of Realist fiction tried to control any physical interference with the textual content. They achieved this through

... conventionalising space right out of existence. Nothing must interfere with fiction’s representation of reality, so the physical dimensions of the book must be rendered functionally invisible. Thus we get that ‘solid block of print from one margin to another running down the page from top to bottom, except for an occasional paragraph indentation’ ... So familiar and predictable is this format that it has come to feel like a ‘second nature’ ... as the Prague structuralists would have said, fully ‘automatized’ (McHale 1987:181).

associations induced by the inserted fragments or distracted by the materiality of the context.¹²¹ The various forms of fragmentation or textual collage used to disrupt a narrative's plot gives the reader a certain amount of power in the interpretation of a text. This freedom and authority granted the writer/reader is often described as being a result of a 'looseness of association'. Through the process of textual fragmentation the 'creator' of the text is 'welcoming chance into the compositional process' (Lewis 1999:128). The arrangement of temporal and material allusions serves to continuously compose the text, even when the author is not literally writing. The reader, presented with a dozen viable options, may in turn formulate further associations and conclusions. These deductions are undoubtedly often unforeseen by the original composer of a text. Nevertheless, they are welcomed within a postmodern climate. Within such a climate of multiplicity, a text may appear to change its direction and content continuously and simultaneously.

2.1.1.4 Language Disorder

This simultaneity has prompted various cultural theorists to describe postmodern fiction as schizoid. Lewis (1999:133) accounts for this description:

This recurrent linking of mental illness, the fractures of late capitalist society and the linguistic experiments of contemporary writing is not accidental. Temporal disorder, involuntary impersonation of other voices (or pastiche), fragmentation, looseness of association, paranoia and the creation of vicious circles are symptoms of the language disorders of schizophrenia as well as features of postmodernist fiction.

The implications of communication from and within such a posture are profound. Any 'attempt to limit the range of relevant meaning ... or to halt the endlessly self-dissolving instabilities of writing has been stigmatised as "authoritarian"...' (Collini 1992:7). Consequently, the creator of a text is not 'permitted' to use the conventional tools of narrative, unless this is done in a manner of deliberate contention. The reader of the text is expected to adopt the role of the text's creator, and to participate

¹²¹ See McHale (1987:179-196) for detailed, illustrative literary examples of fragmentation in the postmodern novel. Here I provide a brief summary of postmodern novels that demonstrate the different forms of fragmentation that I have discussed in this section: Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) is described as a 'classic instance' of a novel that offers multiple endings which resist closure by offering multiple outcomes for a plot (Lewis 1998:127). Excessive fragmentation of the text into many short sections is witnessed in the texts of Richard Brautigan and Donald Barthelme; Barthelme states that 'Fragments are the only forms I trust' (cited in Lewis 1998:128). Novels which make use of the subversive textual gloss include Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962). The primary text in this book 'dwindles to insignificance alongside its manic annotator's grossly swollen end-note commentary, which is in any case largely irrelevant ...' (McHale 1987:191). Flan O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1940/67) and *The Dissertation* (1975) also make use of a form of textual glossing encouraging the reader 'to try to follow both texts simultaneously' by 'flipping from the main text in the front of the text to the commentary at the end, and back again' (McHale 1998:191). Derrida's *Glas* (1974) highlights the ontological status of the book – 'a book whose materiality cannot be ignored, and which uses this foregrounded materiality as leverage against metaphysics' (McHale 1998:181). McHale (1998:179-180) also discusses various authors who consciously manipulate typographic elements and the spatial dimensions of the page, for example Ronald Sukenick's *Long Talking Bad Conditions Blues* (1979) and William Gass's *Willie Master's Lonesome Wife* (1968).

in the contention against finality of interpretation. Accordingly, the text forfeits rectitude, being expected to tender nothing and everything at once. This had led to much accusation against postmodern narratives as being superficial and senseless.¹²² Lucy (1997:17) describes this version of postmodern narratives, and the often cited belief

... that there is nothing 'below' the surface of any text. There is no prior (authorial) or underlying (structure) source or mechanism controlling the flows of meanings between texts and recipients (or novels and readers): there is only a 'play' of textual surfaces. Instead of meaning-to-say, there is only meaning-of-play.

This lack of delineation in narrative construction has resulted in the presence of an inherent 'indeterminacy' in contemporary texts: '... it is a text's "indeterminacy", the fact that it is theoretically "unfinished" or only "partly written" and shot through with "gaps" that means the reader must "fill" what is left unsaid' (Iser, cited in Cobley 2001:136). The ephemerality, collage and fragmentation of postmodern novels has resulted in a new form of writing and reading. This form of 'writing/reading' is based upon 'a series of signs or chaos of signs referring to other signs' (Powell 1998:125) and is characteristic of postmodern culture. It is a concept that may be understood and described further by the term 'intertextuality'.

2.1.2 Intertextuality

Roland Barthes¹²³ formulated the notion of 'intertextuality' in the process of defining the 'Text'. Barthes' differentiation between the terms 'work' and 'text' contributes both to his concept of 'The Death of the Author' and the concept of intertextuality.¹²⁴ Heartney (2001:10) explains Barthes' definitions of these terms:

The work takes us back to the prestructural realm, where there is a stable external world from which an artwork or piece of writing issues. The reader's job is simply to interpret, or in Barthes'

¹²² This criticism prompted author and theorist Umberto Eco to question the limits of interpretation and establish the 'rights of the text' in his books *The Role of the Reader* (1981) and *The Limits of Interpretation* (1990). In these texts Eco proposes that it is the narrative structures (delineated by narrative theory) that establish the 'rights of the text'. A right to 'be interpreted and to a right not to be over-interpreted' (Lothe 2000:16).

¹²³ In the various stages of his career as a cultural critic, Roland Barthes has been described as a Marxist; a semiologist; a structuralist and as a post-structuralist – 'celebrating the quasisexual pleasures of the text' (Sim 1998:191). However, Barthes is most renowned for his post-structuralist essay *The Death of the Author* (1968).

¹²⁴ Barthes (1977:156) warns that one must approach this differentiation with care:

The Text is not to be thought of as an object that can be computed. It would be futile to try to separate out materially works from texts. In particular, the tendency must be avoided to say that the work is classic, the text avant-garde; it is not a question of drawing up a crude honors list in the name of modernity and declaring certain literary productions 'in' and others 'out' by virtue of their chronological situation: there may be 'text' in a very ancient work, while many products of contemporary literature are in no way texts.

terms, 'consume' it, in accordance with the creator's intentions. The Text, by contrast, is composed of that web of interwoven signifiers and deferred meanings that is poststructuralism.¹²⁵

Barthes' description of the Text implies that a text has no single creator or author – 'no privileged figure who can be lifted above any of the raw materials out of which it is composed'(Heartney 2001:10).¹²⁶ In his writings, Barthes first assigns a shift of power from the author to the processes of language and writing.¹²⁷ Authorial power is then shifted to the reader of a text. Texts existing as fabrics of interwoven quotations and sources allowed the reader to become the creator of meaning through active, subjective engagement: 'Barthes uses the metaphor of music to make his point, likening the Text to a score, which the performer brings to life' (Heartney 2001:10).

Barthes' description of the Text opened up the possibility of the concept of 'intertextuality':

We know that a text is not a line of words, releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture (Barthes 1977:146).¹²⁸

The Text – which has become the 'preferred term for referring to a literary or other work (not necessarily linguistic or verbal) stripped of traditional preconceptions about autonomy, authorial control, artistic or aesthetic force'(Hawthorn 1994:213) – has liberated the author from having to produce a 'unique' and 'authentic' voice. The concept of the Text has opened up the opportunity for play, pastiche and creative appropriation. Although Barthes' writings provide an entry for later post-structuralist ideas, they do not take into consideration the infinity of factors affecting a text's reading, that is the personal and psychological 'baggage' of the writer, reader and critic of a text and the inherent (often hidden) power relations that are encoded within texts.

The 'intertextual' nature of contemporary texts is a result of both the processes of textual construction and textual deconstruction. Expounded otherwise, 'intertextuality' is a consequence of both processes

¹²⁵ Often the work is described as a product; whereas the Text is viewed as process (see Marshall 1992:120-123).

¹²⁶ Barthes (1977:142-143) describes the dated (modern) perception of *the* author of a text in his essay *The Death of the Author* (found in *Image, Music, Text*):

The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author ... The image of literature to be in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions ... The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* 'confiding' in us.

¹²⁷ Barthes, at this point, was still working with structuralist tenets in mind.

¹²⁸ Derrida also believed that 'there is no such thing as a sovereign subject of *écriture* [writing]; rather, there is a system of relations between the psyche, society, the world and so forth' (Marshall 1992:122).

of writing and reading a text.¹²⁹ Intertextuality holds that a text ‘cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system’ (Still & Worton 1990:1).¹³⁰ Still and Worton (1990:1-2) give two reasons to support this idea:

Firstly, the writer is a reader of texts ... before s/he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind ... Secondly, a text is available only through some processes of reading; what is produced at the moment of reading is due to the cross-fertilisation of the packaged textual material (say, a book) by all the texts which the reader brings to it.¹³¹

If the concept of intertextuality is to be understood as a reading of everything ‘inside’ of the text linked to everything ‘outside’ – based upon Derrida’s idea that ‘there is nothing but context’ (Royle 2000:65), Derrida (cited in Royle 2000:61) states that ‘No meaning can be determined out of a context, but no context permits saturation’ – I propose the use of Gerard Genette’s¹³² term ‘transtextuality’ (or textual transcendence), which is more inclusive of the exact nature of the idea of intertextuality. Transtextuality refers to ‘everything, be it explicit or latent, that links one text to others’ (Still & Worton 1990:22).¹³³ This is the precise nature of intertextual writing: it is a ‘momentary compendium of everything that has come before and is now’ (Marshall 1992:17). Culler (cited in Marshall 1992:128-29) explains this:

‘[I]ntertextuality’ leads us to consider prior texts as contributors to a code which makes possible the various effects of signification. Intertextuality thus becomes less a name for a work’s relation to particular prior texts than a designation of its participation in the discursive space of a culture; the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture.

Hence, contemporary texts do not just refer to or quote previous texts. Rather, as Kristeva (cited in Marshall 1992:130) puts it: ‘A text works by absorbing and destroying at the same time the other texts of the intertextual space.’ Through reference, appropriation, allegory and allusion, single convergent

¹²⁹ A ‘text’ must be understood here as both ‘a work of literature’ and ‘in the wider sense to mean anything which can be perceived as a “signifying structure”’ (Still & Worton 1990:x).

¹³⁰ ‘Intertextuality’ is a term used by Julia Kristeva (feminist psychoanalyst, linguist, theorist and critic) in her work *Word, Dialogue and Novel* (1967) or *Problèmes de la structuration du texte* (see Sim 1998:296-297). Kristeva has developed her concept of ‘intertextuality’ from Barthes’ earlier texts. However, Barthes’ understanding of intertextuality means slightly more than in our postmodern context. Barthes’ intertextuality ‘explains that we make sense of our lived experience and hence construct our “lives” in relation to texts’ (Still & Worton 1990:19).

¹³¹ ‘A delicate allusion to a work unknown to the reader, which therefore goes unnoticed, will have a dormant existence in that reading. On the other hand, the reader’s experience of some practice or theory unknown to the author may lead to a fresh interpretation’ (Still & Worton 1990:2).

¹³² Gérard Genette is a French literary theorist associated in particular with the structuralist movement. He is known particularly for his reintroduction of rhetorical vocabulary into literary theory, for example the re-emergence of metonymy.

¹³³ Genette additionally introduced subcategories of transtextuality: architextuality; ‘Kristevan’ intertextuality, hypotextuality and paratextuality (see Still & Worton 1990: 22-21) and (Chandler 2001:203-204). See also Chapter Three for a more detailed discussion of the concept ‘paratextuality’.

narratives are interrupted by a fissuring of the narrative space and textual closure within the postmodern novel is challenged. Postmodernist literature displays a potent anti-hermeneutic approach, instead favouring a rich, dense signifying practice which aims to subvert dominant meanings. Consequently, the literary audience may adopt a variety of reading processes or approaches. The reader may read certain aspects of the text *sous rature*, by recognising textual traces either forming the textual framework or inherent as significant fragments. The reader may simultaneously adopt a ‘rhizomic’¹³⁴ reading process, establishing connections not only between everything referenced within the text, but everything related to the text. Intertextual reading/writing operates through a collage of references between texts separated temporally or physically through medium, for example the literary text and its related illustration/s.¹³⁵

The nature of intertextual relationships may be further apprehended through the contemplation of the idea of an ‘intertextual space’. It is from Victor Burgin’s understanding of the text that I wish to approach the concept of contemporary fiction as an ‘interpretative space’. Burgin (cited in Richards 1993:64) describes the ‘text’

... as not an ‘object’ but rather a space between the object and the reader/viewer – a space made up of endlessly proliferating meanings which have no stable point of origin, nor of closure. In the concept of ‘text’ the boundaries which enclosed the work are dissolved: the text opens continuously into other texts, the space of *intertextuality*.

To comprehend a text at a recondite level, intertextual links need to be made within this ‘intertextual space’. Intertextuality is derived from the post-structuralist contention ‘that signifiers refer always and only to other signifiers: that language can be transformed, translated, transferred but never transcended’ (Sim 1998:285). Currie (1998:12) expounds on this actuality: Poststructuralism tends ‘not towards the interpretation of things but towards the interpretation of interpretations or towards the interpretation of metanarratives rather than narratives themselves’.¹³⁶ The postmodern novel reflects these ideas and as a result narrative ‘meaning’ is gained through an endless ‘play of signification’. The ‘play’ of meaning in a text is the result of the interaction between words, concepts and various

¹³⁴ The idea of the ‘rhizome’ as an analogy for how systems should work within a postmodern context is found in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980):

Rhizomes are contrasted to trees and roots, which, in Deleuze and Guattari’s opinion, ‘fix an order’, and are thus implicitly restrictive and authoritarian. The implication of this is that since rhizomes do not feature the linear development of roots, they are more democratic and creative, thus forming a better basis for systems in a postmodern world than the tree-like hierarchies most Western societies tend to favour instead (Sim 1998:350).

I will refer to this form of writing/reading in the later sections of this thesis, especially with regard to my discussion on the relationship between the literary text and illustration.

¹³⁵ The nature of this complex intertextual relationship will be discussed in depth in Chapter Three.

¹³⁶ ‘Poststructuralists often argue that this is the only game in town because we have no access to things in themselves except through their interpretations, because all narratives are themselves interpretations, or because all narratives are ultimately metanarrative’ (Currie 1998:12).

collaged textual fragments.¹³⁷ When readers shape meaning, they ‘transpose texts into other texts, absorb one text into another, and build a mosaic of intersecting texts’ (Hartman, cited in Lenski 1998:75). This commutation of textual layers echoes Derrida’s idea of the ‘supplement’. The reader/writer performs a process of substitution/supplementation from a context of personal experience and previously experienced texts.¹³⁸ This process of supplementation is also performed by the ‘original’ author of the text, resulting in a narrative that exhibits ‘traces’ of past texts.

The processes of signification and supplementation apparent in postmodern fiction reflect the very nature of the postmodern novel and of postmodern culture: ‘that no book [text] is an independent entity, and private existential self-referentiality is an impossibility’ (Currie 1998:69). Eco reflects this in his novel *The Name of the Rose* (1984):

Often books speak of other books. Often a harmless book is like a seed which will blossom into a dangerous book, or it is the other way around: it is the sweet fruit of the bitter stem. In reading Albert, couldn’t I have learned what Thomas might have said? Or in reading Thomas, know what Averroes said?

‘True’ I said amazed. Until then I has [sic] thought each book spoke of things, human or divine, that lie outside books. Now I realised that not infrequently books spoke about books: it is as if they spoke among themselves (cited in Currie 1998:69).

The above observations aptly describe the relationship between intertextuality and the postmodern novel. Eco’s realisation that ‘books spoke about books’ illustrates the reliance of contemporary texts on texts of the past: ‘the relation of the novel in which it is embedded to its historical sources, explicitly declaring its own intertextuality’ (Currie 1998:69). Contemporary fiction, functioning as a postmodern text, makes references from sources indistinguishable from the world or another text, ‘since textuality is woven into all’ (Currie 1998:70).¹³⁹ Barthes (1977:159) describes this abundant textuality within contemporary texts as the ‘*stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric)’, which may be antecedent or contemporary. This results in texts that are irreducible in nature, ‘in which the play of meaning is infinite’ (Sim 1998:285), and where the limits of interpretation are set by the imagination.¹⁴⁰

A deliberate postmodern intertextuality, where texts point to other texts, is a result of the linguistic turn in philosophy. One of the results of this linguistic turn is the loss of an author’s individuality and

¹³⁷ It is important to realise that postmodern texts also employ an aleatory form of play – play that is random, based purely on chance.

¹³⁸ I will discuss the process of writing, reading and formulating meaning within a text in section 2.1.2.2.

¹³⁹ Hence the rise of the historical novel and Historiographic Metafictional writing within the postmodern paradigm.

¹⁴⁰ The celebrated role of textualism in postmodernist discourse has resulted in what is described as the rise of the imagination. See Kearney *The Wake of the Imagination* (1994), especially his discussions on an ‘ethical-poetical’ imagination (360-397).

originality through the ‘pervasive use of and references to other texts’ (Kvale 1996:23).¹⁴¹ Consequently, postmodern literature is characterised by collages of texts, resulting in a proliferated use of such devices as pastiche and allegory in contemporary writing. The following section illustrates the workings of these devices within a postmodern literary context. Pastiche, allegory and metaphor have been used within cultural artifacts for centuries; however, their modes of operation are strikingly different within a postmodern context.

2.1.2.1 Literary Pastiche, Allegory and Metaphor

Postmodern and post-structuralist discourses have resulted in the ‘movement of pastiche from minor to major status within the literary system’ (Hoesterey 1999:80). The rise of intertextuality entailed a new valuation and validation of pastiche – pastiche being an ideal form of creative critical activity in the intertextual system. Pastiche functions through a reliance on ‘excessive referentiality’ from a variety of sources, both historical and contemporary. Literary pastiche, like parody, may be described as being metafictional in nature, drawing attention both to the source and construction of its fictional devices.

The functioning of pastiche in contemporary literature is best illustrated by Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*.¹⁴² The story is told by a first person narrator, Adson, who describes the work as a ‘cento’.¹⁴³ Adson has constructed the text from scraps he has gathered from a burnt library: ‘The whole novel is written in borrowed intonations’ (Eco, cited in Hoesterey 1999:85). The pastiche that is the novel is derived from the ‘master narratives of Western culture’ and from ‘innumerable quotations and paraphrases of verbal and visual material’ (Hoesterey 1999:85). It is the narrative hybridity of the text that allows the reader entry into interpretation. The intertextual reading between a ‘sophisticated patchwork of textual styles’ and ‘poetic grafts’(Hoesterey 1999:84) effects the creation of meaning.

What characterises literary pastiche on the other hand, and the general concept of pastiche, is its lack of a ‘critical distance’ from its sources. Parody ‘always generates a critical distance between its parodied background source or quote and its parodic repetition of that source’ (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence). It is the function of irony to create this ‘critical distance’:

¹⁴¹ The ‘author today is less an original genius than a gifted craftsmen and mediator of the culture through his or her mastery of language’ (Kvale 1996:22).

¹⁴² ‘The novel seems shaped with Charles Jenck’s postulate of “double coding” in mind: on the narrative surface and the level of plot, the text can be read as a thrilling detective novel; on another level of reception, the text reveals itself as an extended philosophical reflection on major codes concerning the human condition’(Hoesterey 1999:85).

¹⁴³ In literature, the form of pastiche originated two thousand years ago and took the form of the antique ‘cento’. Hoesterey (1999:83) describes the cento as a

... ‘patchwork’, a poem stitched together from verses by different authors such as Homer and Virgil ... Cento works were produced primarily with parodistic intent yet could serve as serious literary criticism, e.g. the cento in Aristophane’s *The Frogs*. The cento form anticipates the characteristics of the ‘pasticcio’ that becomes pastiche: namely, the structure of appropriation and imitation of a great poet. At the same time it is also a hotchpotch, the aspect stressed ... concerning the pastiche form in postmodern visual art and film.

... irony is the difference that makes the difference. Irony changes meanings and opens up the multiplying of meaning within a text. Irony is thus an essential intertextual device. It, however, only works if one recognises it as irony – if you don't see the irony, it stops being ironical ... parody invites an active viewer who not only recognises the source but recognises the difference from that source ... (Lipshitz 2003a:private correspondence).

Pastiche, by contrast, functions without the 'ironic opening' used to generate meaning. Hence, the contemporary pastiche novel may appear shamelessly to reuse existing texts, without any shift from its sources. This is not to say that postmodern culture functions in the absence of irony; postmodern interpretation relies heavily on ironic intertexts. However, the postmodern favouring of the reader has shifted the position of irony. The 'ironic opening' is now created in the manner of a reader's approach to a particular text. In contemporary pastiche it is not the original text's onus to create meaning, but the combination and juxtaposition of its assembled sources in the intertextual network that generate significance. The sensibilities of the pasticheur should challenge the reader 'to detect and decipher the intertextual fabric of a work' (Hoesterey 1999:82).¹⁴⁴ Postmodern literary texts, employing the form of pastiche, may be described as textual collages. These texts consciously and demonstrably borrow from the past, and are thus also described as having an 'allegorical impulse'.¹⁴⁵

Although pastiche is described as exhibiting an impulse towards the allegorical, allegory's behaviour in a text is fundamentally different to that of pastiche. In a seemingly similar operation to the workings of pastiche, an allegorical text (in a postmodern context) piles up 'fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal' (Benjamin, cited in Owen 1984:207). However, there exists a marked difference between them. Pastiche brings together a variety of sources and arranges them in a passive form of collage. Similarly, allegory assembles a collection of sources, but 'allegorical work tends to prescribe the direction of its commentary' (Owens 1984:204). Allegory insists on a discrepancy between form and meaning. It is pertinent to realise that allegory is a definite structural element within a text and cannot be written into a text through processes of interpretation.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ '... without which many postmodern artistic endeavours would offer only a banal ... experience' (Hoesterey 1999:82). Jameson, who absolutely supports the notion of pastiche eclipsing parody proclaims that pastiche 'is a neutral practice of ... mimicry ... amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality exists' (Jameson 1991:17). Jameson views this particular figurative eclipsing of parody by pastiche as negative, describing pastiche as 'disfigured by the "complacent play of historical allusion"' (Jameson, cited in Storey 1998:150).

¹⁴⁵ This explicit use of texts from the past in various postmodern arts has also induced the description of the postmodern as a form of 'radical eclecticism'. Jencks first used this term to describe the pastiche and 'double-coding' found in postmodern architecture. Postmodern fiction may be described as 'eclectic' in its reuse and combination of a variety of 'performed linguistic or artistic material' (Rose 1993:52).

¹⁴⁶ Lewis (1998:125-126) provides examples of contemporary novels that employ forms of postmodernist pastiche. Many of these novels borrow the codes and conventions of other stylistic forms, for example the western or the typical detective story. The examples cited include: Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1984); Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy* (1987), Ishmael Reed's *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down* (1969) and William Burroughs *The Place of Dead Roads*.

Allegory has two chief thrusts within postmodern literature – an inquisitorial interest in history (the past) and an interest in reassigning the boundaries of interpretation. The process of allegorising involves a layering of texts and thus allegory functions as an intertext. However, allegorical texts are appropriated texts and original meaning is not restored to these borrowed texts. This is unlike pastiche which merely usurps its sources without the addition of alternate dimensions:

Allegorical imagery is appropriated imagery, the allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them. He lays claim to the culturally significant, poses as its interpreter. And in his hands the image becomes something other (*allos* = *other* + *agoreuei* = *to speak*). He does not restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured; allegory is not hermeneutics. Rather, he adds another meaning to the image. If he adds, however, he does so only to replace: the allegorical meaning supplants an antecedent one; it is a supplement (Owens 1984:205).

One may replace the terms ‘image/imagery’ with ‘text’ or ‘writing’ and thereby relate the workings of allegory, described in the above citation, directly to the literary realm. New meaning is added to a text in such a manner as to replace the source text’s original content. This process of writing is achieved without completely destroying all presence of the original text/s.¹⁴⁷ Allegory functions in a literary narrative as a text through which other texts are visible, hence Owens (1984:204-205) describes the basic paradigm for allegory as the palimpsest. Defining allegory as palimpsest highlights two characteristics of postmodern allegory. In allegory the foundation of the work is provided by something that is not expressly there, consequently allegories in postmodern literary texts avoid establishing centres. Secondly, traditionally allegories ‘depend on the existence of a recognised and more or less universally accepted frame of reference outside of the text’ (Hansson 1999:453). Within the postmodern context no referent may be taken for granted. Postmodern allegory, therefore, creates instability and widens the scope for interpretation.¹⁴⁸

McHale (1987:140-147) provides an in-depth analysis of allegory in the postmodern novel, with detailed discussions of particular texts, for example: John Barth’s *Giles Goat-Boy* (1966); Jerzy Kosinski’s *Being There* (1971); Ishmael Reed’s *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) and Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981).

¹⁴⁷ ‘Within an allegorically-constructed text, there is an explicit tension between the worldly, phenomenal interest which we take in the literal level of the writing or image, and the abstracted hierarchies of meaning which allegory then draws from that figure’ (Wheale 1995:182).

¹⁴⁸ It is important to recognise the oscillation inherent in postmodern allegorical writing. I have focused largely on a critical form of allegory. This form of allegory functions within the context of questions and challenges raised by postmodern cultural and theoretical discourses. It raises questions about accepted knowledge systems and the validity of interpretation and in the process opens up interpretation. However, contemporary allegory may also exist in a more playful, parodic mode, performing a parody of allegory, ‘allegory reflecting upon allegory. With this turn of the screw of self-consciousness, postmodernist allegory would appear to have distanced itself from what we are still apt to think of as the “naiveté” of traditional allegories’ (McHale 1987:145). This form of allegory through excessive reference and appropriation simply collapses in on itself – ‘into “literal” texts ... leaving us with the only thing that was “literally” there all along – the sentence itself’ (McHale 1987:146).

The fragments allegory arranges exist as metaphors or traces of other texts, they are ‘signs representing signs, integers in implicit chains of signification’ (Evans, cited in Owens 1984:207). Walter Benjamin (cited in Owens:207) illustrates this characteristic of an allegorical text using the concept of mathematical progression:

If a mathematician sees the numbers 1, 3, 6, 11, 20, he would recognise that the ‘meaning’ of this progression can be recast into the algebraic language of the formula $X \text{ plus } 2^2$, with certain restrictions on X. What would be a random sequence to an inexperienced person appears to the mathematician a meaningful sequence. Notice the progression can go on ad infinitum. This parallels the situation in almost all allegories. They have no inherent ‘organic’ limit of magnitude. Many are unfinished like *The Castle* and *The Trial of Kafka*.

This ‘infinitum of progression’, or in the case of literary texts ‘infinitum of signification’, is created by the metaphor or metonymic sign,¹⁴⁹ actuated by the allegory. The multiple meanings engendered by these signs ‘work[s] to problematize the activity of reading, which must remain forever suspended in its own uncertainty’ (Owens 1984:220). Postmodern literary allegory utilises ‘the fundamental ambivalence of signs’ (Owens 1984:220) to halt the fixity of understanding and the realisation of narrative endings.

Allegory as a form of signification celebrates ‘the varieties of ways in which the ascriptions of meaning to signs can be deployed.’ (Wheale 1995:183) This is achieved in the postmodern novel through a process of ‘allegorical signification’. Allegorical signification involves a process of writing or constructing a text in which figurative meanings are used.¹⁵⁰ As Quilligan (cited in McHale 1987:145) expounds, ‘allegory has a tendency to slide tortuously back and forth between the literal and metaphorical understandings of words ...’ Hence, allegory in a postmodern context draws attention to ‘the tensions between different polysemous words’ (McHale:145) and the inherent complexities of meaning making within language. This tendency of postmodern allegory gives it its ontological and self-reflective status:

... allegory projects a world and then erases it in the same gesture, including a flicker between presence and absence of this world, between tropological reality and ‘literal’ reality – literal in the sense of ‘words on the page.’ For what this flicker foregrounds above all is the *textuality* of the text (McHale 1987:146).

¹⁴⁹ Metaphor: use of a word or phrase to indicate something different from (though related in some way) to the literal meaning. For example, she has a heart of stone. Metonymy: substitution of an attribute or adjunct of something for the thing itself. For example, the *crown* for the queen. Allegory implies both metaphor and metonymy (see Owens 1984:208 and Lothe 2000).

¹⁵⁰ ‘Allegory is defined as “speaking otherwise than one seems to speak”, or as the “Description of a subject under the guise of some other subject or aptly suggestive resemblance” (OED) (Wheale 1995:179).

It is then the role of the reader to translate these figurative representations into 'non-representational codes' (Wheale 1995:179). Consequently, allegory may be described as 'the distance which separates the signifier from the signified, the sign from meaning' (Owens 1984:222). Allegory creates an intertextual space where meanings are created and invariably multiplied.

I have mentioned in the above sections the allegorical use of figurative devices to create an interpretative space. One such device closely linked to allegory is metaphor. The use of metaphor as a literary stylistic device is generally not listed as a definitive characteristic of postmodern fiction. This could be because the workings of metaphor within a postmodern context are more subtle than excessively appropriative devices. The ways in which metaphors traditionally function allow for their politicised usage within contemporary fiction. Brian McHale (1987:134) in his book *Postmodernist Fiction* describes the significance metaphor gains within a postmodern context:

Postmodernist writing seeks to foreground the ontological *duality* of metaphor, its participation in two frames of reference with different ontological statuses. This it accomplishes by aggravating metaphor's inherent ontological tensions, thereby slowing still further the already slow flicker between presence and absence. All metaphor hesitates between a literal function (in a secondary frame of reference) and a metaphorical function (in a 'real' frame of reference); postmodernist texts often prolong this hesitation as a means of foregrounding ontological structure.¹⁵¹

Hence metaphor aids ambiguity, significant play and openness of interpretation in postmodernist texts by creating a tension between presence and absence; the existent and non-existent and the literal and figurative.¹⁵² Metaphors further create instability in a text because they themselves have become unstable through postmodernist and post-structuralist discourses. Literary metaphor functions within the context of figurative language, by making comparisons and drawing similarities between various entities. However, within our contemporary context the nature of textualism ensures that the similarities between the analogised elements are never concrete. Hence, metaphor emphasises the endless deferral of meaning within language and as such emphasises the importance of the reader. The use of metaphor in contemporary writing counteracts univalence in a text.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ McHale (1987:133) discusses the two frames of reference within metaphorical devices:

Metaphorical expressions, according to Benjamin Hrushovski, belong simultaneously to two frames of reference. Within one of these frames, the expression has its literal meaning; within the other it functions figuratively. Only the second of these frames of reference actually exists in the fictional world of the text (what Hrushovski calls its *field* of reference). The frame within which the expression functions literally is *nonexistent* from the point of view of the text's world, absent where the other frame is present.

¹⁵² Hansson (1999:457) further expounds on metaphor:

Metaphors and analogies, like proverbs, are often given universal significance, and largely go unquestioned. What makes metaphorical expressions interesting, however, is that they are double signs. The discrepancy between the literal meaning of the words and the utterance meaning of the statement, that is what is being conveyed, gives life to the metaphor. As a consequence, metaphors die or lose their value when the utterance meaning is automatic it no longer carries dual meaning, and this is when they need to be reetymologized.

¹⁵³ Derrida also writes about the concept of metaphor in his article entitled *White Mythology* published in *Poétiques* (1971) and later again in *Marges de la philosophie* (1972). Whereas a name used to designate a concept invokes an aspect of reality

Metaphor may take a critical stance in postmodernist fiction in its own right, but more often functions in relation to allegorical presence within a text. McHale (1987:141) describes the relationship between metaphor and allegory:

... allegory is metaphor's *inverse*: where in a metaphor the metaphorical frame of reference is absent, the literal frame present, in allegory it is the literal frame of reference that is missing and must be supplied by the reader – only the metaphorical frame is given.

Allegory and metaphor work together to divide the sign, thereby exposing its arbitrary nature. Both these devices destabilise the relationship between word and meaning/form and content. These processes dislocate the text, and in the process challenge authorial signification. Hence, allegorical and metaphorical writing within postmodern fiction open out interpretation through promotion of reader participation in the process of meaning making.¹⁵⁴

in the mind of the reader, a metaphor merely establishes a link between two names, based on a perception of similarity. In Derrida's terms a metaphor is a link between linguistic entities, formulated entirely within the realm of language. No 'real' world concept is brought into the process of signification:

Metaphor ... is determined by philosophy as a provisional loss of meaning, an economy of the proper without irreparable damage, a certainly inevitable detour, but also a history with its sights set on, and within the horizon of, the circular reappropriation of literal, proper meaning (Derrida, cited in Harrison 1999:513).

Derrida's argument leads us to understand that metaphorical writing may only produce irresolute narratives without closure – narratives that move in a circular pattern, constantly refracting and deferring meaning strictly within a linguistic context. Derrida emphasises that metaphor is more imprisoned in language than any other figurative device:

... any attempt to set up the contrast between the metaphorical and the literal (or proper) in a language which transcends that distinction, which distinguishes, *from a standpoint outside language*, between the direct relationship between a name and its bearer and the indirect relationship between name and name involved in metaphor and periphrasis, will fail because the terms in which it operates will prove to be themselves explicable only, at some point, by dint of metaphor and periphrasis (Harrison 1999:515).

Derrida also implies that metaphor has no defining or essential essence that rigorously separates it from the language which contextualises it, consequently:

The 'detour' of metaphor or periphrasis, that argosy which Western metaphysics traditionally pictures as returning freighted with new literal meaning, ceases to be conceivable as one following a closed curve. *Ellipsis* ... in rhetoric, among other things, [is] the omission of one or more of the words necessary to express the full sense of a sentence. But ... if the full sense of a sentence must be given not by relating its terms one by one to essences given externally to language, then the notion of a fully expressed, non-elliptical sense evaporates into vacuity; for since the chain of such explications is potentially endless, the accretion of supplementary ... layers of meaning is potentially endless too (Harrison 1999:516).

Derrida's argument establishes that '[m]etaphysical discourse is derivative from ... metaphor, not what is left over when – impossibly – language has been purged of all trace of metaphor, periphrasis, and ellipsis' (Harrison 1999:516).

¹⁵⁴ Within postmodernist critical theory it has been stated that there exists a displacement of metaphor by metonymy. Taylor (2001:246-247) best explains this shift:

In classical rhetoric and rhetorical handbooks, metonymy is considered a trope (that is, a 'turn' from literal meaning) which, like figures of speech and thought, deviate from direct referential speech. This reliance upon theories of referential and 'representational' uses of language is crucial in understanding postmodernism's uneasy relationship with metonymy. Since postmodernism denies the realm of the prelinguistic signified, and instead makes metapoetics its point of inquiry, both the enlightenment ideal of a 'scientific' referential speech, and theories of direct, linear representation from vehicle to tenor, are themselves jettisoned as master metaphors ... To place metonymy in postmodern thought [one] must first distinguish between the use of metonym as trope from the metonymic characteristics of language itself. As a rhetorical trope metonymy relies upon the mimetic pleasures of resemblance and presence ... Conversely, postmodernism remains interested in the parodic or ludic qualities of metonym that separate it from treatments of language as transparent containers for ideas ... Derrida adopts Jakobson's definition of metonymy as a 'positional combination' because it does not rely upon a linear movement from vehicle to ontotheological tenor, instead functioning fully within language itself ... Ultimately, treatments of metonymy in postmodernism are based in the degree to which it is considered as privileging difference and alterity over patterns of resemblance.

In the preceding pages I have mentioned but a few stylistic, linguistic and figurative devices that may be employed within a postmodern literary context. I have also emphasised my reluctance to situate these devices as typical or characteristic of postmodern fiction. Most accounts differ in their description of contemporary fictional narratives. For example, allegory is not always regarded as a ‘typical’ characteristic of postmodern fiction.¹⁵⁵ In contemporary critical theory every text is regarded as an intertextual space. The stylistic devices I have selected foreground a text’s intertextual nature through the introduction of other discursive sources. Through processes of reference, appropriation, fragmentation and layering of words, texts and patterns, literary narratives are brought into a new relation. These forms of literary collage endeavour to destabilise the central, dominant tropes within the text and in the process reflect the quests of postmodern culture at large. Through the knitting together of a variety of diverse textualities, literary collage presents a non-hierarchical mode of creating a multi-centred work. By means of various forms of literary collage, the postmodern novel questions not only knowledge systems, originality, authenticity and interpretation, but how we read, interpret and write literature as a whole.

2.1.2.2 The Politics of Reading/Interpretation

I would like to discuss two analogies used to describe the process of reading in the postmodern context. The first comes from literary theorist Wolfgang Iser, who makes a comparison between the ‘process of drawing astronomical constellations’ and the posture of contemporary texts. Iser proposes that ‘[t]he “stars” in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable’ (cited in Copley 2001:137). This analogy suggests that meaning in a text is not previously concretised or fixed and that the reader has an active and vital role to play in the production of meaning. It is the ‘posture’ of contemporary texts, however, that allows for significant reader participation or ‘active interpretation’. Barthes (cited in Chandler 2002:198) declared that ‘a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination’. The postmodern novel has not only ‘declared the death of the author’, but actively distances itself from mimetic storytelling through undermining narrative conventions.¹⁵⁶ Consequently, postmodern writing has become metafictional in nature, self-consciously examining its own making

For further reading on the oscillation of metaphor and metonymy from a Modernist to a postmodernist context and the similarities between and interaction of metaphor and metonymy, see Culler 1981:209-233 and Barcelona 2000:1-28.

¹⁵⁵ See McHale (1987:140:143)

¹⁵⁶ Mimesis: ‘In Plato’s work mimesis is considered a reflection of an “eternal model” of the world in language, in the thought of the philosopher, and in material things. It is seen as mimicry of a visual, behavioural or impersonatory kind, and it is discussed as the making of poetic, musical and choreographic images. Since Plato, mimesis has been frequently considered merely as a dramatic *imitation* of events and characters. In opposition to the *reporting* of events and characters which “tells” what occurs in narrative and is more readily prone to the charge of didacticism, mimesis in this formulation simply “shows” to readers or spectators what goes on in a narrative. The latter perspective is largely derived from the sketchy comments of Aristotle in his *Poetics*’ (Copley 2001:235). Mimetic texts pose to relate narratives in a ‘truthful’ and ‘realistic’ manner, through the imitation and recreation of our empirical reality. Consequently, mimetic representation is considered a false authoritarian guise over subjective experiences, and thus does not form part of the postmodern vocabulary.

and simultaneously the construction of meaning. Many forms of self-reflection in postmodern fiction arise from the myriad patchwork of sources it adopts and settles. Hence, postmodern writings are intertextual in nature and as such are considered ‘unfinished’ or ‘partly written’.

It is a text’s indeterminate nature that allows for the production of a variety of textual readings. Iser purports that gaps/’indeterminacies’ in narratives are integral to textual interpretation. It is between the collection and layering of various signifiers that ‘blanks’ or gaps of indeterminacy are created. It is through or between these ‘gaps’ that ‘the reader must “fill” what is left unsaid’ (cited in Cobley 2001:136). This leads to the polysemy of contemporary narratives, as each reader ‘brings with him or her different experiences and expectations to the reading of narrative texts’ (Lothe 2000:18). This is expounded further by Wallace Martin (cited in Lothe 2000:18):

Reader-Response theorists emphasize an important point: narratives do not contain a definite meaning that sits in the words waiting for someone to find it. Meaning comes into existence only in the act of reading. But it is equally wrong to conclude that interpretation must therefore be ‘in’ the reader, regardless of the words on the page. In order to read them, we must know the language ... though we need to be conscious of its complex rules.

Currie (1998:133) expounds further on the relationship between a narrative and its interpretation:

... a narrative and its reading are in a kind of dialogue with each other. They are a kind of mutually dependent pair, *nec tecum nec sine te*, a kind of suture which keeps them separate and prevents them from parting. A narrative does not speak for itself. It needs to be articulated through reading, and a reading will always be a kind of rewriting, but the reading cannot interpret the text in complete freedom, cannot say anything it likes. There is always a kind of oscillation between objectivity and subjectivity in reading: the reading invents the narrative no more than it is invented by it.

Although, the stature of the author has been diminished in postmodern textual creation, the function of the author is far from redundant. The author in writing a text creates a framework, an arrangement of signs – the author points out the ‘stars’ in a literary piece. In this process of textual creation/arrangement the author assigns the text ‘interpretative validity’ or creates an intertext:

An intertext is one or more text which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance (as opposed to the discrete meanings of its successive words, phrases, and sentences) ... Literature is made of texts. Literariness, therefore, must be sought at the level where texts combine, or signify by referring to other texts rather than to lesser sign systems. When we speak of knowing an intertext, however, we must distinguish between the

actual knowledge of the form and content of that intertext, and a mere awareness that such an intertext exists and can eventually be found somewhere. This awareness in itself may be enough to make readers experience the text's literariness. They can do so because they perceive that something is missing from the text: gaps that need to be filled, references to an as yet unknown referent, references whose successive occurrences map out ... the outline of the intertext still to be discovered (Riffaterre 1990:56).

Intertextuality, as has been previously defined in this thesis, creates an interpretative space where text and intertext interact. The intertextual space contains many intertexts, collaged to generate new meanings through their relocation and jostling proximities. Even though this web of texts creates room for play and freedom, the reader will always be strung between two tensions:

One is the readers' feeling that they need surcease from the demands the text puts on their ingenuity, and from the text's departures from accepted linguistic usage or narrative and descriptive conventions. The other is the constraints or limitations the same text puts on the readers' search for that relief (Riffaterre 1990:57).

These inherent constraints on the reader which Riffaterre makes apparent are vital to consider in a discussion on intertextual reading within a postmodern context. Although contemporary texts are described as being able to pertain to or mean anything, the reality is contrary. Postmodern fiction creates instability and ambiguity. Once the intertext is activated by the writer, text or reader a process of interpretation is begun. But the framing of texts with other texts or intertexts has ramifications beyond the author(s) of the text:

No one today – even for the first time – can read a famous novel or poem ... without being conscious of the contexts in which the text has been produced, drawn upon, alluded to, parodied and so on. Such contexts constitute a primary frame which the reader cannot avoid drawing upon in interpreting the text. The context of intertextuality reminds us that each text exists in reaction to others (Chandler 2002:198).

Hence postmodern fictional narratives open up meaning, but the process of meaning making is always context bound. Intertextuality emphasises that texts have contexts. The postmodern novel, through its figurative processes, aims to highlight the fact that textual interpretation is not dependent solely on the author or the text or the reader. Interpretation is dependent on all three operating within an intertextual space, frame and network:¹⁵⁷ 'It is thus that the text maintains its identity despite changing times,

¹⁵⁷ An awareness of the framing nature and freeing nature of the intertext is vital when one enters a discussion on the relationship between a literary text and illustration. Intertextuality generally refers to the intertextual space whereby connections are made between a given text and other texts. But a form of 'intratextuality' also operates within a text. Intratextuality refers to the internal relations within a text, for example the descriptions accompanying illustrations. Barthes

despite the evolution of the sociolect, and despite the ascent of relationships unseen by the author' (Riffaterre 1990:57).

Reflecting on Eco's earlier statement that 'books speak of other books', Michael Foucault declared in a similar vein:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network ... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands ... Its unity is variable and relative (cited in Chandler 2002:199).

Foucault describes the process of internalising a book as an activity that positions the reader within a network. This idea is similar to a comparison used by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and this is the second analogy that I will discuss. This analogy involving Deleuze and Guattari's idea of a rhizomatic root system gives another perspective on the process of writing/reading intertextually.¹⁵⁸ Deleuze and Guattari state that previous knowledge systems were conceived of as based on arborescence. This implies that knowledge/narratives may all be tracked back to a single origin by following or tracing their linear paths – much like a tree developing vertically from a single seed.¹⁵⁹ In order to digress from an arborescent nature, Deleuze and Guattari claim that multiplicity must be created. They compare 'the botanical rhizome, the subterranean plant stem that constantly produces new shoots and rootlets' (Hayden 1998:94) to language and the state of contemporary texts:

Their constructivism can be understood as involving a type of creative association that uses the concept of the rhizome as a practical contrast to the hierarchical schema of arborescent structures, and is congenial to a variety of theoretical, social, cultural, and political concerns. Such arboreal or vertical tree-like structures are found within the narrowly rationalist forms of Western epistemology and ontology which organize knowledge according to essentialized, centralized, internalized, polarized, and codified systems of representation that are held to reproduce or mirror a transcendent foundation. The rhizome, on the contrary, is a horizontal and immanent assemblage of external relations open to the productive continuum of the world ...' (Hayden 1998:94).

(cited in Chandler 2002:201) introduced the idea of textual 'anchors' to constrain the preferred readings of a text – 'to fix the floating chain of signifieds'. Within a postmodern context intratextual elements may serve a subversive role. See Chapter Three.

¹⁵⁸ In their text *A Thousand Plateaus* found (in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1987), Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of 'rhizomatics' to explain intertextual relations. Both these theorists draw on psychoanalysis, Marxism, structuralism, and deconstruction in their writings. However, Deleuze and Guattari are not classified with any one school of thought. Much of their writing relates to the work of Derrida and his destabilisation of language and hierarchal knowledge systems to create multiplicity of meaning.

¹⁵⁹ The Modernist novel, although seeming to represent a break with the linearity of narrative and language, and presenting multiple origins, still retained a sense of unity for the reader, which may also be described as positing arborescence.

The comparison of language and an intertextual field to a rhizomatic root system works on various levels. Language is rhizomatic in that language does not exist in itself, and may only be apprehended through language and everything related to language. This is achieved through making affiliations and involves the principles of ‘connection and heterogeneity’ (Hayden 1998:94). A distinctive characteristic of the rhizome is its ability to make connections between ‘anything other’. In the case of literature these semiotic chains are created between various figurative devices and texts appropriated, alluded to and referenced from. Further semiotic chains are created during the reading process, whereby the reader makes connections between the intertexts provided and other external fields of reference.¹⁶⁰ This process of making associations and connections in a myriad directions defeats textual linearity and synchronicity and opens out interpretive means – which means that texts employing intertexts cannot exist as self-enclosed entities. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari state:

... that there is no such thing as a formal essence or thing in itself, but instead that there are only temporary stabilizations of linguistic, perceptive, gestural, environmental, and political components that are assembled in a diverse number of ways (cited in Hayden 1998:95).

A further characteristic of the rhizome is a tendency towards multiplicity, a characteristic that lends itself to a process of ‘assigning rupture’. Just as the rhizomic root system in biological terms can create and break connections to and with other roots or root systems, so may intertextual systems create multiplicity, through both the processes of writing and reading a text:

The rhizome, as an open system composed of external relations and heterogeneous elements, is constantly mutating, shifting, and reforming itself on the basis of its multidirectionality. It pursues one line at one moment, a different line at another moment (Hayden 1998:95).

This ‘line-changing’ in a text is performed through a process of reading that is both degenerative and generative, involving a form of code changing. This is especially apparent within the layered texts of postmodern fiction. The reader needs to recognise the various intertexts arranged by the author. Once these have been identified they need to be apprehended and deconstructed in a multiplicity of directions and on a variety of levels. In this interactive process of reading the reader is actually rewriting the text by rearranging connections and making new connections. Deleuze describes intertextual collages as ‘rhizomatic “lines” of becoming’ (cited in Hayden:95), similar to Iser’s constellation lines, implying that the text is always in a state of creation with each individual reader and each new context. These lines ‘constantly flow between the different complex components ... of

¹⁶⁰ It must be mentioned that Deleuze’s rhizomic intertextual analogy does not stress intratextual relationships – ‘rhizomic relations are not internal, in that they are not derived from self-enclosed essentialist totalities, but external, because they are effects of practices which associate terms according to specific conditions, contexts, and circumstances’ (Hayden 1998:94).

an assemblage, making the assemblage a kind of compositional, open-ended unity' (Deleuze cited in Hayden 1998:95).

Deleuze and Guattari define 'the qualitative transformation of multiplicity'/rhizome as assemblage.¹⁶¹ The rhizome or intertextual field does not have a fixed defining essence or structure, consequently this system may define itself through dynamic interplay:

An assemblage is precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections ... An assemblage is the product of some multiplicities being related to other multiplicities, a collection of multiplicities or rhizomes related on the basis of some particular mode of construction (cited in Hayden 1998:95).

In their discussion of assemblage, Deleuze and Guattari speak of processes of 'territorialization' and 'deterritorialization', which may be equated to dichotomies such as reading or writing, and decoding or recoding in the process of generating meaning. A literary text (for the purposes of this discussion textual collage) constitutes itself through an arrangement of distinct or heterogeneous pieces: this is territorialization/writing. The writing process is simultaneously a process of reading/deterritorialisation – 'the transformation of the assemblage's previous relational quality, and reterritorialization or the passage from one kind of territorial assemblage to another' (Hayden 1998:96). If we refer back to Martin and Riffaterre's discussions on the inherent limitations placed on the reader, the sentiments they expressed are reaffirmed by the nature of assemblage/collage, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari:

It follows that none of these movements can be isolated as the original moment of the process, for they continually pass into one another. The rhizome does not change simply because new terms are brought into play, but because different relations are made to flow between the terms, mutating the relationship as a whole ... (Hayden 1998:96).

In other words, the writer still has a creative role to play by writing a text which exists as an intertextual fabric or network. A vast leap in previous methodology may be described not as the 'death of the author', but rather the 'birth of the reader'. The above section illustrates that meaning apprehended through a process of reading is not a linear operation. Meaning is not passed from the author into an inherent imperial position in the text, to be understood and accepted by the reader. Instead the author sets up an intertextual framework, which the reader works through like a maze, reaching different conclusions depending on the direction of lines followed. This leads to the final

¹⁶¹ For the purposes of this section of the thesis, when Deleuze and Guattari speak of assemblage I have used the term interchangeably with collage. However, in Chapter Three a clear distinction is made between the terms 'collage' and 'assemblage' in a visual illustrative context.

analogy made by Deleuze and Guattari with reference to the rhizome, involving the medium of cartography. I have already stated that the rhizome/assemblage does not have an essential structure or nature, hence it may not be defined, traced or mapped systematically. However, Hayden suggests that maps are constructed via means of rhizomatic connections, and being rhizomatic the map 'is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification' (Deleuze & Guattari, cited in Hayden 1998:96). This implies that any rhizomatic, intertextual network will always have multiple entry points. The multiplicity of entry points into a text is the quintessence of the postmodern novel. Not only may readers approach interpretation from various subjective vantage points, but they may also enter the text at different points in the narrative flow, involving a synchronicity of time and space, both within the textual narrative structure and within the interpretative space.

In my preceding argument I have established that a combination of occurrences manifest when a reader is reading within an intertextual network. The intertextual network allows the text presence through a combination of intertexts. The text always departs from what the intertext imparts, for example, the intertext may represent convention, the new text a departure from convention. The intertext represents what has been imparted before, the new text the negation of this representation. Intertextuality is the space in which all of the intertexts are modified. The text reflects everything that has disappeared with the suppression of the intertext. An understanding of these functionings within the postmodern novel illustrates that significance in the literary text is found outside of the text – in the traces of the repressed intertext. It is through the productive recognition and reading of the intertext's form and content, as well as the context in which the intertext occurs, that significance is generated. Riffaterre (1990:77) proposes that 'the intertext is to the text what the unconscious is to consciousness'. Even if the reader does not perceive the full magnitude of the intertext, its functioning within a network drives the reader to experience a multiplicity of significance at varying depths.

2.2 Conclusion

The above discussion of the more salient features of postmodern fiction provides a point of comparison against which the visual illustration of postmodern narratives may be considered. The postmodern novel, as a contemporary cultural artifact, reflects cultural change at large. These changes are a consequence of the intense questioning of knowledge systems and the narrative structures in which they are written. Many of the stylistic devices found in postmodern fiction were initiated and used by Modernist and avant-garde writers and poets. Postmodern authors aimed to push Modernist ideologies further still, hence literary texts have become radically anti-realist and anti-narrative. Postmodern authors achieved this by causing language to turn in on itself in a form of intense self-reflexivity. Postmodern literature thus exhibits a tireless interruption of narrative, showing the reader

that he or she is reading a text, language, fiction – a narrative that does not exist in an unmediated form.

The intertextuality of a postmodern narrative, like the novel, is further complicated by the introduction of illustrations into the interpretative space. There has been a resurgence of illustration within the context of postmodern writing. McHale (1987:188) proposes that this is a consequence of the vast divergence from Modernist practices that postmodernism exhibits:

By the modernist period, illustration had been demoted from its place in the serious novel, displaced downward and outward in the literary system until its last strongholds were popular magazine fiction and children's literature. When illustration re-emerged late in the modernist period, it did so in new and unprecedented forms: as surrealist collage-novels, and as photographic illustration.

However, many of these illustrated novels, like the above-mentioned collage novels, undermine the power of illustration, not only as a supplement to the verbal text, but capable of replacing the written word:

Collage-novels such as those of Max Ernst (e.g. *Une semaine de bonté*, 1934) constitute in effect extended jokes at the expense of illustration. What many earlier novelists had feared has here come to pass: the illustrations have completely supplanted the verbal text. But at the same time the illustrations have lost their narrative logic and coherence through the artist's collaging together of visual *non sequiturs* (animal-heads in place of human faces, and so on) ... Ernst uses complete full-page illustrations from sensationalistic nineteenth-century novels as the base onto which he superimposes other visual materials. Disrupted in this way, these pictures no longer tell the coherent story they once told, or rather, what they now 'tell' is the discourse of the unconscious (McHale 1987:189).

These illustrations function as anti-illustrations, parodying the conventions of illustration – to reinforce and complement the content of the original verbal text. Similarly, much contemporary postmodern illustration functions in this parodic mode, not only commenting on the status of illustration, but also the state of contemporary visual culture – a context in which originality, authenticity, invention and self-hood are deplored. This has resulted in a visual culture intoxicated with appropriation, allusion, eclecticism and the subversive embracing of history (the past). Postmodernist anti-illustration functions through the foregrounding of ontological structure. As a result there is often no relationship between text and image to speak of – pure visuality dominates the illustrative process.

Collage as a verbal stylistic medium, as has been demonstrated in this chapter, is able to support postmodernism's project of narrative disruption. I have also argued that subversive textual collage functions in a politicised mode. This mode insists that the use of literary collage increases and expands the intertextual field, simultaneously questioning language, narrative and the modes of generating knowledge. In the third and final chapter of this thesis, I demonstrate both the ludic and critical potential of visual collage in the context of illustration in general, and my own illustration in particular. I perceive illustrative collage as the ideal supplement to postmodern narrative fiction, increasing the intertextual field and interrogating narrative conventions. I also argue for a form of code changing or role reversal in the reading process, though, not only between the contents of the text and image, but through the contemplation of the hierarchy that exists between a verbal text and the accompanying visual text or illustration.

Chapter Three

Framing the Text

The preceding chapters aim to provide a theoretical framework upon which the third and final chapter of this thesis is based. Chapter One deals with various aspects inherent in contemporary culture in order to move towards a definition of postmodernism. The various manifestations of postmodernist thought are largely discussed with reference to a variety of academic discourses and cultural texts. This first chapter aims to immerse the reader in a particular climate of thought, one that questions univalent master narratives and opens up viewing, reading and thinking to pluralistic forms of interpretation. The dominant subject in this discussion and questioning of knowledge systems is that of narrative and narrativity.¹⁶²

Chapter Two critically examines a narrative form that extensively illustrates the presence of postmodern thought and practice within contemporary cultural texts, postmodern fiction. The discussion of trends, patterns and various stylistic devices evidenced in recent literary fiction highlighted the literal or physical forms in which postmodernist thought has entered our creation and consumption of cultural texts. This mode of degenerative/generative construction of meaning has largely been informed by the deconstructionist theories of Jacques Derrida. Issues raised and supported by deconstructionist writings have given the reader/writer of texts a new semantic lens with which to view, read/write and interpret cultural artifacts.

Chapter Three examines a second form of narrative – collage – which, through its various forms and conventions, embraces the ideas raised within the postmodern context. While the previous chapter deals with literary narratives, this chapter deals largely with visual narratives. The visual narratives under discussion, however, are situated within the context of illustration, and particularly my own book illustrations (artist's books). Illustration by its very nature is intricately bound with literary written language. Hence, this chapter is embedded in and functions parallel to the preceding debates on postmodern fiction.

The work I produced for the practical component of this study comprises a series of illustrated 'artist's books' or 'book objects'. The illustrations are generated largely through the employment of the

¹⁶² In his article *Narrative and Narrativity: A Narratological Reconceptualization and its Applicability to the Visual Arts* (2003), Werner Wolf discusses what he calls the 'narrativist turn' in contemporary discourse. This 'turn is evident in the increased attention that narratives and their characteristic quality, narrativity, have met with over the past few decades in a surprisingly large number of cultural practices' (2003:180). 'Narrativity', a term I have both used and discussed in Chapter Two with regard to literary fiction, refers to the defining quality of narrative in all extensions of this concept. These are extensions that move beyond the literary text to visual texts, pertinent in this discussion to the concept of illustration.

medium of collage, which I used for both its formal characteristics and temporal implications. The appropriated material from which the collages were composed consists mostly of pages of old books, which have been cut up and disassembled to create new narratives. The remnants of the ‘original’ texts or ‘raw’ materials from which the new illustrated book objects descend are then retained and used to create counter-books. There are, thus, a number of correlations between the literary conventions discussed in Chapter Two and the illustrated book objects discussed in this chapter, for example the relationships that exist between the various texts within a book, like the literary text/s and the visual text or illustration. These relationships serve to question, challenge and subvert narrative conventions within the specific context and constraints of the codex. Another connection involves the formal use of literature, texts, narratives and pages from existent books, which have been ‘rewritten’ through the processes of collage. As the concepts of both illustration and collage are central to the production and consumption of the book objects created for this study, a more in-depth discussion of the implications and intricacies of both these concepts follows.

3.1 Illustration in a Postmodern Context

The very term ‘illustration’ is much politicised and here a few of the complex issues surrounding this discipline must be introduced before I can proceed with my discussion.¹⁶³ Colin Richards begins his article *Illustration: Antagonising Chauvinisms* (1993)¹⁶⁴ with an account of the general attitude to

¹⁶³ I would like to emphasise that for my discussion of illustration in this section (and its defining parameters and prerequisites), I am generally referring to illustrations functioning in the context of the book or codex (for example illustrated novels, illustrated collections of poetry and picture books. I will not be focusing on comic strips or educational / instructional illustrated matter). At this point, it must be made clear that there exist a whole range of illustration conventions that function as ‘visual translations’ of primary verbal narrative texts. These include forms of picture book illustration, editorial illustration, information illustration, and so on. In his Master’s thesis *’n Ondersoek na Betekenis in Prentboeke vanuit ’n Vertaalteoretiese Perspektief* (2004), Piet Grobler argues that illustrations and translations function semiotically, both relating narratives by means of systems of signs or codes. Following Grobler’s argument, the above range of illustrations may be viewed as visual translations of verbal texts. It is far beyond the scope, aims and focus of this thesis to explore this sphere of illustration in general and translation theory in particular (for an in-depth discussion on illustration in the context of translation theory see Grobler 2004:96-129). (See also Annette Sauerberg’s article, *On the Literariness of Illustrations: A Study of Rowlandson and Cruikshank* (1975), Sauberg (1975:372) defines illustration by means of direct translation of the primary verbal text, whereby ‘there must be *correspondence* between text and illustration ... [and] there must not be incongruity between picture and text’.)

It is also pertinent here to define the concept of the ‘codex’ and its correlation to a variety of book formats. The most common form of the book is the codex form. Johanna Drucker, in her book *The Century of Artists’ Books* (1995:121-123), describes the codex as

... [m]ade from a set of bound leaves or pages, the codex is a very restrained form – conventionally made from standard-size pages fixed in a rigid sequence by being clasped or held on one side ... the codex is the dominant book form ... given its efficiency and functionality ... to its basic form and function as the presentation of material in relation to a fixed sequence which provides access to its contents (or ideas) through some stable arrangement. Such a definition stretches elastically to reach around books which are card stacks, books which are solid pieces of bound material, and other books whose nature defies easy characterisation.

I have made conscious use of the term ‘codex’ – which I use interchangeably with the word ‘book’ in this chapter – for its characteristic nature of pages bound in a *fixed* sequence and for its indexing and access devices.

I would also like to make apparent that many artists’ books – books which challenge the parameters of the codex – exist in the traditional codex form, but enact their challenges through content.

¹⁶⁴ There is very little literature concerning the dubious status of illustration in the contemporary arts. For the purposes of this discussion, Richard’s article provides an excellent overview.

illustration, that it is ‘taken, implicitly or expressly, to offend the integrity of the texts it enjoins’ and that it has ‘come to stand, it seems, for all that is derivative, parasitic and trivial in the visual arts’(1993:60). Both of these statements engender a series of questions and debates that I will cover in the ensuing pages.¹⁶⁵ Much of the debate surrounding the position of illustration in contemporary cultural texts stems from Modernist discourse and the allied notions of Knowledge and the Text.¹⁶⁶ Modernist discourses tended to establish a kind of ‘linguistic imperialism’ (Richards 1994:60), whereby the written text was seen as imparting ‘knowledge’ and ‘truth’ in concrete and absolute terms. Modernist literary texts strove for singular meaning and a purism of form and technique. The author of the text was considered the absolute authority and his or her written work was accepted by the reader as comprising unilateral and closed content. This unequivocal assigning of fixed roles, responsibilities and conditions to both the author and text culminated in a prominent textual dominance.

These theoretical parameters automatically established a hierarchy between author and text and illustrator and illustration (image), which favoured the former. Hodnett (1982:5) describes how the illustrator was considered primarily a craftsman, ‘one that excluded passion and vision and concentrated mainly on technical proficiency’ and who ‘takes the drifting images evoked by the written word and translates a few of them into finite graphic images’ (1982:6).¹⁶⁷ These were expected then to reflect the tone of the literary work.¹⁶⁸ The literary text itself was expected to follow a mimetic, teleological form.¹⁶⁹ Hence, illustrators had little leniency for subjective interpretation or authorial control over the content of their images. Illustrations were regarded as purely supplementary to the written word, but not in the Derridean sense, whereby the supplement would enhance, add to,

¹⁶⁵ Many such debates have been raised by Mitchell in his book *Picture Theory* (1994) in which he discusses the relationship between text and image. Mitchell discusses the relationship between text and image in various cultural forms both visual and verbal, with very little discussion of the text and image dynamic with regard to illustration as a discipline *per se*. However, many of his observations and critiques concerning text and image relations in and between other media are pertinent to this discussion. Mitchell raises ‘the problem of the “imagetext” (whether understood as a composite synthetic form or as a gap or fissure in representation)’ (Mitchell 1994:83).

¹⁶⁶ It is important at this juncture to be aware of the two-fold negation of illustration which stems from Modernism. The first, involves a ‘Greenbergian modernism striking its familiar purist, anti-literary pose ... hostile to “literature”, inimical to image-text relations generally ...’ (Richards 1993:61). A large component of the discussions surrounding illustration operate within the wider debate concerning the ambivalent relationship between painting and literature or *discours*. This debate sets up various dichotomies: art versus functionalism, originality versus intentionality and reading versus looking. The magnitude of these issues are beyond the scope of this thesis, hence I have lifted only aspects from this wider argument that are pertinent to book illustration.

The second negation of illustration involves the position or status written text / language has been and frequently still is afforded over the visual. For the purposes of my argument, I am primarily concerned with this latter issue.

¹⁶⁷ Another interesting connection to Greenberg involves the association of illustration with graphic art processes:

... the mechanical and instrumental view of illustration most likely owes something to negative perceptions of graphic art processes in ‘high’ cultural criticism. Connoting populism, the degraded humanism sedimented in the sentiment, mass reproduction, and commodity relations, illustration (with [repro]graphic art) consorts with popular culture. The unsavoury (d)alliance lies within the ambit of kitsch, one of the programmatic targets of Greenberg’s avant-gardist polemic (Richards 1993:61).

¹⁶⁸ It was often argued that works of literature should not be illustrated at all and that ‘illustration is a distraction that interposes a precise image for the unfettered suggestions of words’ (Hodnett 1982:12).

¹⁶⁹ Frequently, illustrators were given specific pieces of the overall text to render visually. These were then dropped into their appropriate places in the book, usually to reinforce and enhance the ‘emotional effects sought by the author’ (Hodnett 1982:8).

proliferate or subvert meaning.¹⁷⁰ Illustrations were supplementary in the sense of superfluous additions, not critical, always dispensable – merely reiterating and reaffirming the linguistic authority of the text.

The emergence of postmodern discourses has allowed for the marked movement from ‘literary imperialism’ to what Mitchell describes as the ‘pictorial turn’ (1994:88), a dominance in visuality. Consequently, ‘illustration might be recast to take on a more robust critico-aesthetic role’ (Richards 1993:60). Postmodern thought, as has been exemplified in the previous chapters, propagated a rise in textualism, in both written and visual texts. This transition has turned the process of non-partisan looking into reading and has elevated the illustrator to the status of author. Michel Camille reflects on this elevation:

... [j]ust as there is no ‘innocent eye’ probing the natural world in... painting, there is no innocent illustrator picturing the ... text as if it were an ‘open’ natural form, simply waiting for translation into the pictorial realm (cited in Richards 1993:62).

The illustrator, working within the postmodern moment, was now given the jurisdiction to interpret and illustrate the text subjectively. This authorship was instigated on two levels. Firstly, with changes in accepted basic procedure, an illustrator may now be given the choice of the aspects of the written text he or she wishes to articulate visually. Illustrators may often work in a medium of their choice, although various factors relating to the book format and medium of reproduction may limit the illustrator in particular formal aspects. Secondly, the illustrator has now become a writer of texts, no longer reiterating the written, authorial linguistic contents of the written text, but creating a space of ‘difference’ and supplementarity between the author/illustrator and verbal/visual text.¹⁷¹

... in challenging the autotelic composure of the text it joins, [illustration] both liberates and guarantees crisis in meaning. Rather than butteressing a modernist aesthetic of disagreement or simplistic postmodernist appropriation, it can keep alive, sharpen and inflame vital critical tensions between different textualities, tensions in which the reconcilable (similarity) and the irreconcilable (difference) meet, align, shift and part (Richards 1993:63).

¹⁷⁰ It is important to be aware that I am discussing very general conceptions of illustration, rooted in generally accepted Modernist ideologies that have predominated during the last couple of decades. But as Richards (1993:62) points out there are some ‘significant accounts of premodernist illustration ... figuring as supplement (in the strong sense), as critical, as deconstructive, and as subversive ...’

¹⁷¹ A third instance of granting authorial power to the illustrator may be witnessed in the re-emergence of picture books, which remove the written word entirely from the context of the book, allowing the illustrations to serve as the primary text. When I refer to the concept of a ‘primary text’, I am not asserting that the visual text has authority over any prior source text or written word. Instead I am pointing to the fact that the reader is confronted by the visual text first. I will deal more with this idea in the following sections of this chapter.

This shift in a previously highly constrained discipline has resulted in a dynamic restructuring of multiple relationships. The earlier hierarchal relationship between the authors of this composite text becomes charged with the quest for authorial ownership. If the writer and the illustrator have been afforded equal authorial freedom, the question arises which text is primary and which text secondary – which text represents *the* narrative? Renee Riese Hubert, in her article *Readable – Visible: Reflections on the Illustrated Book* (1985:523), describes how the illustrated book

... requires of the reader a deciphering act capable of interrelating if not integrating, ‘discourse and ‘figure’ [sic], where the aesthetic and cultural assumptions introduced through the visual corroborate the verbal and bring out much of its potential.

From this citation the position of book illustration is clearly seen as secondary and supportive, allowing the verbal text dominant ownership over the narrative. Even though the climate of postmodern thinking has brought about a reinstatement of power to the illustrator and the illustration, they are still paradoxically treated as ‘radically non-essential’ (Richards 1993:63). Two main reasons for this entrenched assumption may be proposed: the first entails the physicality of the book, which often reaffirms the assumption that the illustration is subordinate by its formal favouring of the text.¹⁷² The other reason involves reader reception and expectations, entrenched in the idea of textual dominance and linearity.¹⁷³

Richards proposes that the value of illustration may not lie in authorial equality, but rather:

Its integrity may lie in challenging the bounds of textual and visual integrity in their narrower sense. In producing a structural interregnum in which neither image nor text can be wholly co-opted or enveloped, illustration questions the very notion of integrity, that sure distinction between what is ‘inside’ and what is ‘outside’ a work or text, what is prior and origin(al).

¹⁷² The structuring principles of the codex – sequence, relation, flow and event – often allow the written word visual or textual dominance over the illustration. Literary conventions have dictated the conventions of the page to facilitate their communicative potentials, allowing textual formats external and internal domination. Drucker (1995:168) states that the ‘self-conscious use of literary conventions increases the readers’ awareness that there are such conventions and that they help structure meaning.’ Similarly the formal conventions of the codex and the page dictate and pre-empt readers’ expectations. On opening a book one is bombarded with text in various forms: title pages, tables of contents, chapter heads, running heads and footers, body copy, page numbers, footnotes, endnotes, and indices, even illustrative captions/descriptions. In a literal sense the reader is forced to confront the written word first and continue the process of reading according to the text’s syntactic guides. These guides traditionally follow a mimetic linear direction, from beginning to end, from left to right. The book format favours sequential narrative forms and by placing illustrations towards the middle or end of texts – even dropped into body copy – the reader is again forced first to negotiate the written word. Often the text/image weight in books creates a palpable textual dominance over the visual. In this thesis I use the terms codex and book interchangeably; however, as has been exemplified above a book can transcend the specifications of the codex.

¹⁷³ A crucial aspect of the book as a narrative format/container pertains to its emphasis on finitude and sequence: ‘The limits of a book – its finite parameters in space and time and its demarcated physical boundaries – are so basic that only within dematerialized conceptual propositions or electronic space can they be suspended’ (Drucker 1995:257). In the following sections it will become apparent that the text versus image relation, or the introduction of self-legitimizing illustration into the codex will complicate linearity and create polysemiotic narratives.

Working from within a postmodern perspective, I support Richard's proposal of illustration as an interpretative space as altogether apt. The idea that illustration can

... frame, focus, disperse, digress, displace and space points to its potential power. The space illustration articulates, the space that enjoins the meeting of different textualities, is itself neither empty nor transparent, but opaque and noisy. It is the space of radical irresolution even of *aporia* (Richards 1993:63).

Defining and understanding illustration in these terms allows one to explore and utilise illustration in the context of Derrida's deconstructionist theories. It is crucial at this point to be aware that any image consciously described as an illustration will inherently be linked to another text. If we adopt postmodernist textuality and apply a general form of textual reading, writing and interpreting to a variety of texts (visual and verbal), illustration may be regarded as a 'metatext':

... a means of 'writing' upon another text that makes it legible in different ways and increases its visibility. Illustration imposes a grid on the initial text by translating it into another language as well as by supplementing it with commentary (Hubert 1988:23).

Richards (1993:63) uses the words 'capacious' and 'capricious' to describe illustration. Both of these adjectives support Hubert's view of illustration as an active supplement – in other words, complex enough to carry the initial text and creative enough to deviate from a predictive and prescriptive linear paraphrase of the first text. Illustration involves a translation between separate texts. In this process of non-derivative translation a space for metatextuality is created: 'Each translation necessarily displaces the structures of meaning it ostensibly repeats, and creates the possibility of significant variation' (Carr, cited in Richards 1993:68). This translation manifests itself in both form and content.

The recognition of the illustrator as a subjective, intertextual reader/writer of authentic and viable texts has allowed for illustrations that engender new perspectives and narratives that provoke the reader into a multitude of interpretative spaces. However, if illustration flourishes through an intertextual exchange involving *différance* and supplementarity to and from an affiliate text, does textual fusion or parallelism not become obligatory? Richards and Hubert propose that the conjoining of the verbal and visual text is intrinsic to illustration, 'but may indeed be alien to it' (Richards 1993:63) in our current context. For Hubert, illustration is capable of 'abolishing parallelism':

On the surface parallelism dominates the relation of text to image. This parallelism ... merely reflects the persistence of earlier models and practices; it does not indicate the presence of any fixed relationship between text and image ... the reader faces two oddly dissimilar entities which simply refuses to move along parallel tracks ... our act of reading can hardly proceed in a linear

and continuous or on a single level, whether we begin with the alleged parallelism ... or attempt to reconstruct the genesis of the book (cited in Richards 1993:63).

Illustration – functioning in its previous context as the subordinate text which served to elaborate and illuminate the primary written text – adopted a subaltern position within a literary context. The written text could function immediately without the presence of the visual text; however, the illustrated narrative was reliant on the word for stature and validation. Yet if illustration is understood as a metatext and an intertext, the compulsory presence of the rudimentary verbal text is abolished without undermining its affiliation with the literary.¹⁷⁴ Richards (1993:67) suggests that any overall arresting of the verbal and visual text or critical reduction of the literary text or illustration reveals

... a desire to repress the multiple play of language, convention and rhetoric in visual imagery and vision itself. This ‘de-wording’ of the visual, this repression of language, convention, rhetoric, aims at the radical critical containment of the image within an absolute frame.

Illustration ‘more than any other artifact combines the visual and the verbal’ (Hubert 1985:519) and by its very nature is essentially related to another text. Consequently, this discipline calls for an imbrication of verbal and visual texts. However, illustration need not be coupled adjacent to this other text – formally or conceptually. A distance between the written text and the illustration is needed to create an interpretative space, where ‘the complications of “difference”, the potential semantic and visual excess in the relation between image and text, opens a space for a more critical, polymorphous, heterotextual notion of illustration’ (Richards 1993:62).

¹⁷⁴ Gérard Genette, in his article *Introduction to the Paratext* (1991:261), introduces his concept of the ‘paratext’ as ‘the means by which a text makes a book of itself and proposes itself as such to its readers, and more generally to the public’. The paratext includes everything around the text, verbal and visual, for example the author’s name, the title, a preface and illustrations. The paratext ‘surrounds’ the text, ‘prolongs’ the text and ‘presents’ the text – ‘in its strongest meaning: *to make it present*, to assure its presence in the world, its “reception” and its consumption, in the form ... of a book’ (1987:261). The paratext may be compared to a frame that presents the ‘primary’ text. Genette, however, in referring to illustration as part of the paratext, asserts the dominance of the written text:

No matter what aesthetic or ideological pretensions (‘fine title,’ preface-manifesto), no matter what coquetry, no matter what paradoxical inversion the author puts into it, a paratextual element is always subordinate to ‘its’ text, and this functionality determines the essentials of its aspect and of its existence (1987:269).

Genette (1997:261) also states, however, that with the concept of a paratext ‘[o]ne does not always know if one should consider that [it] belong to the text or not ...’ I have taken the stance, roughly proposed by Genette (1997:261), that the paratext be understood as an

... ‘undecided zone’... between the inside and the outside, itself without rigorous limits, either towards the interior (the text) or towards the exterior (the discourse of the world on the text), a border, or as Philippe Lejeune said, ‘the fringe of the printed text which, in reality, controls the whole reading.’ This fringe, in effect, always bearer of an authorial commentary either more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes, between the text and what lies outside it, a zone not just of transition, but of *transaction*.

The reasons I have introduced the idea of illustration as a form of paratext are manifold. Firstly, when discussing the context of my work, in the form of book objects, the very elements that form their context may be described as paratextual. Secondly, an important and dynamic process of code changing occurs when illustration becomes the primary text and the written word paratextual. See the following sections of this chapter.

3.2 Collage

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to various forms of collage, both verbal and visual. In Chapter One, collage was demonstrated as the ideal vehicle to challenge the projects of Modernism. The aims of collage, manifest in a multitude of postmodern cultural artifacts, are to debunk Modernist notions of purity, originality and authenticity; to question the construction of knowledge and significance in Western thought and discourse; and to re-examine the past (history) by reassembling it in different forms. Postmodern culture's use of collage reveals a propensity for excessive appropriation and allusion, often adopting a self-parodic stance. Postmodern collage's rampant recycling of old cultural forms simultaneously made value judgements on the increasing capitalist influence invading aesthetics, which began during the Modernist period. The process of creating art objects from a collage of 'original' texts and mass reproducing them, removed the rarefied aura from the previously autonomous artifact. Chapter Two focuses largely on instances of verbal collage found within the postmodern novel. Literary collage, manifest in both a temporal and material sense within the context of the book, aimed to challenge traditional narrative conventions. Collage was evinced in postmodern fiction through the literal combination and layering of various appropriated texts; the writing of texts in borrowed intonations; the physical fragmenting of narrative through the play of typographic elements and the subversion of the conventions of the book and accepted modes of reading.

In the following subsection, I focus my discussion on visual, two-dimensional collage, particularly my own collage which functions as and within the context of book illustration. To understand the significance of the prolific use of collage in contemporary cultural forms – and my argument for collage as the visual equal of postmodern fictional narratives – it is pertinent to recognise the origins of much of collage. Many of these are rooted in the early visual and verbal experiments of the avant-garde. The following section outlines a brief history of this medium.¹⁷⁵

3.2.1 Contextualising Collage

Soon after the turn of the century, the artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, through their Cubist paintings, experimented with the fragmentation of the picture plane. This fragmentation, situated in the 'Analytic phase', was taken a step further with the introduction of non-painterly objects onto the canvas during the 'Synthetic phase', when literal fragments of other texts were incorporated onto the canvas. Brandon Taylor (2004:8), in his book *Collage: The Making of Modern Art*, describes the first rough definition of this activity: 'Collage in its first and unusual meaning involves the pasting-on of

¹⁷⁵ The history and development of collage within twentieth-century art and literature is vast, and the complexities of this topic are beyond the scope of this thesis. I have thus focused on the crucial early stages of collage's development within the broader phases of Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism. For a comprehensive study on collage, see Brandon Taylor's *Collage: The Making of Modern Art* (2004).

scraps that originated beyond the studio, in the department store or on the street.¹⁷⁶ The implications of these new juxtapositions, the pasting of pre-existing materials or objects onto a two dimensional surface, had manifold implications. The foremost, however, was transgressive blending of 'low' and 'high' culture/art. These Cubist collages also created a new form of composite image. The idea of the composite image, however, was not unheard of before Modernism, as Taylor (2004:8) describes:

The seventeenth-century painter Peter Paul Rubens freely added 'improvements' to the drawings of others, regardless of modern attitudes to originality. A little later William Hogarth took delight in the incongruous visual-verbal mixtures to be found in shop and inn-signs. The nineteenth century saw the advent of the scrapbook as a popular form, while picture-postcard humour, made possible by montaging disparate photographic elements against each other, was by the end of the century widespread.

But until the Cubist/collage experiments of Picasso and Braque entered the consciousness of the art spectator and critic, composite images were not part of a Modern art vocabulary. Much of the collage produced, however, was still described in High Modernist Formalist terms. The substantiation for including outside objects onto the painting was to thematise the flatness of the painting or paper itself. Collaged materials were introduced onto the canvas and into the picture plane in order to rupture the illusionistic world set up by the painter, thus forcing the viewer to rethink the very notion of painting.¹⁷⁷ In the strictest Formalist and Realist discourses collage was considered a facet of avant-garde Modernism. Collage became a provocative mode of representation, providing a critique of pictorial illusion, and visually depicting cultural and social change, in the process questioning the very notion of the sign. Collage, as Taylor (2004:8) expounds

¹⁷⁶ Picasso created the first artwork which implemented collage, *The Letter*, in 1912. In this work Picasso pasted a real Italian postage stamp onto a painted letter. The second definitive artwork in the development of collage was also produced by Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912). This painting of wooden strips was combined with an oil-cloth printed with a simulated chair caning pattern, evoking the illusion of furniture. The work was then itself framed by a continuous loop of rope.

¹⁷⁷ These Formalist tendencies were often propagated by the artists themselves. François Gilot (1990:70), in her book *Life with Picasso*, repeats his often cited explanation of Cubist collage:

The purpose of *papier collé* was to give the idea that different textures can enter into composition to become the reality in the painting that competes with the reality in nature. We tried to get rid of *trompe-l'oeil* to find a *trompe-l'esprit*. We didn't any longer want to fool the eye; we wanted to fool the mind. The sheet of newspaper was never used to make newspaper. It was used to become a bottle or something like that. It was never used literally but always as an element displaced from its habitual meaning into another meaning to produce a shock between the usual definition at the point of departure and its new definition at the point of arrival. If a newspaper can become a bottle, that gives us something to think about in connection with both newspapers and bottles, too. This displaced object has entered a universe for which it was not made and where it retains, in a measure, its strangeness. And this strangeness was what we wanted to make people think about because we were quite aware that our world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring.

The above citation raises the term '*papier collé*', which directly translated means, 'paper impregnated with glue to prevent it from soaking up moisture' (Taylor 2004:8). *Papier collé* was a form of creative recreation practised during the nineteenth century. The process involved the formation of decorative designs made with pasted pieces of coloured paper. It was from the concept of *papier collé* that Picasso and Braque approached their own Cubist collages. *Papier collé* is often described as being 'closer to traditional drawing and painting, consisting essentially of a collage of paper elements with a paper support' (The Dictionary of Art, 1996, s.v. 'collage'). The early composite images created by Picasso and Braque were generally not labelled as collage, but rather *papier collés*.

... had a special and even profound part to play in the expression of modern sensibility: a sensibility attuned to matter in the modern city, matter under the regime of capital. This implies that we negotiate the fine line between understanding collage fragments as ‘flat, coloured, pictorial shapes ... pieces of extraneous matter incorporated into the picture and emphasising its material existence’ ... and taking a more anthropological interest in the category of the discarded, the unwanted, the overlooked, as marks of modernity.

The development of collage should be understood in the context of modernity’s rise in mass media – the rise of the newspaper and excessive advertising. This abundance of printed matter not only gave artists ready-made media to work with, but the actual temporal, verbal and visual construction of advertising and the physical layout of the newspaper changed the very reception of narrative. For example, newspaper pages exist as an assemblage of fragments, which creates a discontinuity and rupture in the flow of information. Thus newspapers can be regarded as the first literal materialisation of a readily accessible intertextual field.

Rapidly increasing material culture; a rising panic about the authenticity of textual existence, and worldly political upheavals led to heightened forms of politicised collage. One of these forms was the Russian and French Cubist movement’s shift from the earlier *papier collé*/collage to ‘construction’. ‘Construction’ employed the juxtaposition of images in highly symbolic montages, which celebrated the rise of the photographic image and highlighted rampant Communist fever and tensions. Another form saw the amalgamation of visual art, poetry and music with notions of space, dynamism, play and freedom. At this stage, many avant-garde writers and poets were interested in the ‘elementary components of words’ and the ‘sounds of language in themselves’. Consequently, they avoided the use of meaningful words and phrases (Taylor 2004:32).¹⁷⁸ This trend was exemplified in the visual and textual collages of the Dada movement. The intentions of the Dadaists were manifold: ‘to declare that “representation” in the old manner was at an end’ and to eradicate ‘the distance between the visual and the verbal’ (Taylor 2004:38). A dissatisfied state of mind had already begun to exist as the failings of the projects of modernity surfaced. The Dada movement was given further impetus by the First World War:

The war was the death agony of a society based on greed and materialism ... Dada as a requiem for this society, and also the primitive beginnings of a new one. ‘The Dadaist fights against the death-

¹⁷⁸ This influenced visual artists, like Kasimir Malevich, who was intrigued by this literature freed from ‘object-reference’. An inspired Malevich wrote:

... tear the letter from its line ... give it the possibility of free movement. Lines suit only the world of bureaucracy and domestic correspondence ... We came to the distribution of letter-sounds in space, just like Suprematism in painting. These phonic masses will be suspended in space and will produce for our consciousness the possibility of reaching further from Earth (cited in Taylor 2004:32).

throes and death-drunkenness of his time ... He knows that this world of systems has gone to pieces and that the age which demanded cash has organised a bargain sale of godless philosophies' (Ades 1997:111).

In a complete antagonistic reproach of the ordered, systematic and authorised works of Modernism, the Dadaists revelled in the act of play and chance, seeking, according to Hans Arp, 'an anonymous and collective art ... [they] rejected all mimesis and description, giving free reign to the Elementary and Spontaneous' (cited in Taylor 2004:39). This is illustrated through the collages of Arp. In his *Squares According to the Laws of Chance* (1917) (Fig.1), Arp indiscriminately dropped and placed randomly cut out pieces of coloured paper onto a cardboard base.¹⁷⁹ This simple arrangement of squares on a page abounded with significance. Arp, like the Dadaist poets who randomly cut up existing poems and newspapers into single lines to be arranged at will, was rupturing the grid of meaning, he was liberating forms through arbitrary collage from closed significance, highlighting the signifying aspect of the sign and collapsing subject/object distinctions. The collaged squares become metasemiotic: 'With rectangles and squares we built radiant monuments to deepest sorrow and loftiest joy. We wanted our works to simplify and transform the world and make it beautiful ...' (Arp, cited in Taylor:39).

The experiments of Dadaism took the concept of fragmentation further than mere free visual forms and broken verbal texts. With the Dadaist combination of text and image (particularly with regard to photographic imagery), narrative conventions were subverted and relativity and radical uncertainty evidenced through the process of reading. This was achieved through the creation of what George Grosz and John Heartfield defined as 'montage', a method of mounting images next to and against each other.¹⁸⁰ In works like Grosz and Heartfield's *Life and Times in Universal City at 12.05 Noon*

¹⁷⁹ Arp further relinquished control over the creative process by abandoning scissors – 'which all too readily betrayed the life of the hand' (cited in Taylor 2004:39) – and worked instead with a craft knife.

¹⁸⁰ Both these artists accept the credit for the realisation of the significant power of montage:

In 1916 ... Johnny Heartfield and I invented photomontage in my studio ... On a piece of cardboard we pasted a mish mash of advertisements for hernia bells, student's song-books and dog food, labels from schnapps and wine-bottles, and photographs from picture papers, cut up at will in such a way as to say in pictures what would have been banned by the censors if we had said it in words. In this way we made postcards supposed to have been sent home from the front, or from home to the front (Grosz, cited in Taylor 2004:41).

The terms 'collage' and 'montage' have overlapping definitions: some sources use the terms interchangeably, while others differentiate them as separate mediums. I have adopted the following understanding of these two terms and their related offshoots:

Collage: the term 'collage' is derived from the French word *coller*, to gum or to stick. Collage involves the bringing together of disparate elements in a single composition, juxtaposing and overlaying them to create a new visual (or verbal) narrative/text. Montage: (French 'mounting') involves the same procedure. However, montage is an arrangement of existing images, photographs, prints, illustrations or previously existing artworks. Collage derived directly from the early *papier collés*, and often involves the cutting up and arranging of paper fragments which are not necessarily figurative. Bethany Johns (1984:306), in her article *Visual Metaphor: Lost and Found*, proposes that collage be considered more 'arbitrary' to the more 'allegorical' montage: 'Collage presents situation rather than context, and texture rather than composition; its elements more didactic than directed.' Johns (1984:306) suggests that collage involves a more 'subjective image selection', whereas montage 'exercises more control over its elements ... collage begins a thought and triggers possible emotions (by recollections for instance), montage forms a message by ordering its elements so they may be "read"'.¹⁸¹

Photomontage is the arrangement of only photographic elements to form a montage.

(1919) (Fig.2), a multitude of near complete images (narratives) are layered together with fragmented textual narratives, words and phrases. Unlike the Surrealist collages which followed, works like this were not created with a heavy hidden political or definitive meaning that asked to be uncovered. Dadaist collage/montage articulated the chaotic state of society experiencing the disassembling of knowledge systems and power structures. These collages also reflected the vibrancy and dynamism of the growing metropolis. Foremost, however, these images celebrated the displaced fragment. All of the separate images, type and textures, amassed on a single picture plane, represented a rupture in the many original narratives. Linear coherence was broken with the cutting up of verbal texts; pictorial representation was dismantled with the recycling and disassembling of previous artworks, advertisements and photographs; time and space were jumbled and fractured with the combining of the old and the new, often quite literally with the combination of handwork, layered with mass-produced printed media, as witnessed in Raoul Hausmann's *Dada Cino* (1920) (Fig.3). In this work the collaged elements are pasted onto an old, foxed paper substrate, embellished with delicate inked handwriting. This personal, humanised pictorial space offsets the appropriated printed imagery, which depicts scenes from modern city life. Here old and new, history and the contemporary are juxtaposed in both form and content.

Dada montage's collection of narrative remnants create an intertextual space. However, the chaotic disparity of the assembled images made the reading of particular narratives difficult. In these collages there is a definite polarisation of sense and nonsense. Removed from their backgrounds, fragments are deprived of sense, functionality and coherence, and are redistributed and transformed into a web of nonsensical relativity. The integrity of the work now lay in the process and the significance of the material forms that were utilised. This differs remarkably from the collaged work of the Surrealists. The chief importance of Surrealism to the development of collage is due to its 'association of collage methods with the plane of the verbal – hence the appearance of a tension between matter and image, matter and text ...' (Taylor 2004:65). The Surrealists were instrumental in changing the nature of the relationship between text and image in the illustrated book.

In the previous section I discussed the nature of pre-twentieth-century illustration and the state of much recent contemporary illustration. Book illustration had previously mainly emphasised verbal

Assemblage (which is not discussed in this thesis) is considered a form of collage and involves the collaging or arranging of objects in three dimensions.

I have also included 'frottage' under my definition of forms of collage. Frottage involves making an impression of textures by means of rubbing. Frottage is an adaptation by the Surrealists of the old practice of 'rubbing'. Max Ernst arranged or collaged his collection of various rubbings/frottages to create other new images, such as landscapes. I included frottage here as it is a technique I have adopted in my own image creation.

Bricolage is based upon Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept of 'the *bricoleur*, who creates improvised structures by appropriating pre-existing materials' (Chandler 2002:203) (Lévi-Strauss defined this term within the field of cultural studies). *Bricolage*, like collage, creates new texts through deletion, substitution and transposition. The term *bricolage* is often used interchangeably with collage, especially within a literary context.

descriptions and followed logical, coherent narrative sequences. It was the excessive experimentation of the Cubists that first allowed for a deviation from these restrictions

... by their refusal to represent objects in isolation, their peculiar representation of distance and proximity, their subordination of perspective. By interrelating lettering, often 'hand-written,' with figurative shapes, they developed in their graphics a new rapport between text and the page. The cubist illustrated book ... juxtaposes the many-faceted poems of Guillaume Appolinaire, Pierre Reverdy, or Max Jacob and the multi-planed images of Pablo Picasso, Andre Derain, Georges Braque, and Juan Gris. This entails a transposition that stresses differences rather than simple equivalence. The cubist writer and painter moved beyond the surface of a single object to attain a new kind of simultaneity ... (Hubert 1988:5).

The avant-garde artists were attracted to literary texts that offered a departure from mimetic storytelling, but their illustrations chiefly focused on esthetic value. The Dadaists also produced illustrated books that

... sought to break down the order of textual space, the conventions of lettering, and what ever might smack of literary conformism. Pages in their books defied and challenged the reader mainly through the elimination of descriptive and narrative elements that might provide a stable identity for the author or his subject matter (Hubert 1988:5).

By managing to subvert mimetic, linear conceptions of time and space through collage, the Dadaist illustrator created a chaotic synchronicity that lent itself to 'impish subversion' (Hubert 1988:6) rather than the creation of valid intertexts.¹⁸¹ However, the central tenets of the Surrealist dialectic were also subversive in nature, the chief aims being to focus 'upon the unreliability of logic, the value of the dream, the flight from positivism, and the embrace of the absurd'(Taylor 2004:67). These intentions were outlined by Andre Breton in the *First Manifesto of Surrealism*, published in 1924.¹⁸² In this document Breton stated that Surrealism was to be 'physic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express, *verbally by means of the written word* or in any other manner, the actual functioning of thought' and that Surrealism was absolved 'from any aesthetic or moral concern' (Breton, cited in Taylor 2004:67).¹⁸³ A large component of Surrealism exhibited an affinity with the

¹⁸¹ Kurt Schwitters joined the Dada movement in 1918, but was not particularly politically inclined. Instead he created a series of collages 'using lithographic transfers to combine words/sounds from many languages without a formal text and images of found materials without concern for direction and readability, the whole united by the implied theme'(Johnson 2001:25). This series of works was entitled *Merz* and took an interest in pure form (rather than political commentary), which often culminated in nonsensical reading.

¹⁸² The body of work created under the broad and general category of Surrealism is extremely large and diverse. Including for example the category of Surrealist artworks called 'dream paintings', which are an arrangement of ideas and objects presented in the form of painted collages. A consideration of all of the various forms of Surrealism is beyond the scope of this thesis, hence I have focused my discussion on the heavily text-based, mixed media collages of Surrealism.

¹⁸³ The Surrealists were greatly influenced by the *papier collé*/collages of Picasso. Breton describes Picasso's 'sudden flash of inspiration ... sometime between *Factory*, *Horta de Ebro* and *Portrait of Kahnweiler* [where] he broke openly with the

textual – this is especially evident in the collage novels of Max Ernst. These books demonstrate ‘the flexibility of collage methods, their adaptability to both the visual and verbal modes’ (Taylor 2004:67). In Ernst’s collaged novels a transgression of boundaries between text and image is witnessed for the first time. With his illustrative, visual collages Ernst subsumes the literary text almost entirely, but unlike the destructive nonsense created by the Dadaists, Ernst sets up a series of intertexts. In Ernst’s *Une Semaine de bonté (A Week of Happiness)* (1934), he presents the reader with what appears to be a continuous narrative, the images in themselves substituting words. However, ‘narrative continuity is totally subverted for the sake of perilous forays from the banality and corruption of everyday existence into the world of the marvellous’ (Hubert 1988:256).

Ernst’s *Une Semaine de bonté* consists of one hundred and eighty collages, accompanied by various forms of paratext – titles, subtitles, quotations and captions. These paratextual elements provide the ‘text’ through and with which the collages are traditionally expected to be read.¹⁸⁴ The quotations are used to introduce each new cahier or illustration, and like the titles and subtitles function in a subversive manner.¹⁸⁵ These quotations, however, function as intertexts for the collages, as Antoine Compagnon states:

Quotation is a privileged element of the adaptation, for it is a locus of recognition, a guide in reading. It is perhaps for this reason that no text, however subversive it attempts to be, completely renounces all manner of quotation. Subversion displaces all competences, confuses their typology, but does not abolish them in principle, which would be tantamount to cutting oneself off from all reading (cited in Hubert 1998:270).

Compagnon goes further in relating the act of quotation to collage: ‘*les ciseaux* (scissors) and *le pot à colle* (glue), reading and writing, being merely a more adult version of collage’ (Hubert 1998:270). The quotations appropriated by Ernst belong to authors of the Surrealist movement, like Eluard or Breton, or to writers whose sentiments had resonance with the Surrealist objectives. These collected quotations form a literary collage throughout the novel, contradicting, complimenting and completing one another: ‘As there is no reason why surrealist writing should not answer to the same laws as the other kinds of literary discourse, the production of obscure meaning, of difficult interpretation, even of nonsense can only be a particular case of intertextuality’ (Riffaterre, cited in Hubert 1998:272).

treacherous nature of tangible entities ... and more particularly with the facile connotations of everyday existence’ (Breton, cited in Taylor:67).

¹⁸⁴ In this book, Ernst wrote the short text himself, eliminating the tension between author and illustrator – the existent tension remains between text and image. However, the ‘precarious situation of the text [in] *Une Semaine de bonté* raises problems concerning its genre, both as novel and as illustrated book’ (Hubert 1988:270).

¹⁸⁵ The table of contents in this book starts by announcing the ‘deconstruction of the traditional novel, and the quotations provide another device to stress the disruptive nature of Ernst’s fictions’ (Hubert 1998:278).

The disorder apparent in the text is reflected in the accompanying illustrations. In Ernst's collages constant disruption and disorder invade the picture plane. The detailed and confused images are

... constructed out of cheap engravings evoking the world of bourgeois entertainment, cheap horror stories, and topical illustrations of the *fin-de-siècle* and perhaps before. These collages required precision cutting and pasting, often resulting in adjacent images showing the brown and grey coloration of their original pages ... (Taylor 2004:68).¹⁸⁶

Ernst, like the Cubists and Dadaists, used mass-produced printed media from contemporary popular culture to build his images. Many of Ernst's collages also include material appropriated from scientific journals and other illustrated literary works. (Fig. 6 & 7) Like the earlier *papier collés* and unlike the collages of Dadaism, Ernst carefully cuts out and rearranges and recontextualises whole forms and objects in suggestive compositions. A further dimension is added to the reading of Ernst's collages, in that he cut up existing illustrations:

We assume of course that in these materials used by Ernst – *faits divers*, scientific vulgarizations, political harangues, and, above all, popular novels – text and illustration ran a parallel course. In the novels, the engravings give a faithful image of the characters, their adventures, and the setting. Ernst's collages, all of them transformations of nineteenth century illustrations, are conditioned by the text he eliminated or did not select. The viewer is tempted to reconstruct the original plates, the banal stories, through his own knowledge of potboilers (Hubert 1988:281).

The originary sources Ernst plundered are never recontextualised sequentially in his recreation of the new collaged novel. This served to heighten the disruption of any form of continuity in narrative reading and construction, and to further widen the intertextual field.

Ernst's collage novels need to be read and understood as an interplay between absence and presence. The presence of the quotations is read through the absence of their original contexts; the image-fragments layered in the visual collages highlight their break with a legible context. Although *Une Semaine de bonté* and Ernst's other collage novels and illustrated Surrealist poetry cannot be definitively interpreted, they may be apprehended in terms of the negation and interrogation of wider concepts.

Since Ernst's work was grounded in Surrealist ideologies, it was largely influenced by the notion of the unconscious, in the writing and reading of verbal and visual texts. This grounding allowed for the interrogation of text and image relations within the context of the book. Ernst used collage to subvert

¹⁸⁶ This discolouration, a trace of the original source, is witnessed in Ernst's *Let's Go. Let's Dance the Tenebreuse*, from *Rève d'une Petite Fille qui Voulut Entrer au Carmel* (1930) (Fig. 4) and in *The Swan is Very Peaceful ...* (1920) (Fig.5).

both verbal and visual mimetic linearity, creating discontinuity in both the literary and illustrative components of the book. Even the traditional paratextual elements of the book, which usually serve as a guide to the reader, offer confusion and endless deferral. The fracturing and fragmenting of previous texts from both the past and present instigated a collapse of time and space, temporally and materially. This multitude of synchronous, fractured narratives juxtaposed in the context of the codex, took on a new significance in the act of parodying and negating accepted narrative forms. As Sylwia Gib states, 'by the continual transgression of the categories of traditional narrative, the dialectics of history and discourse give rise to a new kind of narrative whose "upside down" operation may establish the surreality of the narrative text'(cited in Hubert 1988:272). The nonsense or surreality created by the literary quotations forces the reader to search for sense within the illustrations. The illustrations themselves offer little more than a further allusion to their sources. In this process the intertextual network or chain is lengthened and deferred and the hierarchy between text and image is collapsed. It is then no longer important to debate the imperialism of the text: 'Once Ernst has undercut the autonomy of these texts, they become fragments from dubious wholes or fabricated bits of non-existent works' (Hubert 1988:278).

Although the Surrealists made great advances in the complex relationship between literary and verbal texts, their subversive techniques did not manage to restore or recreate meaning through juxtaposition and recontextualisation. Many of the intertexts operated on a superficial and playful level, yet the attempt to set up transtextual dialogues is significant.

The changes that these early collages wrought on subsequent textual creation and consumption was profound. Much of the collage produced and exhibited in the later part of the century was based upon the conventions subverted in early Cubist, Dadaist and Surrealist works. Various forms of collage followed, ranging from the highly politicised montages of the 1930s to the critique of counter culture in the 1960s, to yet again more political commentary during the 1970s. The later emergence of a type of postmodern collage allowed for the use of the very same conventions employed by the early avant-garde collage artists. However, a shift in temporality from Modernist ideologies by the theoretically aware denoted a shift in authorial intentions. A ludic form of postmodern collage developed where self-parody and empty quotation dominated, and nothing is asserted except for unrelatedness and immediate visual consumption. The excessive borrowing and recycling of postmodern collage immediately highlights the perfunctory nature of the author. However, a more critical form of postmodern collage emerged simultaneously with the ludic aspirations of much of the cultural artifacts being produced. This form of collage addressed the issues being tackled within discourse and questioned the relevance of structure and meaning, through form, process, content and context. This facet of contemporary collage absorbed the ideas set forward by deconstruction and acknowledged the rich intertextual nature of all construction. However, this form of collage 'is less interested in the

occupants of that intertextual space which makes a work intelligible than in the conventions which underlie that discursive activity or space' (Culler 1981:130).

It is this form of active contemporary quotation and recontextualisation that I define in the following section. The preceding section provided a cultural context for the developments and changes manifest in collage. The next subsection provides a theoretical foundation for the concept of collage as an intertextual space, and the workings of collage in the production and reading of the illustrated artist's books and counter-books I produced.

3.2.2 Towards a Theory of Collage

In this subsection I bring together the various dichotomies that exist within postmodern and post-structuralist thought, to move towards a general theory of collage.

The concept of fragmentation is central to an understanding of the significance of collage. A shift in contemporary thought regarding the nature of our existence and everything that composes our inferred reality indicates a move from the idea of totality. This shift implies that we no longer accept the wholeness and unity of knowledge, memory, experience and understanding. The authority of apparently coherent, unified systems of thought has been repudiated. Contemporary culture has recognised and acknowledged that language is never neutral and self-contained. Rather, language is perceived as actively participating in the construction of our being. This essential break from wholeness revealed the sophistry of linearity and the promise of consistency and logical order it prefigured. The historic avant-garde, experiencing the improbability of the totality of existence, began destroying the coherence and autonomy assumed by society and its cultural artifacts. This was achieved through a process of fragmentation in visual art and literature.

The dissolution of organic unity resulted in the celebration of the fragment. Collage highlights this process of dissolution through the blatant use of isolated pieces separated or removed from a system. This is exemplified in the creation of my illustrated artist's books and through the counter-books, where particular visual or literary forms are extracted from the pages of 'original' texts and recontextualised as displaced fragments or forms. These collages, as a textual form, never attempt to group these fragments as a whole, in order to provide explanations for all aspects. Rather, collage foregrounds its construction from decontextualised elements, revering apartness and a sense of alienation. Each of these decontextualised fragments externalises tensions inherent in the process of recontextualisation.

The concept of linearity is one of the tensions the fragmented nature of collage openly challenges. A linear chronological representation implies finality, realism, a capturing of meaning and a singularity of experience and perspective within time and space. Collage moves beyond chronological representations, dispelling diachronicity through the presentation of multiple realities. Appropriated fragments/texts collected from different time frames – from both the past and the present; from different sources, authors and media – create a multiperspectival space, where no proper locations of origin or meaning are situated. Collage offers a synchronous experience of textualism using a collection of displaced remnants to elude the present and infinitely divide the past so as to create a space for the construction of meaning that invokes a constant state of unfolding. In a material sense, collage creates simultaneity of experience and reading through the juxtaposition of fragments that formally resist patterned coherence. Collage's segmentable and composable nature flouts all forms of traditional narrativity. This is strongly manifest within the context of the illustrated codex. Even though the leaves or pages of the codex form are fixed, the use of illustrative collage (as is apparent in the process of reading the book objects I have produced) allows the concepts of relativity to invade the interpretative process.

Collage is paradoxical in nature, simultaneously laying claim to the concepts of parallelism, convergence and divergence in its layering of fragments. The construction of meaning in the context or network created by the collage of elements involves the creation of relationships between what is cited, made apparent by the existent fragments and what has been edited or left behind. Collages are texts that consciously flaunt their own displacement; their physical manifestation makes clear that they are composed of a collection of traces and referrals. The post-structuralist delegitimation of language and its associated underlying structures of power and authority have made visible the lack of concrete finality or full presence of meaning in any text. Instead, a sense of meaning is garnered through what is left unsaid; significance is read through absence. Collage instigates the absence/presence binary in both formal and temporal terms. Formally, collage is composed of a collection of assembled appropriated elements. These individual pieces have been displaced, cut or removed from another context. During a process of recontextualisation, constructive fragmental functioning is dependent upon both what the fragment brings to the new context and what it leaves behind. Although the repositioned fragments create new meanings among themselves, the meanings generated are also a result of reading the collected fragments as traces, that is. the idea of reading a text through what lies 'outside' of the text/context is embodied within the idea of the counter-books, formed from the leavings of the book object's collages. The reader simultaneously reads and erases the inherent complexities each fragment brings to a collage, and thus interpretation is procured through the constant flicker between absence and presence.

A double reading is required of each element in collage. This dual process reflects the existent tension between what is presented on the surface through new juxtapositions and the inherent depth existent between these new formal combinations. This process of re-reading/re-writing a text – particular in post-structuralist and postmodernist discourses – is reflected in the very processes adopted in the creation of collage. Collage involves the temporal and physical disruption of existing texts to generate new narratives; this is manifest quite literally through my severing of literary texts from existent books to create new narratives through the collage process. This degenerative/generative nature of collage magnifies the alterity of the sign, by literally displacing the collaged element among different contexts, thus exhibiting the tenuous, ambiguous nature of meaning making. Simultaneously, collage highlights the importance of the context or frame in the writing/reading process, whereby each displaced fragment is read in terms of a new perceptual context and in relation to other fragments.

Contemporary society has experienced a marked shift from systems and narratives that foster hierarchy. Through its disjunctive nature collage epitomises this shift from centrism. The continuous layering of fragments results in a non-hierarchical and multicentred text, which allows for a multitude of entry points. Collage, like the rhizomic map, comprises a multitude of interconnected and interlaced entities. Depending on the interpretative perspective these parts acquire and lose significance, not because the fragments themselves are changing, but because the relations between the network of disparate elements alters with every subjective contemplation.

By openly flouting its construction through appropriation, recycling and allusion, collage draws attention to its properties of continual re-creation. This serves not only to collapse the dissonance between the perceived primary, original text and the reproduction, but also to de-emphasise the idea of a sole creator or single author. This self-reflexivity and transparent existence as artifice allows collage to accentuate the textual nature of all existence.

The next section deals with the practical work I produced for this study. As previously mentioned, these are illustrated artist's books in which collage forms the main component in the creation of the illustrations. These illustrated book objects are accompanied by indexical, supplementary counter-books, composed of the leftovers from the collage process. The process of creating these books from other old books has demonstrated the complex nature that exists between the literary text and the visual text, and how a combination of the two can subvert traditional conventions in narrative and the process of reading. The employment of collage as a visual means of creating a text or writing a narrative further complicates and liberates the traditional understanding of conceptions of knowledge and existence. As I have demonstrated above, the very nature of the medium of collage lends itself to our contemporary multi-textual understanding of society, culture and the world. The context of the

illustrative collages, within the codex, provides further allegorical and metaphorical impetus to these visual texts in challenging the very nature of narrative and textualism.

3.3 Collage and Counter-Collage

Each of the books in the series of book objects¹⁸⁷ created for the practical component of this study is some way or another comprised from the context and content of other books. In this discussion I will focus largely on one of my illustrated artist's book, *The Painted Bird* (2005). The initial source text for *The Painted Bird* is a passage taken from Jerzy Kosinski's novel also titled *The Painted Bird* (1978).¹⁸⁸ The visual text / illustrations for the book object, *The Painted Bird*, are created from the pages of other books. In both the textual and formal sense a new book is created from the selected fragments of existing books. The selection of the particular passage from Kosinski's novel continues the theme of death and burial in the province of the bird, which is a theme continued throughout the series of illustrated artist's books produced in this study. The material elements were sourced from the typeset pages of old books and were chosen mainly for their aesthetic qualities. However, as the illustrative

¹⁸⁷ The terms 'artist's book' – used interchangeably with 'book object' – is derived from the French *livre d'artiste*. Johanna Drucker (1995:2) explains the origins of this term:

The *livre d'artiste* came into being as a publishing enterprise initiated by such figures as Parisian art dealer Ambroise Vollard, whose first productions appeared in the mid-1890s, and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler who began publishing slightly more than a decade later. This trend caught on among other editors who saw the opportunity to market deluxe editions which bore the name of a rising or established star in the world of visual arts or poetry (Vollard was associated with Georges Roualt and Kahnweiler with Appollinaire, Picasso, and other Cubists). Deluxe editions predate the existence of the *livre d'artiste* and books with all of the elements of the genre – large sized format, elaborate production values such as hand colouring, virtuoso printing, fine binding, use of rare materials, texts, or images which catered to a sophisticated or elite market – had long been established in the printing industry. The *livre d'artiste* took advantage of the expanded market for visual art which had grown in the 19th century, along with other luxury markets expanded by industrial growth, the accumulation of capital, and an educated upper middle class with an appetite for fine consumer goods. The market of these books was developed as an extension of the market for painting, drawing, and sculpture. Kahnweiler was fully aware that he was creating a sideline in books which could be sold on the strength of the popularity and fame of artists whose work he dealt ... for artists they often offered the possibility to produce work which they wouldn't or couldn't normally produce themselves. This might include working in a printmaking medium, for example, or pursuing a theme which did not find an easy place in their other work. The artists whose work was featured in the early *livre d'artiste* are among the foremost in the twentieth century ... Pierre Bonnard, Henri Matisse, Joan Miro, Max Ernst, and Pablo Picasso. These books are finely made works, but they stop short of being artist's books. They stop just at the threshold of the conceptual space in which artists' books operate ... it is rare to find a *livre d'artiste* which interrogates the conceptual or material form of the book as part of its intention, thematic interest, or production activities. This is perhaps one of the most important distinguishing criteria of the two forms, since artist's books are almost always self-conscious about the structure and meaning of the book as a form.

There are further characteristics that separate the *livre d'artiste* and the artist's book, for example, in the production of the *livre d'artiste* the editor had much of the conceptual control, and artists and writers were contracted according to their respective styles. The *livre d'artiste* also tended to be 'embalmed in excessive production values, burdened by the weight of traditional format and materials' (Drucker 1995:4). The artist's book has instead transcended all formal, material and conceptual boundaries, challenging the very notion of the book. For a further detailed discussion on the history and development of the *livre d'artiste* see Drucker (1995:1-19).

¹⁸⁸ Kosinski's novel *The Painted Bird* is described as a work of postmodern fiction and is also placed under the genre of holocaust fiction. This novel is not described as postmodern for its formal conventions, but rather for the issues the content of the narrative works through. The narrative unfolds in Eastern Europe against the backdrop of rising Nazism and excessive xenophobia, and follows the journey of a troubled young boy considered as the Other. For a detailed discussion of this novel and the concept of the Other in postmodern cultural discourse, see Linn 1996:63-69.

collages grew from the textual raw material, the source material itself began taking on an important significance.

The source books need to be considered within three separate but inherently linked dimensions of the book, namely thematic content, materiality and formal characteristics. The use of old books as source material for the new collaged artist's books forays into all three aspects of the codex, both literally and conceptually. The source books sought and collected for use in the collages embody the traditional cultural and historical notions previously denominated as authentic knowledge. They entrench the Modernist idea of knowledge as linear and coherent, whole and absolute, represented by a finished text or a 'closed' work. The reason for these associations becomes apparent when one examines the colophons of each of the books selected, most of which predate the twentieth century. This is significant in terms of Barthes' description of 'closed' and 'open' texts. Barthes describes 'closed'/'readerly' texts as 'making up the enormous mass of our literature' before the previous century (Barthes, cited in Hawthorn 1994:164-165). This leads one to associate the thematic nature of the source codexes as tending towards fixity, 'plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages'(Barthes, cited in Hawthorn 1994:164). Many of the books found and collected as raw material were selected with little or no knowledge of their content (many exist as foreign language texts). Yet their placement in the libraries of academic institutions alludes to their logocentric nature. At the time of the production and reception these texts, they were regarded as comprising incontestable structures of signification validated by full presence and absolute fixed centres. With time, however, we have come to recognise that the text, like the book, is about absence – there is a 'fundamental impossibility for the book to contain anything except the sign of absence, it is the empty field showing all that it cannot enclose' (Drucker 1995:119).

It is pertinent to recognise that the above-mentioned books all formed part of an era of excessive dissemination and consumption of knowledge and information. Hence the source books under discussion formed part of a mass production of printed media – produced rapidly and at low cost. The books selected for use as raw material are not representative of limited edition volumes contained within handcrafted, precious bindings. Many of the primary books are soft-covered glue-bound volumes (*The Development of Reference Systems*); stapled hand-typed and corrected theses (*Waterink: Religieuse Volkskunde*); as well as low-budget mass-edited forms of popular fiction (*Rebecca*). A number of the collected volumes also include hard-covered, stitch-bound volumes in the form of dictionaries (*Dictionaire of Etymologique, Principia Latina - Part I*); mathematical tables (*Chambers's Mathematical Tables - New Edition*); and school readers (*Op Skool Met Josina, MacMillan's South African Readers I*) – reference books that would have involved large print runs and would have been widely distributed. Although a number of less popular, widely distributed books

have also been recycled (*Vittoria Alfieri; Autobiografia*), the emphasis here rests on the general utility and availability of the chosen source books, not on their stature as precious book objects.

These books – relegated to the racks of library sales – are considered past their usefulness and relevance in the validation of knowledge systems. In my collages they take on a new significance through a process of selection based upon the appearance of the book. In this act of choosing, the value of the book shifts from the import of the content to the materiality of the codex. The source books are examined and chosen through a close examination of a number of physical attributes. One of these physical criteria involves a consideration of the typefaces in which the book's text has been set or composed. The appearance and form of the typography is important, as well as the density of type per page and the balance of textual layout throughout the codex (see Fig. 8). The existence of typography on the surface of a page denotes a space that has already been occupied with narrative and significance. Most of the pages in the source books are inhabited by existing type; hence the few blank pages are of great value. The blank page denotes a space for new work and the creation of narratives less embedded within the appropriated materials. These are, thus, very valuable to acquire as they are often typeset on only one side of the page. Endpapers and title pages are also significant since they contain only single titles or phrases and not blocks of massed body copy and footnotes or endnotes.

The density of type per page is determined through a formal consideration of the set, measure, side bearings and various trackings of the printed typography. All of these factors dictate the space around and between individual letters, lines and paragraphs, which determines the different visual patterns and arrangements the type creates within the dimensions of the page. The typography is viewed not only as fonts on a page, but as forms in space capable of taking on new significance within the process of disassemblment and recontextualisation. Owing to the particular time period in which many of the books were printed, *Letterpress*, the most common method of typesetting, was used. This method was predominantly utilised for text in large print runs.¹⁸⁹ *Letterpress* is a relief method of printing, whereby a raised surface is inked and pressed against the surface of the page. Consequently the page exists as a myriad of indentations and textures. These tactile textures serve to activate the substrate, creating a dynamic space upon which new narratives may be written or created.

The fonts used and textures created by the type on the surface of the paper are viewed in conjunction with the paper type or quality found within the codex. The selection of different papers to work with is

¹⁸⁹ There are two *Letterpress* methods: the first involves the casting of individual letters, which are then assembled into words, inked up, printed, then cleaned and put away. These separate letters and punctuation marks were made from steel punches, struck into a softer metal to make the form in which the type was cast. The individual letters were then set by hand into an adjustable printing press. The second method, *Hot-metal* typesetting, involves the work of a typesetter or compositor who 'types' the text (copy) onto the printing apparatus. Moulds of each letter then slide into position forming the desired copy. Each line of text is then cast in lead via mechanical processes. These individual lines are then set into the type block and placed onto the bed of the press.

based upon various critical considerations. The most important factor is the ability of the paper to be manipulated through varied processes of cutting, tearing and folding. Older papers often tend to be more brittle and fragile and may crumble on a single fold. The book pages need to be strong enough for extensive handling in the creative process. The density of the page is also significant, and the pages must also be able to pass through the mechanisms of the photocopier and have enough claw to retain the ink powder on the surface of the page. The books selected are also assessed in terms of the amount of glue their pages can hold without warping. On a purely aesthetic, visual account, books and pages are selected for their tonal qualities or discolouring – interesting stains and foxing marks are significant in that they invade and corrode the page.

The source books are also chosen for traces of provenance. Pages bearing stains, folds, tears, and erosions through glue, light and insects mark their existence through time. Handwritten notes and names on end and title pages, lists of chronological library stamps and borrowing lists, all signify a succession of readers and a movement through the passage of time. Specific pages from the source codexes have been selected for use in the collages, for the traces they hold in the form of handwritten notes and the marking of lines or words that offered clarity and meaning to individual readers (see Fig. 9). I chose other books for their lack of apparent personal and physical traces. They exhibit few traces of having been handled, referenced and read, and offer ‘neutral’ fragments with which to write.

The formal conventions manifest within the source books are largely based upon traditional expectations and conventions of the book. The books are ordered into linear sequences and divisions and the reader is guided by standard paratextual elements. It is only once the disassemblment of the source books has commenced that a process of code changing is entered into. Through a process of defacement, obliteration, cutting up and erasure, the conventions of the codex, knowledge and reading are subverted and new books generated. Drucker (1995:109) describes the process of working with existing books as

... not a replication of a conventional form and it is not a completely new statement within the vocabulary of form. The transformed book is an intervention ... There is an aggressiveness to this violation of an existing text which is related to the gentler act of making a layered palimpsest. In a transformed work the presence of the original can be reduced to almost nil, or be so fragmented and restructured as to be a Frankenstein monster of the original. All of these practices of working onto or into an existing work are interventions into the social order, and the text of the world as it is already written.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Drucker (1995:109-116) discusses the work of the makers of various artists’ books who work through a process of transformation of other books to create new texts. I have selected a couple to introduce and discuss at various stages; their working methods and concepts have resonance with my own work discussed in the ensuing pages.

The process of transformation adopted in my book, *The Painted Bird*, began with the taking apart of the collected source books. This involved the removal of each book's cover in order to reach the exposed spine. From this location glue and stitching could be easily scraped off or cut to release the assembled leaves. Once the pages were freed from the confines of the binding, coherent sequence was abandoned and the pages were sorted for various uses in the new book. This sorting process was determined by aesthetics, paper types and sizes, and the separation of blank pages from typeset pages. Upon completion of the process of disassembly the form of the codex was extinct and I was left with raw materials made up of loose pages.

The signatures or leaves of *The Painted Bird* comprise the pages of a single source book – I chose to use only one book in order to establish consistency in the size and nature of the new format. The majority of these pages have gone through a process of erasure in order to restore a sense of 'blankness' to the pages. This process of neutralising the page involved running separate leaves through a photocopy machine in order to 'black out' the existent text. These ink-blackened pages were then further worked on with etching hardground and lithography crayons.¹⁹¹ Although this continual erasure of the existent narrative was performed, the original type still seeps through the blackening. This resurfacing text, however, no longer inheres as an intruding significant structure. Rather it dynamises the substrate in the form of textures and visual forms, creating an active palimpsest. The collaged illustrations are composed upon either the blackened pages or the blank pages, the latter also revealing traces of other narratives through their Braille-like textures rising from the other printed side of the page.

The collages were created by the cutting up of a variety of books and papers, creating a variety of tones and textures. Figure 10 shows a detail from an illustration from *The Painted Bird*. A suggested interpretation for this image is to read it as a dense forest canopy as seen in flight from above. This

¹⁹¹ In Tom Phillips' book object *A Humument*, a process of erasure is also followed in order to de-emphasise the presence of the originary text. In 1966 Phillips launched a search for a book which he would save from obscurity by reworking its pages. He was rewarded with the finding of William H. Mallock's *Human Document* (1892), in the bin of a local bookshop. Phillips transformed this Victorian novel through his 'sensitivity to the existing structures of the page, as well as the complexities of the book form in its entirety'. Phillips removed unwanted words from the text using pen and ink. He then continued to further hide the existent text through the application of layers of paint to the book pages. Drucker (1995:109-110) describes how from the effaced text of Mallock's story

Phillips allowed another story to emerge whose hero is named 'Toge'. This word can only occur on pages where the words 'together' or 'altogether' appeared in the original text (the only words in which these letter combinations occur, thus the story of 'Toge' is always delimited in advance by the possibilities latent in Mallock's text).

In contrast to my own use of the source book, Phillips further employed the book's existent structures by utilising the margins of the removed text block as a frame to his inserted images. The appearance and pattern of type also dictated the new form:

The linear form of type, when allowed to show, sometimes functions as an element of pictorial composition – a break between paragraphs becoming a point of demarcation for a horizon line in a sketched landscape. But the type can also function simply as the grid on which an abstract design is enmeshed or from which a pattern is elicited (Drucker 1995:111).

Phillips allowed Mallock's work 'differing degrees of preservation'; hence he managed to create an infinite number of varied compositions, even though he was bound by the very rigid grid delineated by the original book.

image is constructed from a myriad paper shards, some cut from the ‘untouched’ or raw pages removed straight from the source codex. These pieces still exhibit the markings of their original text through the display of fragments of letters and punctuation marks on a cream-coloured paper background. Other pieces show the distinctive *moiré* patterns of half-tone screen printing. These particular source pages have had other photographic images and textures transferred onto their surface in order to enhance the variety of tones, textures and cutting patterns used within the new codex. Further cut out pieces show text veiled by blackening ink, printmaking crayons and fragments of the transferred imagery. All of the fragments comprising the paper forest were cut carefully and individually from the source papers using a craft knife, arranged on the blackened format and glued down piece by piece. The weaving of various different narratives occurs within the paper canopy and between the canopy and the background. The original contents of the background page visibly bleed through and interweave with the new surface texts, perpetually leaving traces and continually producing new texts.

Another way of utilising the raw materials collected from other books (that is conceptually similar in process to Phillips) allows the original text to dictate or delimit the possibilities of the new text. This delineated form of utilising the appropriated raw materials is illustrated through the process used in the creation of the illustrated double-page spread (Fig. 11), which may be perceived as the welling up of fear in the chest of the sacrificial bird. This collage is constructed from the individual quotation marks cut from an entire book and layered at the top of the format as though trying to escape the confines of the page. The shape and size of this form was determined by the number of quotation marks which existed in the source text.¹⁹² In the creation of the collages for *The Painted Bird* there is a tension between a process of playful unrestricted cutting and a cutting system delimited by the original texts. These processes cause the images to be read on a metaphoric level, where the form and process become crucial to the understanding of the intended narrative.

This process of obsessively collecting and cutting a variety of different extant source texts to create ‘raw materials’ for new texts highlights the paradox inherent in the idea of conceiving of old books as

¹⁹² Another artist’s book which utilises the existent linguistic structure to establish the visual co-ordinates and map the form of the new text (Drucker 1995:116) is Marcel Broodthaers’ reworking of Stéphane Mallarmé’s *Un Coup de Dés* (1969). Drucker (1995:115) describes Broodthaers’ conceptual process:

Broodthaers took the structure and layout of Mallarmé’s proposals for the poem (which went unpublished in his lifetime) and represented them as a schematic work. Where each line of the poem should lie on the page a dark black line, simple, geometric, stark is placed in its stead. This is a physical equivalent, a moral inequivalent, a recapitulation and an obliteration ... It is flattened into form. Broodthaers reduces *Un Coup de Dés* to its structure – or to put it another way he elevates the structure of the work to a concept worthy of study in its own right ... Rendering the structure concrete, visible, almost tactile.

What is significant here is that Broodthaers’ new text is already delimited by Mallarmé’s original text – just as the quotation mark form is determined by the source book – and that the new text transcends any textual form in the conventional sense, existing instead as a visual (textual) form. Broodthaers’ new form subsumes the structural elements that composed and comprised a specific text, just as the new form in Fig. 11, composed of the quotation marks that functioned as structural elements in their original text, transcends the linguistic function of the quotation mark garnering new visual and temporal significance.

capable of existing as 'raw materials'. The disassemblment and separation of the codex disturbs narrative coherence and textual linearity, disrupting traditional readers' expectations and reader response. The erasure of the contents of the page through a process of 'blackening' serves to undermine and subvert traditional notions of Knowledge and the Word as concrete proof of truth and reality. The cutting of pages serves to free signifiers from a linear structural framework, simultaneously severing the power of the authority of the text. However, these processes do not render the text neutral (raw, unprocessed), they merely fragment and free the text allowing for the arrangement of new texts. The illustrations of *The Painted Bird* use collage to write new narratives from old narratives through the acts of layering and juxtaposing other texts. In this collaged form, the illustrations self-consciously exhibit their construction from other texts, hiding and revealing old and new texts in the manner of the palimpsest. The illustrations are apprehended not only through what exists on the page in fragments and traces, but through what is missing or absent from the page.¹⁹³

In Figure 11 the pillaged quotation marks are read through the absence of their surrounding text, and it was *this* text that determines the present state of the floating punctuation marks. Through the creative progression of *The Painted Bird* it became apparent that I was working within and between two interlinking systems. This is a process similar in nature to the use of dressmaking patterns: the existing, old or other books constituted the patterns for the new illustrated books, and the residues or leftover bits of the patterns, books or pages revealed another narrative, or counter narrative to my illustrated narrative.

¹⁹³ Buzz Spector is an example of another book artist who transforms existing codexes in the activity of writing new texts or creating new books. Spector deals with the subject of absence versus presence in his book entitled *Passage* (1994). The book object *Passage* is presented to the reader as a standard, traditional book:

The work is bound like a conventional book, sewn and glued into a case binding. The full measure of pages fill out the spine to a thickness of slightly more than an inch. Standing on the shelf or seen from the spine side the work appears to be a regular book, stamped with its title, author's name, and publisher. But inside the book the pages turn out to be torn, each page slightly longer than the next, so that the entire body of the book slants at an oblique angle. The same text has been printed on each page and the tearing allows the book to be read through the wavering, flickering disruptions caused by the physical transformation. The word 'Passage' appears at the top of the page, suggesting a running head ... since the text begins in mid-sentence there is good reason to believe that the page is supposed to exist within a larger book (Drucker 1995:118).

The pages of the book reveal the story of a Hebrew scholar, who knows the Talmud completely by memory. If given a line from the Talmud's text he could tell from memory 'what letter occupied that site on every following page' (Drucker 1995:119). Spector created *Passage* in response to this anecdote, stating that the scholar was obviously mistaken about his status as a scholar, because for Spector 'books only show what I have forgotten' (cited in Drucker 1995:119). *Passage* is about books' representations of absence, books as indicators to what has not been recorded within their pages. *Passage* reminds the reader that books are material objects in themselves, not representatives of all existence. *The Painted Bird* works on a similar level, indicating to the reader that it is merely a text constructed from other texts, read as/in the absence of other fuller texts, that it is a book containing fragments of stories and not trying to represent a whole universe or single, authoritative perspective. Its functioning as an illustrative book (autonomous artist's book) also emphasises the book's nature as a subjective interpretation of a text, not a translation of the verbal source.

3.3.1 *Ergon* and *Parergon*

In his book *The Truth in Painting* (1987), Derrida introduces his understanding of the term '*parergon*', which he based on Immanuel Kant's writings on aesthetic framing. The idea of the *parergon* is related to the broader notion of the terms 'border' or 'frame',¹⁹⁴ but exceeds both of these terms in complexity and ambiguity. Jonathan Culler in his book *On Deconstruction* (1982) provides a range of interpretations inferred by the term '*parergon*', for example in Greek '*parergon* means "*hors d'oeuvre*", "accessory", "supplement". A *parergon* in Plato is something secondary' (1982:193). Derrida uses the terms '*parergon*' (and '*ergon*') interchangeably for frame and work; however, his use of the term is far more intricate than a mere relationship between what lies inside or outside. Derrida (1987:9) describes the more complex nature of the *parergon* as being

... neither work (*ergon*) nor outside the work [*hors d'oeuvre*], neither inside nor outside, neither above nor below, it disconcerts any opposition but does not remain indeterminate and it gives rise to the work. It is no longer merely around the work. That which it puts in place – the instances of the frame, the title, the signature, the legend, etc.

When Derrida describes the *parergon* as framing or titling the work, he is referring to a process or entity that contextualises the work. Culler supports this use of the term 'frame' over 'context', as he proposes that in a postmodern climate the context is produced and not given:

The expression of framing the sign has several advantages over context: it reminds us that framing is something we do; it hints of the frame-up ... , a major use of context; and it eludes the incipient positivism of 'context' by alluding to the semiotic function of framing in art, where the frame is determining, setting off the object or even as art, and yet the frame itself may be nothing tangible, pure articulation (cited in Hawthorne 1994:75).

Derrida also understands the *parergon* as a supplement to the *ergon* (finished or accomplished work) - as an addition, a secondary object, an excess, a parenthesis, everything the 'proper' work is not, cannot and must not be:

A *parergon* comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside. Like an accessory that one is obliged to welcome on the border, on board ... (Derrida 1987:54).

¹⁹⁴ The concept of the 'frame' is complex and changes markedly according to the context (literary or visual) in which it is used and discussed. Hawthorne (1994:74-76) provides an overview of the different stances adopted by various theorists, including Bal, Caws, Goffman, Eco, McHale, Riffaterre and Furbank. For this discussion, I have adopted Derrida and Culler's use of the term.

However, the distinction between the text and the supplement, the work and the frame/context is very fine, and often, as Culler (1982:198) explains

[a]n external frame [*parergon/parerga*] may function as the most intrinsic element of a work, folding itself in; conversely, what seems the most inner or central aspect of a work will acquire this role through qualities that fold it back outside of and against the work. The secret center that appears to explain everything folds back on the work, incorporating an external position from which to elucidate the whole in which it also figures.

The *parergon* serves to dismantle ‘most reassuring conceptual oppositions ... such as presence and representation, visibility and invisibility, text and context, representation and reality ...’ (Wolfreys 2004:88). *Parergon* delivers the reader to a transcendental space or border, where the stability and fixity in signification is continually evaded. The *parergon* itself is also evasive: ‘the parergon is a form which has as its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy’ (Derrida 1987:61).

In contemporary discourse (post-structural and deconstructionist) the *parergon* is a crucial element in the reading of a text. This is a result of the impossibility of full presence within the *ergon*. In Chapter Two I discussed the metaphysics of presence within a text (that a text always represents an absence of what is not written or said). Without this essential, inherent lack within the ‘proper’ text, the role of the *parergon* becomes redundant.

I have introduced Derrida’s *parergon* for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it aids in the investigation of the relationship between the ‘completed’ illustrations in my books and the remnants of the cutting process; and secondly because it challenges the traditional relationship between the verbal narrative text and the visual illustration. In both of these instances there exists a very fine and complex distinction between what is considered the primary and the secondary text; and what is deemed important (even vital) (*ergon*) and less important and possibly dispensable (*parergon*) within the context of the illustrated codex.

3.3.2 Text and Image within the Codex

Thus far in the discussion of the practical component of this study, I have established a context in which *The Painted Bird* was conceptualised and created. *The Painted Bird* – like the other book objects in this series – visually describes the death of a number of birds, based on four paragraphs selected from Kosinski’s novel. The selection of only a fragment of narrative from within an associated

‘complete’ novel, *The Painted Bird* (1978), brings to the fore the idea that our existence is constructed from a collection of smaller fragments or little narratives. The passage chosen from Kosinski’s *The Painted Bird* – the only piece throughout the novel that deals with bird imagery and death – was selected as the primary, verbal text to be re-created visually by means of illustration. The illustrative mode adopted was that of collage, using materials appropriated directly from other books in the form of paper cut outs. These cut fragments, although worked over with blackening inks and the transfer of other existing images onto their surface, still exhibit traces of their original sources. The forms in many of the illustrations in my work *The Painted Bird* have been delimited by the writing, typographic layout, and construction of the appropriated materials’ original sources.

The content of the illustrations, however, was largely unaffected by the traditional restrictions ‘set up’ by the primary verbal passage. The ability to digress from the verbal text – which as demonstrated in section 3.1 is often still adopted as the dominant text to be merely translated – was validated by the context of the illustrations within the artist's book: a book which combines ‘the formal means of its realization and production with its thematic or aesthetic issues’(Drucker 1995:2). Working within a postmodernist and deconstructionist climate of thought also encouraged me to subvert or challenge the roles of both the illustrator and illustration.

In the process of illustrating Kosinski’s text I adopted a mode of visually (and temporally) ‘re-writing’ the initial narrative. The selected passage reads in a linear sequence starting with the capture and death of the first chosen bird, through to the death of the last bird in the protagonist’s collection. The visual narrative, however, begins with the death of one of the captured birds and works *backwards* through the envisioned bird wars, to the choosing of the initial sacrificial bird mentioned in the verbal text. The narrative ends in a depiction of the last remaining live birds’ perspectives from their positions of imprisonment. By breaking up the text and rearranging the resultant shorter fragments, a cyclical narrative was created in contrast to the linearity of the original verbal passage.

This initial cutting up and collaging of the verbal text (temporally and then visually), immediately disqualifies an absolute illustrative translation of the text. The process of fragmenting the verbal narrative serves to move the text/illustration relation from traditional consecutive and simultaneous reading patterns, which are usually initially delineated by the verbal text.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, because the visual images are placed in the context of the codex and are presented as illustrations, a ‘syntactic problem of hierarchy’ still exists (Varga 1989:41). A hierarchy is implied between the particular

¹⁹⁵ In her article *Criteria for Word-and-Image Relations* Kibedi Varga (1989:33-34) states:

From the point of view of production, image and text always appear consecutively insofar as they stem from different artists, but from the point of view of reception, there is a great difference between cultural products which offer words and images at the same time and cultural products which clearly belong to one domain only, although they owe their existence to a cultural product previously made in another domain.

‘primary’ verbal text and the secondary visual text. In the case of the verbal text preceding the image, the visual text is traditionally described as an illustration.¹⁹⁶ Varga (1989:41) states that in text/image relations ‘the part which appears later dominates the original part; it is in every case a statement about and thus a reduction of the older object.’ This statement implies that illustrations within the illustrated codex, *The Painted Bird*, having appeared after the creation of the written text, are secondary reductions of the primary or whole verbal text. This deduction – a persistent conception as demonstrated in the first part of this chapter – allows one to further delineate the text/illustration relationship, whereby the literary narrative (*ergon*) is supplemented by the illustrations (*parergon*).

In the process of the creation and illustration of *The Painted Bird* I resisted any attempt at a parallel interpretation between text and image. This deviation is evidence of my own background or approach as the illustrator, illustrating within a literary context, that is from within the reading/writing of books and literature. This resulted in an interpretation that was highly textual and intertextual, both formally and conceptually. Working within the medium of collage further aided the self-reflexive addition of new dimensions to the literary fragment. Figure 12 is an illustration from *The Painted Bird* which ‘translates’ visually a key moment within the verbal narrative – the point at which the chosen bird is marked with coloured paints to differentiate it from the flock.¹⁹⁷ In this illustration, the bird’s body, an imminent sacrifice, is represented by paper fragments covered with the traces of past texts and past deaths, alluding to the countless number of birds sacrificed before the present victim. The markings painted onto the bird’s palimpsest-like form, comprise letters cut from the footnotes of a Dutch/Greek translation (*Kommentar Zu Athenagoras*). The footnotes (being supplementary to the text proper) represent another narrative within the book – different but inherently related to the main text. Painted onto the body these letters mark the bird with something other than that represented by the main flock. The fact that the letters are Greek has an additional literary allusion to the autobiographical writings of Virginia Woolf and her Greek-speaking birds. During her illnesses Woolf experienced aural hallucinations of birds singing in Greek outside her sickroom window.¹⁹⁸ It was during these periods of sickness that she felt completely isolated, victimised and alienated from society, by and through her mental state. The Greek letters clinging to the paper feathers of the painted bird mark the bird as the

¹⁹⁶ If the visual image precedes the word, the term used is *eksphasis*, this term usually being used in the context of painting (see Varga 1989:33-51).

¹⁹⁷ The excerpt discussed in the above section follows and exists as part of the four paragraphs chosen from Kosinski’s novel:

Finally, after prolonged scrutiny, he would choose the strongest bird, tie it to his wrist, and prepare stinking paints of different colours which he mixed together from the most varied components. When the colours satisfied him, Lekh would turn the bird over and paint its wings, beak, and breast in rainbow hues until it became more dappled and vivid than a bouquet of wildflowers (Kosinski, cited in Linn 1996:64).

¹⁹⁸ In her definitive biography of Virginia Woolf, Hermione Lee (1997:195-196) discusses the various sources relating the incident of the Greek-speaking birds:

She recalls these hallucinations in her 1922 memoir ‘Old Bloomsbury’. Here she says that in 1904 Vanessa [Bell] moved the family into Gordon Square ‘while I had lain in bed at the Dickinsons’ house at Welwyn thinking that the birds were singing Greek choruses ...’ Leonard Woolf mentions these Greek-talking birds twice in his autobiography ... Quentin Bell says of her 1904 breakdown that ‘it was here that she lay in bed, listening to the birds singing in Greek ... And so the Greek-talking birds settle in as verified, striking features of her ‘mania’.

Other. The illustration in Figure 12 is a subjective visual interpretation of the verbal narrative and not a definitive writing to be ultimately accepted by the reader. The visual rendering of the literary text in Figure 12 is just one example from *The Painted Bird* of the impossibility of sheer translation. Translation is a form of interpretation and '[w]hen we interpret, we betray; we delete and add. There are some fundamental epistemological limits to our endeavor' (Boehm, cited in Varga 1989:51).

The literary text that had already been changed from a linear to a cyclical narrative sequence by the parallel visual narrative was further deviated from with a change in the perspective from which the verbal story was relayed. The verbal text is from a human perspective, while the illustrations are situated in the realm of the bird – the bird's eye view of flying above the paper forest, of being trapped within the paper vine cages supported by sticks, of fighting among paper splinters and pencil marks in the aerial bird massacre, and of experiencing the chaos of a mass of bird voices expressed by dynamic commas freed into space. This visually describes a narrative tangent to the verbal text. The conspicuous deviance from and excessive subversion of the verbal text allows the visual narrative to become less text bound.

Once the illustrations for *The Painted Bird* were complete and visualised within the format of the codex, they created an untenable tension throughout the book between the verbal and visual narrative. The illustrations, no longer a direct translation of the literary text, and no longer a mere supplement to the verbal text, serve to frustrate the expectations of the reader. Although contemporary culture has experienced what Mitchell terms 'a pictorial turn' when text and illustration are placed together in the codex, the 'imperialism of the text' persists in the mind of the reader. This reliance on the text is heightened when the illustrations confound or subvert traditional narrative conventions and/or pictorial conventions.

In order to alleviate the tension between the two parallel narratives and abate the dominance of the literary text, the reference passage – consisting of the four paragraphs in their original linear state – is placed at the end of the book. This placement forces the reader to confront and assimilate the illustrations without a textual crutch.¹⁹⁹ Even though it is acceptable and encouraged in contemporary texts for illustrations to challenge 'the autotelic composure of the text it joins' and create 'vital critical tensions between different textualities, tensions which in the reconcilable (similarity) and the irreconcilable (difference) meet, align, shift and part', the positioning of the text at the back of the book also has wider implications in terms of categorically disrupting the traditional text/illustration

¹⁹⁹ In Chapter Two, section 2.1.1.3 I discuss how the postmodern novel highlights the materiality of the book through various formal conventions. In *The Painted Bird* the splitting of the literary and visual text – which would conventionally be read in conjunction – compels the reader to page back and forth during the reading process. This highlights the physicality of the codex and in doing so makes the reader aware of the construction of the various narratives or supposed realities. The position of the verbal text at the back of the codex also usurps the reader's traditional expectations of the book, foregrounding the very patterned construction of all knowledge.

hierarchy. Through this shift a number of questions are raised: Which text is primary and which text secondary? Which text represents the 'real' narrative? Who holds authorial control – the writer or illustrator? A dramatic transposition in the *ergon/parergon* relationship between text and image is thus witnessed.

The Painted Bird as an illustrated artist's book is not intended to reduce the literary parallel or its contribution to this book's creation, thereby repressing 'the multiple play of language, convention and rhetoric in visual imagery and vision itself'. Instead, it poses new ways of approaching and reading the visual components within the context of the codex (traditionally literary bound). The position of the illustrations, bound in a sequence within the codex without the apparent encasing of a literary narrative, creates the impression that the visual illustrations are the primary text. Notwithstanding, the book should be read as in intertextual space, where the importance of a designated primary and secondary text becomes redundant. The illustrations in *The Painted Bird* are created as 'metatexts', 'writing' upon another text (the literary passage), making it legible in different ways and concomitantly increasing its visibility. The placing of the literary narrative at the end of the visual narrative allows one to write the literary text upon the illustrations, instead of the traditional mode where the verbal text comes first. In this artist's book, both the illustrated and the literary text represent the 'real' text. However, within the postmodern climate there exists no authentic text; all texts are composed of and represent fragments from different vantage points: 'Each translation necessarily displaces the structures of meaning it ostensibly repeats, and creates the possibility of significant variation.'

Understood in this sense, both narratives are equally relevant interpretations, and both texts exist as valid entities that represent an inherent lack or absence of full presence. Hence, these two parallel, convergent and divergent narratives, bound within a single codex, supplement each other. Both texts shift simultaneously between the positions of *ergon* and *parergon*: the illustrations provide a context for the text and the text provides a frame for the illustrations; the literary text supplements the illustrations while the illustrations are an active addition to the text. The evasive nature of the *parergon* is demonstrated clearly in the context of the illustrated codex, setting up an intertextual interpretative space and in so doing denying either text dominion. The splitting or fragmenting of the narratives (both temporally and physically) gives the reader more freedom to move within the interpretative space.

The position of the literary narrative at the end of *The Painted Bird* also suggests a form of 'textual glossing' – the process of textual fragmentation discussed in Chapter Two (2.1.1.3). In this instance, the literary text is positioned in the codex in the space conventionally occupied by the endnote. This fragment of a larger literary narrative is contained within the 'endnote' and read as supplementary to

the visual narrative, which occupies the position of the ‘text proper’ in the book. This literary endnote serves not only to supplement the visual text, but also to subvert its narrative content by offering a related but contradictory narrative of its own. Hence, even though the narratives have been separated, there is still a tension between the verbal and visual text whereby the supposed marginal narrative continuously reasserts itself.²⁰⁰

The Painted Bird exhibits the recognition of the illustrator as a subjective, intertextual reader and writer of viable narrative texts. These texts illustrate narrative perspectives that digress from, converge with, complement, supplement and subvert the literary text. In *The Painted Bird* the literary text is formally placed in a secondary position within the codex, but temporally still serves to function as an equally valid intertext within the reading/writing process. My illustrated book thus serves to subvert traditional oppositions between text and image within the confines of the codex.

3.3.3 The Counter-Book

The first book completed for the practical component of this study, *The Dead Bird* (2003), comprises a codex where the text and image run parallel to each other on facing pages. As in *The Painted Bird*, the illustrations digress from the content of the literary narrative. The source passage is taken from Margaret Wise Brown’s *The Dead Bird* (1938), and describes the finding and subsequent burial of a dead bird by a group of children. The accompanying visual illustrations describe the death and funeral procession of the bird from his fellow birds’ perspectives. The illustrations in *The Dead Bird* are still relatively figurative and the story moves through time and space in a cohesive linearity. Yet the addition of the perspective of the bird serves to heighten our awareness of the simultaneity of existence and the multiperspectival nature of narrative. When the images start digressing from figurative representation, the verbal narrative serves to guide the reader through a system of suggestive associations and connotations between text and image. There is also an intratextual relationship between the illustrations which helps the reader to interpret the pictorial narrative. The working of this intratextual relationship is demonstrated between Figure 13 and Figure 14. In Figure 13 a suggested reading is offered of the announcement of the bird funeral by a being masked by the curtain of death. The dynamic marks emanating from the collaged gramophone coupled with the printed paper feathers alludes to the idea that the speaker is a bird. This illustration (read in context with Fig. 14) is accompanied by the following verbal text:

²⁰⁰ I feel at this stage I must make clear that my intention is not to denigrate the literary text within the codex. Through my working process I have rather tried to highlight the power of illustration, not merely as a direct visual translation of or supplement to the literary narrative, but as an equally valid text within the book.

And even as they held it, it began to get cold, and the limp bird body grew stiff, so they couldn't bend its legs and the head didn't flop when they moved it. That was the way animals got when they had been dead for some time – cold dead and stone still with no heart beating (Brown 1938:11-12).

This text serves to prompt the reader to make associations between the live marks released from the gramophone (bird song or voice) and the trapped marks in the stone-like form, an allusion to the last vestiges of life trapped in the stone-cold body of the bird. Subsequently, these marks are read throughout the book as connotative of the presence and activity of bird life.

The illustrations in *The Painted Bird* exhibit a far less figurative mode of working and display a greater sense of play with texture, layering, cutting and the direct utilisation of the formal typographic elements appropriated from the source text. The illustrations also deviate markedly from the literary narrative and become closely linked conceptually to the process of collage and the inherent connotations bound up within the recycled materials. These digressions from highly representational pictorial forms coupled with the temporal and physical distance from the source text, make the reading of these illustrations intricate and involved. *The Painted Bird*, composed of cut-out elements illustrating a fragmented narrative displaced from its conventional authoritative position in the codex, strongly suggests absence.

The opening illustrative spread in *The Painted Bird* (Fig.15) visually describes an aerial perspective of the carnage on the ground below. The image is composed of the remnants of the paper birds which were cut out and pasted as part of the collage depicting the bird wars (Fig 16). In Figure 15 the black remnants are suggestive of the ossified remains of countless bird corpses, the pitted white form suggesting the pecked and broken paper body of the painted bird. As witnessed in *The Dead Bird*, an intratextual relationship is formed and aids in the reading of (and between) images within the codex. However, the reader may only penetrate this intratextual system once the initial elemental forms comprising the image have been apprehended. Unlike in *The Dead Bird*, as discussed above, *The Painted Bird* lacks the literal visual (and verbal) clues that provide an entry point for the reader.²⁰¹

As the study progressed the relationship between the collages and the residues of the cutting process began taking on an increasingly interdependent nature. The remnants of the cutting process began revealing the incompleteness of the illustrated book, and as such became essential to both the construction and reading of *The Painted Bird*. What emerged from this creative process was an

²⁰¹ Throughout *The Painted Bird* there is no literal depiction of a bird. Instead the bird is created through fragments, marks, obscure perspectives and the evocation of atmospheres and anthropomorphic feelings. Often the presence of the birds is described through their absence – for example, by the row upon row of empty pegs on the vines strung up between the trees, awaiting the arrival of the painted birds' corpses or the depiction of the dark insides of the empty cages.

illustrated codex comprising two volumes, the one being the illustrated book, *The Painted Bird*, containing the collages (*ergon*), and the other a counter-book comprising the remains or counter-collages (*parergon*) of the collage process. The counter-book serves to provide an entry point to the reading of the collages.

Each of the illustrated books in the series of book objects created for this study comprises the fragments and traces of other codexes. The mass-produced source books were cut up or plundered and, as has been described previously, this exercise could be viewed as an act of violence and brutality and could thus be read as a metaphor for the defacing and violating of past conventions of knowledge, truth, meaning and memory, reducing past systems of belief and understanding to worthless, dislocated fragments:

As a cultural form the book has a long and complex legacy as the Law and the Word. It has a vernacular and secular history as well, and in this multifaceted identity it is like language – which lives the most exalted philosophical existences and serves at the basis of the most mundane transactions (Drucker 1997:102).

Despite this disturbing disassembly of the old books, the constructions of the new book objects involve a process of painstaking, delicate and obsessive reconstitution. These illustrated books represent new forms of knowledge, and speak of the fragility, relativity and instability of knowledge: ‘The book,’ states Drucker (and noted by poet and philosopher Edmond Jabes) (1997:103) ‘is never closed. Its infinitude is always inscribed by its boundaries, which, by marking themselves, indicate the place of questioning the possibility for containment.’ These collaged books also speak of the constructed and refined nature of existence.

The counter-books created by binding together the remains of the old source books and paper cuttings emphasise Walter Benjamin’s previously cited notion that any fragments of the past that are not recognised by the present threaten to disappear irretrievably. The counter-books serve as a contemporary container for past knowledge and it is through these fragments of the past, incorporated into the present, that we perceive and construct our current ‘realities’. Like past texts, historical narratives and knowledge systems, the counter-books serve as an index or key to the understanding of the new illustrated books. *The Painted Bird* is read through its accompanying counter-book, containing all of the matter left over from its creation. The apparent absences generated by the cut-out pieces in *The Painted Bird* are read formally through fragmented pieces of typography, paper chips, a mass of displaced punctuation marks and the raw edges of the cut-out collaged shapes. The counter-book, the *parergon*, exists as the secondary object – the excess, the supplement, separate from the illustrated book, but indispensable in the apprehension of its narratives. The counter-books, which

serve to restore absence on a content level, exemplify a form of code changing and make use of subcodes/paratextual elements to frame and contextualise the illustrated book.

3.3.4 Code Changing

As has been discussed in the preceding chapters of this thesis, signs gain meaning through their proximity to other signs. In isolation signs are less meaningful. From a post-structuralist perspective it is understood that signs are not fixed entities, 'but rather a meeting ground for independent elements'(Eco 1979:49) whose different combinations and meetings set up significance to be interpreted. Furthermore, as Chandler (2002:147) states, '[I]f the relationship between a signifier and its signified is relatively arbitrary, then it is clear that interpreting the conventional meaning of signs requires familiarity with appropriate sets of conventions.' Such conventions or frameworks are existent to simultaneously organise signs and allow signs to be apprehended by the reader through learned (conscious or unconscious) conventions in the form of codes. 'Codes organize signs into meaningful systems which correlate signifiers and signifieds' (Chandler 2002:147).²⁰² Eco (1979:49) goes further in stating

... that it is not true that a code organizes signs: it is more correct to say that codes provide the rules which *generate* signs as concrete occurrences in communicative intercourse. Therefore the classical notion of the 'sign' *dissolves* itself into a highly complex network of changing relationships.

Chandler (2002:147-148) describes codes as a 'social dimension in semiotics: a code is a set of practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework.' Stuart Hall (cited in Chandler 2002:148) goes further in stating that 'there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code'. In the literary or visual text various codes function interactively to establish

²⁰² The concept of the code(s) with regard to written and visual language is largely situated and discussed within semiotic discourse. Hawthorn (1994:23) explains how the

... influence of Linguistics and Semiotics has led to an increased recourse to the term *code* on the part of literary critics and theorists during the past two decades. This may be at least in part because the term implies that writer and reader are linked by their common possession of a set of conventions governing systematic transformations, an implication which appeals to many contemporary theorists interested in issues raised by the sociology of literature and by the concept of literariness. The term also ... suggests that the literary work contains that which is hidden to those not possessed of the right code-book.

I have purposefully avoided the use of the terms 'code' or 'decoding' in this thesis, because the implication of decoding 'a sign or sequence of signs is to return to a meaning or message that pre-existed sign or signs, whereas to engage in interpretation ... is to generate something new ... use of terms such as *code* or *decoding* tends to ally one with those who do not see interpretation as a creative activity' (Hawthorn 1994:23). However, it is pertinent at this stage in the discussion to make use of the concept of the code in the reading of texts, in that the changes that occur within the codex from the source book to the illustrated and counter-books incur a form of code changing – from *lisible* to *scriptible* texts. The theoretical issues around the code are complex and beyond the scope of this discussion. For further reading on the theory of codes see Eco's *A Theory of Semiotics* (1979:48-150) and Chandler 2002:147-173.

meaning.²⁰³ In the codex a system of signs organised within a framework of codes and subcodes not only guide the direction of the given narrative, but also go beyond the text and link the narrative to an interpretative network, creating an intertextual field of interpretation: ‘Codes are not simply “conventions” of communication but rather procedural systems of related conventions which operate in certain domains’ (Chandler 2002:148).

In order to grasp the full significance of the book objects, *The Painted Bird* and the accompanying counter-book, it is essential to recognise the various forms of code changing that were made operative. On viewing the completed book objects, a degree of expression and signification that is not normally present in everyday sign production becomes apparent. This is expressed through a ‘surplus of expression’ manifest through formal devices and techniques, which in turn give rise to a ‘surplus of content’ (Eco 1979:270). This surplus of content is a consequence of what Eco describes as ‘extra-coding’. In *A Theory of Semiotics* (1979) Eco defines the terms ‘overcoding’ and ‘undercoding’, conflating the two under the broader description ‘extra-coding’.²⁰⁴ Eco (1979:136) explains the reasons for his categorisation as follows:

... overcoding proceeds from existing codes to more analytic subcodes while undercoding proceeds from non-existent codes to potential codes. This double movement, so easily detectable in various cases ... is frequently intertwined in most common cases of sign production and interpretation, so that in many instances it seems difficult to establish whether one is over or undercoding. In such threshold cases (in which the programmed march toward codes is mixed with the free activity of semiosis [sic] production and innovation) it would be wiser to speak of *extra-coding* (such a category covering both movements at once).

The book objects, both the illustrated book and the counter-book, are the end products of an entire process of code changing. Starting with the source narratives and visual source material, followed by a process of editing and selecting pieces from the narratives, dismembering the books used as visual source material, and ending up with the transformed and completed book objects. This entire transformative process was governed by a range of aesthetic and formal considerations and decisions,

²⁰³ Roland Barthes proposes five literary codes of reading, ‘which allow readers to recognise and identify elements in the literary work and to relate them to specific functions’ (Hawthorn 1994:23). They include the proairetic code, the hermeneutic code, the semic code, the symbolic code and the referential code. These codes have not been dealt with in detail, but the functions they provide are made use of indirectly within this discussion. For more detailed reading on Barthes’ codes delineated for and within the literary text, see Hawthorn 1994:23-24.

²⁰⁴ Eco (1979:129) states that the ‘theory of codes explains how one possesses rules of competence that permit one to disambiguate or to overambiguate, to form and to interpret given messages or texts’. It is important, however, to understand that textual codes in a post-structuralist/postmodernist context do not ‘determine’ the meanings of texts but dominant codes do tend to *constrain* them. Social conventions ensure that signs cannot mean whatever an individual wants them to mean. The use of codes helps to guide us towards what Stewart Hall calls “a preferred reading” and away from what Umberto Eco calls “aberrant decoding” (see Chandler 2002:158-160).

determined by the aesthetic idiolect of the author/illustrator.²⁰⁵ The transformation of the source books into the new illustrated books and counter-books defies the 'synchronic perspective of structuralist semioticians [who] tend to give the impression that codes are static' (Chandler 2002:172). In the contemplation of these artists' books the reader is faced with a greater semiological system, with similar, but more complex, encoded structures than those of the source narratives and visual source materials.

The signifiers contained within each of the artist's books present themselves in an ambiguous way, existing simultaneously as both meaning and form. The source narratives and visual source materials posit meaning that 'is *already* complete, [they] postulate a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas and decisions' (Barthes 1974:117). When these sources texts become new forms (book objects), 'the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates, only the letter remains'(Barthes 1974:117). In other words, the signifiers in each of the book objects may be ambiguously viewed as the final 'term'(the signification arising from the source texts) of one system, or as the first 'term' (the signifier) of a new codex system.²⁰⁶ As the final term of the old system, the signifier can be seen as a set of already existing meanings. As the first term in the new codex, order is characterised by the form; as this new form asserts itself, the already existing meanings undergo changes. However, as Barthes (1974:118) states:

... the essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal. One believes that the meaning is going to die, but it is a death with reprieve, the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form ... will draw its nourishment.

The meanings contained in the source materials are defamiliarised through the various formal devices employed in the creation of the illustrated books. Through processes of dismembering, erasing and pillaging, activities described previously, the contents of the source books are masked, changed or deleted. The book objects, created from the appropriated forms, now exist in terms of a new set of structural laws, as a 'new reality'.²⁰⁷ This assertion of the new formal devices detaches the status of the

²⁰⁵ The term 'idiolect' refers to a stylistic or personal code and is often described as a sub-code. Eco (1979:272) describes an idiolect as a code

... spoken by only one speaker, and understood by a very restricted audience; it is a semiotic *enclave* which society cannot recognize as a social rule acceptable by everyone. Such a type of private code is usually called an 'idiolect'. The rule governing all deviations at work at every level of a work of art, the unique diagram which makes all deviations mutually functional, is the *aesthetic idiolect*. Insofar as it can be applied by the same author to many of his own works (although with slight variations) ... Insofar as it produces new norms accepted by an entire society, the artistic idiolect may act as a *meta-semiotic judgement changing common codes*.

²⁰⁶ In his book *Mythologies* (1974), Barthes speaks of the first and final 'terms' in systems of signification. With regard to the relationship between linguistic systems and mythical systems, see Barthes 1974:109-127.

²⁰⁷ There exists in this process a 'paradoxical permutation in the reading operations, an abnormal regression from meaning to form ...' (Barthes 1974:117).

prior meanings and frees the system to receive the new narrative concepts. The meanings that are drained from the form are absorbed by the concept as signified, and a new chain of relationships is constructed in terms of the new codex system. Thus, the 'deviational matrix' witnessed in the new book objects 'not only represents a structural rearrangement: it entails a rearrangement of the codes themselves ... the proposal of a *new coding possibility*' (Eco 1979:272).

Extra-coding is manifest through the formal devices, processes and materials used within the context of the new codex, as well as in the paralleled extra-coding on the content level. The changes incurred in the literary content or source narrative of *The Painted Bird* has been discussed previously, as have the formal transformations manifest in the collage process. In *The Painted Bird*, both the content and form have undergone a process of code changing, from diachronic, linear ordered forms or old codes (Kosinki's written bird narrative and the structured source codex, both *lisible* forms), cut up, disfigured and defaced to reconstitute new codes (a cyclic reference text to the new visual narrative, composed of collaged fragments and traces of old codes or books to create new *scriptible* forms). These new artists' books represent a movement from books as mere products offering fixity and closure (readerly texts), to offering narratives that continually invite the reader to produce new meaning (writerly texts). The illustrated codex and its counter-book, although constructed from *lisible* codes, exist as *scriptible* texts:

The writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no *consequent* language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed; the writerly text is *ourselves writing*, before the infinite play of the world (the world as function) is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages (Barthes cited in Hawthorn 1994:164).²⁰⁸

The new codes are read in the new context of the illustrated artist's book. In this context the old codes resurface and reassert themselves through marks and traces. However, the old codes are no longer existent as the source codex has been physically dismembered, displaced and dispersed. The content of the narratives (old code) that informed the illustrations (new code) is held at a distance in order that the new form (collage) can assert itself.²⁰⁹ The aesthetic extra-coding apparent in the artist's books sees the ambiguous organisation of sets of interconnecting messages that operate on different levels across the illustrated books and their respective counter-books.

²⁰⁸ Roland Barthes' idea of readerly versus writerly/*lisible* versus *scriptible* texts is related to his definition of the terms 'work' and 'text' which has been previously discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.1.2 Intertextuality. The Work may also be described as the readerly/*lisible* text, the Text as the writerly/*scriptible* narrative.

²⁰⁹ These processes involving the books and counter-books are rendered diagrammatically in Addendum C.

The book objects possess metalinguistic, referential and aesthetic qualities, all of which indicate a text which is ambiguous and self-focusing.²¹⁰ Eco (1979:262) describes ambiguity as a mode used to violate the rules of codes, and states that its importance arises from the function it serves as

... a sort of introduction to the aesthetic experience; when, instead of producing pure disorder, it focuses [the reader's] attention and urges [the reader] to an interpretative effort (while at the same time suggesting how to set about decoding) it incites [the reader] toward the discovery of an unexpected flexibility [in the particular language being dealt with] ...

The Painted Bird is characterised by its overt intertextual dimensions, being visibly detachable 'from a context of origin or immediate situation' (Stewart 1989:27) through its transference, transgression and transformation of recognisable language or codes into other domains of reality. *The Painted Bird*, via a process of code changing, in both form and content, can no longer be read through the usual codes, and this break with convention forces the reader 'to reconsider the entire organization of the content' (Eco 1979:263). In this way the artists' books become self-focusing, directing 'the attention of the addressee primarily to *its own shape*' (Eco 1979:264). Eco (1979:271-272) further states:

Insofar as the aesthetic text has a self-focusing quality, so that its structural arrangement becomes one of the contents that it conveys (and maybe even the most important one), the way in which the rules are rearranged on one level will represent the way in which they are rearranged on another. Furthermore, it is the ambiguous arrangement of one level that provokes a reassessment on another ...

This 'ambiguous arrangement on one level that provokes a reassessment on another' is illustrated through the interconnected relationship between the illustrated book and its counter-book. One of the crucial entry points in the process of interpreting the system of structural relations within the illustrated book is provided by the related counter-book. The illustrations in *The Painted Bird*, as discussed in the preceding sections, function in the absence of both a directly accessible written narrative and figurative forms. Thus a form of extra-coding is brought into operation in order to allow the reader to penetrate the visual narrative. This form of extra-coding is provided by the contents of the counter-book, containing the bound fragmented remnants of the cutting process, pages that physically represent an absence through the gashes and hollows on their surface – for example, the entire book bound within the counter-book to *The Painted Bird*, which exhibits an absence of commas and quotation marks, or the book of pillaged footnotes, or the mathematical tables missing a mass of decimal points. The illustrated pages are read in conjunction with their 'pattern-like' pages in the counter-book. These readings, however, provide only visual clues as to the source and process of the

²¹⁰ This position was reached after a consideration of Jakobson's subdivision of the functions of language (Eco 1979:262).

illustrations' form and creation. The cut-out pieces, traces and marks in the illustrations, absent as cut-out holes in the counter-book, represent a code in formation which serves to guide the reader towards an 'intended' reading of the narrative.

3.3.5 Paratext

A further form of metalinguistic coding is implemented within the counter-books to enable the reader to further access the visual narratives on a content level. This is achieved through the introduction and manipulation of a particular paratextual element, namely the title. Genette's concept of the paratext has been discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and is described as the 'presence surrounding the text' (Genette 1991:262). The paratext may therefore also be described as the text's frame or *parergon*:

The verbal frame, or paratext, may enhance the text, it may define it, it may contrast with it, it may distance it, or it may be so disguised as to seem to form part of it. In fact the frame by necessity defines a relationship different in quality to that between the text itself and its audience. This is the relationship between the creator or owner of a text on the one hand, such as the author ... and the public on the other, between the senders and receivers of the message (Maclean 1991:274).

Genette (1991:263) delimits this concept further with the introduction of the term 'peritext':

An element of paratext, at least if it consists in a materialized message, necessarily has a *positioning*, which one can situate in relationship to that of the text itself: around the text, in the space of the same volume, like the title or the preface, and sometimes inserted into the interstices of the text, like the titles of chapters or certain notes; I will call *peritext* ...²¹¹

As a peritextual element, the title is used in the counter-book as a clue or key to reading *The Painted Bird*. Maclean (1991:275) describes the title as

... the most characteristic manifestation of liminality ... any part of the paratextual is in a way liminal. A frame acts as a threshold, as Genette observes, and we cross a threshold both when we enter a space and when we leave. Yet the liminal is most easily perceived as being associated with entry ... perhaps the most obvious threshold, the obvious stepping stone provided into the text, is the title. Titles provide keys to reading in many different ways whether they are semantic or rhematic (merely concerned with content) as Genette puts it.

²¹¹ Genette (1991:264) describes the paratext as being made up of the peritext (discussed above) and the 'epitext':

Around the text again, but at a more respectful (or more prudent) distance, are all the messages which are situated, at least originally, outside of the book: generally with the backing of the media (interviews, conversations), or under the cover of private communication (correspondences, private journals, and the like).

Both books in each volume share a common ‘over-title’, which Genette (1988:696-697) describes as a general title that covers several volumes within a set, for example the title *The Painted Bird* covers both the illustrated book and the counter-book. The counter-book, consisting of a stack of leaves bound in accordance to the illustrated book, is further divided into sections by subtitles (‘sub-over-titles’), which follow convention and appear only on the inside of the book, titles such as *The Book of Beaks*, *The Book of Eyes*, *The Book Without Commas*, *The Book of Bird Language*, *The Book of Leaves* and *The Book of Missing Footnotess*. The addition of subtitles to the cut-out, abstracted forms on the counter-book pages are arranged to be read in conjunction with the self-reflexive collages of the illustrated book. This titled arrangement creates a new set of codes or conventions to guide the reader’s approach to and construction of the text.²¹² Maclean (1991:275) states that ‘[o]ne of the most common appeals of the title is the appeal to intertextuality, an appeal which works both by inclusion and by exclusion’. The titles in the counter-books are intratextual in nature, if *The Painted Bird* and its counter-book are viewed as two volumes – the *ergon*, *The Painted Bird* and the *parergon*, the counter-book – comprising one text. This intratextual/intertextual relationship is illustrated by Figure 17 from *The Painted Bird*, which renders visually the paper, forest canopy composed of strips of sliced paper shards from the source books. Figure 18 from the counter-book depicts a page from the section entitled *The Book of Leaves*. Reading these ‘absent’ cut-out forms in conjunction with the title, guides the reader towards the intended connotation of the paper pieces amassed in *The Painted Bird*, as a natural, interwoven mass of plant life, leaves, branches, bark and twigs.

The counter-book assumes an imperative role in the case of *The Image of the Lost Bird* (2005).²¹³ In this illustrated book object the verbal reference text is present in the book ‘under erasure’, blackened out under layers of ink and lithography crayon, with only traces of the text surfacing. The visual narrative is devoid of a visible verbal crutch and the visual forms oscillate between figurative and more abstracted forms. In this volume of books, the counter-book becomes an integral key (indexical in nature), in the interpretation/reading of the visual narrative. *The Image of the Lost Bird* suggestively illustrates the inside of a desolate cathedral, as seen from the perspective of the birds inhabiting its lofty heights – the elongated format is evocative of the cathedral’s long central nave (Fig. 19). Although the reader may apprehend the book without the aid of the counter-book, an enriched and preferred reading is achieved through the use of key titles and words provided in the counter-book. Titles such as *The Book of Chandeliers*, *The Book of Tiles*, *The Book of Glass* and *The Book of Folded*

²¹² The counter-books may also be described or viewed as catalogues: ‘A catalog is a collection of titles ... A catalog, like any other book (or almost any book) has readers. A reader of catalogs is a reader who, for better or worse, reads titles only. The catalog is therefore the preeminent (symbolic) place for title communication’ (Genette 1988:706). A catalogue may be understood as a *parergon* to the main artwork, text or event, as a navigational tool through which the main text is read. In the case of the counter-books the titles read in conjunction with the related descriptive material (bound remnants) provide a subtext or guide to the reading of the (main) illustrated books.

²¹³ The verbal narrative for the illustrated book, *The Image of the Lost Bird* (2005), is a fragment taken from the short story by H.H. Munro (“Saki”) entitled *The Image of the Lost Soul* (1936).

Prayers all allude to the setting in which the narrative unfolds, even though the cut-out holes may not always conform figuratively to the forms described.

As the visual narrative becomes the dominant text in the illustrated book, the written or verbal narrative becomes supplementary, a frame and even paratextual in nature. In *The Painted Bird*, the written text is placed at the back of the book, the same position titles occupied during various stages of the development of the book.²¹⁴ Although the over-title is provided for the reader at the beginning of the book, the reader who does recognise the nuances and literary references provided by the title *The Painted Bird* will seek the verbal passage for additional information. During the interpretative process, the written narrative inadvertently assumes the role of the gloss (marginal text) to the text proper (visual narrative), assuming the paratextual form of the endnote. The provision of the over-title (before or in the place of the verbal narrative) has further implications. Genette (1988:701) states that

... the title discovered all at once, and often well before the work's subject, is not at all exceptional, and even less indifferent since a preexisting title has every opportunity to act as incipit... that is to say as an inciting mechanism: once the title is present, it remains only for the author to produce a text to justify it, ... or not.

The title(s) read in conjunction with the illustrations and/or the verbal narrative may simultaneously open out or subvert the text. The titles support the visual narrative by providing keys or clues to interpret the illustrations, and undermine the verbal text through aiding in the unfolding of a deviant visual narrative. With the written text increasingly held at a distance, the counter-book garners interpretative validity and augmented significance. The over-titles and subtitles in the book objects are elevated to the position or status of a text, functioning as objects of reading and communication.²¹⁵ The titles in the artists' books do more than just prefigure the text's content; they also indicate something of the book's form.

²¹⁴ Genette (1988:699), in his article *Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature*, traces the various positions posited by the title, within traditional conceptions of the book, through history:

For centuries the title, like the author's name, had no specific location except, occasionally, in the antique volumina, where it functions as a sort of label (titulus) more or less attached to the 'umbilicus' of the roll ... If the first or last lines of the text itself did not mention it in such a way as to make it inseparable from the work's destiny ... its designation was rather a matter of oral transmission, of knowledge of hearsay of the competence of the literate. The invention of the codex between the second and third centuries did not significantly improve the material position: the text used to begin at the very first page ... The first printed books, which imitated to perfection the manuscripts they reproduced, did not yet have what we call a title page. One had to search for the title at the end of the book ... the title page appeared only in the period 1475-1480, and would remain for a long time (until the invention of the printed cover, toward the beginning of the nineteenth century) the sole location of the title, often loaded with some other information... tangential. This page was therefore called the title page, and this not by metonymy; our present notion of the title gradually emerged from this magma, first textual and then paratextual ...

²¹⁵ This is as opposed to the standard function of the title as a 'circulation tool':

If the recipient of the text is actually the reader, the recipient of the title is the public ... The title addresses itself to many more people than does the text, people who in one way or another receive and transmit it, and thereby contribute to its circulation (Genette 1988:707).

The counter-books, like the verbal narratives in the book objects, exist as a supplement, as *parergon* and especially as paratext, in that the paratext is

... always bearer of an authorial commentary, either more or less legitimated by the author, constitutes, between the text and what lies outside it, a zone not just of transition, but of *transaction*; the privileged site of a pragmatics and of a strategy, of an action on the public in the service, well or badly understood and accomplished, of a better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading – more pertinent, naturally, in the eyes of the author ... the paratext is shown as the place where the author displays intentions, where he or she speaks to the reader as sender to receiver. Whether this message is successful or unsuccessful, honest or dishonest, does not affect the illocutionary status of the speech acts involved ... the paratext presents not so much or not only a model of author-reader relationships but even more of author-text relationships.

The counter-books reside in a dynamic oscillation between operating as marginal texts to the main text and as narratives continuously questioning the threshold between sense and nonsense, both in their intratextual relationship with the illustrated book and within their own pages. Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense* (1990:71) describes nonsense as being devoid of sense: ‘Nonsense is that which has no sense, and that which, as such and as it enacts the donation of sense, is opposed to the absence of sense.’ However, Deleuze does not mean that nonsense is an absence of sense. Instead, as Patton and Protevi (2003:73) explain: ‘Because nonsense is “opposed to the *absence* of sense”, we must conceive Deleuzian nonsense as presence ... he speaks of a “co-presence” of sense and nonsense.’ Conversely, Derrida defines nonsense by means of negation; Derrida’s nonsense ‘is defined by non-presence’, a lack of presence of sense: ‘If nonsense for Derrida is defined by the lack of intuitive presence, then sense is always necessarily taken (*pris*) by nonsense’ (Patton & Protevi 2003:74). Even though Deleuze describes nonsense in terms of presence and Derrida in the form of an absence, both imply the dynamic, oppositional but parallel relationship between sense and nonsense.²¹⁶

Susan Stewart, in her book *Nonsense Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature* (1989:4), describes nonsense in the following terms:

Nonsense stands in contrast to the reasonable, positive, contextualised, and ‘natural’ world of sense as the arbitrary, the random, the inconsequential, the merely cultural. While sense is sensory, tangible, real, nonsense is ‘a game of vapours,’ unrealizable, a temporary illusion. While sense is ‘common’ and ‘down to earth,’ nonsense is ‘perfect,’ ‘pure,’ an untouched surface of meaning whose every gesture is reflexive ... Nonsense always refers back to a sense that itself cannot be assumed.

²¹⁶ Neither Deleuze nor Derrida define nonsense in terms of logical absurdity (see Patton & Protevi 2003:71-77).

The act of cutting up the source books – symbols of logic, completeness and sense – involved an unconscious process which reduced the original texts to a form of nonsense. The leftovers from the cutting and collage processes exhibit a collection of fractured narratives. These pages of counter-collage (amassed from a variety of sources and bound in a volume) can be described as ‘books of nonsense’. The collection of titles accompanying these cut-out forms serve to create a heightened sense of the ambiguous and the surreal. Yet, the counter-books, as previously stated, are but one book of a two-volume compendium. In this context, the books become indexical in nature, providing a context in the absence of more evident traditional narrative cues.²¹⁷ The significance of the illustrated books ‘is created by assuming a contiguous relationship between “text” and “context”, between meaning and the occasion of its manufacture’ (Stewart 1989:9).²¹⁸ In the process of creating the illustrated books, each level of textuality moved further away from or decreased a sense of ‘realism’. Hence, the reading of the text without the indexical counterpart becomes increasingly difficult, reflexive and self-conscious. Because in the interpretative process ‘each level depends upon the previous levels for both its content and its method’ (Stewart 1989:21). The counter-book, viewed as the *parergon* ‘is the scene of transformation’, lying between the sense-filled world and the ‘internal space of representation’ (Stewart 1989:23). The framing activities of the counter-books maintain the counterbalance between both books existing in a state of simultaneous sense and nonsense.

The state of ambiguity the book objects incite is further intensified by the textual form of the illustrations. Drucker, in her essay *The Art of the Written Word* (1998:57-58), describes the written or typographic form:

... whether marks, strokes, signs, glyphs, letters, or characters, writing’s visual forms possess an irresolvably dual identity in their material existence as images and their functions as elements of language. Because of this fundamental dualism, writing is charged with binary qualities. It manifests itself with the phenomenal presence of the *imago* and yet performs the signifying operations of the *logo* It is both an object and an act, a sign and a basis for signification, a thing in itself and something coming into being, a production and a process ... the engagement with writing as a visual form foregrounds these dialogues – between personal and social, somatic and symbolic, conceptual and material, and real and metaphoric ...

²¹⁷ The notion of the index is best illustrated by Charles Peirce in Stewart (1989:41):

An index is a sign or representation which refers to its object not so much because of any similarity or analogy with it, nor because it is associated with general characters which that object happens to possess, as because it is in dynamical (including spatial) connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the sense or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand ... Psychologically, the action of indices depends upon association by contiguity and not upon association by resemblance or upon intellectual operations.

²¹⁸ Harold Garfinkel (cited in Stewart 1989:10) states: ‘Not only does no concept of context-in-general exist, but every use of “context” without exception is essentially indexical.’

Within postmodern artistic practices (especially within the illustrated book), the ‘graphic and the verbal ... encroach more readily on each other’s territory ... displaying by provocative means transgressions rather than correspondences or neutral differences’(Hubert 1985:520). The collages in the illustrated book objects that I have produced simultaneously transpose visual and verbal signs, thereby problematising legibility. Many of the collages are composed from letters cut from the source books or from paper cut-outs that exhibit fragments of text/writing. In these illustrations ‘writing becomes equivalent to the destruction of matter, and in the literal as well as figurative sense of the word as trace’ (Hubert 1985:521). The illustrations materialising as text and the text materialising as illustrations confounds the reading process and creates a rich nest of interwoven narratives.²¹⁹

Many of the collages in *The Painted Bird* exhibit similar processes to the typographic experiments found on the pages of various postmodern novels, for example Ronald Sukenick’s *Long Talking Bad Conditions* (1979).²²⁰ *The Painted Bird*, like Sukenick’s typographic play, highlights the concrete structure of the text and the book, visually demonstrating Italo Calvino’s opposition between ‘a thing that is there, a thing made of writing, a solid material object ... [and] something else that belongs to the immaterial, invisible world’(cited in McHale 1987:180). Many of the collages in *The Painted Bird* exhibit similar tendencies to the forms of concrete poetry, ‘which insists on the role of the letter rather than of the word’(Hubert 1985:533) and in this mode ‘undercuts referentiality as much as possible in asserting the concreteness of language itself, yet also conceptualises it strongly’ (Hubert 1985:533). The collages in *The Painted Bird* (as in the other book objects) do not function in the more typical mode of concrete prose whereby the ‘pieces of concrete prose are literally “verbal icons,” imitating through their shapes the shapes of objects or processes in the real world’ (McHale 1987:184). Instead, the collaged letter forms illustrate ‘invisible *concepts*; here the iconic relation between the shaped text and the “thing” imitated is metaphorical or allegorical, and depends upon the readers interpretation’ (McHale 1987:184).²²¹ The description of an invisible concept is best illustrated by Figure 11 from *The Painted Bird*, which has been described earlier as a ball or bubble of fear in the chest of the sacrificial bird. The shape of this mass of quotation marks does not attempt to make reference to a ‘real’ world

²¹⁹ Hubert (1985:534) describes how text was incorporated into or acted as an integral part of the visual illustrations in Cubist book art:

Cubist books introduced in most cases poetic texts which defied mimetic approach. As in the paintings of Braque, Gris and Picasso, illustrations introduced multiple perspectives which produced structural analogies with the text. The relation between the printed page and graphic representation became a prime consideration. In more than one case, the spatial architecture of the text was orchestrated with that of the illustration. Cubist painters, who often introduced letters and numbers into the very structure of the work, here and there considered that the visual surface of the text was to be rewritten by them in order to be incorporated into the illustration. Visibility and readability thus assumed closer ties.

²²⁰ Sukenick (see Chapter Two postmodern novelist) states: ‘The essential trope of fiction is hypothesis, provisional supposition, a technique that requires suspension of belief as well as disbelief’ (Sukenick, cited in McHale 1987:33). Sukenick recognises that a fictional text is neither true nor false, but rather suspended between both. He attempts to illustrate this oscillation through typographic play on the pages of his novels, thereby highlighting the ontological nature of the fictional text. See McHale 1987: 184-187 for a full description of (and visual examples of) Sukenick’s work.

²²¹ Dick Higgins (cited in McHale 1987:184) explains how contemporary concrete poetry, prose and fiction tends ‘to be far less mimetic. The visual element is often purely expressive and improvised, in the manner of an abstract expressionist painting. Or it is clean and geometrical.’

object, and instead speaks in metaphorical terms of an accumulation of anticipation and fear. McHale (1987:187) states that the more ‘abstracted’ forms of typographic play in many contemporary texts (‘even more than the geometrical or iconic types’) allow the reader to fully ‘experience the ineluctable *materiality* of the book’ and as a consequence ‘these fictional worlds, momentarily eclipsed by the real-world object, are forced to flicker in and out of existence’.

3.3.6 Nesting

Another way in which the book objects draw attention to their materiality and means of construction involves the use of metafictional, devices a concept discussed in Chapter Two. Metafictional texts violate ‘common-sense principles of order’, foreground the ‘cultural nature of signification’ and expose ‘systems of interpretation as systems’ (Stewart 1989:21). The collages within the book objects, literally created from a multitude of interwoven texts, letters and symbols, explicitly highlight the excessive textual nature of contemporary narratives, physically illustrating that textuality is indeed woven into all. The book object’s amalgamation of text and image, via the subversive subsuming of the verbal narrative through displacement and deviation (within the codex), and the role of the written word (in the illustrations) as both *imago* and *logos*, draws the

... reader’s attention to its process of construction by frustrating his or her conventional expectations of meaning and closure problematizes more or less explicitly the ways in which narrative codes – whether ‘literary’ or ‘social’ – artificially construct apparently ‘real’ and imaginary worlds in terms of particular ideologies while presenting these as transparently ‘natural’ and ‘eternal’(Waugh 1984:22).

In this way the illustrated book objects are metafictional in nature. This metafictionality is further emphasised by the role that the counter-books play in the reader’s apprehension of the illustrated narrative. The counter-books establish that the distinction between ‘framed’ and ‘unframed’ cannot be made.²²² I use the term ‘frame’ in this context to designate intertextual frames (existing literary topoi or narrative schemes), contextual frames and framed (or nested) narratives (narratives within narratives). Stewart (1989:21) explains:

The frame focuses our attention not upon content alone, but upon the organization of content and the relationship between content and its surroundings. The idea of content itself is brought about by organizing interpretative activities.

²²² Waugh (1984:29) states: ‘Everything is framed, whether in life or in novels.’

The concept of postmodern metafiction establishes that ‘reality’ is constructed through frames, and that it is difficult to distinguish where one frame ends and another begins:²²³

The frame is a communicative gesture, an invitation. It lies between the external space of the common-sense world and the internal space of the representation. It is a scene of transformation (Stewart 1989:23).

In the above sense, the frame may also be described as a form of metacommunication or metalanguage, providing not only an entry into a signifying system, but also commentary on that system. The counter-book (as established previously) may be understood as a framing device, which provides a context for the illustrated book, in both formal and temporal terms. Through a form of metacommentary the counter-books provide interpretative keys to unlock the latent content of the collages. In this process of reading the book objects (through the counter-books), language is used to interpret language; one fictional ‘reality’ is used to penetrate another. The framing of the artists’ books by means of the counter-books demonstrates that the ‘reality’ created by the text may only be realised through the discourses of and around that text. The existence of the counter-books also demonstrates the core nature of the metafictional text (understood as fiction about fiction); these indexical books provide fictional keys to elucidate the fictions contained within the collages.²²⁴

The counter-books may further be described in terms of ‘nesting’, a process similar to or used within the context of metafiction in the postmodern novel. The use of ‘nesting’ devices highlights the fact that frames are essential within all forms of fiction.²²⁵ Nesting, which is described by Stewart (1989:124)

... as quotation, as story within story and discourse within discourse, may be seen as an exploration of the nature of textuality and the possibilities of allusion. A relationship between texts is not only hypothesized, it is inevitable. Nesting flaunts the interdependence of discourse; every text bears within itself an infinity of prior and potential texts as well as the idea that its own text can be repeated.²²⁶

²²³ Hawthorn (1994:75) expounds on the contra status of the frame in Modernism, which is discussed in P.N. Furbank’s *Reflections on the Word ‘Image’* (1970):

... there is an interesting discussion of what Furbank sees as the peculiarly modern tendency of ‘abolishing’ the frame, a tendency he relates to a revolt against the idea of standards of reference and to an egalitarian desire to oppose the isolation of art in separated-off compartments.

²²⁴ I use the term ‘fiction’ here to refer to a visual and artistic ‘reality’, often equated as a form of ‘non-reality’ in contrast to the general understanding of everyday ‘common-sense’ existence.

²²⁵ Waugh (1984:30) explains that

... metafictional novels highlight through the foregrounding and analysis of framing activities ... the extent to which we have become aware that neither historical experiences nor literary fictions are unmediated or unprocessed or non-linguistic or, as the modernists would have it, ‘fluid’ or ‘random’. Frames are essential in all fiction. They become more perceptible as one moves from realist to modernist modes and are explicitly laid bare in metafiction.

²²⁶ Stewart (1989:123) further explains ‘nesting’ in folkloric terms as a

Allusion in any textual form may make reference to everyday experiences, past experiences, memory, history, and to other texts. In the instance of texts referring to other texts, our inability to escape any form of language, signifying or interpretative system is foregrounded. It is through this referential process that the ‘text comes to flaunt its fictive frame and is no longer under obligation to make sense by pointing consistently to one domain’ (Stewart 1989:125). The collages in the illustrated books reveal a form of nesting through their fragments, marks, traces and shapes which direct the reader towards other texts (counter-books) to validate their own significance. However, the counter-books, as Stewart (1989:125) says of nesting in general, reveal further ‘layers of textuality beneath which there is nothing but an apparition, a skeleton, of form’. This ‘apparition of form’ is a result of the entire ‘signifying structure’ contained within the book objects, which is based layer upon layer of text. Through these textual layers the book objects reveal different levels of narrative and narratives within narratives. Yet, each time the reader attempts to clarify the significance of the illustrated collages, the structural nesting of texts and narratives merely alludes to and reflects further textual forms. Through nesting, the book objects continuously ‘re-mark’ themselves, drawing attention to their condition of artifice.

The process of reading the book objects entails a contemplation of the entire collage process in a circular form. This process illustrates the unfolding of a text within a text; an unfolding that has no centre and is thus rendered a play with infinity.²²⁷ The counter-books also raise the problem of what is inside and what remains outside of the text; which book is container and which is contained; the question of form as content and content as form. Waugh (1984:31) states that often overt frames (as in the case of the counter-books) ‘involve a confusion of ontological levels through the incorporation of visions, dreams, hallucinatory states and pictorial representations which are finally indistinct from the apparently “real”’. The counter-books represent an obvious framing device, alluding to an infinity of texts within texts (messages about messages, and even as Eco describes ‘books speaking about books’), which in turn highlights the

... phenomenon that can move ‘in’ or ‘out’ towards infinity. Nesting can be found at work in those objects called Chinese boxes: a box, doll, or set of baskets that contains within it another box, doll or set of baskets, and within that box, doll, or set of baskets, lies another box, doll, or set of baskets, and so on. The possibility, if not the actuality, of infinity is thus presented.

In terms of my artist’s books, they exist formally as texts (source books) within texts (counter-books) within texts (illustrated books). I have applied a general definition of the term ‘nesting’ to the formal construction and reading of my book objects. For further reading on the functions of nesting in the literary text, see Hawthorne 1994:74.

²²⁷ Derrida (cited in Stewart 1989:118) describes the effects of ‘decentering structure’:

This movement was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse – provided we can agree on this word – that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification *in infinitum*.

... paradoxical relationship of 'framed' and 'unframed' and, in effect, of 'form' and 'content'. There is ultimately no distinction between 'framed' and 'unframed'. There are only levels of form. There is ultimately only 'content' perhaps, but it will never be discovered in a "natural" unframed state (Waugh 1984:31).

The books presented in the form of *ergon* and *parergon*, collage and counter-collage, through their interdependent relations, aid in destroying 'the notion of "content" independent of framing' (Stewart 1989:129). The intratextual and intertextual relationship between the illustrated book and its counter-book reveals a form of parody which functions as a 'frame-break'. The mode in which the books may be read separately or in conjunction simultaneously sets up the illusion of the 'imperceptibility of the frame', an illusion shattered by the introduction and use of the counter-book, which constantly exposes the frame (Waugh 1984:31). The counter-books parody the illustrated books, as books that speak of the provisional nature of books, and through this process destabilise our ideas and expectations of the book. Through this parodic relocation, inversion and subversion, the deconstructive nature of metafiction becomes apparent, as do new ideas and possibilities in the reading process.²²⁸

The self-reflexive nature of the artist's books produced for this study reveal a form of play through shifting contexts and signification.²²⁹ Metafictional devices in a text aid in revealing 'the implications of the shift from the context of "reality" to that of "fiction" and the complicated interpenetration of the two' (Waugh 1984:36). The cutting up of the source books to create the illustrated book objects, denotes a release of the original narratives from everyday contexts of reality and truth to self-reflexive fictional realms and 'new realities'. Millar (cited in Waugh 1984:36) argues that this 'lack of constraint from conventional ways of handling objects, materials and ideas, is inherent in the concept of play ...' However, Waugh (1984:36) makes clear that without 'explicit metacommentary', processes of recontextualisation may not be fully appreciated.²³⁰ The counter-books provide this metacommentary, demonstrating through a literal absence (cut-out forms) in their own structures the resultant illustrated book's shift from conventional structures. This textual shift between the illustrated book and the counter-book demonstrates a playful release from the pressures of having to signify traditional forms of knowledge and truth. Both book objects – composed of traces and flickerings between absence and presence – reveal an integral part of the functioning of metafiction: 'Metafiction

²²⁸ An interesting dichotomy is revealed through the reading of the book objects' construction:

The study of how to uncover deception is also by and large the study of how to build up fabrications ... one can learn how one's sense of ordinary reality is produced by examining something that is easier to become conscious of, namely, how reality is mimicked and/or how it is faked (Goffman, cited in Waugh 1984:34).

²²⁹ Waugh (1984:35) states:

The most important feature shared by fiction and play is the construction of an alternative reality by manipulating the relation between a set of signs (whether linguistic or non-linguistic) as 'message' and the context or frame of that message.

²³⁰ The term 'metacommentary' is used in this context interchangeably with the term 'metalanguage', a term explained in Chapter Two.

functions through the problematization rather than the destruction of the concept of “reality”. It depends on the regular construction and subversion of rules and systems’ (Waugh 1984:40). Thus, book objects are considered through the departure of their present forms from older rules, codes and systems from which they originated. The metafictional nature of the book objects demonstrates how process has overcome narrative, and in so doing highlights the reader’s interactive position in examining the old rules, in order to reconstruct new fictions or “realities” and create new possibilities in reading and interpretation.²³¹

3.4 Intertextuality

In *The Pleasure of the Text* Roland Barthes (1975a:36) describes the intertext as a form of ‘circular memory’ – ‘the inter-text is the impossibility of living outside the infinite text’ – or as Hutcheon (1988:128) states ‘intertextuality is the very condition of textuality’. In the following section I discuss the use of allegory and metaphor as intertextual forms or elements used not only to enhance the interpretative space, but to demonstrate (through the form of the book objects) the excessive textualism of the visual narratives, and inter alia all narrative.²³²

3.4.1 Visual Allegory and Metaphor

As discussed in the first two chapters, allegory fosters two chief concerns within a postmodern context: the first entails an inquisitorial interest in the past, and the second involves the reassigning of the boundaries of interpretation. The illustrations in *The Painted Bird* composed of a collage of appropriated texts where one text is read through another, exhibit a strong allegorical dimension. I have described the images in the various illustrated book objects (which are created from a variety of textual sources that perpetually reveal the marks and traces of their source’s structure and context) as being palimpsest-like in nature. It is these visible traces of the source texts that provide the allegorical dimension to the illustrations and book objects. *The Painted Bird’s* allegorical nature – in contrast to traditional forms of allegory²³³ – operates through the form of collage, rather than through narrative content. This is amplified by the fact that the illustrations are read in the context of the codex. The written (source) texts are confiscated and appropriated, torn and cut up, displaced and erased, and

²³¹ The fact that the illustrated books are composed of other older (‘historical’) narratives relates strongly to the concept of historiographic metafiction, discussed in Chapter Two, which employs texts from the past within its own textuality. The artist’s books, however, engages with these ‘historical’ texts only on a formal level.

²³² In the previous two chapters I discussed the marked use of pastiche in contemporary postmodern texts. The book objects and the collages in the book objects, however, do not display an obvious use of pastiche. According to Hutcheon’s definition of pastiche – ‘as functioning in the postmodern text to both affirm and subvert the conditions of history ... as contingent narrative’ (Taylor & Winquist 2001:275) – the book objects do formally expose the textualism of history or the past by the use of old books as source material. Yet, through processes of code changing the forms (and contents) of the source books alter dramatically, ruling out pastiche’s characteristic ‘imitation’ of other styles or forms without critical distance.

²³³ For further reading on the functioning of conventional allegory, see Miller 1981:355-370.

through these processes become something 'other'. The written narrative is transformed into an image, and the original content of the text is obscured and lost. Yet, collaged fragments always allude to their original sources; hence the presence of the verbal texts will never be completely destroyed. Earlier in this thesis allegory was described as a 'text through which other texts are visible' and the textual form of the illustrations literally and visually demonstrates this trait. The collages in all of my book objects are composed of 'literal words on the page' and may be described as McHale (1987:147) portrays postmodern allegory as 'made out of text, letters, words and [dis]connected discourses' – and thus they formally foreground the textuality of the text.

In allegory the literal frame of reference is absent (while the metaphorical frame is present), and the functioning of allegory is thus dependent on a recognisable external frame of reference. In the case of the book objects the frame of reference is provided by the counter-books. Hence *The Painted Bird* (*ergon*) allegorises its counter-book; the significance of the illustrated book is read through the accompanying counter-book. I have previously discussed McHale's (1987:141) assertion that there is 'an implicit recognition of the elusiveness of postmodernist allegory, relative to what we usually think of as the unequivocalness of traditional allegories'. In a postmodern context, both allegory and metaphor serve as tools 'for exploring ontological structure and foregrounding ontological themes ...' (McHale 1987:141). The self-reflexive relationship between the illustrated book and the counter-book, formally demonstrates that within a postmodern context no referent may be taken for granted. This is revealed by the textuality of the illustrations, which, when read in conjunction with the textual frames (counter-books), demonstrate the ability of the sign to signify and defer meaning under different and dynamic forms.

The illustrated book objects may simultaneously be understood as a parody of allegory.²³⁴ According to McHale (1987:145) parody 'is a form of self-reflection and self-critique'; hence a parody of allegory 'is allegory reflecting upon allegory'. The counter-books allegorise the source books from which they emanate. The contents of the counter-books reflect the form of the source texts, as the counter-books are composed of the cut-up pages from the source books. However, as a result of the cutting process, the contents of the source texts have been altered (the counter-book's narratives are pitted with gaps, erasures and absences). The transformative processes from the source books to the counter-books reflect the functioning of allegory in its basic action: reflecting the form of its source, but displacing and changing any former content.

The illustrated books are created from the absent marks and traces in the counter-books. The relationships between these books also exhibit a formal connection or reflection of form (allowing the

²³⁴ McHale (1987:145-147) cites the writings of Maureen Quilligan, which deal with examples of 'parody of allegory' in the written text.

illustrated book to be read through the key-like forms in the analogous counter-book). The illustrated books, however, contain an ‘implicit recognition’ of ‘the elusiveness of postmodern allegory’. The illustrated book (for example *The Painted Bird*) when read through the counter-book appears to verge on offering an allegorical interpretation. As in much of postmodern allegory, the contents of the illustrated book appear ‘*potentially* allegorical, but nothing is actually an allegory; the trope seems to lack a specific literal level or frame of reference’ (McHale 1987:141).

The frame of reference between the two volumes of each book is tropological, metaphoric and connotative. These tropes are established between the paper forms in both books and the respective titles and contexts in each volume; for example the reader is told by the title *The Book of Chandeliers* that the tiny polka-dot-like cut-out forms are indicative of chandeliers, lights or candles in the illustrated volume. The image/title relationship functions metaphorically, in that metaphor

... is a device rigorously relied upon to constitute meaning through minimum means. As a complex sign, usually presented as a distillation and compression of an entire physical world down into the appropriate and most resonant detail, it is used to represent – one can say to embody, or at least to ‘clothe’ – an abstraction (Johns 1984:292).

In the book objects an assemblage of fragments is directed towards a ‘unified’ whole. Metaphorically, this tropological activity provides a frame through which the visual narratives are apprehended: ‘Establishing a frame is in the physical sense a metaphorical action as it sets up tension between two different elements ...’ (Johns 1984:299). In this instance metaphor is used as a bridge between two fictional ‘realities’, allowing the reader a means of entering the narratives alluded to by the collaged illustrations. This act of framing the illustrated narrative through the counter-book simultaneously creates a sense of ‘closure and infinity’ and ‘limitation and variety’ (Johns 1984:299).²³⁵ Through this framing process the indexical quality of the counter-books is foregrounded, as is the position of metaphor in a postmodern context.

In metaphor the literal frame of reference is provided, and intertextual comparisons are made within an enclosed language system (language refers to language), creating instability and continuous deferral. In my work enclosed language system is created by means of the intertextual and indexical relationship established through the reading process between the illustrated book and its counter-book. The collection of ‘apparently random’ but ‘suggestively referential’ fragments in the illustrated collages establish the role of the reader as an interactive participant in the creative process. With reference to Mihai Nadin’s (cited in Johns 1984:302) explanation of collage in general, the

²³⁵ Johns (1984:299) explains that there ‘is a central paradox in the act of framing (creating a boundary for controlling fragments) in that while it indexically controls the fragments, it also creates them’.

illustrations in *The Painted Bird* and *The Image of the Lost Bird* use metaphor interactively, so that the role of the reader is not to

... passively appreciate but to interact with the imagery, to become a part of its interpretation. By offering [the reader] only fragments, the configuration requires our participation in a game of completion; signs, interpreted by signs, interpreted by signs, and so on.

In the metaphoric relationship that exists between the primary books (collages) and the counter-books (counter-collages), the significance of the illustrations is gleaned through the formal interplay and tension between the same textual system: the transformed cut-out shapes and their pattern-like source pages. The formal reading of the transformed pieces, from and through their original context (metaphor is based on a relationship of similarity), veritably illustrates the arbitrary relationship between sign and meaning, and form and content, formally demonstrating the inherent instability of language. In the illustrated artist's books – through the form of collage – allegory and metaphor work together to destabilise the sign and highlight the importance of the reader as a writer of the visual narratives.

3.4.2 Reading and Writing the Artist's Book

In this final section of Chapter Three, I relate the processes of creating, reading and writing the book objects to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the rhizome, which is discussed at the end of the second chapter. The rhizomic system, used as a metaphor for the intertextual nature of contemporary narratives and language systems, is premised on a departure from arborescent structures. All of the artist's books created for this study exhibit a formal and temporal deviation from traditional linear narrative forms. The source texts, used as a point of origin in the creation of the illustrations, comprise either whole texts that have been broken into fragments, or selected textual fragments which were further broken into many smaller narratives, both verbally and visually. The raw materials used in the composition of the collages were derived from the destruction and de-construction (code changing) of the aboreal structures which pervaded conventional forms of the codex. In addition the use of collage as an illustrative medium advocates the paratactic nature of the book objects (as non-hierarchical forms incorporating diverse fragments producing multicentred works), which appear segmentable, revisable, re-composable and re-readable.

The ability of the narratives to be perpetually re-created or re-written is a result of the 'creative association' afforded the elements of an intertextual system (rhizomic system). The composition of the collages from a wealth of textual fragments, shapes, marks and traces alludes to many other (external) texts, creating an 'immanent assemblage of external relations' which open up the book objects as

productive intertextual spaces. Through their reference to other texts (especially the texts contained in the counter-books), the illustrated artist's books highlight the 'rhizomatic nature of language'. The illustrated books composed of verbal and visual language are not fully present in themselves and rely on the connections made between the collages and the counter-collages for extended significance. The interplay between the cut-out shapes and allusive titles in the counter-books create a network of semiotic chains which establish different levels of connection or traces of a narrative thread. These connections exist in a constant state of re-formation, as each reader enters the visual narratives from different and subjective perceptual contexts.

The illustrated books, composed of a mass of collaged heterogeneous textual elements, may be understood as 'rhizomatic lines of becoming' or 'compositions of open-ended unity'. The collaged books' evident lack of anchoring centres and definitive structures or essences exists as 'decentralised networks of ideas', which allow a profusion of texts to interact, creating openings for a multitude of different readings and interpretations. Deleuze and Guattari speak of a 'dynamic interplay' between the elements of a collage (assemblage). This interplay is a result of the 'line-changing' that occurs during the reading process. The book objects celebrate this form of 'line-changing' by providing the reader with an index or key (intertexts) to begin a process of textual navigation. Yet, the counter-books do not dictate a fixed narrative significance. Instead they offer a means of establishing new connections. The counter-books serve both the illustrator and the reader of the book objects by supplementing and supporting the narrative perspective of the illustrator, and by offering creative freedom to the reader in the form of a visual and verbal map. The counter-books (like maps) offer an interpretative journey that may take an infinity of different paths (different connections), directions, lines or routes, depending on the connotative perspectives and choices of each reader. In this way the artist's books, reflect the integral nature of the rhizome - 'which does not change simply because new terms are brought into play, but because different relations are made to flow between terms' (Hayden 1998:96).

The rhizomic nature of the artist's books celebrate the 'birth of the reader', by transferring reference through collage and counter-collage from an impersonal to a personal domain. Reading the many little narratives contained in each fragment of the collages separately as a network of differences / different worlds (territorialization) and together as a new 'reality' (deterritorialization), reflects a transborder practice which perpetually shifts the margins and boundaries of interpretation. Presented as collaged narratives the book objects - like a rhizomic network - invite the many creators of its fictions to bring in other fragments, worlds, and texts from the outside to expand the framework of their significance.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter brought together the theoretical and practical components of this study, by using the literary concepts discussed in Chapter Two to frame the conceptual processes revealed in the creation of the book objects. Through the artist's books I aimed to demonstrate that collage is the ideal medium with which to illustrate the fragmented state of contemporary narratives. I also endeavoured to challenge the subordinate position of illustration in the context of the illustrated book. The various characteristics of collage – for example evident and excessive appropriation, fragmented compositions, embracing of synchronicity and marked tension between absence and presence and the inside and outside of the text or context – all complement the state of contemporary texts, texts which exhibit a self-reflexivity about the condition of their textuality. I formally 'de-constructed' source texts which represented (via their context and periodically their content) past systems of authoritative and definitive knowledge dissemination. The recontextualisation of these cut-up texts, through the composition of the collaged illustrations, restored a sense of 'incessant and differential "play"' (Taylor & Winquist 2001:302) to the textual fragments (contained within the new intertextual field of the book object). The use of collage as an illustrative medium further increased the dimensions of the intertextual space between the text and illustration in the book, and between the book object and its audience.

Working within the framework of book art allowed me to explicitly challenge the primary position traditionally held by the verbal narrative in the codex. This context also allowed for a traversing of the borders separating traditional perceptions of fine art and illustration. Through the development and creation of the book objects the verbal narratives were increasingly marginalised, allowing the visual narratives to prefigure the content of the written texts. Yet, the non-figurative forms of the illustrations created an interpretative need for a further set of verbal and visual clues. These interpretative keys were provided by the counter-books, which additionally increased the field of play by providing dynamic and non-foundational systems of meaning making – based upon an oscillation between sense, nonsense and ambiguity.

The counter-books reflect Kant's original description of the *parerga* as 'incidental' or 'by-works' (cited in Taylor & Winquist 2001:273) arising naturally from the cutting up of the source texts. Yet, these indexical books also reflect Derrida's conceptions of *parerga* as separate from the work but not entirely apart from the work; they are required for the work's articulation. The counter-books serve not only to validate the narrative content of the illustrated books, but also disrupt or subvert the integrity of the verbal narrative – by offering alternate fictional 'realities' to the written text. (In the illustrated books the verbal texts took on a supplementary role to the visual narrative, and in a sense

may also be described as *parerga*.) The counter-books problematise rather than establish the interpretative boundaries of the book objects.

These book objects explore ontological structures and themes through metafictional, allegorical and metaphorical devices, and in doing so demonstrate that language, texts and signs cannot be used as objective interpretative tools as they continuously construct and re-construct our textual existence. The interactive process of reading/writing these books encourages reader participation by immersing the reader in an intertextual network created in the space amid the collaged fragments, between the verbal and visual narratives, and among the various book objects and the reader.

Conclusion

This study set out to create a body of illustrated art works within the conventions of book art and to engage in theoretical discussions around these books. My aim through this process was to explore the relationship between visual and verbal collage in a postmodern narrative context. The greater part of this study involved an investigation into the form of collage in both contemporary literary and visual narratives (contained within the codex). In the course of this study the traditional hierarchy between text and image in the illustrated book (whereby the verbal text is traditionally favoured) was questioned, challenged and subverted, demonstrating that the relationship between text and image can be of an integrated nature, or in the case of my practical research, that the verbal text can become supplementary to the visual illustrations.

The first chapter (Towards a Theory of Postmodernism) gives a broad 'definition' of postmodernism. This chapter was not conceived as a definitive account of the postmodern – as postmodernism by its very nature exhibits 'a failure to satisfy the criteria of objecthood' – but rather to provide a description or interpretation of a contemporary Western-oriented 'climate of thought'. A comprehensive understanding of postmodernism is gained through mapping the changes society and culture have exhibited during the last couple of decades. This is achieved through a consideration of contemporary culture from an historical perspective; through changes wrought in the condition of knowledge and by analysis of aesthetic styles or devices used in current cultural artifacts. I have shown that many of the characteristics and tendencies associated with postmodern culture are a result of the questioning of and reaction to various dominant Modernist ideologies.

This chapter demonstrates, however, that postmodernism is best understood as a form of 'late-Modernism', and does not represent a complete break with the ideas and theories of Modernism and modernity. The discussion of postmodernism in the first part of this thesis reveals a cultural movement that refuses to be defined in any absolute terms. Postmodernism is a cultural condition of indeterminacies, ambiguities, pluralities and ruptures, reflected in various forms through the fragmentation of contemporary society's knowledge systems and cultural productions. The pervasive indeterminacy of contemporary culture is best articulated through an analysis of its verbal and visual texts, particularly contemporary literary fiction. The postmodern novel, 'a cut-up literary object', exhibits a penchant for collage, disconnectedness and a processual self-reflexivity.

In the second chapter (Towards a Theory of Postmodern Narrative in Fiction) themes pertinent to contemporary literary narratives are considered. In this chapter the postmodern novel (as a contemporary cultural artifact) is used to discuss and reflect the changes manifest in present-day narratives. Chapter Two utilises the related postmodern discourses of post-structuralism and

deconstruction to frame a discussion around the extreme textualism of postmodern narratives. One may conclude that the different stylistic and figurative devices highlighted in this chapter exhibit collage-like characteristics (in the context of the postmodern novel). These devices, for example metafiction, allegory and various other forms of language disorder, give postmodern fiction the quality or condition of excessive self-reference and a fragmental texture. I have shown that many of these literary texts rely on ludic, ironic and parodic forms to create verbal texts that are anti-realist and anti-narrative, thereby 'making language the center of its reflexive concern'. The indeterminacy of the postmodern novel is also demonstrated. This form of writing invites reader participation and performance in order to 'fill the gaps' in the narrative. As a result postmodern fiction exemplifies Barthes' concept of the 'death of the author' and the consequent 'birth of the reader' by inviting the reader to re-write and revise the form and content of the text. The reading/writing of the postmodern novel is an intertextual process. This mode of interpretation is a consequence of a postmodern recognition and acceptance that society and culture exist in an immanent textual and semiotic system. Chapter Two finally demonstrates that collage used as a stylistic medium in the postmodern novel supports modern contemporary culture's pluralist and disjunctive state. This chapter shows a positive and active use of collage, through forms that increase textual validity via the expansion of the intertextual space.

The final chapter of this thesis (Framing the Text) deals with the illustrated book objects produced for the visual component of this degree. The chapter begins by providing a historical and cultural context for the present state of illustration within contemporary visual arts discourses. These discourses frequently validate the secondary and supplementary position of book or textual illustration. In this chapter I have demonstrated that postmodern culture has witnessed a rise in the role of illustration (and the illustrator) as a means of challenging the 'autotelic' nature of the verbal text. I have situated a discussion of my own series of illustrated book objects within the broader fields of illustration, collage and book art, and have demonstrated that 'counter-collage', *ergon* and *parergon*, code changing and the paratext serve not only to reflect the similarities between the book objects and various manifestations in the postmodern novel/contemporary narrative, but also provide useful means of discussing and analysing visual texts. The final part of Chapter Three deals with the complexity of reading and interpreting the artist's book within a context of pervasive postmodern intertextuality.

The book objects (both the illustrated book and the counter-book) exhibit many similarities to the texts contained within postmodern novels. These similarities are a result of the use of collage in the artist's books as a narrative vehicle, both in the fragmentation and illustration of the original verbal texts. Like the postmodern novel, my artist's books (formally) reflect the changes evident in contemporary narratives taken as a whole. Many of these changes are manifest through the use of metafictional devices, which reflect a concern with the ontology of language, fiction and the book – '... the worlds

summoned up by literary texts are grounded in their own textual mechanisms; subjectivity gives way to textuality' (Connor 1989:130).

The book objects exhibit four main metafictional features. In the novel, metafiction strives to create alternative linguistic structures or fictions which reflect an older form; the reader apprehends the new text through a re-construction and recognition of the old form. In the same way, the book objects create alternative new structures from old forms through a process of code changing. The reader uses and partially re-constructs the old form (particularly in the counter-books) in order to make new meaning. Metafiction also functions through tensions created between devices which construct fictional 'realities' within language and the simultaneous, self-reflexive exposition of these devices. The illustrated books function in the same way through the creation of an entire fictional 'reality' in which the condition of artifice is revealed by the appropriated marks, traces and fragments of the collages and by the processes uncovered in the counter-books. Metafictional forms evident in the postmodern novel foreground the shifting borders between material reality and fictional reality. This is achieved in my book objects by the subversion of various conventions of the book form, forms of textual glossing and via the process of reading through the indexical counter-books. Finally, metafictional devices used in postmodern fiction dramatise the role of the reader. The fragmented and marginalised verbal texts, the collaged forms and non-figurative devices in the illustrated books and the allusive shapes in the counter-books all operate by way of inviting subjective and inter-active reader participation.

From the above it can be concluded that collage is an appropriate or even ideal medium for contemporary narrative illustration. The 'dissolution of organic unity' evident in the visual narratives of the illustrated books sustains the fragmented state of the original verbal texts. The collaged illustrations simultaneously complement and subvert the visual narratives, thereby expanding the interpretative intertextual/intratextual network or space. The use of collage as an illustrative medium invites an active and participatory reader. By revealing the process of constructing the collages (through the form of the counter-books), the creative participation of the reader in the production and play of meanings is revealed. Lastly, the form of the collaged illustrations explicitly exposes the textualism of knowledge (discourse), language and narrative, laying bare 'ever-changing intertextual fields in which signifiers acquire provisional meanings'.

Through the creation of the book objects I have established that illustration may exist as an equally valid and original narrative within the context of the codex. In *The Dead Bird* it is evident that illustration (while still utilising the verbal text as a departure point) may tell a convergent and divergent story to the verbal text, without playing a secondary and supplementary role. In addition, as observed in *The Painted Bird* and *The Image of the Lost Bird*, the verbal text may play a secondary

role in relationship to the visual illustration. In these books the illustrations assume the position of the text proper, while the verbal text frames and supplements the visual narrative.

Given the paucity of theoretical discourse on illustration, this study has endeavoured to provide a theoretical framework within which to interact with visual illustration. By drawing on concepts from postmodern literary theory and applying these literary ideas and terms to my own illustrated book objects, a rich interdisciplinary language has emerged with which to discuss the relations between text and image. Book illustration by nature has a relationship with some form of verbal text, and an understanding of narrative and literary operations aids the illustrator in producing a form of visual text that supplements, enriches and expands the interpretative space.

Illustrations

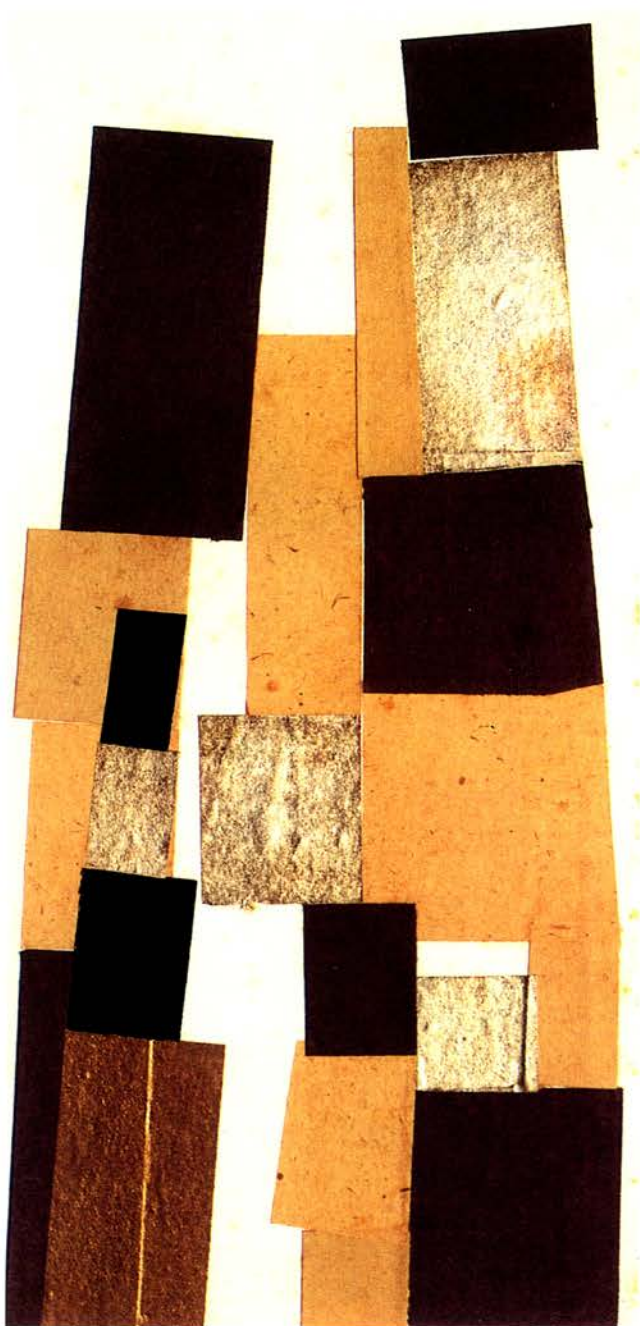


Fig. 1 Hans Arp, *Squares According to the Laws of Chance* (1917). Torn and pasted paper, 25.3 x 12.5. Kunstmuseum, Basel (Gale 1997:62;35).

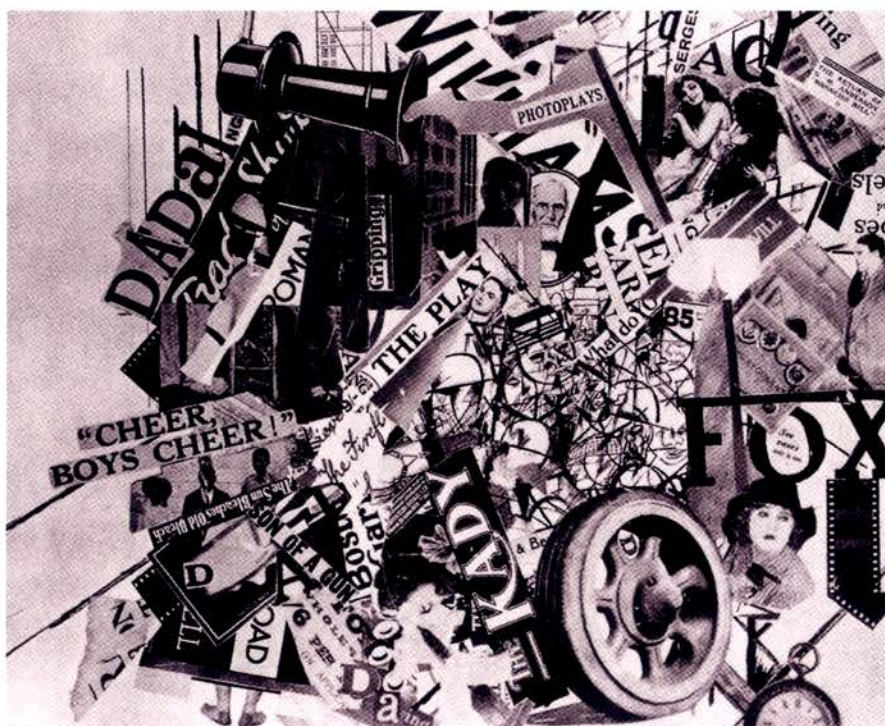


Fig. 2 George Grosz and John Heartfield, *Life and Times in Universal City at 12.05 Noon* (1919). Collage, dimensions and whereabouts unknown (Taylor 2004:43;37).



Fig. 3 Raoul Hausmann, *Dada Cino* (1920). Collage and photomontage, 31.7 x 22.5. Private Collection (Taylor 2004:43;38).



Fig. 4 Max Ernst, 'Let's go. Let's dance the Tenebreuse ...', page from *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* (A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil) (1930). Collage, dimensions and whereabouts unknown (Taylor 2004:66;62).

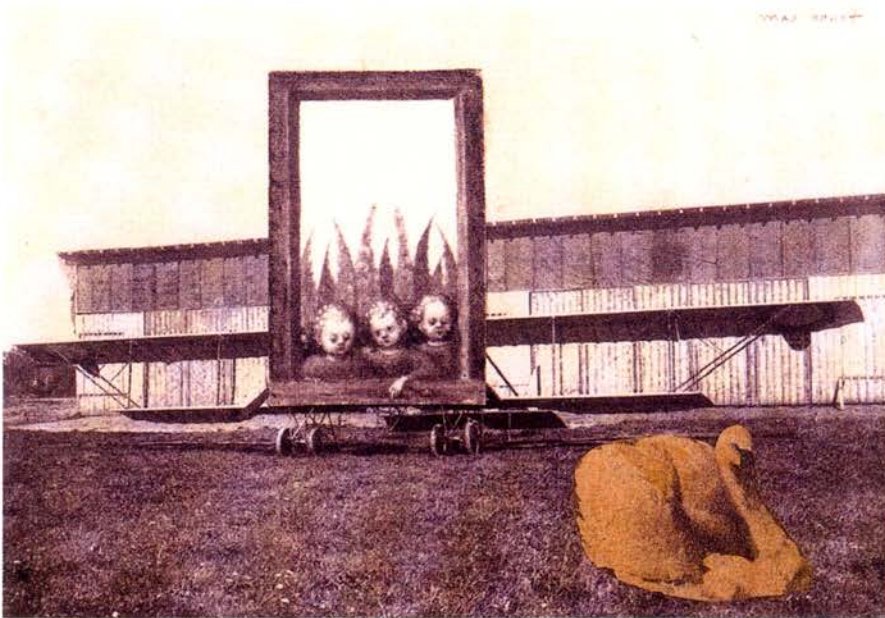


Fig. 5 Max Ernst, *The Swan is Very Peaceful ...* (1920). Collage with photograph fragments, 8.3 x 12. Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan (Taylor 2004:57;54).

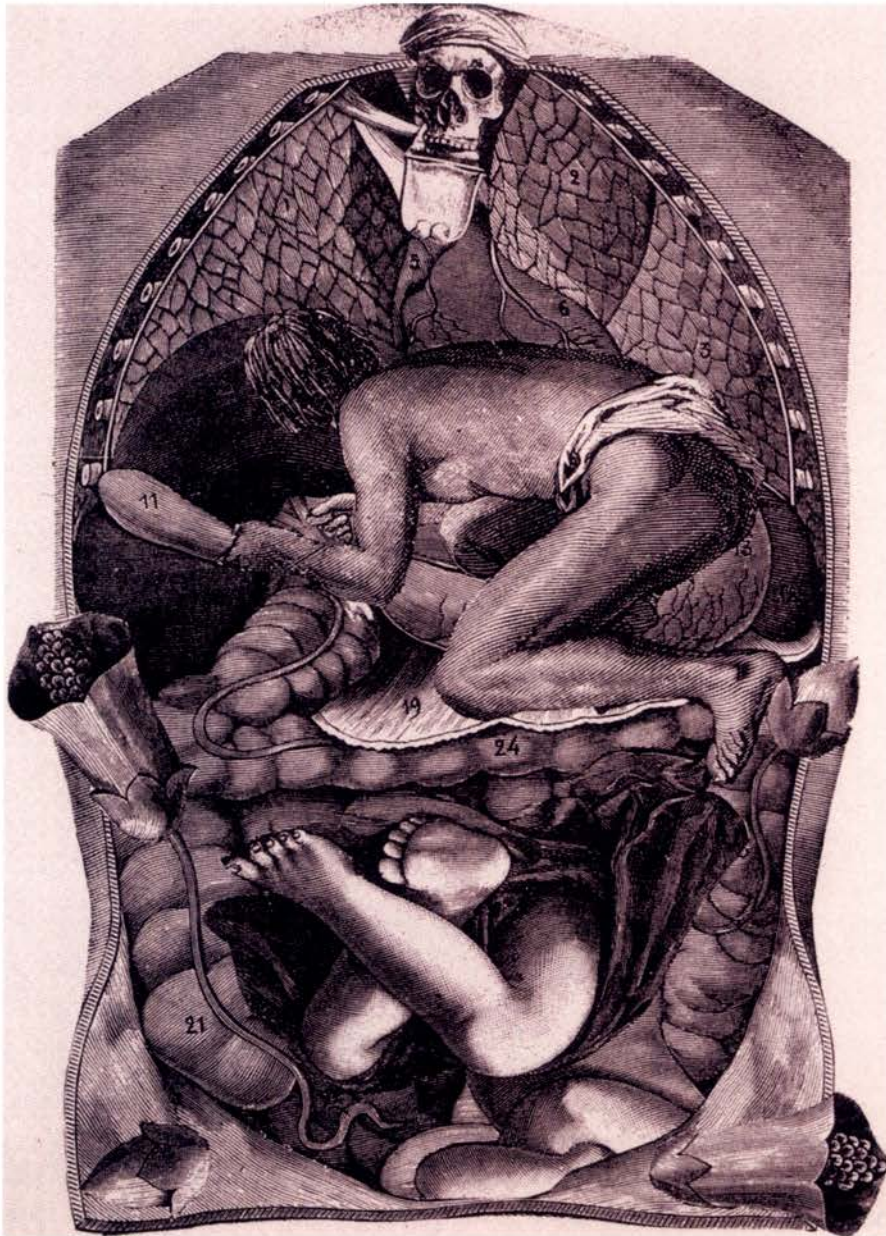


Fig. 6 Max Ernst, page from *Une Semaine de bonté* (1934). Collage, dimensions and whereabouts unknown (Hubert 1988:276;100).



Fig. 7 Max Ernst, page from *Une Semaine de bonté* (1934). Collage, dimensions and whereabouts unknown. (Hubert 1988:279;101).

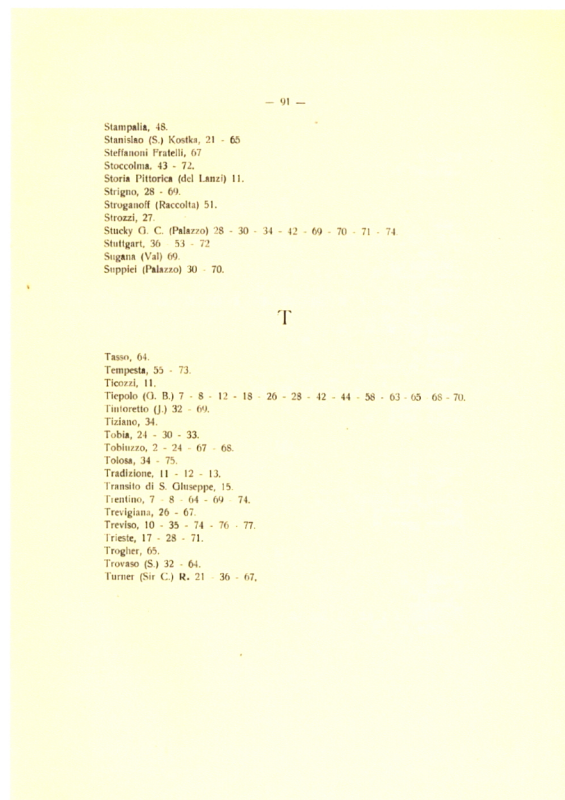
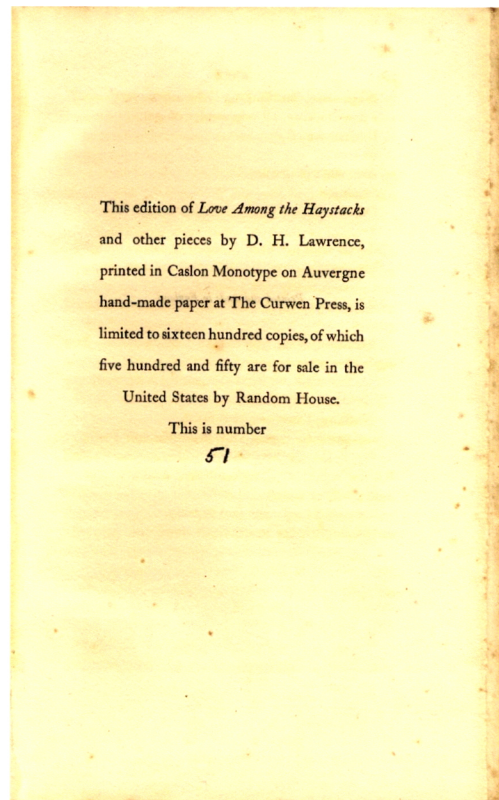
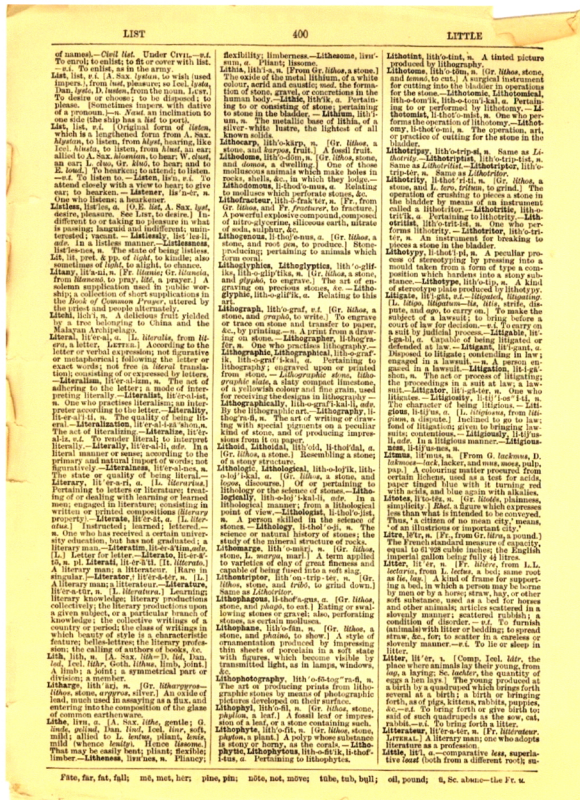


Fig. 8 Pages from source books depicting different typographic designs and layouts.

Other words are given to show me a manner of painful life...
 Then fools' approval stings, and honour stains.
 From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit
 Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire
 Where you must move in measure, like a dancer.
 The day was breaking. In the disfigured street
 He left me, with a kind of valediction,
 And faded on the blowing of the horn.

There are three conditions which often look alike
 Yet differ completely, flourish in the same hedgerow:
 Attachment to self and to things and to persons, detachment
 From self and from things and from persons; and, growing
 between them, indifference
 Which resembles the others as death resembles life.
 Being between two lives—unflowering, between
 The live and the dead nettle. This is the use of memory
 For liberation—not less of love but expanding
 Of love beyond desire, and so liberation
 From the future as well as the past. Thus, love of a country
 Begins as an attachment to our own field of action
 And comes to find that action of little importance
 Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,
 History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
 The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved
 them,
 To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.
 Sin is Behovely, but
 All shall be well, and
 All manner of thing shall be well.

[219]

112 DEFECTIVE VERBS.

DEFECTIVE VERBS.

Defective Verbs are such as want many Tenses and Persons.

I. *Coepi, I began.*
 II. *Mémini, I remember.*
 III. *Odi, I hate.*

INDICATIVE. — Perfect.	Coepi	Mémini	Odi
— Past-Perf.	Coepérám	Mémínérám	Odérám
— Fut.-Perf.	Coepéro	Mémínéro	Odéro.
SUBJUNCTIVE. — Perfect.	Coepérim	Mémínérím	Odérím.
— Past-Perf.	Coepéscem	Mémíníscem	Odíscem.
IMPERATIVE. — Future.	(wanting)	Méménto,	(wanting)
INFINITIVE. — Perfect.	Coepíscé	Mémíníscé	Odíscé.
FARTICIPLE. — Future.	Coepítúrus	(wanting)	Odítúrus.

IV. *Aio, I say* :—

INDICATIVE.	SUBJUNCTIVE.	INDICATIVE.	SUBJUNCTIVE.
Present.	—	Imperfect.	—
S. Aío	—	S. Aíebam	—
Aís	Aías	Aíebás	—
Aíit	Aíit	Aíebát	—
P. —	—	P. Aíebámus	—
Aíunt	Aíant	Aíebátis	—
	PRESENT PARTICIPLE.—Aíentis		

V. *Inquam, say I* :—

INDICATIVE.	Imperfect.	Futura.	Perfect.
Present.	Inquibam	—	Inquisti
Inquia	Inquibás	Inquist	Inquisti
Inquít	Inquibát	—	Inquisti
Inquímus	Inquíbamus	—	—
Inquítis	Inquíbátis	—	—
Inquítis	Inquíbátis	Inquis	2 Pers. Inquító

Obs. *Inquam*, like the English *say I*, *says he*, is always used after other words in a sentence.

VI. *Fári, to speak*, a Deponent :—

INDICATIVE.	SUBJUNCTIVE.	IMPERATIVE.	INFINITIVE.
Present.	—	Present. S. Fárs	Fári
Fatur	—	—	—
Fábör, fábítar	—	—	—
Fátus sum, &c.	Perfect.	—	—
—	Fátus sim, &c.	—	—
—	Past-Perf.	—	—
—	—	—	—

Handwritten notes on page 112 include '76', '085', '172', and '576'.

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MACMILLAN'S

SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY

READERS

I.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

I n j u r i e

MACMILLAN AND CO. LIMITED

ST. MARTIN'S STREET LONDON

1911

Fig. 9 Pages from source books depicting an array of personal annotations, marks and traces.



Fig. 10 Joanne Halse, detail from original artwork for *The Painted Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 18.5 x 48.

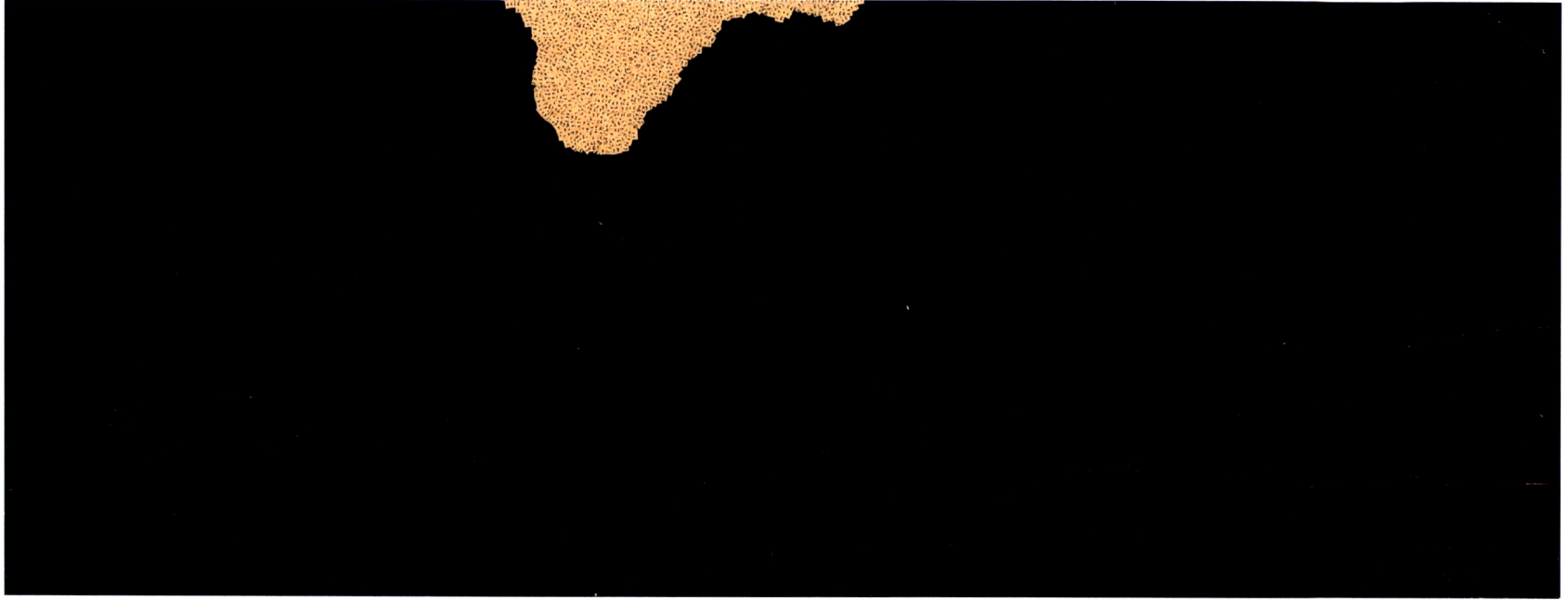


Fig. 11 Joanne Halse, Ball of Fear, original artwork for the *The Painted Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 18.5 x 48.

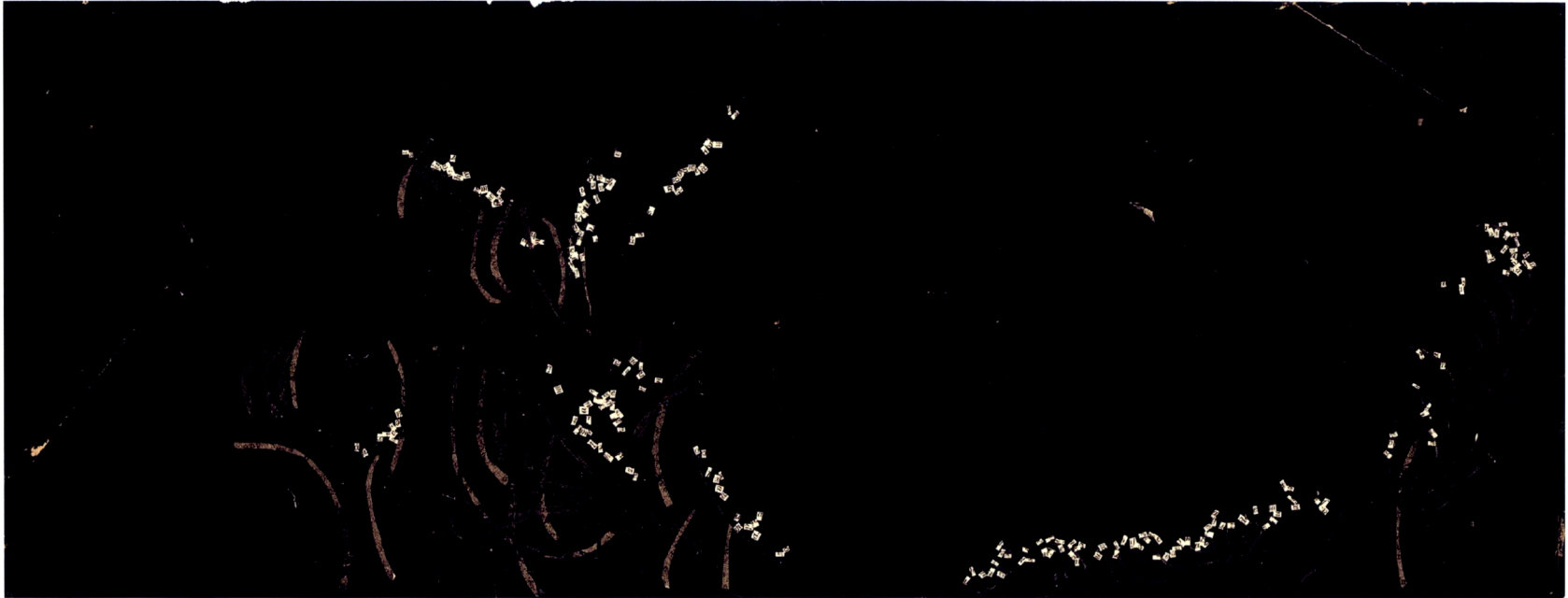


Fig. 12 Joanne Halse, *Metamorphosis*, original artwork for *The Painted Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 18.5 x 48.

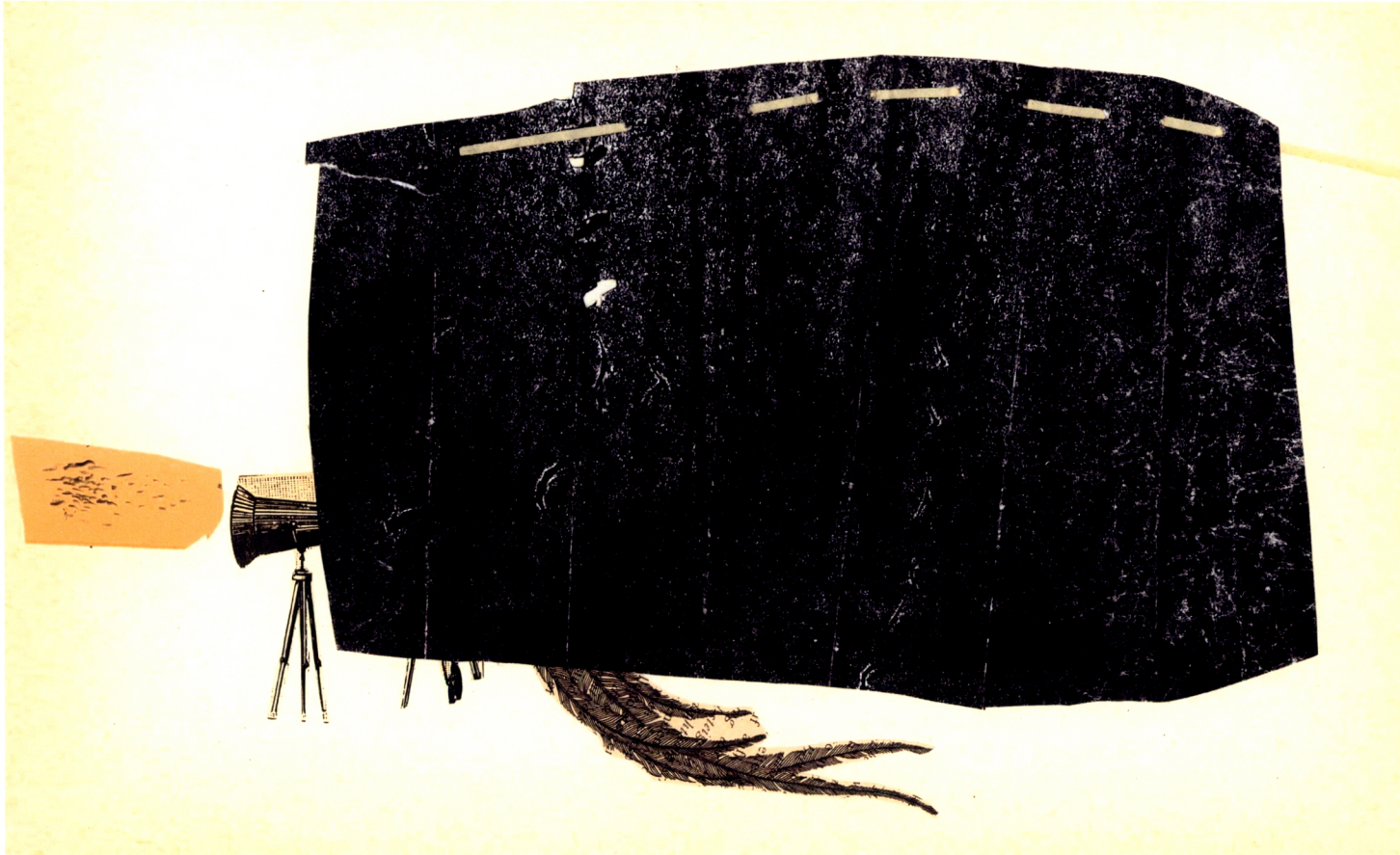


Fig. 13 Joanne Halse, *The Announcement*, original artwork for *The Dead Bird* (2003). Collage, 20 x 32.5.



Fig. 14 Joanne Halse, The Stone Body, original artwork for *The Dead Bird* (2003). Collage, 20 x 32.5.



Fig. 15 Joanne Halse, *The Painted Bird*, original artwork for *The Painted Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 18.5 x 48.

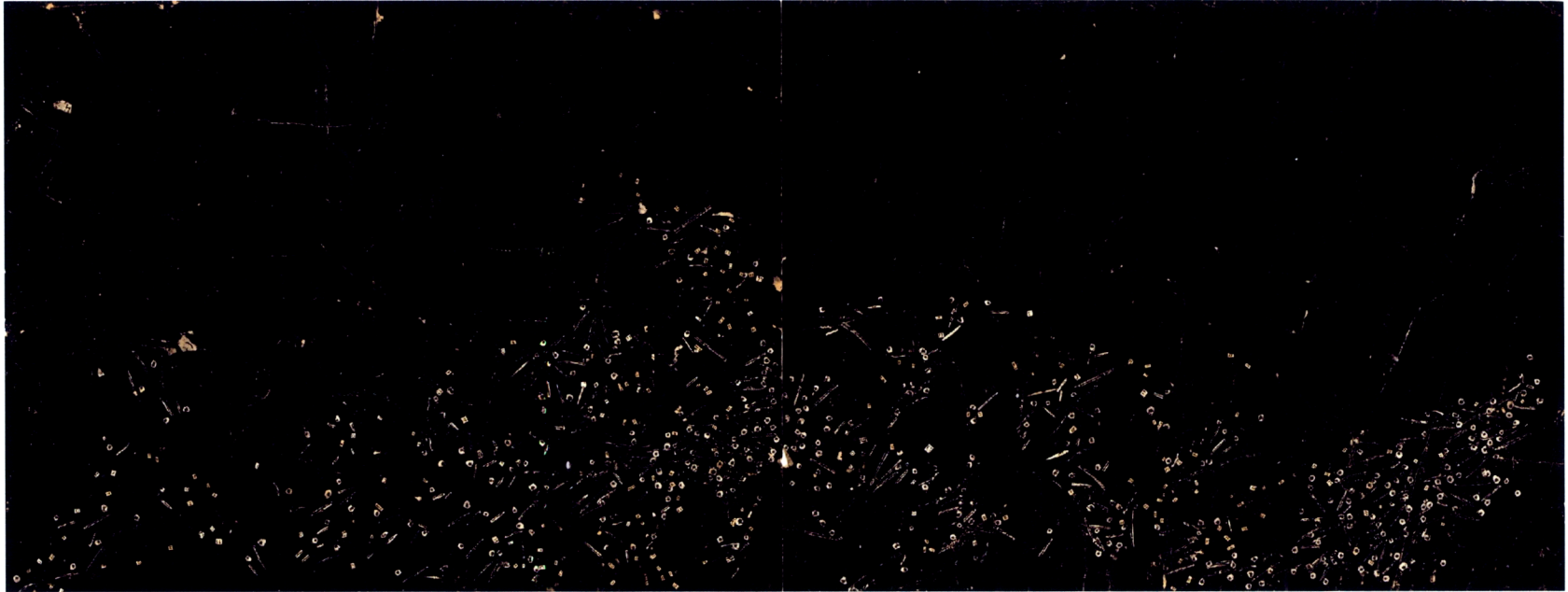


Fig. 16 Joanne Halse, *The Bird Wars*, original artwork for *The Painted Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 18.5 x 48.

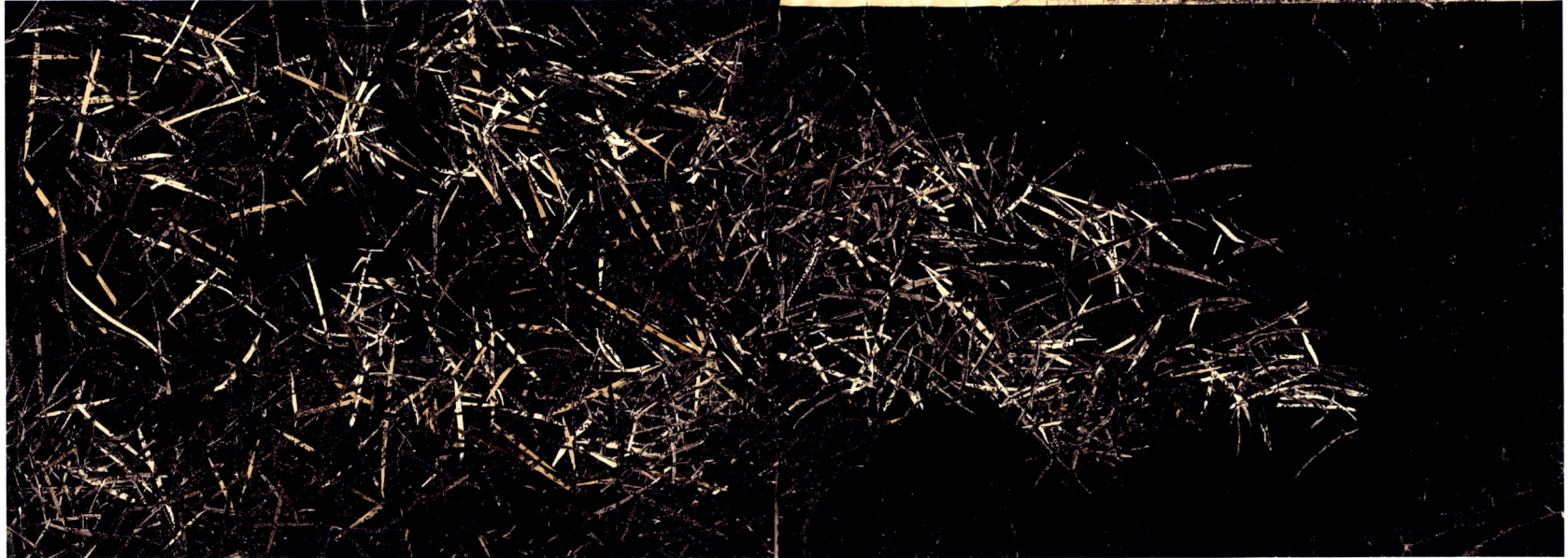


Fig. 17 Joanne Halse, Forest Canopy, original artwork for *The Painted Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 18.5 x 48.



Fig. 19 Joanne Halse, Chandeliers, original artwork for *The Image of the Lost Bird* (2005). Mixed media collage, 20.5 x 37.5.

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Addendum A

Table of Binary Oppositions

Modernism	Postmodernism
Romanticism/Symbolism	Pataphysics/Dadaism
Form (conjunctive, closed)	Antiform (disjunctive, open)
Purpose	Play
Design	Chance
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Mastery/Logos	Exhaustion/Silence
Art Object/Finished Work	Process/Performance/Happening
Distance	Participation
Creation/Totalization/Synthesis	Decreation/deconstruction/Antithesis
Presence	Absence
Centering	Dispersal
Genre/Boundary	Text/Intertext
Semantics	Rhetoric
Paradigm	Syntagm
Hypotaxis	Parataxis
Metaphor	Metonymy
Selection	Combination
Root/Depth	Rhizome/Surface
Interpretation/Reading	Against Interpretation/Misreading
Signified	Signifier
<i>Lisible (Readerly)</i>	<i>Scriptible (Writerly)</i>
<i>Narrative/Grande Histoire</i>	<i>Anti-narrative/Petite Histoire</i>
Master Code	Idiolect
Symptom	Desire
Type	Mutant
Genital/Phallic	Polymorphous/Androgynous
Paranoia	Schizophrenia
Origin/Cause	Difference – <i>Différance</i> /Trace
God the Father	The Holy Ghost
Metaphysics	Irony
Determinacy	Indeterminacy
Transcendence	Immanence

Ihab Hassan's table of features that contrast Modernism and postmodernism (Brooker (1992:11-12).

Addendum B

Source Texts for Illustrated Books

Extract from Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965:49-51)

Lekh would become possessed by a silent rage. He would stare solemnly at the birds in the cages, mumbling something to himself. Finally, after prolonged scrutiny, he would choose the strongest bird, tie it to his wrist, and prepare stinking paints of different colors which he mixed together from the most varied components. When the colours satisfied him, Lekh would turn the bird over and paint its wings, beak, and breast in rainbow hues until it became more dappled and vivid than a bouquet of wild flowers.

Then we would go into the thick of the forest. There Lekh took out the painted bird and ordered me to hold it in my hand and squeeze it lightly. The bird would begin to twitter and attract a flock of the same species which would fly nervously over our heads. Our prisoner, hearing them, strained toward them, warbling more loudly, its little heart, locked in its freshly painted breast, beating violently.

When a sufficient number of birds gathered above our heads, Lekh would give me a sign to release the prisoner. It would soar, happy and free, a spot of rainbow against the backdrop of clouds, and then plunge into the waiting brown flock. For an instant, the birds were confounded. The painted bird circled from one end of the flock to the other, vainly trying to convince its kin that it was one of them. But, dazzled by its brilliant colors, they flew around it unconvinced. The painted bird would be forced farther and farther away as it zealously tried to enter the ranks of the flock. We saw soon afterward how one bird after another would peel off in a fierce attack. Shortly, the many-hued shape lost its place in the sky and dropped to the ground. When we finally found the painted bird it was usually dead. Lekh keenly examined the number of blows which the bird had received. Blood seeped through its colored wings, diluting the paint and soiling Lekh's hands.

... Lekh, sulking and glum, removed one bird after another from the cages, painted them in still gaudier colors, and released them into the air to be killed by their kin. One day he trapped a large raven, whose wings he painted red, the breast green, and the tail blue. When a flock of ravens appeared over our hut, Lekh freed the painted bird. As soon as it joined the flock a desperate battle began. The changeling was attacked from all sides. Black, red, green, blue feathers began to drop at our feet. The ravens flew amuck in the skies, and suddenly the painted raven plummeted to the fresh-plowed soil. It was still alive, opening its beak and vainly trying to move its wings. Its eyes had been pecked out, and fresh blood streamed over its painted feathers. It made yet another attempt to flutter up from the sticky earth, but its strength was gone.

Complete text from Margaret Wise Brown's *The Dead Bird* (1938)

The bird was dead when the children found it. But it had not been dead for long – it was still warm and its eyes were closed. The children felt with their fingers for the quick beat of the bird's heart in its breast. But there was no heart beating. That was how they knew it was dead. And even as they held it, it began to get cold, and the limp bird body grew stiff, so they couldn't bend its legs and the head didn't flop when they moved it. That was the way animals got when they had been dead for some time – cold dead and stone still with no heart beating. The children were very sorry the bird was dead and could never fly again. But they were glad they had found it, because now they could dig a grave in the woods and bury it. They could have a funeral and sing to it the way grown-up people did when someone died. So they took it out in the woods. And they dug a hole in the ground. They put warm sweet-ferns in the bottom of the grave. And they wrapped the bird up in grapevine leaves and put it in the ground. Then they put more ferns on top of it, and little white violets, and yellow star flowers. Then they sang to it:

Oh bird you're dead

You'll never fly again

Way up high

With the other birds in the sky

We sing to you

Because you're dead

Feather bird

And we buried you

In the ground

With ferns and flowers

Because you will never fly

Again in the sky

Way up high

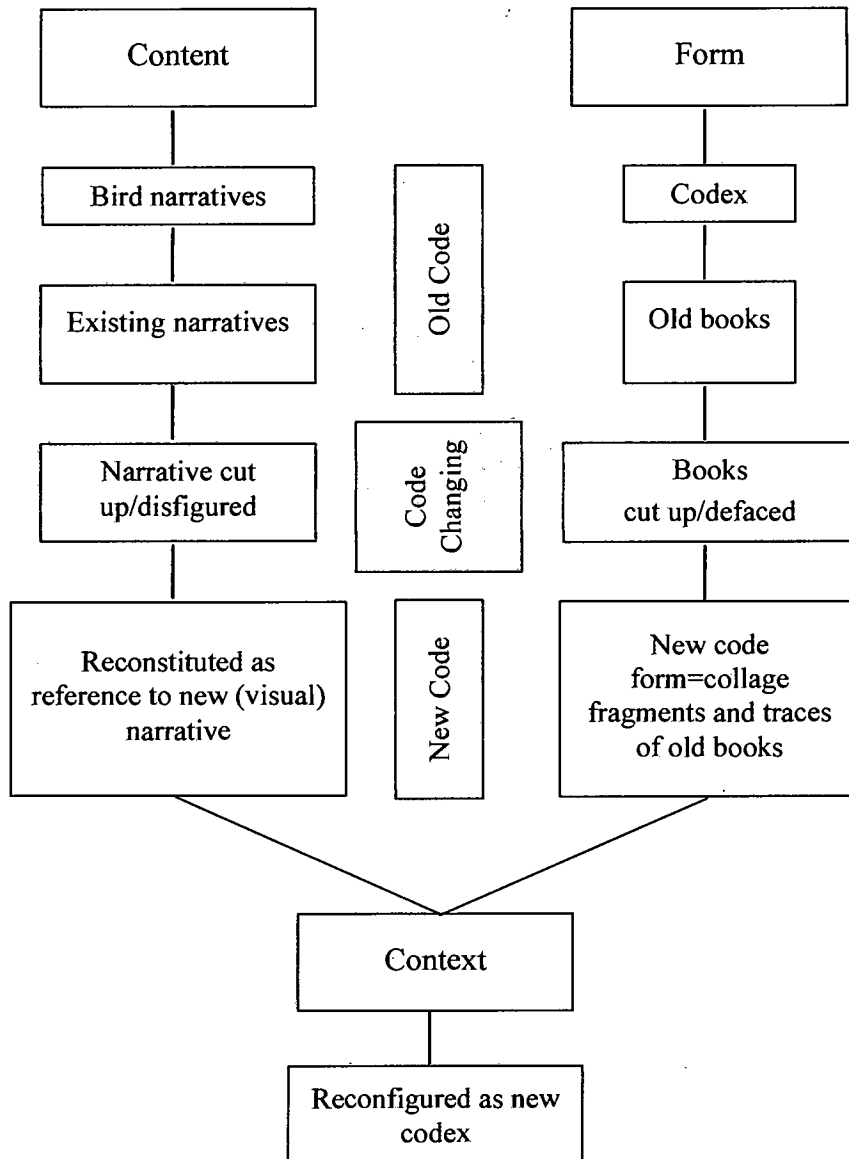
Little dead bird

Then they cried because their singing was so beautiful and the ferns smelled so sweetly and the bird was dead. They put dirt over the bird as they sang, and then they put more ferns and flowers and a gray stone on top of the dirt. On the stone they wrote: Here lies a bird that is dead. Around the stone they planted

white violet plants, and wild geraniums, only the geraniums faded. And every day, until they forgot, they went and sang to their little dead bird and put fresh flowers on his grave.

Addendum C
Code-Changing Diagrams

Books



Counter Books

