

**The problem of authorship:
Considering the significance of interpretative approaches
on the conditions for creativity
in undergraduate fine art studio practice**

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Abstract

Varying approaches to interpretation, debated in aesthetic and literary criticism since the very beginnings of philosophy, favour the artist's (author's) intentionality, the viewer's (reader's) interpretation, and/or the artwork (text) itself. The merit of these approaches, in terms of what informs the artwork's meaning or significance, is not at issue in this research project. Rather this project is concerned with how these different approaches play out within referential frameworks in teaching, learning and assessment interactions in higher education, and their significance for creativity in fine art studio practice.

To comprehend the complex interplay of structure, culture and agency, the study draws from qualitative case studies of two art schools, in England and in South Africa, which differed in their espoused approach to assessment and interpretation. In addition, comparative case analysis of five studio practice teachers and their students considers agential approaches to interpretation and their significance for student engagement. Data was collected from course documentation and generated utilising a variety of hybrid methods. This included observations of assessments, questionnaires and interviews with staff; and to generate data from students, an image-based narrative method, focus group interviews and questionnaires. At various points during such researcher-participant interactions, possibilities for reciprocity, transgression and challenge of interpretations were enabled.

Utilising critical discourse analysis, each case was analysed individually and then comparatively. Firstly, that which was espoused and practiced by staff was mapped to a framework constructed for the purpose of identifying approaches to interpretation: whether eucharistic, objective, or operative criticism, in relation to the author, text and reader. Secondly, insights from staff and student participants were related to the optimal conditions for creativity in this domain. Schema of the environment, relationships and curricula were then sketched, indicating the significance of interpretative approaches on students' emotional, critical and reflective engagement with themselves as artist-students, their artmaking processes, and their artworks.

This project contributes to research in assessment in fine art studio practice by providing a means to both identify the discipline's embedded referential frameworks and consider their significance for creativity. The findings from this study revealed that whether or not the interpretative community of assessors were informed by educational development or quality assurances discourses, or utilised explicit criterion-referenced assessment, the more powerful and implicit discourses were those of their professional practice, informed by art criticism. As such, actual intentionality was not given

prominence in either institution's summative assessments. Despite this, its importance for the nominal authenticity of the artist-student emerged. As students' reflective engagement of assessors' readings of their artworks against their own meaning-making was unsupported, students evidenced underdeveloped skills of metacognition and critical judgment. However, the study found that those teachers with longer experience, of the particularity of institutional structures and cultures, had developed the capacity to better manage the effects on their students' formative experiences. Such relationships emerged as having a strong formative influence. Those students, who believed their teacher was concerned with their actual intentionality, experienced less alienation and felt better supported to persevere with or problematize their desires, and to handle uncertainty.

An argument is made for the negotiation of interpretation as discursive and inclusive of students' actual intentionality in assessment practices in fine art studio practice. This turn, to situating the author within interpretation, is towards enabling possibilities of agency and the responsibility of ethics within teaching, learning and assessment of reflexive practitioners. In questioning the significance of interpretation on authorship and the conditions for creativity within the higher education context, of which there has been little in the way of empirical research, this research contributes to contemporary literary and aesthetic criticism.

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Chapter One

Introducing this study

As a person who has studied, taught, practiced and researched within fine art studio practice (FASP)¹ and what is currently termed higher education studies (HES) or educational development, I have often found myself in the crosscurrents of vastly different understandings of the nature of learning and being in the world, at times complementary, at times conflicting. My current work in HES has allowed me to turn more scholarly attention to FASP in higher education (HE), than the usual focus of those who teach artmaking, which is most often on the creative endeavour of artmaking itself (Gillespie 2004). Some suggest that the marked lack of scholarly attention on the interaction between students and faculty in art education literature “suggests a defensive response [to] the uncertainty and ambiguity that we all experienced as students” (Ochsner 2000, p.194). I found the inverse: that I was motivated, by such memories of my student experiences and by my later discomfort with how I was positioned as a teacher by structural and cultural expectations of teacher-assessor roles in FASP, to research such interactions. In my educational development work, I have come to realise that similar problematics extend across various disciplinary contexts in higher education. However, the fundamentally important concerns of creativity, subjectivity, agency and authority, are brought to the fore in this particular domain. This thesis grapples with the significance on the conditions for creativity of the ways in which these important concerns are constructed through interpretative approaches in FASP.

The focus of the academic community in FASP has predominantly been on the development and assessment of artworks, and not the students themselves; and similarly the professional communities’ approaches to interpretation often absent considerations of the very person who makes the work: the artist or author. The epistemological lens of HES has allowed me to question foci which exclude considerations of the educational value for and significance of the person who is learning and making art. Yet in FASP this is not easily negotiated, because it is the artist’s intentionality which emerges as a complex site of contestation over what informs the meaning or significance of artworks.

¹ A full list of abbreviations used in this text can be found in Appendix A.

While intentionalist models construct intentionality as related to any aspects of authorial knowledge, including the artist's original intention to make the work or engage with the subject; more contemporary notions relate intentionality to the artist's concern with readership, in how s/he conceives the work will be received and its significance once it has become 'public'. Neither deterministic nor reflexive models are given as much credence as the authority of the reader or critic in anti-intentionalist models, which dominate contemporary art and literary criticism. With rare exception, research on approaches to interpretation in teaching and learning has not been extensive, and in studio learning it is vastly under-researched. When conducting previous research (Belluigi 2008; 2011), I found that approaches to intentionality and interpretation had been imported to studio practice from literary criticism studies, without due consideration of the impact of such approaches on the student experience. While art historians and critics may be relinquished of responsibility for any effects of such interpretative approaches on the art maker, FASP studio staff are specifically tasked with fostering creative development, yet were seemingly unaware of the potential "backwash effect" (Biggs 1999, p.68) of anti-intentionalist summative panel assessments on their formative interactions with students. This may well be because there has been little rigorous empirical research on the effects of interpretative approaches on the development of artists' professional practice.² In subsequent informal interactions with FASP staff, it emerged that those who suspected negative effects, felt ill-equipped to question or combat such interpretative approaches because of their import in contemporary criticism. I came to discover that none of the dominant studio teaching traditions, whether the master-apprentice, reproduction, innate or gifted traditions, focus on intentionality (Cowdroy & de Graaf 2005; Belluigi 2010). Those staff who had engaged with professional development courses or scholarship in higher education studies did not find those discourses adequately equipped them to challenge such approaches.

Current FASP teaching and assessment operates somewhere between these two communities, academic and professional. The influence of the latter is more domain-specific and tacit, and at times less openly researched, possibly due to a defensive stance of the teacher-researcher (Ochsner 2000) or the suspicion of techno-rationalist discourses which delegitimise tacit, subjectivist

² As much as I could determine, the few published discussions on this issue are not empirical in nature nor produced within the traditions of what is considered 'scientific' research, but rather are of an informal, populist nature about the effects of criticism on the artist's career or psyche (for instance, Lennon 2012). Of interest, is that even within such forums, there is recognition that the critic's responsibility is to the viewer/reader not to the artist/author (for instance, Spiegler 2005; 'Page-turner' 2012).

assessment practices (Sambell & McDowell 1998; Orr & Blythman 2005; Hardy 2006b). In this research project, I draw arguments from both, to explore the ways in which academic assessment mis/aligns with interpretation in the professional community of practice; and how interpretation is enabled or constrained by the academic context and its purposes, situated within this disciplinary context (Orr 2006).

This thesis is structured to lead from curriculum- and teacher-centred concerns, as they mediate what is intended within the disciplinary and professional communities of practice, to a consideration of their significance in practice for the artist-student and his/her learning experiences in undergraduate FASP. The contribution of this research is thus both to the field of HES, in the interest of furthering the scholarship of assessment, and contemporary criticism, in questioning the significance of interpretation for authorship and creativity, where there has been negligible research in the HE context.

To sketch the context of this research project, in Chapter Two I focus on insights into FASP assessment from art education literature. Some of this literature explores and expands on traditional approaches to assessment in this academic discipline. Much recent research is predominantly informed by educational development and quality assurance discourses, and as such is concerned with changes to practice aligned with outcomes-based education, criterion-referenced assessment, “assessment literacy” and “the development of pedagogic intelligence” (Harland & Sawdon 2012, p.67). However, despite the influence of such educational³ discourses on developing referential frameworks, and sincere attempts at ‘innovations’ in assessment practice, a concern has arisen that little has fundamentally shifted in creative arts education (Williamson 2013).

Towards a more substratal engagement with the referential frameworks underpinning judgment in this domain, in Chapter Three I situate such models against a broader philosophical narrative, recognising that whilst evaluation is very much at the heart of the interpretative purpose of assessment in FASP, it has become the least important or desired aspect of contemporary criticism (Elkins 2003). I begin the chapter with a genealogy of constructions of authorship and creativity. This serves to contextualise a framework I constructed for the purposes of analysing the interpretative

³ I have chosen the word ‘educational’ rather than ‘academic’, because the emphasis on being inclusive of the ‘person’ and ‘process’ within assessment was introduced from engagement with recent HES discourses, for the purposes of educational development, rather than academic traditions.

approaches of staff engaged in teaching and assessment in FASP. Embedding this transdisciplinary research within authorship/ interpretation debates, in Appendix B I demonstrate the ways in which a number of the dominant interpretative approaches, which are either actively employed within or ghost contemporary art criticism, might be mapped in relation to their significance for constructions of the author, text, and reader. The application of this framework to various interpretative approaches in criticism is thus made explicit, in addition to its being put to use in the empirical analysis of cases in FASP.

The first two chapters reveal that, whether authority resides with assessors in academia or critics in professional practice, the issue of authorship is fundamentally about the negotiation of power. As such, this research has been conducted in an attempt to offer a deeper philosophical exploration, informed by empirical research, into assessment and power in terms of authorship.

As I intimated at the start of this introductory chapter, I was motivated by a desire to explore the significance of interpretative influences on the student-artist and his/her creative development. The research methodology for this study, which I discuss in Chapter Four, draws from a hybrid of fields, epistemologies, approaches and methods. I collected and generated data from observations of assessments, questionnaires and interviews to analyse references made by the staff and student participants in various assessment contexts, and mapped these against the framework constructed. To gain insights into the significance of such approaches for undergraduate students in FASP, I analysed data generated from final year Bachelor of Fine Art students using questionnaires and an image- and narrative-based method. The analyses were triangulated and analysed for indicators of the larger conditions in which they were situated, including the curricula, environment, and relationships established, and student experiences of engagement and alienation. Schema were sketched, organised in relation to the conditions for creativity in FASP (Belluigi 2013), indicating the students' emotional, critical and reflective engagement with their 'self', their artmaking process, and their artworks, during their studies. Whilst such heteronomical approaches may not be congruent with conventional approaches in HE research (Trowler 2013), I felt that the demands they would make on me to be open to the subject and my participants, and self-critical of the validity of my choices, would better enable me to handle the uncertainty of the project without closing down on its possibilities and problematics.

Recognising the layers of structure, culture and agency, I present two data analysis chapters, one from an institutional perspective and the other individual. In Chapter Five, the comparative case analysis between two art schools, one in South Africa (SAI) and the other in England (UKI), explores

differing structural approaches, in the form of the curricula and explicit assessment procedures, and cultural influences, on dominant practices and discourses. The ways in which agential approaches are positioned, enabled or constrained by the institutional influences within which they are embedded, are explored through comparative case analysis of five FASP teachers in Chapter Six.

This latter focus recognises that what is most complicated and nuanced, when it comes to issues of interpretation, is that which is enacted by the teacher. As interpretation in FASP is made by practice-based teachers, it is linked to that person's identity as an artist (Logan 2013), and his/her positioning within the communal assessment culture (Orr 2011). Discursive frameworks are constructed by the espoused theory of art practice, the artist-teacher's theory-in-use when making his/her own work, and the roles s/he plays as teacher-assessor in initiating, guiding and assessing students and their production (Aitchison 2005). I chose to utilise the term 'supervisor' to represent the artist-teachers' formative role in students' practice-based research (Belluigi 2016), as it makes appropriate associations with postgraduate supervision, which arguably involves similar influences and problematics (McCallin & Nayar 2011; Wisker & Robinson 2013). The term distinguishes the role of the studio supervisor from the dominant expectations of mainstream teaching roles, which at the undergraduate level are most often not as fundamentally concerned with research-based pedagogical approaches and facilitation. In addition, it serves to jolt the familiarity of terms used within this domain, such as those from within the two institutional cases studied ("tutors" at UKI and "lecturers" at SAI).

In the last chapter, I present a discussion informed by the significance of interpretative approaches which emerged from this empirical research, and in dialogue with other research findings in this domain and in HES. I focus particularly on student engagement and the conditions which most strongly emerged, pointing to the limitations of the study, possibilities for future research and tentative suggestions for interventions in assessment practices. I connect this project and its process with reflections on my larger research journey, methodological practices, and concern with ethics.

Threading throughout this text is the problem of authorship, the subject and agency – and how I am to ethically practice and represent my own authorship of this text and acknowledge the possibilities of its reception for you as the reader, while researching and representing these very problems in both abstract and situated contexts.

Chapter Two

A consideration of the problematics of context: assessment in fine art studio practice

This chapter is constructed as a contextual background to offset the central concepts foregrounded in this research project. In the first part, I briefly frame the relevant concerns from literature on contemporary curricula of FASP, with a particular focus on the struggle over content in postmodern curricula, and its significance for authorship. Approaches to and problematics of assessment in this domain are the foci of the second part of the chapter. I briefly outline some of the methods, purposes, referential frameworks and traditions of assessment in FASP, with a consideration of the significance of assessment for the conditions of creativity. In the third part of this chapter, issues of interpretation and intentionality in art education literature are outlined, as a bridge to the next chapter, which considers these issues from the perspective of art criticism.

Part I.

The struggle over content: curricula of fine art studio practice

Histories of education and curricula have been mapped in diverse ways, such as geographical and political schemes (Pearse 1997); historical periods (Elkins 2001) and traditions (Harwood 2007); and national development, human and cultural capital (Stankiewicz 2007). Each of these readings has validity when one researches across geographic locales in the postmodern context, as I am attempting in this research project. What emerged from my literary analysis was that contemporary curricular values in art education evidence little consensus, and that this may be due to an ontological/epistemological problem at its heart. Whilst many established disciplines are concerned with determining what remains within the canon or content of the course, visual arts is concerned with defining what art is itself (Harwood 2007).

Viewing fine art education's approach to traditions across a continuum, the conservation or preservation of tradition on one end would include music education, with innovation and destruction of tradition on the other, where visual art would be placed (Harwood 2007). The absolutism of the former, critiqued for its modernist attempts at homogeneity and grand narrative style, holds that there is a generalizable canon (Elkins 2001). Relativism holds that curricula should be responsive to surrounding culture or context, a standpoint critiqued for being revisionist. This

difference may be born from the fundamental difference in their practices, where generally music and theatre are interpretative, whilst visual art is created 'originally' by practitioners (Edström 2008). This division can be linked to formalist (art for art's sake) and contextualist (the functional value of art) approaches to artmaking (Anderson & McRorie 1997), echoing binaries of the university as ivory-tower or responsive. In the context of FASP curricula, this relates to a medium-specific interest before postmodernism and a discourse-interest with postmodernism (McEvelley 1996; Houghton 2014). Similarly, divisions between 'theory' and 'practice' have perhaps been exasperated in an attempt to establish legitimacy of such 'disciplines' in the academy, with theoretical approaches (historical, aesthetic, critical et cetera) and so called 'activities of the spirit' (imagination, expression, creation) valorised above technical education (Darras 2007). In Chapter Three, I consider the roots of these tensions, the form-content dyad in philosophy, from the perspective of authorship and interpretation.

Of importance is the significance of such curricular tensions on the current teaching-learning relationship. Those informed by absolutist approaches are accused of creating a system where students are encouraged to reproduce the known; relativist approaches are accused of encouraging students to produce the unknown of the present (Darras 2007). Similar binaries are evident in HES, where teacher- or curriculum-centeredness is often pitted against student or learning-centeredness, with student voice/demands/desires placed in opposition to the authority of teacher as a representative expert of the professional or academic community of practice (Dewey 1902).

Art education has not only been influenced by itself, in fact far from it. The threads from many different sources have intermingled and been re-appropriated, depending on context, both inside and outside of art education (Darras 2007), with diverse influences evident in adult learning traditions (Boud 1989) and traditions of creativity (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005; 2007; Belluigi 2010). Contemporary HE curricula espouse adopting approaches which either question structures that disempower the student (the critical tradition of adult education), and/or enable the inclusion and positionality of discourse and the personal narratives of students (postmodern notions of adult education) (Boud 1989). Hand-in-hand with the uncertainty that such a shift in power might engender, is the anxiety of contemporary art educators (Pistoiesi 2001; Schiralli 2002; Kindler 2007). In part, this stems from the radical philosophical shifts in the nature of art, with art education responsive to this ontological/epistemological problem.

While philosophers and aestheticians create a cottage industry writing critiques of art in the postmodern... era, what are art educators supposed to do with all those students? (Pistolessi 2001, p.12)

Whilst some argue for a combination of contextualism and formalism in art curricula (Anderson & McRorie 1997), others argue against formalism's hold over current art criticism (McEvilley 1996). Whilst the complexities of interpretative approaches will be given more consideration in the next chapter, at this juncture it is relevant to consider that with formalism, interpretation occurs through appreciation of the meanings and intrinsic features which reside within aesthetic forms; with contextualism, interpretation is concerned with the construction of meanings about the work in contexts which themselves have constructed meanings. As I explore in Chapter Three, both these approaches in art criticism to some extent empty out the artist-as-author from the work, pointing to a problematic in art education which claims to be concerned with the development of the artist-student.

Post-structural analyses of curricula have unearthed that most often than not there is more than one curriculum intertwined in formal education: the formal curriculum, the focus of my discussion above, and hidden versions. The term 'hidden curriculum' encompasses a broad range of definitions, though I think this excerpt creates an impactful sense of what is meant by the term.

It is an apposite metaphor to describe the shadowy, ill-defined and amorphous nature of that which is implicit and embedded in educational experiences in contrast with the formal statements about curricula and the surface features of educational interaction (Sambell & McDowell 1998, pp.391–392).

The 'hidden curriculum' can be seen at a micro-level, what was intended or espoused compared to that which occurs on the ground or is experienced in practice by the student; and at a macro-level, hidden societal structures and mechanisms that may be coercive or destructive in terms of their effects. Because of the understanding that assessment shapes the hidden curriculum by communicating what is valued, the site of assessment allows the researcher to excavate or reveal the hidden curriculum (Rowntree 1987). It is for this reason that assessment has been explored extensively in art education literature, as I discuss in this chapter, and why much energy has been directed in HE towards reforming or innovating assessment to create alignment (Biggs & Tang 2007) or articulation (Hussey & Smith 2002) between the espoused and the practiced, the intended and the experienced, to enable purposeful transformation (Belluigi 2014). There is a sense in much education literature that students are unable to resist the pressures of assessment (Ramsden 1992) which can be used to strategically guide their engagement (Gibbs 1999; Biggs 1999). Some argue that even though assessment may act coercively and powerfully, students have some agency to

construct their response to the hidden curriculum through how they interpret, perceive and decide to act (Sambell & McDowell 1998; Webster 2006). Their backgrounds, including their prior education (Boud 1995); approaches to learning (Marton & Saljo 1984); various forms of capital (Bourdieu 1977); and experiences (Mann 2001), act as further influences. Whilst assessment exists in formative and summative guises, the structures and cultures of both impact on student learning.

In the next section I discuss how FASP assessment practices are mostly informed by the traditions which the teachers themselves experienced; the varied notions of judgment imported from the professional community of practice; and, more recently, the influence of quality assurance and educational discourses. In addition to the manner and purpose of assessment, the question of what is being assessed in fine art raises many thorny issues, possibly due to the ontological/epistemological concern at the centre of the curriculum (p.6). The artwork may be assessed as a stand-alone object, separate from the student who created it or the objectives of the supervisor in the course. It may also be seen as the product of a learning process, where the focus is on assessing the student's development as art-maker. In addition, assessing and, in turn, fostering creativity may be one of the aims of assessment in FASP.

Part II.

Contemporary structures and cultures of assessment in fine art studio practice

Contemporary assessment methods in fine art studio practice

The assessment method or rather 'event' that is both most contentious and applauded in FASP is the Critique (colloquially known as 'crit' and in other studio learning contexts 'jury', 'review', 'dialogue'). As an oral genre it is an integral part of the curriculum, centralised within the studio tradition and its acculturation rituals (Dannels 2005). Crudely put, it involves an artist, artwork, and a supervisor or assessor who critiques the work. An audience may be present, usually the artist-student's classmates, additional faculty and/or guest artists. The more traditional system is a public assessment by proxy where a panel of experts makes a collective judgment about the quality of a student's artwork, either in-progress or finished, based on a visual exhibition and sometimes inclusive of verbal or written presentation made by the student and/or his/her studio supervisor. In other systems, students present and defend their own work (*'in viva voce'*). Most often the frequency of Critiques varies according to supervisors' specifications (Barrett 2000) or is determined by the curriculum or summative requirements. Rarely, it is initiated by the student (Edström 2008).

A space and opportunity for students to receive feedback is seen as one of the primary purposes of this method (Cline 1999; Blair 2007). This feedback may be for the purpose of informing or guiding students' work-in-progress or future work (Hetland et al. 2007) or for providing access to the evaluative judgement of their assessors, who experience and define the values and standards of the community of practice (Owens 2007). The Critique provides opportunity for reflection-outside-action, where "art-making is paused, so that students and teacher can reflect on the work and the process of creation" (Hetland et al. 2007, pp.28–30). Only rarely are affective aspects cited as a reason for these assessments, such as motivation "to help them make art better" (Barrett 1988, p.25).

Those of the critical tradition are concerned that this method's critic-centred nature coerces students into conforming to hegemonic notions of habitus, while others see the student-centred critical dialogue as supporting the student's reconstruction of their own habitus (Webster 2006). Those of the latter school, argue that the Critique allows for transparent and agreed upon assessment criteria to be established (Cline 1999) where key concepts of the project or course are highlighted (Hetland et al. 2007). Another implicit purpose that emerges from the literature is peer

and self-assessment, where in addition to their supervisors' modelling, students learn how to observe, interpret, explain, and evaluate works (Hetland et al. 2007).

A large divide exists between critical readings of this method and its significance for student learning and engagement, and more positive readings of its possibilities. Readings based on psychological and anthropological research paradigms hold up the Critique as "a liberal celebration of student creativity" (Webster 2005, p.265), because of its *potential* for positive, effective and efficient learning and teaching (Chadwick & Crotch 2006). In the philosophic tradition of Socratic questioning 'elenchus' (Owens 2007), student involvement is shifted from passive reproduction to an active learning experience as students bring to consciousness their existing knowledge base so as to reason through the problematic at hand (Overholser 1992). The more public and social nature of the interactions is seen as appropriate to this 'authentic' assessment method, which to some extent echoes processes outside of formal education, within the professional community of practice. The social nature creates the potential for feedback to be received from various sources, and for the focus to be on students' work and working processes.

However, the overwhelming majority of research conducted on the Critique is critical of its processes as educationally flawed. Mostly informed by sociological research paradigms, cultural theory and critical pedagogy, such readings can be placed on a continuum from mild concern to outright rejection (Chadwick & Crotch 2006). Foucaultian attention has been paid to the negative effects of its public nature, where individual competencies and personal experiences are made visible, objectified and located within a particular hierarchy of success and expertise. Bourdieusian readings characterize it as a "symbolic ritual in which 'apprentices' (students) repeatedly present their habitus, a notion of identity that includes cognitive and embodied aspects, to their 'masters' (tutors) for legitimization" (Harwood 2007, p.320). The majority describe student experiences of alienation, as students are coerced into adopting or reproducing a teacher-centred construction of habitus (Webster 2005). Such readings interweave much of this discussion as they are dominant within literature on studio learning.

Positive readings can be seen to give primacy to the subject over agency and construct the student subject as free to construct his or her own understanding and identity during the pedagogic encounter; while critical readings give primacy to agency over the subject and construct the student subject as dominated by the assessors who seek to control them (Webster 2006). Metaphors may be a more evocative way to articulate the complexities, sub-cultures, differing notions and purposes,

including the Critique as amorous seduction, bad translation, narratological or collaborative storytelling, warlike, a legal proceeding, and ritual (Elkins 2001).

Seen as a compliment to the traditional focus on product, the portfolio as “a purposeful collection of student work” (Haanstra & Schonau 2007, p.428) has been reconceptualised in recent years (Johnston 2005) to act as a repository and space for reflection-in-action during the process of learning. The ways in which the genre is utilised and assessed differs greatly between schools, supervisors and even individual students, but the document generally contains sketches, drawings, photographs, personal statement, notes et cetera. The reflective potential of portfolios is seen as its most useful purpose (Austerlitz & James 2008). Whether assessments of portfolios are formative, informal, or integrated with the summative assessment, it is contended they often have a bearing on students’ grades (Barrett 2009).

Dominant purposes of assessment in FASP

Assessment in education has various functions, such as diagnosis, feedback, licensing and achievement of curriculum outcomes (Haanstra & Schonau 2007). In my review of published literature, the dominant purposes of assessments in FASP involve formative (assessment for learning) and summative (assessment of learning) purposes, where there may be overlap or distinct separations in how these purposes are effected in practice. Many argue that the assessment of work produced in the studio, and the learning that occurs in the studio, are two phenomena of teaching and learning that should be seen as separate (Dineen et al. 2005). However, overwhelming indications are that both have significance for the student experience (Mann 2001; Atkinson 2006; Falchikov & Boud 2007; Eshun et al 2012).

Formative assessment is recognised as potentially constructive in promoting creativity within visual arts education (Dineen et al. 2005; Hickman 2007; Belluigi 2013). Such assessment is concerned with facilitating learning by generating information about the task (‘feedback’) and ways of improving future performance (‘feedforward’) (Knight 2001). ‘Ipsative assessment’ avoids prescriptive or purely judgmental feedback, attempting to encourage deep reflection and metacognition in student learning through its focus is on the individual’s growth and development rather than providing evidence for external purposes. ‘Diagnostic assessment’ utilises assessment as a means to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of students’ ability in relation to targets for future development. ‘Negotiated assessment’ involves guidelines and feedback processes to some extent negotiated by participants, aims to increase student ownership and investment. Each of these streams of formative assessment is underpinned by the understanding that human motivation and desire have an impact

on the learning process (Hickman 2007). To varying degrees, formative assessment involves the student more actively in the process of assessment, from being the recipient of feedback to involvement in making judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of their own performance and approaches.

The possibilities and validity for formative learning are constrained within the current high-stakes adult education climate (Maclellan 2004; Orr 2007). While alternative assessment such as the Critique may be educationally valuable, their alignment and thus instrumental use in a HE climate, which is concerned with summative assessment for reasons of accountability and certification, is questionable (Maclellan 2004). Summative grades in studio teaching and learning have been regarded by staff and students as insufficient feedback (Blair 2006), with such processes found to often undermine creative processes (Winnicott 1971; Amabile 1996; Dineen et al. 2005; Belluigi 2008). Summative grade-bearing assessments are often guided by normative goals or properties about the student's product or behaviours. They strategically encourage display and showcasing of mastery, thereby discouraging disclosure of difficulties or problems. In addition, it can be difficult to determine "by looking at studio work whether a student has understood a particular concept or has blindly followed the teacher's suggestion" (Parsons 1996, p.58). In curricula where summative assessments carry considerable weight, results indicate the success of teaching for the achievement of that outcome, rather than being about learning. Regardless, summative assessment is the traditional purpose of assessment in adult education, and for the most part is exclusionary of student participation.

Referential frameworks for assessment in FASP⁴

A most contentious issue, not exclusive to FASP, is how outcomes-based education (OBE) and related educational discourses have impacted on the referential frameworks for assessment. The re-emphasis on criterion-referenced assessment (CRA) in the 1980s was in an attempt shift assessment from a focus on normative comparisons between members of the student body, to one on individual learning against the purposes of the course. However, many argue that assessment in FASP is still predominantly norm-referenced (NRA), with recent shifts having not fundamentally altered teaching and learning (Delandshere 2001; Williamson 2013). Because much artmaking involves unpredictability, it is possible that neither NRA nor CRA is appropriate as both involve comparison

⁴ Much of this section informed a paper I produced while reading for this degree (see Belluigi 2014).

(Eisner 1993; Belluigi 2010). Their dichotomous opposition may simply serve to feed into a myth of objectivity (Shay 2005) by erasing their subtle interplay in practice.

NRA has been common practice in FASP since the guild, where the discretion of masters and influence of patrons played a role. Later, within the academies, competitions were commonly used for assessment purposes. These were judged in private in the Carracci Academy, where the resulting order was recorded on the actual artworks without comment. From the assessors' perspectives, this was intended to soften "the bitterness of being criticized" (Caracci in Elkins 2001, p.111). However, students' experience of the unfairness of this system, of decisions being made without explanation or appeal, possibly provoked the modern system of Critiques (Elkins 2001).

Concurrent to this approach have been instances of CRA, as a result of pressures from academia for more 'objective' methods (Morgan 2011). French Baroque assessment practices involved a rational system of analysis with clear criteria and mark weighting. The Critiques inception was influenced by pressures from academic institutions (Webster 2005) and Romantic critiques of NRA as authoritarian and negatively normative of individual potential and direction (Elkins 2001). The 19th-century *École des Beaux Arts* was the first to adopt a 'jury' system where a panel of 'experts' made a collective judgement about the quality of a student's work, a system of assessment by proxy subsequently adopted in many art schools. This was based at the time on a verbal presentation of the artwork made by the student's studio master, but was adapted in some post-war contexts to include students' presentations and 'defence' of their own work.

Resistance to assessment comes from Romantic (Elkins 2001; Cunliffe 2007) and Modernist (Cunliffe 2007) paradigms of art education, which are based on notions of the artist-student as innately unique and expressive (discussed more on p.31). Assessment, particularly NRA, is seen as imposing values and standards which negatively impact on expression, creativity, and learning. The distinctiveness of artworks is undermined (Cannatella 2001) and the cultivation of "students' productive idiosyncrasies" constrained (Eisner 2007, p.425). There has been recent resistance to the competitive position of identity and social status inherent to NRA, with a focus on the merit of student behaviour, outcomes or work produced. However Bourdieu's work reveals circularity within such attempts (Delandshere 2001).

Whilst many now acknowledge that indicators or criteria for assessment are potentially constructive for discussions between staff and students, establishing successful systems of CRA has proved difficult in creative arts fields, where there is a recognized absence of criteria for assessing the

subtleties of creative acts or high level creative ability (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005), and where the non-verbal nature of artmaking is incongruous with written criteria (Murphy & Espeland 2007). When criteria are determined according to student behaviour, specifications of what elements are desired and the standards for these elements can lean towards prescription and shutting down, rather than opening up, possibilities (MacLellan 2004). The ways in which criteria are utilised and formulated are often dependent on the larger structures and cultures within that context (Hendry et al. 2012). Most often the assessment focus is forced on to the end-product, rather than the creative process behind the product (Barrett 2009). This may result in the artefact being assessed with arbitrarily assigned criteria (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005; Belluigi 2008), or those which rigidly adhere to predetermined outcomes, ignoring what is unexpected (Hickman 2007). Such teleological impositions of arbitrary conditions and conclusions on artmaking may create a loss of ownership for both staff and students, when complying with summative processes not of their own making (Dineen & Collins 2005).

Those working with creativity argue that a flexible approach is required to the writing of learning outcomes and criteria, with the aim of creating the conditions for autonomous learning, feelings of achievement, lateral and divergent thinking (Freeman 2006), where self-actualization is prioritized over mastery (Dineen et al. 2005). Modes of assessment which enable student participation, dialogue and input into the selection and weighting of assessment criteria are seen by many art educators as best practice (Smart & Dixon 2002; Harland & Sawdon 2012) as such empowering processes may resolve some of the problems of the Critique (Horton 2007). This necessitates a paradigm shift from teacher-derived criteria for the assessment of art to negotiated or student-derived criteria towards developing assessment literacy of philosophical and theoretical frameworks (Belluigi 2010). Studies that have used such 'authenticative assessment' indicate they are enabling of creativity in a range of contexts (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005). The emphasis on negotiated criteria is informed by notions of student agency, where referential frameworks enable students to situate their learning experience, develop critical judgment of their creative output and developmental processes, to better improve, reference, interpret and experiment (Corner 2005). This approach rewards what students see as important learning achievements, and highlights these for staff to be more supportive of, or problematize, such processes (Belluigi 2010).

Traditions of assessment

What many see as techno-rationalist impulses in current HE are informed by positivist traditions of assessment (Gray 2002) and early behaviourist principles in educational psychology (Shepard 1991).

These assume that ability is “a fixed, consistent and acontextual human trait” (Huot 1996, p.550); that objectivity is possible; and thus that ‘scientific’ measurement may lead to certainty. Those operating within this tradition assume it is possible to reach an ideal, objective assessment through the appropriate training of assessors and construction of clear guidelines, such as CRA. A key principle is reliability, as the agreement over results and the reduction of errors, and for this reason judgments are referenced according to grading guidelines and scores previously developed. Such techno-rationalism finds an obvious mis-fit with disciplines in the creative arts, where prescription may thwart unexpected or unintentional outcomes of crucial importance to creative development (Cannatella 2001; Gordon 2004), despite the difficulties they pose to quantifiable measurement. More recent post-positivist approaches recognise that complex learning and tasks are more difficult to assess in reliable ways, with awareness of the dangers to validity of striving for ‘reliability’ through measuring only trivial aspects of work (Johnston 2005). Thus validity was later recognised as a key principle, because of the backwash of assessment on what students prioritize in their learning and also in how teachers teach.

Positivist assumptions and the construction of assessment as a technology have been heavily critiqued from those within the critical tradition of adult education, who view assessment as a socio-political practice, whose purpose is defined within structures and contexts (Delandshere 2001; Johnston 2005), and which acts to communicate the values of society. Critical theorists, interpretivist, feminist, postmodernist et al, emphasize different aspects of this problematic. However, of most concern is the significance of assessment practices on those to whom it aims to assess. Thus many critique notions of universal master narratives as having embedded power dynamics which privilege the collective while disadvantaging ‘others’, legitimizing one overriding judgment.

In an attempt to reduce possible negative power relations and effects of assessment, those operating within the subjectivist tradition of assessment (Gray 2002) emphasize formative purposes over summative judgments (Johnston 2005). Instead of the positivist notions of objective judgments, interpretations from assessments are seen as constructed socially within communities of individuals with multiple subjectivities, with the messy practice of assessment recognized as relative, provisional and open to contestation (Orr 2007). Operating under the assumption that the nature of knowledge is socially contingent, difference is valued, allowing for competing and conflicting discourses. Of the various subjectivist approaches to assessment, I have chosen to discuss interpretivist and postmodern approaches, as these emerged as most dominant in art education research.

Orr (2006; 2007; 2010; 2011) has explored the disciplinary norm of assessment in FASP, which occurs through group dialogues and marking events, where grades or marks are agreed publically, and nested within the contextual layers of “a team, a department, a discipline, a university and the arts/education sector” (Orr 2011, p.38). The notion that identities are contextually constructed through the interchange between structure, culture, and agency is a dominant sociological assumption. In relation to the identity of ‘assessor’, this plays out in an understanding that an assessor’s knowledge base is socially and dynamically produced through interpretive constructions with the community in which s/he is a member (Billet 2006; Orr 2011). When it comes to the act of assessment, instead of attempting to reach the level of objectivity a positivist approach may strive for, in this approach the community of assessors hope to come to a consensus “that is as informed and sophisticated as it can be made at a particular point in time” (Guba & Lincoln 1989, p.44). Assessment in this tradition is more of an informed agreement following debate and negotiation among a rational, often temporary, ‘interpretive community’ (Fish 1980), whose members teach and assess through systemic metaphors which express its embedded cultural values (Lasserre 2012). In addition to the socio-political context, is an awareness of the theoretical and philosophical context (Johnston 2005). A number of issues emerge from this approach – the importance of the community which co-constructs these values; considerations of context; and how this approach manages critiques against its assumptions around objectivity and reliability.

The construction of objectivity and subjectivity in binary opposition is problematized in this subjectivist approach (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu 1990; Shay 2005; Cunliffe 2007; Orr 2010), with many contending that ‘objectivity’ has been linked to truth in a mystifying manner in HE (Freeman 2006). Interpretivists point out that to claim there is no objectivity within interpretation is to conflate it with quantifiability. Instead of claims of ‘truth’, the accent is on ‘validity’, ‘credibility’ and ‘transferability’ through “an extensive and careful description of the time, the place, the context, the culture in which those hypotheses were found to be salient” (Guba & Lincoln 1989, pp.241–242). Far from anything goes, such an approach requires “an ethic of disciplined, collaborative inquiry” that “encourages challenges and revisions to initial interpretations” (Moss 1994, p.7).

Influential within the interpretive tradition is the work of Bourdieu, where social structures, and not only philosophical choices, are recognised as playing a role in judgment processes. Bourdieu (1977) analysed the role of education systems and assessment in unconsciously reproducing the distribution of ‘economic’ and ‘cultural capital’. Judgments derive from deeply inscribed categories within academics’ and students’ understandings which are underpinned by hierarchical systems of

oppositions (such as 'strong' versus 'weak', talent versus effort), which legitimize or delegitimize knowledge and competencies. These value judgments are defined by socio-political contexts, and through being exercised, reproduce social structure. This system of power and authority favours those with certain economic and cultural capital and who will in turn maintain the system, while it disadvantages those at the bottom of the hierarchy. Assessment processes which utilise selection, competition, reward, and punishment continue such systems of reproduction. Thereby education involves a strong current of acculturation (Bourdieu 1977; 1988). 'Habitus' "leads us to 'reproduce' the social conditions of our own production" (Orr 2011, p.39), where the term articulates disciplinary dispositions or a "feeling for the game" (Webster 2005, p.267). Where this is of concern is that, against recommendations in art education literature, and showing discrepancies with professional practice and criticism in contemporary art, academics practice assessment as they were taught (Belluigi 2014), which may involve "a limited version of an art criticism with narrow goals" (Barrett 1988, p.27), as this research project explores. This may be because academics' previous experiences as students in fine art inform their assessment practices, as does their own sense of artistic identity (Orr 2011).

In addition, many studies have explored relationships between students and staff in FASP (Percy 2004; Webster 2005; 2006; Belluigi 2016), where the tacit acceptance of its imbalance is perhaps crucial to the acculturation role of the Critique (Percy 2004). Those with capital are accepted as promising future members of the community, while those without become alienated from the discourse and performance of the event (Percy 2004; Webster 2005). Others argue that a more positive view of 'cultural capital' creates possibilities for power differentials within communities to be recognised and reversed (Horton 2007), with the Critique having potential to explicitly and consciously provide students with epistemological access (McCoy 1993; Percy 2004). Many who operate within the interpretative approach hold that tacit practice provides students better access to the subtleties and nuance of the discipline's epistemology (Bloxham & West 2007; Price et al. 2007; Orr 2010). With such valuing of insider knowledge, assessment expertise and professional experience to be able to identify "the characteristics of a fine performance" (Morgan & Wyatt-Smith 2000, p.130), come the difficulties of articulating in language the embodied knowledge that has become intuitive over time (Ecclestone 2001). Against constructions of intuition as "anti-rational or anti-intellectual" (Atkinson & Claxton 2000, p.1), it is appreciated as a learnt social construct, appropriately termed 'guild knowledge' (Sadler 1989).

The strength of this contemporary concept of connoisseurship, its acknowledgement of the importance of tacit practice in assessment, is where it runs into friction (Sambell & McDowell 1998). Techno-rationalist discourses in HE often conflate 'connoisseurship' with absolute values (Hardy 2006b), elitism, unaccountability and mystery (Ecclestone 2001) because it is underpinned by the subjectivist assumption that total clarity is not possible (Orr & Blythman 2005). However, traditional notions of the connoisseur as 'expert' could be made inclusive of 'the critic' who has to *work* at being a reflexive assessor (Smith 2005). By situating connoisseurship within interpretative communities of practice, rigour may be enabled because the individual's response is constructed within a certain context where the subjective is constituted collectively, constrained or enabled by the assessment structures and communal culture (Orr 2010). However, the assumption that academic communities of practice can be critical from within has been questioned, especially in the face of a lack of scholarship of assessment (Price 2005).

Others argue that the interpretivist stance, which depends on a 'stable interpretative community' (Fish 1980) of a group of people within a particular context who are likely to agree on taste, values and quality for a duration of time amongst themselves, is not reflective of the reality of the postmodern art world, where some of the few constants are difference, conflict and creativity (Gooding-Brown 2000; Elkins 2001). The interpretivist tradition is concerned with *meaning*, while postmodernist notions focus on the *significance* of interpretations made through fluid, multiple and temporary positioning within discursive practices (Gooding-Brown 2000). Instead of presenting as a stable interpretative community, assessors could act as representatives of different interpretative communities, operating within an 'evanescent interpretative community' (Elkins 2001, pp.128–130). Postmodernist challenges to knowledge claims allow for the revisibility of knowledge, which would enable a more tentative, conditional approach with more deliberation, debate and challenge (Danvers 2003).

Roles and agency in assessment⁵

Not only are the purposes of, frameworks for, and assumptions underlying the traditions of assessment a concern, but research indicates that the approach and attitude of the person providing feedback contributes to students' confidence and self-perceptions (Blair 2007), as validation through assessment is a feature of education (Juwah et al. 2004). Sentiments about, and the potential

⁵ Aspects of this section are reproduced in Belluigi (2016).

intimacy of, the supervisor-student relationship influence and direct the values, beliefs and expectations students have of themselves in relation to their perceptions of the academic and professional community of practice. The dynamic and complex nature of this relationship is seen to contribute to the affective knowledge a student develops and integrates with his/her own 'emotional biography' during his/her studies, where a level of emotional adaption may be an unintended outcome of studio learning (Austerlitz & Aravot 2006).

However, research has shown that transformative pedagogic outcomes may be distorted and in some cases thwarted by assessment, which as ritualistic practices may objectify and cement the power differential between the assessor as 'critic' and student as pedagogised other (Webster 2006). The confrontational nature of such assessments can negatively impact on the quality of learning taking place, where the focus shifts from students reflecting on their learning to 'defending' themselves, their choices and actions (Blair 2007). Supervisors may be concerned with how assessment adds judgment and critique to the relationship, which may inhibit the intended creative, supportive nature of the supervisor-student relationship (Hickman 2007). Students too may not associate the assessment experience with supportive learning environments (Black & William 1998). There is a perceived tension, often held by both parties, between the supervisor's roles of support and criticism.

Whilst some staff may find the two roles of supervisor and assessor as different and distinct, the fluidity and overlap between them are not lost on students, who may find such separations disingenuous. Assessors at Critiques have been characterized as 'liminal servants', 'entertainers' or 'hegemonic overlords' (McLaren 1993), with students' experiences of each differing in relation to their level of acculturation, self-identity and learning (Webster 2004). Students' insights into their 'best' assessments have highlighted the affective role of the supervisor in Critiques. Students have indicated a desire to have the supervisor demonstrate care for them and foster an environment of "good will"; protect them from humiliation; and make it possible for them to feel encouraged enough after the assessment to return to their work (Barrett 2000).

Of the whole assessment process, research indicates that feedback holds the most potential to affect future learning and student achievement (Black & William 1998; Blair 2006; Harland & Sawdon 2012). However, the ways in which individuals are positioned, between the studio and the Critique, may bring the efficacy of feedback into jeopardy (Blair 2006; Belluigi 2008). From Foucault's (1979) to Butler's (1993) work, assessment in particular has been recognized as utilizing discursive formations to position the subject as object or 'pedagogised other' (Atkinson 2006), which may be

experienced as alienating (Mann 2001). How students receive feedback, and therefore the learning value of such pedagogic encounters, is affected by their perceptions of 'self', and their identity as 'professionals' (Blair 2007) and 'students'. Because 'the self' is contingent on events (Sartre 1962) and dependent on others (Winnicott 1971), being is a situation where it is not validated in relationships and contexts may lead to a loss of 'self', agency or desire (Mann 2001). When such estrangement from the student's creative and autonomous self occurs, it may be replaced by a compliant self that is to some extent bereft of the capacity for creativity. Such a dynamic is worsened when the teacher-as-assessor objectifies all their judgments, and students subjectify theirs (Falchikov & Boud 2007).

While some argue that a "student's ability to choose is based on knowing what s/he wants to achieve" (Dineen et al. 2005, p.37) many recognise such autonomy as an illusion (Usher & Johnston 1997). The person adopts certain approaches to collude with or resist structures which construct him/her. Rather than accepting the discursive formations and non-discursive practices of Critiques, students may learn through experience to strategically perform compliance while not necessarily believing in 'the game' nor the staff's embodiment of authority as legitimate (Webster 2006; Belluigi 2007). Such individual agency is bounded by and limited within the umbrella values and norms of the discipline, professional practice, and conceptual and material constraints. The relationship of agency to students' development of authorship is of central concern to this thesis.

The significance of assessment for the conditions for creativity

In addition to the influence of roles and their constructions, it is generally acknowledged that inappropriate contexts and barren environments can debilitate engagement, being emotionally disempowering and de-motivating for students (Fredrickson 2001). To better comprehend in what ways conditions for creativity might be established or enabled in FASP, I developed a schema informed by art education literature (Belluigi 2013).

What I found is that one of the key conditions for creative learning is the elimination of negative stress (Lucas 2001) or experiences of alienation. Mann's (2001) seven perspectives of alienation offers different ways to understand how students may experience the way in which they are made to perform; are discursively positioned; feel outsiders to the discipline; have their dependence on events or others invalidated; have their creative process or outcome positioned as a strategic component within a system of exchange for assessment purposes; are disciplined by assessment practices; may feel forced to disengage from their desires to preserve their sense of self. Assessment is recognised as detrimental to creativity, particularly when premature, inappropriate (Dineen &

Collins 2005), irrelevant (Blair 2007), too harsh (Mann 2001), or when the primary goal is an externally-imposed grade or mark (Amabile 1996). Such aspects promote surface or strategic approaches to learning (Marton & Saljo 1984), compliance or reproduction (Bourdieu 1977), rather than questioning or production. Whilst some of these effects of assessment on the learning experiences of students have been studied, the significance of interpretative approaches in terms of the conditions for creativity and the development of authorship, is what this study contributes.

In art education and creativity research it is understood that some anxiety may be inevitable in subjects such as FASP which has an inherent instability born from dynamic and productive critical interrogation, risk, play, re-working and reconsideration (Danvers 2003; Hanney 2012), emotional challenge and uncertainty. Those assured within such affective processes of risk experience “access to affect laden thoughts, openness to affect states, affective pleasure in challenge, affective pleasure in problem solving, and cognitive integration of affective material” (Russ in Spendlove 2007, p.159). Negotiating uncertainty may lead to a transcendental state of enlightenment (Reid & Solomonides 2007) not unlike a ‘high’, increasing the artist-student’s confidence and self-knowledge. The qualitative change towards a state of confidence and trust in the student’s own abilities is seen, in some FASP curricula, as a fundamental outcome of the undergraduate degree (Edström 2008).

However, the capacity for such assuredness cannot be relegated to students to develop in isolation, but rather calls for conditions, which enable such creative transformative growth. Conducive to this are challenging and motivating curricula which develop students’ ability to negotiate uncertainty (Lucas 2001); a knowledge base to relate students’ existing knowledge (Gibbs 1999); and staff that model the capacity to be assured in the face of uncertainty (Carabine 2013). Recognising that staff impact the emotional tenor of the learning experience, Mann (2001, pp.17–18) offers four principles to alleviate experiences of alienation and increase student engagement. The first has to do with the teacher’s solidarity with the student, characterized by empathy, open dialogue, and reflection on his/her own experiences to act as a bridge to those of his/her course participants. The second principle is hospitality, to provide a sense of shelter, protection or nurturing for the student’s transition into the community. The third principle is safety, where an accepting and respectful climate allows for unstructured non-typical discussions by participants as they come to voice. The last principle considers how power is distributed, allowing students some measure of control over their learning processes. The application of such principles cannot be reliant solely on individual agency but also the curricular culture and traditions, in addition to specific structures, within which teaching, learning and assessment are situated. This may be challenging for FASP supervisors to

facilitate, if they too find themselves unproductively beset by anxiety brought about by changes in the discipline (p.7), or structures and cultures of assessment that are not enabling of learning.

Part III.

The problematics of interpretation and judgment in FASP

When it comes to issues of interpretation, assessment and the possibilities for learning, authorship is a central problematic. In a dated study, the espoused aims of Critiques were found to be in conflict with the goals professed in art education literature for the teaching of criticism (Barrett 1988).

Whilst there is debate as to whether authorial intentionality has been found to be a crucial consideration for learning in art making (Barrett 1988), in criticism it has been greatly reduced as a criterion of importance (as I explore in Chapter Three), which is perhaps why in previous research I found this difference playing out awkwardly in assessment situations (Belluigi 2011).

These tensions emerge within the oral genre of the Critique. As dialogues between assessors and students, they engage different perspectives with discussion that is sometimes interpretive and often evaluative (Barrett 2000), or borrowing from ancient rhetoric, descriptive and judicative (Elkins 2001). It is argued that feedback should be designed to act as proposals of possible readings and not instructions (Knight 2001), but the danger is that “the game of descriptive analysis can get entirely out of hand when it is not reined in by the underlying purpose of helping the student” (Elkins 2001, p.155). Research has shown that more than simply judgments from the assessors, most students want the reasons for the judgements to be part of the discussion (Barrett 2000). It is unclear from literature how a balance between the two may be achieved, however a concern with the *purpose* of feedback is central to the concerns of this research project.

Recognizing the fluidity and slippage between interpretation and judgment in practice is perhaps more important than how they are differentiated (Smart & Dixon 2002). Approaches to assessment are influenced by a complex interplay of factors, such as the culture of the classroom and art school, the academics’ identities and preferences, values from the contemporary art world and art criticism. Separating out assessment practice and values from artistic practice, individual and group identity in fine art may be an impossible task, as in practice they are enmeshed and create implicit referential frameworks through which artwork is assessed (Orr 2011). In addition, individual institutions have their own local culture that will influence how the work made there is interpreted and assigned value (Shay 2005). For this reason, in this project I compared two very different art schools (pp.

52;64) in Chapter Five, and looked at interpretative agency within their structures and cultures in Chapters Six.

Intentionality and art education

The issue of the students' intentionality in HE, as the artist or author of the work, is complex and contentious. It has been argued that "in the realm of art education we could consider intention as making a pressing claim on our judgment of the outcomes of our pedagogic efforts" (Hughes 1999, p.132), where

without having some sense of what effect the work is seeking to achieve it can be difficult to determine the work's effectiveness. Assessment then becomes a matter of personal taste and not analytical consideration (Freeman 2006, p.97).

This sense of the artworks' meaning or significance is heavily debated in art criticism, an ontological issue at the heart of this thesis. However, there has been little sustained research on how intentionality and the problem of authorship is approached in the assessment of the creative arts in HE, perhaps because they are not a focus of the dominant studio teaching traditions (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005). In this section, I look briefly at intentionality in relation to how it has been constructed in arts education literature, for the purposes of substantiating why authorship in FASP is a problematic worthy of research and exploration.

Whilst the central purposes of education include the person and process of learning, in addition to the final result, FASP traditionally has been focused on the product. The subject of intentionality falls under the umbrella of a concern with the education experience and student development, when it arises in art education literature. Actual intentionality is explicitly included in very few texts. In one, a criterion for portfolio assessment is articulated as "the visibility of the intention behind the picture or pictures (the student's visual work communicates what he or she intended)" (Lindstrom & Bresler 2007, p.1195). In another, the subject of intentionality is given recognition as important for how the child-makers' "artistic experiences and motivations determine how they will engage in and respond to art making activities" (Malin 2013, p.6), albeit more concerned with its utility value for the development of other skills than that of authorship. Few art educators have publically argued that "reading a finished painting back to its maker so that the student artist's project might be refined and extended is the teaching of painting by 'crit'" (Singerman 1999, p.143). Goethe (in Hughes 1999, p.132) proposes three questions which hinge on intentionality for what he calls 'constructive criticism': What did the 'author' set out to do? Was his/her plan reasonable and sensible? How far did s/he succeed?

Such explicit discussions of intentionality emerge mostly at undergraduate levels or lower. Authorship is explored implicitly in research to do with creative arts summative assessment at PhD level particularly. For instance, authorial 'voice' is seen as particularly important within the exegesis in creative research output (Fletcher & Mann 2004), where the written text is constructed as providing the reader access to those aspects of the creative process (composition and production) not evident in the creative work itself. Similarly, discussions around 'practice-based research' are implicitly imbued with the problem of authorship in relation to the academic context of its interpretation and conventions (see Anttilla et al 2014), particularly for instance in arguments, such as Blumenfeld's (2014), where the author is positioned as the 'n' of 'n = 1'.

Intentionality emerges within psychological developmental theories that inform literature on artistic development and creativity. The two over-arching theories are 'stage' and 'repertoire' approaches (Kindler 2007). In the former, influenced by Piagetian theories, artistic development is seen to proceed in a linear, step-like manner towards increasingly sophisticated pictorial outcomes with visual realism at the apex acting as a benchmark for assessment. Cowdroy and de Graff (2005) present a three-tiered model of the artmaking process, linking intentionality with imaginative conceptualisation what they see as the highest order of creative ability. From the originating concept, a number of schemata develop, of which one will eventually lead to the realization as a work. Assessment focuses on the product of this creative process, and as such focuses on execution, seen as the level of the lowest creative value. Thus creative ability, exercised through the abstract, invisible processes of conceptualisation and schematization, can only be inferred but not directly assessed. Some argue that what can be assessed is the student's understanding of the first two tiers, and the place of the concept and schemata in theory, history, philosophy et cetera (Cowdroy & de Graff 2005). This would address two of the core aims of a fine art curriculum: "encouraging the development of individual artistic practice and enabling the student to articulate and define the social and cultural context that they are working within" (Corner 2005, p.324).

However, such models are critiqued for their linear characterizations of the creative process and assessment, which does not recognise that not all artmaking is "causally determined by a stated set of predetermined intentions" nor may they always be assessed via deductive reasoning (Cannatella 2001, p.320). Psychological and educational theories cannot adequately address the problem of authorship in FASP, as they are divorced from the context of art criticism and the artwork's ultimate reception. They do not satisfactorily address the politics and problematics of the artworld, nor how

an image is defined as 'art', at the end of the many possible trajectories within artmaking processes (Kindler 2007).

As I outline in Chapter Three, most contemporary interpretative approaches are not concerned with the artist's development, rather placing importance on the artwork and its reception, because of the sense that "one cannot equate the works stated intentions as a comparable substitute to the works' perceptual and cognitive expressive experience" (Cannatella 2001, p.320). More prevalent in art education literature is the interpretivist notion of the supervisor acting with other faculty as 'expert' readers to provide interpretations and situate the student's artwork in wider contexts (p.15). In a text composed from an assessors' perspective, Elkins (2012) points to how the problem of authorship complicates assessment: how the assessor constructs a fictional author's intentionality when assessing the work, which is then complicated, firstly, by the actual authorial presence of the student, and secondly, the student's narrative of his/her actual intentionality. However, a question haunts the assessment process.

*We may be able to judge that a work is innovative, even unique, but was it a fortunate aberration or was it the outcome of genuine creative imagination?
(Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005, p.510)*

A close reading of this and other texts suggests that a balance is required between intentionalist and interpretivist (or anti-intentionalist) approaches for "just as the form is the result of the individual experience, understanding and purpose of the individual creator, so the viewer deciphers, decodes and responds to the work of art as an individual" (Corner 2005, p.336). Kindler (2007, p.437) offers a systems perspective which

takes under consideration not only cognitive, developmental readiness and attributes and characteristics contained within an individual, but also accounts for the context within which these capacities grow and unfold, in particular the context of the world of Art and the domain of Art itself.

The discourse or dialogue that revolves around the art object contributes to the construction of the meaning of the work, indicating that authorship is never completely fixed nor final.

This creative and critical practice begins with the artist, yet moves to embrace others. I describe this as transcognition, which is as a "process of visual arts knowing where the forms, ideas, and situations are informing agents of mind that surround the artistic self during visual arts practice" (Sullivan, 2005, p.130). These creative interactions are sparked by the purpose and shaped by situational factors in an ongoing process of negotiation and mediation (Sullivan 2007, p.1187).

While too much of an emphasis on intentionality divorces student artmaking from the context of its reading, approaches which deny intentionality may threaten a re-emphasising of existing power imbalances between the student-author and the assessor-reader. At its most extreme, silencing of the artists' voice has serious repercussions for developing the artist-students' reflexive 'voice' (Belluigi 2011), particularly in light of demands on the contemporary artist as reflexive practitioner (Dallow 2003). Reflexivity is considered essential to contemporary artmaking, particularly in the relation between form and content (p.6), where artists are to extend their socially, politically, and historically reflexive explorations to the physicality of the work, its context, reception and vice versa.

What is at issue becomes how the student develops and reflects on his/her representation. Whilst 'composition' in fine art may have various definitions, it is the verb to do with the artist's engagement in the creative act or process of making his/her ideas tangible, that most often is related to intentionality and artistic development (Kindler 2007). Such intentionality informs what some argue are the embodied aspects of the artworks - how the materials, decision-making and techniques all relate to the genre, context, discourses and meanings within the work. Corner (2005, p.338) terms this the "interactive relationship" and manipulation by the artist "between the conceptual, materials, skills, processes and purposes used in the creation of the form". The potential educational benefits of valuing student intentionality and agency have been lauded by a number of art educators as students are internally motivated to question, look for and select what is appropriate or fit for the purpose or intention of their work (Freeman 2006), or the potential of its significance beyond that. The exercising of this choice is seen to develop the experiential understanding and ability to communicate, which feeds into students' capacity for critical judgment to evaluate and make decisions for future work. Assessment practices which are inclusive of intentionality, may enable the 'little narrative', personal voice, and critical language (Hardy 2006a), to counter the interdependency between interpretation and judgment in FASP (Smart & Dixon 2002). Such concerns motivated my focus on the *significance* of interpretation for the conditions for creativity.

Conclusion

Discourses of assessment inscribe different, and sometimes competing, ideological values, which is perhaps why discussions around art education and assessment often include an emphasis on "the uneasy... contentious ... or hostile relationship between them" (Haanstra & Schonau 2007, p.427). In his research, Barrett (1988) found that studio supervisors saw the primary goal of assessment as the improvement of the artwork, i.e. a formative function focused on the product and not the learning

process. However, as he notes, criticism is “more than a means; it is considered a subject matter in itself and as subject matter, criticism is presented as a body of knowledge which has a logic, various recommended procedures, and a variety of goals” (Barrett 1988, pp.25–26). Unlike in broader art criticism, which I explore in the next chapter, assessment is seen as the core function of the Critique in FASP. The entangled competing interests around art criticism, the art school Critique, and assessment approaches in HE, have been explored throughout this chapter.

Chapter Three

A consideration of the significance of interpretation for authorship and creativity

In Chapter Two, I discussed arts education research and referential frameworks which a supervisor and panel of assessors may adopt when considering student artworks for the purposes of assessment. Towards the end of that chapter, I made an argument for the need to expand that discussion by considering the referential frameworks of interpretation influential to professional practice, extending the discussion to the larger problem of authorship. Towards this, in Part I of this chapter, I offer a genealogical outline of dominant constructions of authorship and creativity, from antiquity through to current conceptions. This informed the framework I constructed for the purposes of analysing interpretative approaches, which I discuss in Part II. I then briefly relate this framework to dominant interpretative approaches in contemporary criticism, in Part III. Included within this chapter are discussions both pertinent to, and wider than, the particularity of the FASP context: constructions of creativity as in/explicable; how human agency, subjectivity, intentionality and responsibility are positioned; and the role played by the artist, artwork, and critic in supporting, challenging or undermining power structures and ideologies. As such, this chapter provides a meta-level analysis of interpretative approaches within criticism, as a philosophical landscape in which the empirical analysis I present in Chapters Five and Six is situated.

Part I.

The significance of dominant philosophical constructions for authorship in the Twentieth century

... the history of our thought is bound up with conceptions of what it means to author a text (Burke 1995, p.xv).

The root word for authorship comes from the 14th century Latin 'authenticus' meaning coming from the author, developed from the ancient Greek 'authentikos' meaning one who acts or does things independently (Harper n.d.).

The two dominant strands which run through the history of philosophy are metaphysics, which "builds up constructions of the mind", and critical philosophy, which "tears them down, often in an attempt to return focus to direct experience" (McEvelley 1996, p.41). Interwoven within these two dominant strands are debates to do with notions of the aesthetic, literary and philosophical in

western thinking, which can be traced from ancient times to current theorists and movements. As they ghost current notions of authorship and creativity, and are the precursors to the modernist division between form and content in fine art, in this part I touch on relevant aspects of these debates.

Influential in classical thought was Plato's 'mimetic tradition', where the artwork or text is an unmediated representation of objective reality or nature which itself is a copy of a higher realm, and where the artist is a copyist whose authorial subjectivity and inventiveness is totally absent. To establish this, Plato constructed a separation between philosophical and literary authorship, creating a suspicion of claims to authority by favouring the former as divine inspiration, linked to the rational, serious, rigorous acquisition of truth and knowledge, finding its embodiment in the mind. He marginalized the literary, which he linked to Bacchanic fallibility and mortal human agency, with inspirational, instinctual derangement embodied by the body. This separation and hierarchy between mind and body, determinism and volunteerism, is fundamentally linked to notions of content and form (see this in FASP curricula, p.6), and also the binary split in conceptions of creativity. The derangement view was continued in the Renaissance notion of the artist as melancholic or sociopath, which many argue finds currency in current FASP (Elkins 2001).

This ancient division between autonomous truth and inspiration was somewhat reconciled in early Christian culture, with content (Christ's teaching) and form (his body) brought together (Burke 1995). However, human agency was again marginalized, with divine creativity of the Adamic doctrine and the authority of God as a foil to individual originality and human creativity. The latter, embodied in the all-too-human visual artist Aaron's pagan sculpture, was dramatically rejected as sinful iconoclasm that has continued in a prohibition against image-making in Judaism and Islam. The emptying out of subjectivity in the mimetic tradition occurs similarly in this 'inspirational tradition', where the author is seen as a 'scriptor' through which the divine script is impersonally performed as a public revelation rather than private consciousness. The various forms it has taken, from the Adamic doctrine through to South American shamans and Hellenic cultures, all serve to simultaneously elevate the author, as an elect figure set apart from others due to a divine gift or being chosen, while simultaneously depriving the author the possibilities of creating anything original or expressing his/her subjectivity, but rather as passively awaiting divine inspiration. The notion of creativity as inexplicable is also linked to creativity as a matter of origination (Gaut & Livingston 2003). Stemming from the idea that God's creation occurred *ex nihilo*, the argument is that if creativity is original and unique, one cannot predict its occurrence. An implication of this

argument, in terms of the problem of authorship, is that if creativity were predictable, then the critic or reader who makes such predictions is the creator of the work, and not the artist. Both notions of inspiration (as divine inspiration or human agency) construct creativity as inexplicable and unknowable: whether no human explanation for the form in which the divine was made manifest in the creative work; or rational explanation for the form which is the product of a deeply irrational creative person.

Kant re-constituted the dualism between form and content through his ideas of consciousness and its objects, where he made the 'phenomenal realm' distinct from the 'noumenal realm' in his Copernican Revolution (Habib 2005). The phenomenal realm defines interior consciousness as constituting reality, where through science and rationality the ego imposes or projects constructions on the ultimately inaccessible object of his/her experience. The noumenal realm defines the parameters of human will relating to the divine, where the being of reality-in-itself is unknowable to humankind. Kant believed that fine art is a product of genius extending beyond experience and causal laws. As creativity is inexplicable, there are no determinate artistic rules for its judgment, creative production nor its teaching (Gaut & Livingston 2003), nor is it considered impossible for the artist to know or understand his/her own creative process.

While in Kant the transcendental idealism of the phenomenal was at the epistemological level, later Romantic philosophers hoped to make it substantive (Burke 1995). Kant's original intention to problematize the subordination of the human author to nature (the assumption underpinning the mimetic tradition) and introduce the notion that the world of reality is not equivalent to consciousness, inadvertently created the offshoot notion that subjectivity originates the world, with parallels easily made to artistic creativity as imagination shaping and creating the world. These informed the theoretical foundations for Romantic notions of artistic or authorial autonomy (Habib 2005), and formalist notions of textual autonomy (Adams 1996).

Continuing the separation and valorisation of philosophical from literary authorship, Hegel rejected Kant's 'dualism' of phenomenon and noumenon, arguing for 'constructionism' where phenomenology is recreated from an historical perspective as a science of progress towards truth (Magliola 1989). This was underpinned by an assumption that natural consciousness develops through scientific and philosophical rationality towards absolute knowledge of the Absolute. His dialectic drew on rationalism, empiricism and utilitarianism, while re-asserting the unity between subject and object, content and form, thereby synthesizing seemingly oppositional Enlightenment and Romantic ideals (Habib 2005). Hegel's notion of phenomena as manifest of the Absolute Mind,

and the positivistic trend to exult science, has influenced much Anglo-American philosophy, most notably Realism and intentionalist approaches to interpretation.

In the tradition of literary authorship, Schopenhauer, the initiator of the 'heretorological' tradition of modern literary and cultural theory (Habib 2005) was very much against Hegel's totalising vision. He critiqued Enlightenment ideals of progress, science, civilisation and realism as embodiments of bourgeois' principles. His work challenged philosophy as a discipline and its claims to arrive at truth through reason, instead looking towards emotion, the body, sexuality, and unconscious pragmatic interests. As alternatives to mainstream liberal-humanist and realist visions of Western thought, some of the many critical traditions which drew from or have been affiliated with his ideas include humanists and the literary-critical movements which are oppositional, challenging and undermining of power structures and ideologies of late Capitalism (such as those discussed from p.301).

In addition to the inspiration conception of creativity, the second most influential construction of creativity is the Romantic model, which was informed by Plato's conceptions of inspiration (Gaut & Livingston 2003) and Kant's notions of the artist genius (Cowdroy & Williams 2007). Underpinned by liberal notions of individuality and innovation, and an ideological context of academic disinterest, sacrifice and art for art's sake, the Romantic desire was to shift the prevailing contextual interest in material values to more spiritual ones (Bourdieu 1996). The beautiful was seen as that which was a successful expression of the artist's intentions, where the aesthetic had to do with private aspects of the work which were elevated above public aspects such as the medium (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1946). Drawing from Kant's notion of genius as possessing an extraordinary innate gift or talent, the artist of the 19th century was an artist by vocation who was exceptional, singular and innovative. Both the inspiration and Romantic models of creativity reject the possibility of critical or empirical examinations of creativity, with the validity of teaching and particularly assessment of creativity largely dismissed (Cowdroy & Williams 2007).⁶

The notion of the inspiration tradition, that the origin of all languages is to be found in the divinely inspired language created by Adam to name animals and other things in Eden (p.30), was critiqued as a conception of the authority of language that served essentialist ends in supporting a specific religious perspective of the world of human knowledge (Preziosi 1989). A consequence of this

⁶ See Elkins (2001), whose title suggests this assumption.

construction was that the study of language came to be seen as a more secure way to 'true' knowledge of nature than through observation and the visual, which was delegitimised as involving the fallible reasoning and sensory perception of human beings. In the 19th and 20th centuries, this 'otherness' of the author was transplanted from sacred, idealist sources and relocated to the unconscious, language and representation itself. Humanism rejected religion, challenging the authorial centrality of God, and saw progress as that possible through human effort and agency. The self was equated with the author as the source and centre of the text, with both seen as having a fixed, natural and given identity, which criticism must reveal or discover. Challenges to humanist notions of authorship are on what modern criticism and theory are founded (Caughie 1981). Rather than seeing language as divinely inspired (the inspirational tradition, p.30) or natural (the mimetic tradition, p.30), the relationship between signifier and signified began to be understood as arbitrary and conventional. Words were seen as signs and representation, with language posited as a social institution of the experienced world of communities.

Most current conceptions have shifted away from notions of creativity as inexplicable expressions of the autonomous individual (see Krausz et al 2009 for instance), to the creative person carrying some responsibility for the well-being of the society in which s/he is situated (Feldman & Benjamin 2006). In addition, notions of creativity as located within the isolated individual have been challenged by notions of collaborative creativity (John-Steiner 2003; Burnard 2007). Such debates are underpinned by differing conceptions of self-other relations, congruous with notions of authorship and readership as on one extreme monological and autonomous, and on the other relationally and contextually situated (Burnard 2007). Underling these debates are differing conceptions of human agency and responsibility. Many contemporary conceptions no longer conceive of creativity as antithetical to analytical engagement (Freeman 2006), coming from a tradition in philosophy which can be traced to Aristotle's association of creativity with the rational imposition of form on matter (Gaut & Livingston 2003). This tradition has been continued by such philosophers as Nietzsche, with his understanding of creativity as an expression of the will to power, and psychological models which on the whole assume creativity is explicable (such as discussed on p.25).

Political and economic interests provided much of the impetus for changes in the approaches to literary criticism in the twentieth century, with tragic historic events giving rise to most of its critical movements (Habib 2005), as was the case with adult education (Boud 1989). On the one hand, the aesthetic has been exulted as transcending bourgeois pragmatism and reason, separated from moral and religious concerns, and thus acting as a bulwark against commodifying and dehumanising

visions. On the other hand, there has been a strong drive to have criticism recognized as a 'scientific' activity (Habib 2005), a 'discipline' within academia (Preziosi 1989). These changes shifted interpretation from being mostly biographical, psychological, historical, impressionistic or empirical, as it was at the end of the 19th century. Rather, twentieth century philosophy is perhaps most notable for emptying out of the author from representation (Burke 1992), with a focus on language as the primary site to stage these debates (Preziosi 1989).

Conceptions of the role of the analyst are where schisms between these traditions, and modernist notions of authorship, became apparent. The mimetic and inspirational traditions can both be seen as falling within eucharistic criticism (Preziosi 1989), where the word is posited as an index to a divine or human author, and the analytical task is to evoke that which is already there in the object. This notion of unilinear representation as indication assumes a tight interplay between signifier and signified, which informed positivist drives towards the *discovery* of truths in research (Preziosi 1989). The modernist tradition is rather characterized by a separation between subject and object, signifier and signified, and the impersonal voice of 'objective criticism' (p.39). Modernist notions allow for more variations in signification, since the analyst's task is rather to *construct* a narrative of the causal connections between phenomenon: a system of culture. Formal analytical methods, such as iconography (p.293) and connoisseurship (p.19), come from this time, where the analyst was given increasing importance. With this, the humanist notion of the world as the site of final, unified, authorial meanings shifted to a structured play of forces and relations.

Simplified relationships between author, historical subjectivity, and text was problematized in modernist anti-humanist notions, where authorship shifted from being humanist to conceptual (Burke 1995). Instead of the author equated with the self, the role or act of authorship is seen to be open to the possibility that it can be adopted or created through interpretation to transcend or even negate the biographical subject. This idea has its roots in both spiritual and sceptical notions of the self, the former where the spiritual quest is achieved when the individual is united with divine will. The arguably most influential sceptical notion is the Kantian construction of transcendental subjectivity - the author as having autonomous agency and a disembodied or impersonal consciousness (p.31). Anti-humanist notions persist in contemporary philosophy, such as the subject-in-process, which in its most radical version suggests there is neither causal connection nor ontological unity of the subject. This trajectory perhaps reaches its zenith with some postmodernist conceptions where the play of subjectivity is collapsed into generalized writing. Such anti-humanist

replacements of the author with the reader have been critiqued for unwittingly replacing one ambiguous and mystified entity with another – now the critic (Burke 1995).

This genealogy points to the importance ascribed to how language constructs thought and realities. For many postmodernist approaches, this recognition acknowledges not only the constructed and contextual nature of signs, but also the importance of examining the perceptual tools and the representation of perspectives - of interpretation itself. Social, moral, political and cultural structures, in addition to readings of history, are seen as constructs “embodied in the concepts expressed in language” (Habib 2005, p.568). Postmodernist approaches have thus been characterized as self-conscious semiotic discourses, seeing the text and artwork as political, and concerned with how notions of the ‘author’, ‘text’ and ‘reader’ operate, in terms of their significance, implications, or effects. I have organised such interpretative concerns under the conceptual approach of ‘operative criticism’ in the framework (p.37).

The preoccupation with language in the 20th Century has operated within two widely divergent notions of representation and signification (Preziosi 1989). Within objective criticism, the notion of language is that it is internally constitutive or motivated, with Formalism and New Criticism for instance seeing literature and art as non-referential with self-contained structures (p.288). In comparison, Semiotic criticism has posited the form of literary and cultural phenomenon as linguistic (p.295); Feminism sees language embodying gendered modes of thought (p.303); while New Historicist Criticism and Cultural Studies construct discourses as ways of signifying and understanding the world (p.306). Interestingly, these notions of representation and signification have recreated the Platonic separation of the aesthetic from the rational (p.30), albeit in different guises. Of importance for this thesis is the impact of these notions on the concept of subjectivity, which becomes a function of language and a position within a network of signs (Habib 2005). In some approaches, subjectivity is privileged as that through which the world can be comprehended and analysed; whilst others understand subjectivity and objectivity as both internally structured by language. Art history in particular has incorporated both antithetical notions of signification and representation, in that the artwork is recognized as part of a system of cultural signification while simultaneously outside and autonomous of the world (Preziosi 1989, p.107).

Literary criticism and art history have been similarly plagued by such problems of meaning. The 19th Century’s emphasis on the study of language affected various art interpretative approaches through the notion that one could make the visible legible (Barnes 1988). Moreover, changes to the study of literature towards the end of the 20th Century, which were critiqued as the “reductive assimilation

of literature to ideology” (Levine 1994 in Efland 2007, p.3), have parallels in the transformation from ‘art history’ to ‘visual culture’.⁷ This involved shifts in how the meaning of the text was interpreted, to a dominating discourse that the text signified the social systems that contained and produced it, and thus that all artworks are political. Another shift was towards resisting the idea of literary value or greatness. In art this translated to a suspicion of notions of art’s (or the artist’s) uniqueness as an indication of middle class domination or elitism; and contempt for formalism and formal analysis with more opening to interdisciplinary and contextual study. Previous claims of formalist ‘aesthetic experience’ were re-cast as mystified ideology (Efland 2007), with an increased emphasis on modernist impersonality or artistic disinterestedness in voice (Burke 1995). The effect has been a paradoxical emphasis on description rather than evaluation in current art criticism as a “flight from judgment” to avoid the “burden of historical judgment” (Elkins 2013). The larger assumption has been that the determination of the authorial role should reside with the critic. As such, Burke (1992) argues that the exclusion of the author creates the possibility for literary theory, and as such the continued presence of the author signals the impossibility of theory. This friction between authorship and interpretation underpins the problematics of assessment in FASP.

In this section I outlined the significance of interpretative approaches, language and the politics of academia, as interwoven influences on dominant constructions of authorship. This genealogy of authorship provides a larger context to current interpretative approaches. Running throughout the authorship debate are (a) how the role of author, text and reader are understood in relation to specific traditions; and related to this, (b) whether authorial intentionality should/not relate to interpretation.

⁷ For a socio-cultural and political reading of this development see Grubbs (2012).

Part II.

A framework to map approaches to interpretation

Informed by the different philosophical traditions, arguments and understandings discussed in Part I, I constructed a framework on which to map the interpretative approaches adopted in FASP assessment (IF 1, p.38). This framework is delineated by an horizontal axis which relates to what might be termed the *sources or locus* of meaning, and a vertical axis which refers to different approaches to *how the problem of meaning* is negotiated, whether representation or signification.

I had been working for a considerable length of time on narrowing down the sources of meaning, when I encountered this simple statement of how they may be plotted based on historical periodization:

One might very roughly periodize the history of modern literary theory in three stages: a preoccupation with the author (Romanticism and the nineteenth century); an exclusive concern with the text (New Criticism); and a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years (Eagleton 1983, p.74).

However, as this chapter and Appendix B reveals, the divergent approaches to interpretation dominant within Anglo-American and Continental interpretative approaches do not conform so neatly to such historical categorization.⁸ In each of the movements I discuss in the third part of this chapter, I outline how the three ‘sources’ of the author (or artist)⁹, the text (or artwork), and the reader (or viewer and critic) are constructed. The divisions between these may be not as clear in practice, although may be demarcated in principle, as they are underpinned by differing assumptions about the nature of authorship (whether real, imagined, fictive or figural) and subjectivity; language and the art object; and the various theoretical perspectives which inform them.

⁸ To a certain extent, both the horizontal and vertical areas may seem to encapsulate the dominant discourses of the historical periods, and so appear chronological as Eagleton (1983) suggests. However the framework allows for anomalies in practice. The bands are not intended to indicate hierarchical value. If my study was informed by a different purpose, for instance with a concern for the differing constructions of the form-content dyad, I would have fused the eucharistic and operative bands, because of their similar notions of the form/content relation as inherently unmotivated (McEvelley 1996), unlike those approaches placed within the objective band.

⁹ The term ‘auteur’ could be included within this source, as per film studies’ interest in auteurship.

Whilst there may be consensus that artworks have meaning, there are vast differences in how artworks are seen to ‘do’ this, in addition to methodological differences between how analysts are to read this from the work. The vertical axis of the table I present below relates to differences in terms of “how artworks mean or signify and, to a lesser extent, on what constitutes an adequate reading—where does analysis fittingly conclude” (Preziosi 1989, p.108). In determining the distinctions between approaches, I adopted a broader rather than more fine-grained approach, undercutting apparent differences to comprehend what is more deeply inscribed.

Operative criticism (3)			
Objective criticism (2)			
Eucharistic criticism (1)			
	Author/ Artist (A)	Text/ Artwork (T)	Reader/ Viewer (R)

IF 1: Framework for mapping interpretative approaches

The first horizontal band I define as ‘eucharistic criticism’ following Preziosi’s (1989) inclusion of both the mimetic and inspirational traditions under this term. While in the former tradition, the artwork must visually approximate that which it imitates, the inclusion of both traditions broadens the scope to the strong relationship between signified and signifier (whether about a person, object or message). As such, distinctions between columns within this band (A1, T1, R1) may be weak. In both traditions, the subjectivity of the artist is often subsumed or negated by the importance placed on the representational link to an external referent. ‘Expressive criticism’ (Abrams 1953) is included within this band despite its strongly subjective authorial ethos. The Romantic approach, where the attention is shifted away from the audience or nature to the artist’s inner sensibility, psyche or emotions, is as concerned with embodying an external referent (albeit as an expression of a feeling

or mood). This band is most concerned with how meaning is determined by *representation* of content.

The second horizontal band I termed 'objective criticism' (after Abrams 1953) which is characterised by the assumption that the artwork is primarily internally motivated (p.34 outlines the philosophical underpinnings of such assumptions). This band includes many of the approaches of the modernist discipline tradition, where a clear distinction is made between subject and the object, where the latter is given more emphasis as autonomous from the outside world. Whilst Formalism and New Criticism, with their focus on the form of the artwork as its content, and iconography, which focuses on symbols and signs in artworks, would fall within this area, a less obvious inclusion is that of some late 20th Century literary theory where artworks as 'texts' generate meaning. This band is most concerned with inherent representation, constructing the artist (A2), text (T2), and reader (R2) as autonomous and distinct formalist atoms.

The third horizontal band, 'operative criticism', includes all notions of how the different sources (author, text, reader) function or figure within larger societal concerns. The emphasis is on how these are received and operate in terms of the effects of their reception on specific societies and contexts. Rhetoric and 'pragmatic criticism' (Abrams 1953) fall within this band, in that they relate to how the artist becomes aware of the ways in which to engage, please, communicate or educate the public. This band is concerned with how signification *operates* in certain societal contexts, and as such boundaries are blurred between A3, T3 and R3.

Once I began to generate the data, I realised that certain distinctions needed to be delineated in the context of the framework's usage for the purposes of interpretation for the development, interpretation or evaluation of artworks. I became aware that interpretative approaches differed according to these purposes,¹⁰ which are interwoven with the purposes of formative and summative assessment as outlined in Chapter Two Part II.

¹⁰ For instance, a recent study on social justice art education identified three aspects as central for evaluation criteria: intentionality; the process of production; and operative readings of the artist, text and reception, (Dewhurst 2011).

Part III.

Approaches to interpretation¹¹

At the dividing line of differing notions of authorship lie realist and anti-realist assumptions (Kennedy 2005). In classic realism, the object/text is severed from the subject/author that produced it, however the subject's desires can be *discovered* as they are ontologically 'there'. In the Adamic tradition (p.29), the subject is both the originator of language and s/he whom guarantees meaning. Much intentionalist approaches to interpretation are underpinned by realism.

The distinction between subject and object is blurred in anti-realist philosophies, with a focus on the subject or a displacement to language that 'speaks through' the subject. Many anti-realist notions hold that the text has an agency and history that may be *initiated* by the author but whose meaning or signification cannot be *determined* by him/her. Meaning is not 'there' to be discovered but is continually emergent, constructed or fashioned. Realism's closing of the object or text as inert, is disrupted through the interrogation of the subject and sense of the text itself as autonomous. Authors are not authorities but subjects to be scrutinized (Kennedy 2005), with the text conceived of as a process, dictated by contextual history and orders of discourse, not by the personality or self-expression of the author (Caughie 1981). In some anti-intentionalist approaches, the analytical task is neither to discover nor construct the author but rather focus on the text's foundations – its history and discursive organization (T). In others, the theory of authorship is re-constructed to see how the author functions as a 'figure' within the text and how readers utilise this figure in their reading (R).

Another way of framing approaches to interpretation, which relates specifically to authorship, is whether they are intentionalist, in the importance ascribed the author's (real or imagined) intentions or authorial knowledge when determining the text's meanings (A), or anti-intentionalist. Literary criticism has focused on the divide between those who value authorial intention, as relevant to interpretation, and those who do not (Burke 1992).

Whilst there have been various manifestations of intentionality in criticism, including for instance Auteur Theory, the three dominant intentionalist approaches are driven by different purposes

¹¹ A fuller discussion of approaches to interpretation was originally submitted as part of this chapter for examination, and now appears in Appendix B, as recommended by the examination panel. Thus aspects of this section reappear in that text.

(Davies 2010). Actual Intentionalism holds that interpretation aims to discover what is meant in the work, where the author's 'actual' intentionality leads to the 'correct' readings. It is a realist approach of eucharistic criticism, linking signified and signifier, and rejecting interpretations not intended by the author. Hypothetical Intentionalism holds that interpretation should reveal what could have been meant, with the actual author's intention one of many other possible readings. Value Maximisers hold that interpretation should provide valuable ways of reading the work, which may or may not correlate with the author's intentions. Both Hypothetical and Value-Maximising Intentionalists contend that interpretation cannot be determined exclusively by the meaning intended by the author. In their extreme versions such approaches can be read as anti-realist (Livingston 2007) in that authorial intention is constructed through the interpreter's projections.

Continuing from objections to intentional approaches and the argument that authorial intentionality is inaccessible, indeterminate and unknowable, extreme anti-intentionalism holds that authorial intentions are irrelevant to and never decisive of a work's meaning, effectively disregarding interpretations falling within A. Of the anti-intentionalist approaches, are both those which position the text as locus of meaning (such as New Criticism and Formalism) (T), and those who position the interpretations of the reader as all important (including pluralistic approaches and reader-response) (R).

In Appendix B, I provide an analysis of dominant interpretative approaches in aesthetic and literary criticism, to demonstrate the framework's application within this philosophical landscape. This is to frame the various movements or philosophies which have been most influential in the 20th and 21st Century, particularly those that fall under the umbrellas of Phenomenological criticism (p.294); Semiotic criticism (p.295); Psychoanalytic criticism (p. 300); Political, cultural or contextual criticism (p.301); and New Historicist Criticism and Cultural Studies (p.306). More than simply mapping or identifying where the approaches would 'sit' within the framework, I have attempted to explore the significance of each approach to constructions of the author (A), text (T), and reader (R).

Interwoven within these approaches are distinctions and debates between literary (aesthetically motivated) and non-literary readings; whether there are single or multiple interpretations of a work; whether the content of the work can be determined through only interior or inherent properties or those that are exterior and beyond its boundaries; and the political implications of assigning determinacy or creating possibilities for plurality (Rosebury 1997).

In the following chapter I consider aspects of the methodological choices that informed this research project, wider than this framework usage in Chapters 5 and 6 to map interpretative approaches from empirical data generated in various FASP assessment contexts.

Chapter Four

A discussion of the politics, pragmatics and problematics of the methodology of this study

The purpose of this research project is not to develop some grand theory of assessment or interpretation, but rather to analyse crucial assumptions which underpin, consciously or unconsciously, judgements in educational assessment, and the consequences or implications of such approaches on the possibilities for creativity. One of the larger conundrums I wrestled with from the beginning of the project was whether the focus of my research was on student learning or artmaking itself. I soon realised that at the heart of this is the paradox in art and FASP education: if art is constructed as epistemological rather than ontological it loses its value for learning (Baldacchino 2008), which is perhaps why the focus in FASP is on the concept of art rather than the student (p.6). It is this paradox that enables authorship to be a ‘problem’, which thus emerged as the central concern of this study.¹²

While the discussion above and chapters preceding it are to do with the *subject* of my research, in this chapter I give consideration to both the politics and problematics of the research and my role as researcher. While the initial writing and organising of this chapter was foremost to aid my own thinking, development and negotiation of the research process, in this version it is intended to make both my rationale and the ‘gaps’ in my research more apparent to you, the reader. This includes my philosophical and political standpoints and underpinnings, as outlined in Part I; my thinking about and justification for the pragmatic choices I made, in Part II; and a consideration of the problem of authorship as it has informed and emerged during this research and writing process, in Part III.

¹² Much of the concerns of arts-based educational research revolve implicitly around authorship, intentionality and interpretation. See for instance these implicitly embedded problematics in the recent special edition of *The International Journal of Education & the Arts* (Anttila et al, 2014).

Part I.

The politics of my research paradigm

In this project, I have chosen an inversion (and subversion) of the traditional ontology-epistemology hierarchy, to a relationship between knowledge and ways of understanding the world that are not so cut and dry. Rather than what has been called 'the egology' of ontology (Peperzak 1993), heteronomy suggests the possibility of a relationship to the world and knowledge which attempts to enact an ethical, liminal relationship between self and other. Heteronomy has been described as "a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression" (Foucault 1984, p.45) of limits, subverting conventions of consoling certitude which impose regulations of 'truth', to allow for recontextualizing ourselves with a sense of responsibility to imagine and represent differently (Bain 1995).

I am informed by Derrida's (1981b) suggestion that in ethical relationships there should be neither over-identification nor over-objectification, neither self nor other, but that the relationship should exist in active liminality. His point is not that one can get along without demarcating boundaries but rather that there is no boundary-fixing that cannot be questioned, requiring one to acknowledge aspects of un-decidability and doubt which cannot be easily removed by rules, codes, models or frameworks (Bernstein 1991). As reading is subject to contingency and the historical moment of that reading, the object of research cannot be closed. Recognising such elements of self-doubt and scepticism in my thinking, creates possibilities of opening to the other, in my research, and to contestation, in my representations. However, such openness is a difficult concept to practice in current educational research, with its conventions towards closure ('conclusions') and certainty ('findings'), which create a metaphysics of presence by exerting power in its interpretations (Stronach and MacLure 1997).

However, although surety cannot be absolute, "it is equally true that we have an ethical duty to decide between what is better and what is worse" (Kearney 1991, p.221). In this, I fall within Smith's (2004) definition of a nonfoundational tradition of research which, instead of metaphysical or

epistemological bases, argues that when a pursuit of knowledge has ethical implications, it should have an ethical basis and require justification.¹³

This sense of obligation and moral responsibility of an ethical imagination has weighed on me. Recognising that the processes of research involve construction rather than passive discovery (Hazelrigg 1989), I attempted to be practically and morally careful of the ways the 'reality' of this text is constructed and the ways I respond to the criteria with which it is judged. I see it as my authorial responsibility to take my intentionality and its potential consequences seriously, although it cannot determine the text's reception.

As with Lyotardian (1984) notions of postmodernity, I see my research falling within a philosophical category which is characterised by a critical attitude or way of thinking. I would describe my approach falling under the umbrella of 'postmodernisms of resistance' which "seeks to deconstruct modernism and resist the status quo" rather than 'postmodernisms of reaction' which reduce and dismiss modernism as a cultural style while maintaining the humanist tradition (Foster 1985, pp.xi–xii). While totalising narratives are resisted or opened up to difference, the emancipatory intent of the Enlightenment is still maintained (Briton 1996).

As such, I have operated with a postmodernist understanding of epistemology as "the criteria that allow distinctions between knowledge claims to be made" (Usher et al. 1996, p.173), making visible the factors which shape me as a researcher, against conventional representations of the individual researcher as 'ideal knower' detached for world without history, affiliation or cultural bias. Instead of being dictated to or grounded by a dominant framework of understanding, and operating within its context of expectations and values, I see the analytical tools I utilised as 'openings' resisting the closure and surety of generalizable conclusions (from p.47). Rather they stimulated thinking and generated problems in terms of "the field of disputed meaning" (Stronach & MacLure 1997, p.113)

¹³ In comparison, foundationalism seeks an external (i.e. outside of or other to the self) reference as a foundation for or the assessment of knowledge claims. Antifoundationalists take Lyotard's ideas about the incommensurability of knowledge to its conclusion, arguing that there can be no closure without contradiction (Smith 2004).

of interpretation, authorship and creativity. As I explored a problem rather than prescribed solutions, such an emergent approach was enabled.¹⁴

This study is informed by art criticism (including literary and aesthetic theory, and cultural criticism) and HES, as is appropriate for the subject. One of the relatively untapped resources within HES is its possibilities for transdisciplinary research and lenses (Tight 2004), although this may be “fraught with difficulties and challenges, involving identity risks and the creation of endless and unforeseen vulnerabilities” (Haggis 2003, p.386). Whilst there has been research done across art education research and HES, this transdisciplinary space is relatively unmined, with the result that the educational practices that are the focus of my study are jolted from discursive familiarity and “mythical immediacy” (Buck-Morss 1997, p.x). I have found that such disruption forces me, and in turn perhaps my readers, to look again or more slowly and carefully, at that which is often taken for granted by each perspective (MacLure 2003). Because of my own background in FASP and my current academic position within an HES department, in many senses I embody the position of a researcher/teacher in exile, with an ‘émigré consciousness’ (Said 1993a) of the practices and contexts which allows for a critical yet sensitive eye.

Just as definitions of art are broad and inclusive of idiosyncratic and individual contributions (Hickman 2008b), so too is much art education research (Risner & Constantino 2007), often characterised by tentativeness, uncertainty and pluralistic approaches (Stewart 2008). However, education research has most dominantly been viewed in modernist terms, grounded in highly individualistic assumptions based on subject-centred reason and enlightenment ideals (Peters 1995). HES methodology continues this modernist drive, with its “will to certainty and clarity of vision” embodied in the narrative realism of its preferred writing style (Stronach & MacLure 1997, p.4). Countering this drive for surety, postmodern approaches explore how methods may resist the desire for closure to mobilize meaning and explore significance. Just as contemporary art recognises that perceptions of ‘reality’ are constructed and involve complex processes, with reflexivity needed in acts of observation, and an emphasis on the importance of affect and interpretation (Denscombe 2008), the approaches I have taken have resonance for those working within the arts and arts education (Hickman 2008b).

¹⁴ Of interest is how this chapter’s discussion, of my methodological orientation and practice, has strong associations with Sullivan’s (2014, p.2) characterization of arts-based educational research, as functioning within non-linear, dynamic methodologies, which similarly attempt to “surround” rather than solve problems.

Part II.

The pragmatics of my research methodology

In this section, I discuss how my research approaches, similar to many other transdisciplinary approaches to art education research (see Kindler 2007; Stewart 2008), drew from and across a diversity of research methods and sources, much like a *bricoleur* (Hickman 2008a). Such eclectic methodological triangulation was to develop multi-perspectival, dimensional and layered representations of the significance of approaches to interpretation on the conditions for creativity in undergraduate FASP. As such, I strove not only to “describe the parts... but also to understand relational and contextual factors”, a feature characteristic of arts-based educational research practices (Sullivan 2014, 9).

(Con)text: discourse and mis-reading

In this research, my interpretation of critical discourse analysis was informed by Foucault and Critical Theory, where discourse is seen as an artefact of culture which can be ‘read’ for both meaning and significance. Rhetorical power-plays either legitimize or delegitimize claims, regulating meaning and determining criteria which are used for judgment (Foucault 1972). While analysing, I sought to make explicit discourses, in the participants’ teaching and learning interactions, that were otherwise implicit or invisible, and thereby more powerful, with the intention of exploring the political, social, cognitive and affective significance of such discourses. Cultivating a sensitivity to or awareness of a discourse is a means of consciousness-raising (Ramaekers 2006) in the hope of demystifying their ‘taken for granted’ nature. Such deliberate ‘mis-reading’ has been used effectively in arts research (for instance Smart & Dixon 2002; Melles 2008).

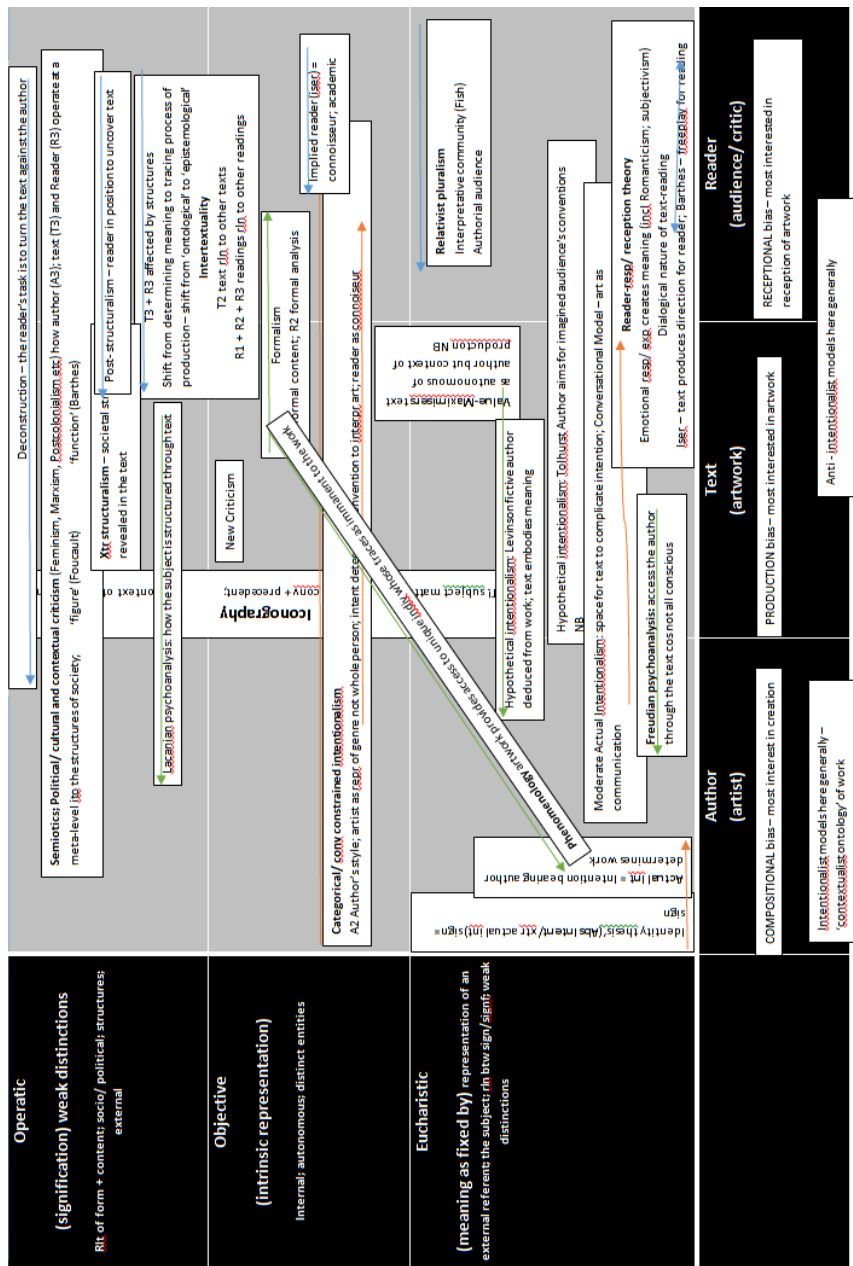
Rather than seeing people and their actions as solely constructed by discourse, the understanding I have held is that discourses do not determine identity but rather provide possibilities or conditions within which they may be negotiated or resisted (Foucault 1979; 1980). This is a sense of the human subject as a psychological subject (Davies & Hare 1990) who is shaped and shapes him/herself through momentary but continuous identifications with discursive positions in which s/he is situated.

A framework for mapping interpretative approaches

An aspect of my research process involved mining discourses and mapping them to an interpretative framework constructed for this purpose (IF 1, p.38). The framework is composed of a vertical axis with three broad interpretative orientations, which I termed ‘eucharistic’, ‘objective’ and ‘operative’

criticism.¹⁵ The horizontal axis distinguishes between references made to the author/artist, text/artwork or reader/viewer). Such wording is informed by literary theory, as concerns with authorship thread through creativity and representations of both word and image since antiquity, though I am mindful of their differences. Chapter Three provides more in-depth explanation and substantiation of this framework, contextualizing it within a genealogical history of authorship (Part I), and outlining how dominant interpretative approaches may be positioned within it (Part III). The analysis in Appendix B is included to provide subsequent scholars, interested in utilising this framework for empirical research, with the various applications which may emerge in other contexts. As such, this interpretative framework is a primary contribution of this project. As far as I have been able to determine, the few other such frameworks have mostly been for purposes of bridging the divide between criticism and laypersons' approaches to interpretation, for such purposes as providing diverse communities "intellectual access" (Lynch 2006, p.3).

¹⁵ A recent model was developed for the purposes of identifying the relation between ideas of art and interpretation of educators from the Tate Britain, which could be linked to my own framework (see Arriaga & Aguirre 2013). For instance eucharistic criticism can be linked to "works of art as a visual representation and interpretation as identification"; objective criticism to "works of art as a message to be revealed, and interpretation as decodification"; operative criticism to "works of art as an intellectual, historical and cultural fact, and interpretation as an opportunity for critical reflection". However, those educators are tasked with a different purpose to those engaged with the development of authorship in FASP.

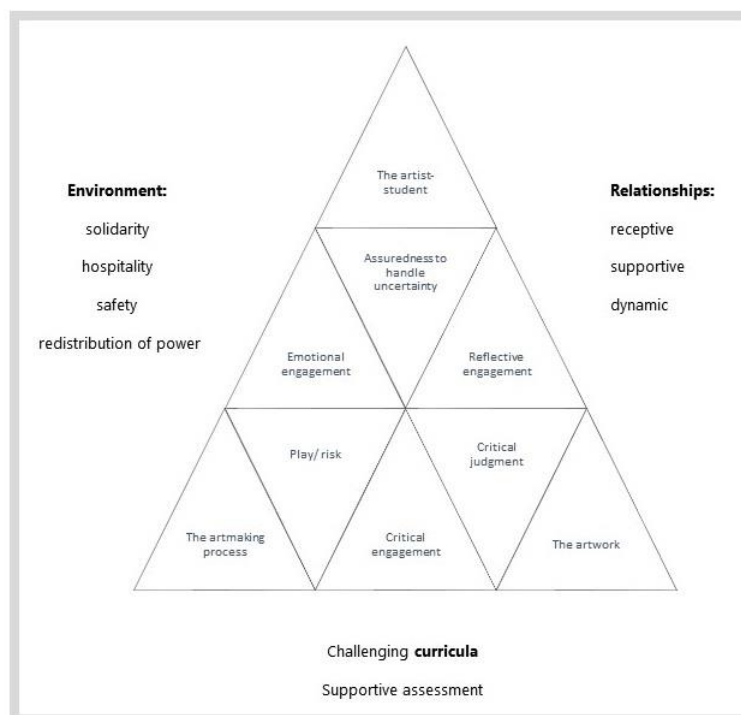


IF 2: Dominant movements and approaches in contemporary art criticism

To visually think through the various approaches discussed in Chapter Three Part III and Appendix B, I mapped them to the framework, to observe how it might accommodate nuance (IF 2). For analysis of the empirical data, I similarly mapped references made within assessment contexts to the framework. However, the versions represented in the data analysis chapters were simplified for the purpose of effective communication with the reader. Colour coding, with advancing and receding colours to indicate importance ascribed, has been utilised. When I presented my analysis to participants, I offered a version reduced to the horizontal axis.

A schema to analyse the conditions for creativity in FASP

This project falls within a tradition of creativity research that considers the interplay of social and contextual conditions *when* creativity becomes manifest (Sullivan 2007), rather than positivist psychometric approaches to the measurement of *what* creativity may be. Contributing to traditions of creativity research (McWilliam 2009; Hargrove 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández et al. 2013) which conceptualise creativity as something which can be developed rather than being entirely innate (Hargrove 2012), I utilised a schema I had developed of the conditions for creativity in FASP (Belluigi 2013) to analyse the significance of the interpretative approaches on the quality of student learning. I have made reference to this research earlier in this text (p.21), but here discuss this schema's methodological usage.



Schema 1: The conditions for creativity in FASP

While there has been compelling recent research on developing creativity in arts education (Reid & Solomonides 2007; Hargrove 2012; Clarke & Cripps 2012; Carabine 2013; Gaztambide-Fernández et al. 2013) and wider creative arts such as music (Brinkman 2010), I felt exploring the particular domain in question was most appropriate (Csikszentmihalyi 1999), as the effect of context on student approaches to learning has been widely demonstrated (Solomonides et al. 2012).

In constructing this schema, my intention was to holistically interweave the creative student's sense of self and identity as the author (what I termed 'the artist-student'); the creative process (termed

‘the artmaking process’); and the creative outcome or product (termed ‘the artwork’). These appear at each apex of a creativity triad. I deviated from Spendlove’s (2007) terminology of ‘person’, ‘process’ and ‘product’ to directly situate this schema within the FASP domain, in addition to avoiding terminology such as ‘product’, which carries with it certain intentionalist/determinist associations.

Within the triad are the three elements of emotional engagement, critical engagement and reflective engagement, informed by the conception of quality learning as engagement. Underlying the ‘western’ constructs of cognition and emotion in binary opposition (Besnier 1990, p.420) are conceptions of the self as either rational or deranged, an opposition pervading ‘Western’ notions since Plato (discussed in Chapter Three Part I). An alternative construction posits the affect as integral to ways of knowing (Heron 1992) the relationships between the self and the broader social world through imaginative and extra-rational meaning-making (Chodorow 1999). Rather than a monological, autonomous self, the sense of self as ambivalent, multiple and fragmentary recognises that conscious agency may be subverted by desire (Dirkx 2001, p.64). My own understanding of this paradigm has been deepened by Mann’s (2001) notions of alienation and engagement, which has informed previous analyses of student data I have done (Meistre & Belluigi 2010; Belluigi 2013). This conception offers a middle ground between approaches to learning (Marton & Saljo 1976; Biggs 1976; Svensson 1977; Entwistle & Ramsden 1983; Gibbs, Morgan and Taylor 1984) and student engagement (Pace 1979; 1982; Astin 1977; Chickering and Gamson 1987; Tinto 1987) paradigms, between epistemological and ontological understandings. Mann’s (2001) construction of the seven perspectives of alienation (p.21) enabled me to analyse student engagement and alienation from data generated (p.57), highlighted specifically in ‘B’ of each of the cases studied.

However, as learning is affected both by the context of study and by the type of experiences students have, the schema includes the conditions (cultures, contexts and circumstances) which enhance, constrain or maintain student involvement. Under this umbrella term I have included: the environment, the curriculum and assessment (that experienced, rather than espoused, as discussed in Chapter Two); and relationships and roles between staff, student and his/her peers. Thus, interwoven is an analysis of the discursive positioning of my participants, informed by research on dominant constructions of the student-supervisor relationships in undergraduate studio pedagogy (Belluigi 2016). As the self is constructed rather than discovered within structures such as education (Atkinson 1999; Gooding-Brown 2000; Reid & Solomonides 2007; Orr 2011), having an understanding of what motivates individual’s choices to adopt, resist or assume discursive positions

is as important as identifying the discursive structures that construct such identities themselves. Important for this research was considering how teachers' conceptions of their roles might undermine or support assessment (Blair 2007), and have an impact on student learning (Prosser & Trigwell 1998).

Specific questions posed to participants (Appendix C) and the prompts for the students' visual narratives (Appendix E) were informed by this schema. Schema 1 is an adaptation of the published version of the schema. Changes included shifting 'critical judgment' between the triangles 'critical engagement', 'engagement with product' and 'reflective engagement', as I came to better understand how these aspects were interlinked. The colour of the original version was removed, rather utilizing similar colour associations as those used for the interpretative frameworks.

Selecting the cases, sites, sources and methods

In Chapter Two and Three, I sketched the context of the issues and problematics of referential frameworks for judgment in FASP curricula and for interpretation of artworks. As my interest is in interpretative approaches and their significance for the conditions of creativity, assessment is the central pivot of this research. In previous research, I found assessment practices useful terrain to determine what is given value by those within teaching and learning interactions, and how power is negotiated (Belluigi 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011).

As experience of assessment is linked to the event itself, what the student brings to the assessment event, and the assessments made by significant others (Falchikov & Boud 2007), it was necessary that I encompassed a number of 'sites' and sources. However, I chose a relatively small sample of case studies because of the possibilities this allowed me to mine for detail, nuance and comparison, rather than breadth or generalizability. Firstly, represented in Chapter Five, I compared two art schools to explore interpretative structures and cultures at an institutional level: UKI, which espoused an intentionalist approach, and SAI, which espoused an anti-intentionalist approach. There were explicitly reflected in the former's inclusion of back-up material for the summative assessments, while the latter practiced the more traditional assessment-by-exhibition. Secondly, represented in Chapter Six, I analysed interpretative approaches at an agential level, comparing 5 cases of individual supervisors and the significance of their approaches for the conditions of creativity for their students. As there was more autonomy and stronger supervisor-student relationships espoused at SAI, I chose that context for the agential analysis. The comparative smallness made it pragmatically possible to include 100% participation, allowing an in-depth analysis

of the roles, relationships and their impact on the conditions. I felt it important that a number of such cases be compared within a single institution to work from a baseline context.

A partial aspect of my choice to include both institutions was admittedly political. Very little research in HE art pedagogy is produced, valued or supported in South Africa or on the African continent (McLaren & Chifenyise n.d.; Mans 2007) where it is not seen as an high-priority in the formal arts education sector, with more research on the arts themselves (McLaren & Chifenyise n.d., p.12). However, I was aware that claims made from an exclusively African case may be dismissed as too localized to be of significance to an international audience. The inclusion of both locations allowed for the marginal and the mainstream to interface. Influences in the national context are outlined on p.64, however for the most part the differences were curricular, such as SAI straddling formalism and contextualism, with remnants of a 'medium-specific' curriculum; while the curriculum of UKI was characterised by 'discourse-interest'.

In terms of the sources of data for this research project, all FASP staff and students involved in the final year of undergraduate studies at the two institutions were invited to participate. 9 of the 16 staff and 10 of the 65 students at UKI actively participated. All 5 staff and 16 students at SAI participated. I was cognisant that there might be risk for participants involved, and so was careful to ensure the confidentiality of my sources and the protection of the raw data. In this text, individuals are distinguished by pseudonym (Appendix C), which I felt was more humanising of their subjectivity than other signifiers of their identity. Participants were invited to choose these themselves, with the proviso that traces of their specificity were retained, such as culture, race, and gender. Students were most appreciative of this gesture, with more than two thirds taking the opportunity.

In terms of data generation methods, I utilised questionnaires, interviews, emails for the staff (p.56), and visual narrative focus group interviews and emails for the students (p.57), in addition to observations (p.56) and analysis of curriculum documents (p.55). The instruments I developed were hybrid in that they were contextually constructed and served not only to generate but disseminate information, as a way of inviting participants to supplement or problematize my interpretations. For instance, my initial questionnaire to staff provided statements based on notions from the literature I drew on in Chapters 2 and 3, with the intention of eliciting participants' responses (Appendix D). Similarly, in my interviews with staff, I drew explicitly from their responses to the questionnaire, my analysis of curriculum documents and my observations, to offer them my interpretations, and inform additional questions. In this way, I treated respondents as both informants and critical

readers to these 'report-and-respond' data generation instruments (Stronach & MacLure 1997).

Below is a transcription from how I began an interview with a staff member.

I am at a point now where I've got a whole lot of data, from your responses to the questionnaire, the observations of your teaching and the assessments too. So I'm going to tentatively just suggest my interpretations and then we use those as a trigger for you to talk further. So it is probably going to be quite messy.

For the most part this approach worked well, forcing me to analyse throughout the process of data generation, and preventing embellishments or jumping to conclusions on my part. By being explicit about my authorial constructions, I opened the constructed process of my interpretations to scrutiny while *in process* by having a more intersubjective or reciprocal relationship with the participants (Stacey 1998). It often made for interesting discussion, as the interviews became ways of speaking about the complexities of issues, rather than the participants and myself interacting as if we were 'cold' to the subject and other data generated. This was responded to appreciatively by this staff member, for instance.

Just a quick response to say that, having finally given this a proper read, I do think the interview approximates how I feel about the issues - even just in its fluidity. And I also think the to-and-fro-ness of it is quite lovely - performative of the kind of reciprocity that I feel is so important (Helena).

The participants were given the opportunity to act in the fruitfully ambiguous role of reader/respondent/critic, with my role positioned less conventionally (Cook-Sather & Alter 2011). In certain instances this allowed for direct challenges to my research approach.

Gill: You are very present in the questions, on the questionnaire, and in the interviews. How were you setting the questions to eliminate your subjectivity?

Dina: Well, there are different approaches to that. You can present questions as quite neutral or you can try to use the interaction so that you treat your participants as participants and not subjects. You know what I mean? I present interpretations that I have and then the person either confirms or refutes them, and they're added as an additional voice. It's a way of sort of saying, 'This is my stance, what do you think?' and that hopefully gives the person enough space. It is a bit like a crit in a way - you put something there and then you get different opinions on it, instead of totally absenting yourself, you know?

Liminality brought into practice my claims about openness (p.43), where such reciprocal interaction emphasised the importance of unfinishedness and a resistance to closure. As many of the

participants worked with practice-based research, they had an affinity for this research approach, as indicated by this staff member at the end of this interview.

Dina: Anyway, thank you Ryan, this has been very interesting.

Ryan: We haven't set the world to rights but we've opened up a bundle of questions against it.

Dina: Well, I –

Ryan: We've had real fun with it. No real answers are there!

I found that extending the notion of 'reflection-in-action' in studio pedagogy (Schön 1983) to research, entailed a challenging artistry (Bleakley 1999) not dissimilar to connoisseurship (Eisner 1976), to appreciate indeterminate, uncertain insights, and problematics, rather than technical solutions.

Academic literature

The literature to which I refer in this thesis comes from a number of fields and disciplines, including art education research, higher education studies, aesthetic and literary theory, and philosophy. I refer to primary texts, but when I felt this was unnecessary or counterproductive, I used secondary sources. As important as *what* I have chosen and *why*, is *how* I approached and utilised these texts. They are not treated as canonical texts to be taken as given or seminal, as in the convention of the 'literature review', but rather they at times substantiate and others complicate the claims and arguments I make. In addition, I utilised key problematics and concerns from literature to commence the empirical data generation from a more in-depth position, bringing my participants' perspectives in direct proximity to the findings and arguments of such research (see for instance Appendix D).

Curricula documents

I considered curricula documents as artefacts of the institutions' cultures and the discourses they projected. Because of its adherence to OBE principles, UKI had substantial documentation of course processes, including assessment criteria which were actively utilised by the staff and communicated to students. The little course documentation that had been produced at SAI had been strategically composed for external quality assurance purposes a decade before I began data collection. As this documentation was not in use within the school, it was invalid for the purposes of this research. Rather, I asked for access to all communications made to final year students, and utilised those to inform my analysis of espoused theories. I conducted a content analysis of terms that dominated, in addition to criteria and discourses which resonated with the subject at hand, and then 'bounced' my tentative interpretations off the participating staff.

Observations

I chose to collect data from unstructured observations of teaching and learning interactions, as explanations generated from more conscious accounts often underestimate the influence of structural, cultural and unconscious factors. These observations provided access to 'reading' the embodied experience (Sagan 2008) of the ways in which my participants were situated by discourses and the capital (Bourdieu 1988) they brought to the situations, through observing their relationships; body language; what they articulated and how it was received. In previous research in this disciplinary context, which has both awareness and suspicion of surveillance, I had found that writing notes was less disruptive than using electronic recording devices.

I selected from a number of formal and informal formative assessment interactions, in addition to summative assessments. Specifically, at UKI I observed four formative assessments, three internal assessment panels, one internal moderation assessment, two moderation meetings, and a discussion between the external examiners and key staff at the school. At SAI, I observed 6 formative studio assessments, formative and summative panel assessments, and a moderation meeting.

Generating data from staff participants

Staff participants included those who supervised studio practice, course coordinators, and internal assessors of FASP. When interpreting their data I was mindful that "false conceptions" as much as "correct information" (Danemark, in Carter & New, 2004, n.p) would help me develop a nuanced sense of what was comprehended by my respondents, as discourses are mostly invisible to agents who operate within that habitus. Some of the staff appreciated this aspect of the process, as commented on during the interviews below.

I find it really interesting. Because you cannot be outside yourself, so it's quite nice, you go, 'Ok, gosh. Do I do that?' (Faye).

It's very interesting to see what one does, contextualized by another (Helena).

The influence and impact on student learning of individual approaches to interpretation, explored in Chapter Six, was important to understand. However, this was not in an attempt to isolate or demonise individual teaching practices. I was mindful that "subjectivity in aesthetic judgement lies not with individual idiosyncrasy but with selection of tradition(s) within which judgements are contextualised" (Bolton, 2006:72). A number of respondents indicated that the research interactions helped them to face conflicting emotions and conscientise themselves about the structures and cultures within which they were situated.

The questionnaire (Appendix D) was designed utilizing 'Google Drive Forms', on-line software that allowed prompt access with local servers in both geographic locations. As a report-and-respond method, I offered descriptions and analysis from art education literature, to which the participants were encouraged to actively respond. The prompting by key players proved helpful in achieving a fair representation of staff perspectives within each institution. Whilst some of the respondents found the questionnaires too demanding of their time, the majority indicated they were helpful for re-thinking their own practice.

I mean it's the first time I've thought of it in those terms and that's actually quite helpful for me to think about (Sophie).

A triangulated analysis of the curricula documents, observations and questionnaire responses informed the semi-structured interviews of a purposively selected sample of staff. These face-to-face interviews were recorded, the audio transcribed, and sent to each individual participant for member-checking and further comment. In addition, informal verbal and electronic discussions with participating staff occurred.

Most of the participants were generous of their time, with some hopeful that the research would lead to reflection within their institutions, as this staff member expressed in an interview.

It's about time. I'm so glad to be doing this, this research, so glad you are doing it. And if it can provide any clarity or kind of openness that all of us, that the art school can have a look at, it would be brilliant (Sophie).

Generating data from student participants

The importance of student participation in this study was paramount as their experiences heavily influence their learning engagement (p.51). Final year students were chosen as they were able to articulate a sense of their own positioning, providing rich insights into the conditions in which they were learning. In addition to data generated from responses to questionnaires (Appendix F), I designed a data generation method which is creative in itself - what I have called 'visual narrative focus group interviews', in which the students authored their own stories (Appendix E). Many of these visual narratives are reproduced within this thesis, under the caption label 'VN'.

Most research methods which utilise imagery are informed by psychoanalytic approaches (Prosser 1998; Cabrera & GuarIn 2012), which are concerned with either what an image conceals or reveals of unconscious impulses (Shorr 1983; Edwards 2007). Rather, visual pedagogy, informed by critical theory, considers the tactics of reading and writing in the construction of visual narratives (Rifà-Valls 2011). As such, visual arts research methods often reinforce interpretivist notions that research

and images create rather than discover (Sullivan 2007). This design was informed both by such imaginative constructions and by projective psychoanalytic approaches, which purposefully utilise ambiguous imagery, so that the person projects him/herself into the situation creating a story - a strongly anti-intentionalist approach to the use of these 'found images'.

The design for the visual narrative method (Appendix E) evolved from an instrument a colleague and I designed for data generation in a FASP context (Meistre & Belluigi 2010), which was informed by an artwork about projective testing he had produced in collaboration with a psychologist (Meistre & Knoetze 2005). The image bank provided to students was selected from a photographic archive, with images referencing the snapshot genre of everyday objects and scenes (Meistre 1998). This source was specifically chosen because the images had been recognised as productive for projective purposes (Meistre & Knoetze 2005). The sequence and possible written component were constructed in response to these four posed statements or phrases informed by the conditions for creativity schema.

The student's imagination was accessed rather than his/her intellect alone, allowing for active construction and inclusion of affective aspects of his/herself (Dirkx 2001), providing me with a record of "ephemeral experience" (as in Fróis & White 2013). Students' constructions varied in effort and approach, with the process described as playful and engaging. Only two participants articulated feeling that the images complicated the clarity of what they hoped to communicate, indicating awareness of the difficulties of ensuring the reception of meaning intended, and exercising their agency to engage with the narrative as they felt best representative.

Dave: I didn't put any pictures up because I felt like you may look at it and get a different realisation to what I'm thinking.

Tammy: I didn't really want to use the images really that much because that's not really how I wanted to represent the way I think about stuff.

Once the visual narratives were constructed, students shared their stories with their peers and myself in a focus group interview format, discussing their choice of images and text in relation to the experience they intended to evoke. This discussion was the first act of interpretation of the visual narratives, with the student participant narrating his/her intentionality for the sequence. I would then ask further questions to probe deeper; to enquire whether and how such experiences extended to others; and to explore their perceptions of the significance of such experiences over time. My considerable experience of focus group interviews, having utilised this method extensively in my professional capacity for evaluation processes in HE, was helpful in this regard. As these narratives

often involved emotional insights and outpourings from the participants, I was careful to explicitly indicate that participants had agency to resist such probing, as in this transcript excerpt.

Dina: How do you feel – I am probing now, you can tell me when to stop. If it's difficult, you know?

Edeen: I'll tell you when to stop.

The focus group interviews were recorded, the transcriptions pasted alongside each relevant visual narrative, and emailed to each individual for member-checking and further comment.

There may be concerns with the reliability or legitimation of this method. However, I believe that the nuanced insights yielded by the instrument warrants the validity of the innovation, particularly since it included students' interpretations of their stories. In previous research, I found FASP students responded most favourably to such methods, some finding it preferable to any other method of evaluation or research, because of its potential for reflection, its recognition of the affect, and for increasing students' intrinsic motivation (Meistre & Bellugi 2010). Many of the students in this project thanked me for the experience, one describing it as "free therapy" and many suggesting it be included within the curriculum.

Two dominant positions informing analysis of stories are that the self is either constructed or revealed, or concealed by them (much like the psychoanalytic view of images, p.57). For those of the former bent, stories are seen as central to identify formation, through which significance is ascribed to experience and the self is constituted (Andrews 2000). Researchers adopting this perspective would analyse stories as an individual's autobiography looking for what they reveal about how the person constructs him/herself. This is an intentionalist approach, of stories allowing privileged access to the author's view of him/herself. The more critical view is that such narratives should not be taken on face value, acknowledging that aspects of the self are beyond the bounds of conscious discourse (Frosh 1999); the 'defended subject' may alter or manipulate such stories to defend against the 'real' self (Hollway & Jefferson 2000b); or may present a fiction. Both positions hold that there are complex connections between narrative and identity, and thus that study of narrative is epistemological (Stewart 2008).

While analysing the stories, I found I had to consciously shift myself from trying to get to the 'self' behind or within the story, and recognise that as people are not 'fixed' - their stories are layers of projection, memory and fiction (Stronach & MacLure 1997). Rather I looked at the layers of subjectivity intrinsic to the narrative and the act of narration itself (Day Sclater 2003). These include the speaking subject (the 'actual' person) who invites or addresses 'the subject' of the speech or text

(the imagined reader), and creates a 'narrating subject' (the narrator), constructs the subject of narration (the character) to speak about the narrated subject (the thing to which the narrator refers but cannot get there because of language – the signified). This recognition, of the many subjectivities in narrative, freed me from the notion that the layers should necessarily correspond, and enabled me to think through my participants' agency to described their experiences and 'self' in the text.

A distinction I found useful for analytical purposes was between narrative or discourse, as a product, and the act of narration, as an embodied social practice composed by intentional agents (Day Sclater 2003). In this project, I utilised both senses of the word, with 'narrative' for what the students narrated in their stories (and indeed all the participants' insights), and 'discourse' for wider representations (p.47). This acknowledges the interdependence which shapes a person's *subjectivity* (through premediate influences of cultural practices over time, and his/her psychology); and his/her *situatedness* (in immediate social experiences and discourses) and *constitutedness* (in postmediate experiences) (Billet 1998). Instead of taking agency as a given, I questioned "the conditions of its possibility" (Butler 1992, p.13) for creativity in studio practice, while recognising that agency can never come to closure, as people are continually constructed by relations and structures around them.

Part III.

Concluding with a problematic of authorship

In terms of how I conceptualized my responsibilities as a researcher, I aimed for 'warranted assertability' (Schiralli 2002, p.63) of the validity of this study, as to whether you as the reader are given a clear and explicit enough account of this research process to follow my thinking and rationale, and find my interpretations trustworthy. This has involved an 'epistemological reflexivity' (Hickman 2008a, p.194) where I consider what frames my vision as a researcher (Derrida 1981b), how my assumptions feed into the construction of knowledge generated within this report, balanced with my obligation to do justice to the subject.

I extended such methodological responsibility to the possibilities of methodological irresponsibility (Stronach & MacLure 1997) through opportunities created to enable 'transgressive validity' (Lather 1993, p.675) for my participants. For instance, practical opportunities were created for them to 'shred' my questions; use marginalized comments; reject my summarized accounts et cetera. Reciprocity, between meaning and power, researched and researcher, proved an important principle

(Lather 1991) to transition conventional respondent-interpreter positions, promote resistance to those normative states, and disrupt traditional objectification of the subject/object dualism (Cook-Sather & Alter 2011).

An approach to gauging the quality of qualitative research is to reflexively and reciprocally respond to the particularity of the context, and the purpose of the subject, by revealing the process of the research narrative (Kumaravadivelu 2001) by un-writing from within (Stewart 2008). For this purpose, I turn to how authorship has been negotiated in this process. While research reports may be implicitly acknowledged as stories about the world and stories about the self (Usher et al. 1996), I have included explicit indications of my authorial constructions within this thesis. On one level, these include a sense of my own feelings, subjectivity or perspective, in terms of my own personal biography and motivation (pp.1; 253); my philosophical approaches as researcher (p.43); and the knowledge constructions I presented to my participants (p.54). In the context of this chapter, a modest figure (Figure 1, p.62) makes explicit the layers of narration in this text.¹⁶

Such explicitness serves the purposes of increasing the self-criticality of my own assumptions, responsibility for and ownership of this research process; in addition to being openly ideological for you as reader. Whilst not pretending to be objective in the positivist sense, I put a number of processes in place (including member-checking, piloting, report-and-respond methods and triangulation), to disrupt unproductive or unconscious moments of my subjectivity dominating my own interpretations, the relationship with the participants, and to open these to other possibilities and transgressions.

¹⁶ Such layers of narration can be charted in many texts. See for instance Walker's (2014) discussion of the ways in which these operate in terms of a particular film's meaning.

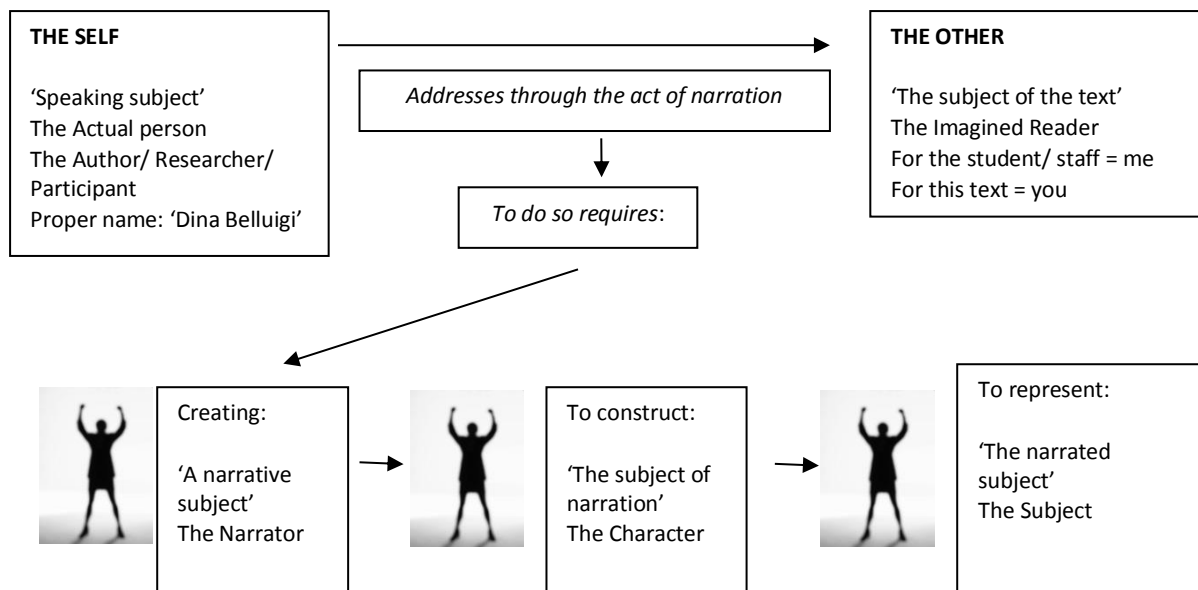


Figure 1: Narrative layers of 'always becoming' of the psycho-social person

However, as texts are "political-judicial-sociohistorical" (Derrida 1990, p.86), I have come to understand that, much like artmaking, there is dynamic interaction between artist/researcher, art object/research report, and viewer/reader (Hickman 2008b), that is irreducible to one perspective as represented in Figure 1. The dynamic is perhaps better represented as an animal-bite-animal process of both construction and interpretation (Figure 2). This research report extends beyond both my intentionality and the moment of reading, acting as neither subject nor object in the relationship.¹⁷ There are potential reflexive spaces to be made of various positioning in the discursive practices of the text, to see the researcher, participants and reader as 'representatives' of diverse interpretative communities, much like the potential openings between the separations of artist, artwork and viewer (Gooding-Brown 2000).

¹⁷ Authorial voice within narration is the subject of a paper exploring the written submission component or 'exegesis' in creative arts postgraduate studies (Fletcher & Mann 2004), which seems more concerned with the dynamics represented in Figure 1. However, Figure 2, hints at wider concerns which may be applicable to that context, in terms of how reception shapes, continues, or shifts the text. For instance, 'exegesis' has its roots in Biblical interpretation, where the aim of analysis is to discover the intended meaning of the 'original' text, indicating how the conventions construct the approach of both the artist-maker in relation to the imagined reader, or external examiner in that context.

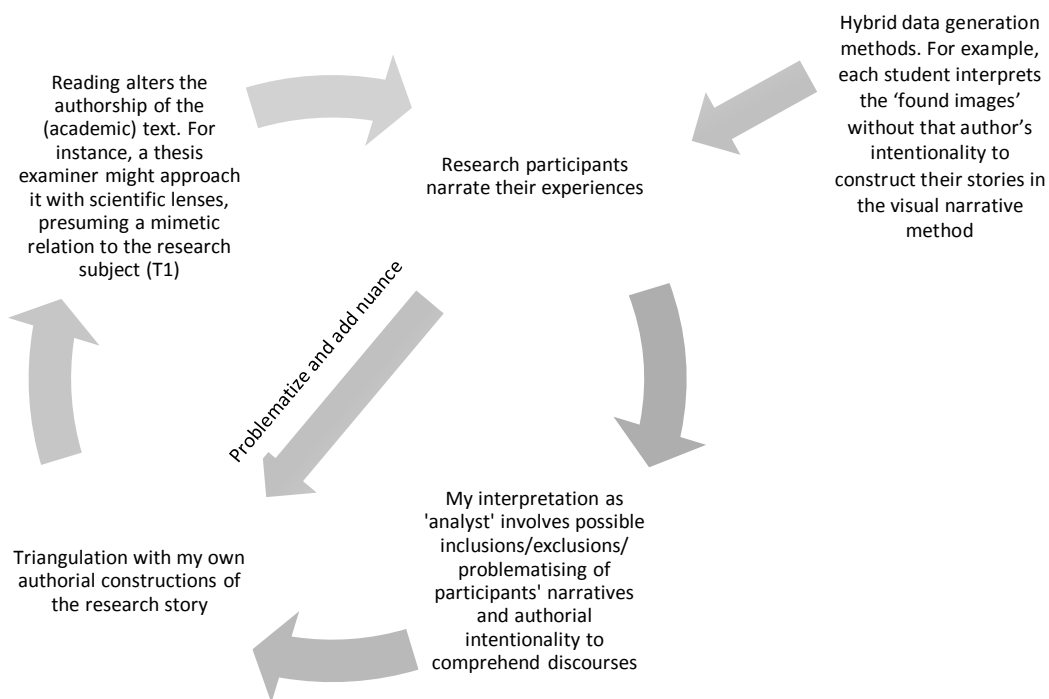


Figure 2: Animal-bite-animal interaction of author, text and reader in this research report

A feasible criticism of this approach is whether methodological questions are reducible to textual ones. The text can only be authenticated in itself by the reader who has little other resources than the pervasiveness of the text (Geertz 1988). However, for my own purposes as the researcher, the interrelationship between methodology and text remains important (Stronach & MacLure 1997). As such, this chapter too may act transgressively, allowing me to un-write from *within* the text and during my process, rather than after the fact. I hope that this sense of mobility and oscillation has a productively disruptive effect in both content and form, my writing and your reading.

There are some who may claim the approach I have taken in this chapter, of opening up my methodological choices and processes in this manner, is not only unnecessary but indulgent and confessional. A more conventional approach to ethics, reliability, generalizability et cetera might have been expected. However, working in an ethical and a transdisciplinary manner requires, I think, one to be as explicit and openly ideological as possible, so that my processes of knowledge construction may be comprehended, and where applicable, challenged. I have attempted to go beyond the technical, to the challenges and principles which I have found the most compelling and demanding of myself as a researcher in this project, including scepticism, openness, reflexivity and validity. I do not think that this dynamic process of active re-reading, interpretation and re-scripting can, nor should, be brought to comfortable closure when exploring problematics.

Chapter Five

An analysis of the significance of institutional interpretative approaches on the conditions for creativity

This chapter represents an analysis of interpretative approaches adopted at institutional level, influenced by the structures and cultures of the two specific schools in which they were situated. Part I contextualises the analysis, by looking briefly at the geographic and curricula considerations, including constructions of learning dominant within these cultures. Part II presents the analysis of UKI, and Part III of SAI. I conclude the chapter by drawing comparisons in their interpretative approaches, and the significance for the conditions experienced by their students.

Part I.

Contextualising the schools

Both curricula of the art schools studied were situated in 'western' systems of art education and contemporary art practice. South African art education was developed through British cultural imperialism (Stankiewicz 2007) and still maintains strong links with British artistic identity (Mans 2007). Whilst the art schools on which this analysis is based were in many ways similar, there were differences that made analysis of both sites valuable. Situated in vastly different geographical contexts, SAI in a small university town in South Africa and UKI in a large metropolis in England, some considerations emerged in terms of their contextual cultures which I would like to draw attention to this in section.

The United Kingdom, in comparison to South Africa, has a population with a far higher percentage of literacy, in addition to being more financially empowered and culturally aware. More economic resources and diverse communities of support are available to artists in the UK. The UK is acknowledged as at the top of the hierarchy for sales in the art market in the EU, and the largest importer and exporter of art globally (McAndrews 2013). Some such reasons were cited by staff at UKI to explain why there was not much competitive ferocity between artists nationally, and why more artists undertake postgraduate degrees in the UK (over 9,7 % as indicated in the graduate destinations data of the Higher Education Statistics Agency 2014), which the staff saw as a national expectation for entry into professional practice.

Schools of art education in the UK are more influenced by HE studies and the discourse of outcomes-based education and student-focused learning than their counterparts in South Africa, although recent research indicates that little has fundamentally changed in British art education (Williamson 2013), perhaps due to the constraints imposed by structural reforms and management policies (MacLaren 2012). In terms of UKI specifically, informal art classes were formalised towards the end of the 19th century at the then ‘technical school’ and later a ‘polytechnic’, which was classified as university in the 1990s, following institutional mergers. Despite this background, by the time of the data generation in 2013, the school had fully embraced a contextualised rather than formalist or skill-based framework (discussed in more detail from p.68). The conservatism of the art school in addition to the outlook of most of the students (Jackson 2013), were characteristics identified as creating a modest expectation of innovation which, at an undergraduate level, rarely extended beyond pushing conceptual personal boundaries (Russell; Peter¹⁸).

Whilst the data for this study was generated before the full implementation of the 2012/2013 reforms, the influence of changes in the balance between public and private contributions to HE funding were already beginning to show. The shift in responsibility from state to the individual, as part of the UK ‘cost-saving agenda’ which had begun in the 1990s (Kilkey 2012), not only continued to increase student contributions to tuition fees but also promoted the marketization of HE. This emerged in UKI particularly within the sense of the student as consumer within the changing fee structure, and the power shift this engendered in an attempt to address customer satisfaction, particularly around assessments, where assessors exhibited fear of “a come-back” (Gill). Student feedback, collected through the National Student Survey, had a certain degree of power and influence in this context, albeit that the perceptions of the effectiveness of such methods for quality assurance and development have been recognised as varied (NatCen 2015).

Another characteristic was an aversion to any intimacy within the teaching-learning relationship, which might have been connected to a cultural paranoia around inappropriate sexual relations at all levels of education (Russell), and partially in rejection of the master-apprentice relationship (Julian; Gill). It also may have related to the institutional structures, where a number of students lived a considerable distance from the campus and some overseas. Although residential accommodation was offered to first year students, this would not have extended beyond their first year or been

¹⁸ Participants have been differentiated by pseudonyms. See Appendix C for the full list.

financially possible for all. In addition, the student staff ratio of UKI's final year of undergraduate studies was 22:1. Due to increasing cuts in core funding for the teaching of undergraduate courses (Bolton 2014) and increasing casualised contracts (UCU 2013), most of the staff were on non-permanent and part-time contracts. As such, most 'teaching' was limited to formative assessment interactions (such as those discussed from p.79).

Very few eligible students apply for, and even fewer succeed in, FASP studies in South Africa. Some of the reasons for such problems in access and success include: that South Africa is currently the most economically unequal society on earth (The World Bank/The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2013); the apartheid educational system disadvantaged and excluded individuals from specific demographics from HE (Lewin & Mawoyo 2014); delayed massification; neoliberal pressures for 'developing' countries to produce a skilled rather than critical or creative labour force (Paasche 2006); and a growing nouveau riche community which values education leading to economic excess over cultural production (Scott et al. 2007). Funding for undergraduate tuition at the time of this research, despite a continued emphasis on public over private good and transformation in South African HE discourse (Steyn and de Villiers 2005), involved cost-share between state and individual. State subsidy of tuition was differentiated according to racial categorisation as part of the 'equity agenda' to address historical imbalances (HESA 2008), albeit that individual portions of the tuition had grown considerably since the demise of apartheid (Stumpf 2011). As a policing mechanism within the quality assurance agenda, subsidy related both to access of students into higher education and their successful graduation (articulated as 'input' and 'output').

Few of the students who are awarded such degrees become practising fine artists, as the amount of enrolments each year dramatically exceeds the amount of practising artists in the sector (Gaylard & Hagg 2011). State support in the arts, and corporate incentives to invest, are minimal, with the majority of so-called successful artists having to generate funds for their practice through employment in other sectors. Before the recession, over 57% were found unable to generate income for significant periods of time (Gaylard & Hagg 2011). Power in the market sits with gallerists who have connections outside of the country, as is the case in a number of other African countries (for instance, Silk 2011). As such, competition over this small pie is rife, collaboration less emergent than individual practice (6% compared to 60%, Gaylard & Hagg 2011), with expectations of the standard of production incredibly high. The economic reality is that few artists can afford the time or money

to enrol in postgraduate studies with much education occurring through informal networks (Raw Material Company 2012).

At the time of this research, there was very little consumer culture within traditional research-intensive South African HEIs such as SAI. The art school's high national reputation added to the staff's awareness that the art school and their performance was implicitly measured by the public and key players of the university at the summative submission exhibition, creating expectations of the quality assurance of the art product over and above the student experience. A characteristic of the educational culture was student deference to the teacher-expert, a culture which was reproduced from colonialist and Calvinist education that had been established at primary and secondary school level (Paasche 2006). As such, little weight was given to student feedback as a quality assurance or policing mechanism within this context. With many characteristics of the Oxbridge model on which it was founded, classes were small with a staff student ratio in 2013 of 3:1. In contrast to UKI, these were all permanent staff with a culture of availability for consultation during office hours. As a residential university, students were better able to access facilities and staff than their counterpoints at UKI.

In other ways, the institutions shared similarities. Both Head of Departments (HoDs) experienced role conflict when having to negotiate between the externally-validated quality assurance assessment system that awarded distinctions, and the traditional expectations of their Deans that these be norm-referenced not to exceed a certain amount per year. UKI employed two external examiners to consider the final submissions of a sample of students (20%) they had followed from the second year, in addition to other submissions where there was debate (on average 35%). The students' final grades included the best 50% of module marks from the second year. SAI had one external examiner who examined only the final year submission exhibition of the entire cohort (discussed in more detail on pp.95;134).

Another similarity was that the majority of the student cohort at both schools were middle-class female students, with the top achievers being male students. This possible gender-bias might have had to do with Romantic constructions of the male artist-genius which ghost contemporary art (Elkins 2001), and in turn influence constructions of the 'ideal' student, an issue noted as of concern in feminist criticism of the politics of authorship (Adams 1996). This suggested an unconscious intentionalist approach inclusive of authorial knowledge.

Fundamentally, both schools were concerned with producing graduates who would practice artmaking within the contemporary art context, although because of economic and other pressures, they had become more inclusive of other possible careers on exiting. Implicitly aligned with contemporary conceptions of the artist is the model of student as reflexive practitioner (Dallow 2003). Whether this concern found its focus on the student-artist, the artmaking processes or the artwork as product, proved to differ. UKI espoused a focus on the processes of learning to make art, rather than exclusively the quality of the artworks themselves or the person's attributes or behaviours; while SAI espoused a focus on the quality of the artworks primarily.

This part of the chapter provides detail of the curriculum structure of these schools, followed by their constructions of learning. In Part II and III, I look at each art school's dominant approaches to interpretation in their assessment practices, and the significance of their approaches on the conditions for creativity.

Formal curricula

In Chapter Two, I discussed that with changes to the relationship of form and content in contemporary art, many FASP curricula have moved from formalism towards contextualism, and in turn, from medium-specificity towards discourse-interest (p.6). Whilst UKI was more distinctly characterised by contextualism (what the staff at both HEIs informally called 'conceptualism'¹⁹), SAI straddled both contextualism and formalism with remnants of medium-specificity. Evidencing a discourse-interest, contextualism in fine art discourses was understood by what UKI termed 'coherence' in its assessment criteria (Gill; Susan). SAI worked actively towards their students' work being 'coherent' in that intertextual sense, and within the body of work which students submitted for summative assessment.

The HoD of UKI was clear that work which operated outside of the norms of contemporary art practice would not be rewarded (Peter). The senior staff members indicated that content at this level of study was more important than form, where "processes follow the idea" (Peter). The importance of students grappling with actualising or realising ideas arose from my research at UKI.

¹⁹ This is a colloquialism understood across 'Western' art schools. However it should be noted that very little similarities exist with the movement of Conceptualism, except for the prioritisation of conceptual discourses.

What we're trying to give them is not just a kind of fine art education but an understanding of creative processes and how you take an idea into the real thing (Peter).

What students are being asked to do is to produce work that has interpretative meaning that can be identified by assessors. So what is the narrative, what does it mean?... If there's not an idea that can be expressed by the maker, then quite often it's dismissed (Russell).

This suggested that an intentionalist approach was espoused within the formative culture of the school.

UKI's construction of this three-year degree was an introduction rather than specialisation, where students had access to learn a number of mediums. Such an approach allowed for "immature" preconceptions of students (the majority being under 21 years old) to be challenged and broadened (Peter; Jane; Julian). Studio practice was differentiated into two modules. From the outcomes, criteria and staff descriptions, the 'Studio Practice module' was intended to develop and assess the quality of processes of composition and production of the artwork, in addition to instilling and rewarding certain behaviours. The 'Exhibition/Portfolio and Professional Development' module included the same criteria for composition and production, with the addition of "selection, presentation and audience", thereby including reception. The espoused purpose of the two modules was to recognise both process and product in the assessment process, and for that to filter back to student learning. Towards this, summative submissions included one to three exhibited works, a portfolio, research log and possible additional back-up material.

Because of its medium-specific structure, SAI's accent was more on the reciprocity of form and content, with an expectation of sophistication in both areas. The structure of the FASP major incorporated a broad introduction with discourse-oriented projects in various mediums for the first two years. Following this, specialised medium-specific instruction by individual practitioners occurred for the last two years, where in the last year students had autonomy of research subject in the preparation for a solo exhibition. Through formal and informal means, supervisors familiarized their students with the histories and discourses of practice around the mediums, towards an applied and abstract understanding of how the discourses of form might add to the meaning or experience to their work. Staff felt medium-specific curriculum provided "roots" in a medium which need not be deterministic of each project or the student's practice. It emerged that the remnants of the previously skills-based medium-specific school had a considerable amount to do with the national context (p.66), where "in terms of resources as a South African artist, you have to be able to do

things yourself” (Adam). An emphasis on mastery of technique and skills was evident where “students very quickly realise that they’re not going to be really entertained if they’re mediocre” (Nick). There was an expectation that competent students surpass such display by problematizing it.

While there was an implicit emphasis on composition, production and reception, there were no differentiated assessment criteria to negotiate the relationship between process and product at SAI. As the final assessment was an assessment-by-exhibition, without a portfolio or reflective documents, the backwash from this event was that the product took precedent over the student’s learning experience. Many of the SAI staff felt that the accent on product was justified as it mirrored the focus of the community of practice on “the product, the world is not looking at your learning” (Adam). The expectation of the summative submission was much higher than that of the national qualifications framework of an honours level bachelor’s degree (CHE 2014), being comparable to a Masters, because the degree functioned as a debut show. It was explained that any less than this would not prepare students adequately for their entry to professional practice in the national context, where competition was fierce (Adam; Sophie). Staff exhibited various levels of anxiety for being responsible for assuring the “direction” of student work towards resolution, with related synonyms and metaphors utilised in all assessment events. In summative assessment observations, refinement and resolution emerged as implicit criteria used to define distinctive work. Supervisors were aware that for many students the push for excellence and accent on the product could result in failure, ultimately damaging professionally and affectively (Adam; Nick). Staff and students in other African studio learning contexts have expressed similar frustration and anxiety, about competition and success in the art market, impacting on their risk taking (Silk 2011). I offered my interpretation that these assessment expectations constrained and sometimes nullified the individuated curricula evident within the studio, to which all supervisors at SAI agreed.

Unlike SAI, the staff at UKI had bought into the application of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang 2007) and CRA (p.13). Those I interviewed believed that, because this differed so much from their own experience of assessment as students, the assessment processes were transparent and understandings shared. This incorrect assumption, that students will understand and know what to do with feedback, is not atypical in education (Sadler 1989). The majority of participating students spoke of being unable to understand the assessment process.

I am unclear exactly how the work is assessed and have no experience of this. I only experience them as teachers for the most part. In rare, more detailed feedback sessions, I have a fleeting idea of this side (Elsie).

This lack of in-depth comprehension was evident at both schools, indicating that, despite attempts at establishing shared understandings through CRA at UKI, the complexity of assessment in studio practice may render such criteria opaque to students, without participatory assessment in such judgement processes to engage with the habitus (p.250). Instead, what emerged as prevalent in both schools was a 'subjective discourse', where the students articulated believing art was assessed subjectively, rather than recognizing that frameworks existed which may be relative or localized. A subjective discourse was evident with staff in both schools too, who seemingly adopted a construction of subjectivity and objectivity as dichotomised, typical in academic assessment. Such tensions have been noted within this domain (p.15), where despite nuanced notions of subjectivity in interpretation, the tendency is to position assessors as objective experts, particularly those in the role of moderating the assessments (see UKI, p.93; SAI, p.133). The Director of Studies at UKI acknowledged that the removal of subjectivity was almost impossible, but strove to create explicit and conscious opportunities to recognize and contain it when it surfaced. A related aspect was "marking potential", though that too was recognised as extremely difficult to avoid (Susan; Gill; Helena). The dominant implicit criteria of both schools that I observed, and staff later confirmed, was the valuing of student labour and related personal attributes such as commitment, intensity, and dedication. Many argued these could be seen within the formal properties of the work, suggesting a hypothetical intentionalist approach.

Constructions of learning

Emerging from these schools' curricula were different constructions of learning. In general, and acknowledging that individuals within these schools may have operated outside these dominant characteristics, I found that UKI operated within the andragogy tradition of adult learning (Boud 1989). Attempts to remove many of the perceived constraints of formal education and the canon were most particularly evidenced in the emphasis on self-directed learning over authoritarian teaching. In its medium-specificity, SAI had weak accents of the training and efficiency tradition (Boud 1989), with aspects of the critical adult education tradition (Boud 1989) when it came to questioning bodies of knowledge and representation.

The majority of students in both schools came with a lack of critical cultural capital to fundamentally question and challenge themselves (similar to Jackson 2013). However, they were encouraged, and in different ways, enabled to adopt critical stances to their own artmaking, with a strong expectation that received opinions, ideological positions, and common-sense assumptions be challenged to create an appreciation of the "inherent revisibility of knowledge" (Danvers 2003, p.51). The

possibilities of perspectivism, where critical evaluation allowed space to exhibit diversity, difference, and pluralism (Danvers 2003), were created through peer interaction at formative assessments at UKI and to a lesser extent in the studio at SAI. However, because of the sharply hierarchical power structures of the summative assessments in both schools, where students and their self-assessments were excluded, such multiple perspectives were not exercised as horizontal when interpreting the work. Thus whilst both schools espoused critical and postmodernist approaches to their content, because of the summative approach, neither could be positioned sitting strongly within critical nor postmodernist traditions of adult education.

In addition to a critical accent on the research content, the culture at SAI was to challenge conservative and outdated understandings of art prevalent in South African society, although the dominance of western contemporary aesthetics seemed unchallenged. A more critical (“sinister”; “challenging”; “ambiguous”) than appreciative or representative approach was rewarded (“too pretty”; “didactic”; “depictive”; “illustrative”; “tame”). This related to not fixing meaning within the work, but opening it up to a diversity or nuance of readings.

Another valued characteristic of SAI was for research to have ‘personal’ relevance. This accent seemed to come from the critical inward-looking of the national art community (Herreman & D’Amato 1999) possibly because of ‘historical melancholia’ (Belluigi 2001) in the face of a crisis of representation in that post-colonial and post-apartheid context, still strongly felt by the practice-based staff.²⁰ While aspects of criticality were evident at UKI, there was far more allowance for lighter aspects, such as curiosity and playfulness.

FASP takes the ‘knowledge capability’ approach of problem-based learning a step further (Bowden 2004), where solving problems is at a lower level of learning than the divergent and exploratory problematizing necessary for the development of contemporary artists (Corner 2005). In both schools, this was enabled through the contextualising curricula which engaged students in problematizing the discourses they operated within. A distinct accent at both schools was for students to push their own boundaries, though such risk-taking mostly applied to the more successful students at SAI. Both schools espoused enabling innovation as a characteristic of their learning environment. Such innovation emerged on a micro- rather than macro-level, or what has

²⁰ This insularity may have influenced the emphasis on formal or optical elements of the work, as on p. 36.

been distinguished as psychological creativity (p-creativity), defined as being novel in terms of the individual's thought processes and creating change in that persons' conceptual framework; and historical creativity (h-creativity), defined as encompassing the individual aspect of psychological creativity and going beyond that to being novel in terms of human history (Boden 1994).

Student data indicated that opportunities for transformative learning were enabled through these challenging curricula. Transformative learning is considered central in art education, with connections between ontological, epistemological, and performative dimensions (Martin 2002; Danvers 2003). Arising from such boundary-pushing is the unknown and unexpected, both in terms of learning and teaching, as very little can or should be predetermined. With this comes a profound affective dimension to learning, as students have to learn to cope with instability and uncertainty in processes of artmaking and creativity (Eisner 1998; 2003; 2004; Danvers 2003; Edström 2008), which is further exacerbated by the postmodern condition. Whilst such uncertainty has been recognised in research as anxiety-forming and even paralytic for art educators (p.7), it is often posited as productive and dynamic when it comes to learning and artmaking (p.22). How such conditions were experienced for students at this schools is discussed in more detail in sections marked 'B'.

As with most studio practice education, experiential learning was recognised in both schools, including participation in practice (Danvers 2003) and reflection-in-action (Schön 1983). SAI utilised studio learning in traditional ways, with students spending considerable time in that space daily, interacting informally with each other and the supervisor, whose studio was close by and visible to them while they worked. At UKI, the studio was constructed as a learning rather than teaching space, and primarily about peer interaction. As many students travelled a costly distance to visit campus, the UKI culture placed little emphasis on student presence in the studio.

A paradox emerged in my analysis of how learning was constructed by the schools, and their use of the studio space. While UKI ascribed to notions of artmaking as collaborative and social (p.102), the studio itself was not used to maximise this potential. This may have been due to economic pressures to reduce the costs of space in the UK, where the ideas-based curriculum required no additional space for teaching technical skills (Susan). However, recent studies have explored how even reduced spaces offer interesting alternatives, such as the vertical and interdisciplinary studio (Blair 2012). SAI ascribed to a more solitary and individualistic understanding of artmaking and learning. However, contextual factors, such as SAI being a residential university, impacted on how students utilised the school's space as their primary studio, working there throughout the day and often late into the

night. In addition, the studio was conceptualised as teaching and learning space where most formative assessments were held.

Student learning at SAI was greatly scaffolded, with initially limited project and medium choices, and later, close direction by the chosen practice-based teacher. I wondered whether the students' developmental level, their immaturity as artists, when coupled with the push towards finish and product at such a higher level, created a necessity for such supervisory guidance and support. When I posed this interpretation to the supervisors in the report-and-respond format, they all agreed that this may indeed be the case. In comparison, a dominant characteristic of learning at UKI was its emphasis on self-directed learning. Students were given autonomy to choose their projects, and for the most part set their own parameters. "Self-management" was a term utilised in course documentation to balance such autonomy with an accent on student responsibility. When experiences of this were highlighted in the focus groups, all students expressed that, with little parameters or structure, the pressures of high-stakes assessment was frightening. The structure was experienced as lacking support and leading to uncertainty about expectations and the validity of supervision. One anonymous student intimated that the staff were disconnected with the emotional consequences of this approach, stating "sometimes I feel they don't truly realise how lost we are".

Linked to self-directed learning, independence and responsibility at UKI, was an espoused concern with meta-cognition. As such, there was an attempt to establish conducive conditions for the making and reading of art, which if effective would lead to "critical self-awareness" (curriculum document). However, students' self-assessment of their work and/or their learning was not included within the assessment process. Whilst opportunities were created, formally and informally, for verbal peer assessment (in formal assessments and in the studio), and for reflections within the research log and back-up material, self-assessment was not a discernable criteria or consideration within the assessments I observed. At SAI, meta-cognition was strategically included as an outcome within the dormant curriculum documentation but was not explicitly considered fundamental to undergraduate student learning. While students would talk briefly about their research projects and processes at the commencement of each Critique, as a form of self-representation, this would most often include little self-reflection, with questions posed by assessors which did not necessarily encourage such reflection. As there were negligible written components within the assessment structure, structured opportunities for deep reflective engagement were lacking.

In this contextualisation, I have attempted to provide insights into the specific contexts of each institution, to create a background for the analysis of their interpretative approaches and conditions which follow. I begin each analysis by considering what was consciously espoused about authorship and intentionality. I then look at how these espoused theories were at times enabled, constrained or problematized by the assessment practices at the school. In 'A' I map formative assessment practices in relation to the interpretative framework, as they have the most tangible effects on student learning, before analysing the summative assessments, moderation and quality assurance processes. Following this in 'B', are in-depth considerations of the conditions at each school, including roles constructed, and student experiences of alienation and engagement.

Part II.

UKI institutional analysis

Constructions of authorship

Responses to my questions about authorship at UKI indicated that the teaching staff often debated such notions as practising artists and within discussions with their students. A dominant construction that emerged from interviews was authorship as collaborative.

I mean authorship is questionable isn't it? Because it's all in a way collaborative. It's driven by you but it's coming from lots of sources (Ryan).

The three years of study at UKI were intended to move students away from deterministic, linear notions of authorship, to more openness to the artmaking process, and how reception contributes to the work.

Part of the philosophy is the idea about production isn't really that it's about the intentionality of the artist, but it's about what happens in the work... first year you work much closer with this idea of what you want to do, what you want to express, to find your voice, find your interest... in the third year they are really supposed to hear what an audience makes of this work, where they might discover that some of the response matches their intentionality and they might also discover that some of it really doesn't (Julian).

Such “development” (Max) was believed to be evident in students’ thinking at the end of the undergraduate course.

... a confident and well informed, independent young artist who has established and understood their audience in relation to their developed knowledge of their own practice and its intention (Gill).

Student awareness of “the complexities of authorship” (Gill) was believed to be implicitly developed from showing their work to their peers in formative assessments, to the public during their studies, and through interactions with staff.

While authorship was a ground to problematize within the undergraduate degree, in the postgraduate years it was seen to be more about consciousness, awareness and meta-cognition,

which included a concerted engagement with intentionality.²¹ This conception of the artist as reflexive practitioner was evident in some of the staff's explicit associations of authorship with awareness of the discourses of concept and form, and their reciprocity (Susan; Ryan).

When asked if intentionality was incorporated within assessment processes, staff were confident that this was the case, aligned with current accents on process and development as lifelong in educational development discourse.

The staff are very committed to this intentionalist model through their own experience, knowing that it's not the art object that defines the artist at all points in time (Gill).

However, Russell questioned whether actual intentionality was a focus in undergraduate studies, believing staff were concerned with commitment, labour and other dispositions of "studentship" (p.103).

A. Mapping interpretative approaches, UKI

Assessment at UKI

Formative assessments occurred through peer group assessments outside of the studio, with 'tutorials' facilitated by the supervisor alternating with 'seminars' which included an additional staff member, in addition to opportunities for students to request 'elective' one-on-one studio Critiques with any member of staff. A formative panel assessment was held mid-way through the academic year, and summative panel assessments held at the end of the academic year.

To expand their assessment beyond "a snapshot" (Gill) of the student's ability, the school was more inclusive of the process than the traditional assessment-by-exhibition. Whilst the artwork and

²¹ As with many of the teaching staff at both schools, despite my clear explanations of the term, most would default to an understanding of intentionality as related to the artist's 'intention' for making the work at its conception, rather than about how the artist hopes for the work to be received/interpreted. For this reason, I began to use the term "the strategy of the artist for the reading or reception of the work" in addition to the word "intentionality" in my interviews, which participants then seemed to understand better as being about how students might consciously negotiate the audience's engagement with his/her work. The term 'strategy' came from a staff member's response to the questionnaire, when she wrote that "the strategy of the artist determines whether the artist/artwork/audience determines the meaning of the work. In some work there is no obvious authorship, and in others the voice of the artist is essential and presented within the context of experiencing the works" (Gill).

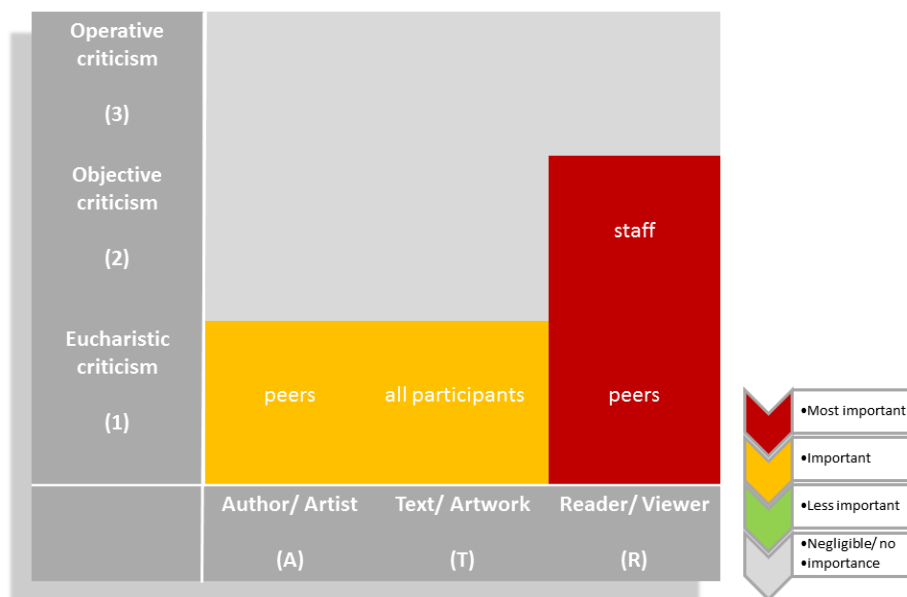
portfolio were aligned with professional assessment of practice, the research log and documentation served various purposes, such as acting as “back-up evidence” (Julian) for moderation processes; “mirrors of practice” (Ryan); indicating students’ educational development over the course (Jane); to “inform practice” (Ryan); evidence intentionality (Gill); and to allow for possible risk and changes to student output, whether interpreted as a fortunate aberration or an “extraordinary leap” (Ryan). Thus it was conceived of being both for the students’ benefit and informing assessment. The inclusion of such matter suggests an intentionalist model to interpretation, in that the artists’ thinking, production and research process informs the evaluation of the work.

Formative assessments

Formative assessments were seen as the primary teaching space at UKI.

Issues of assessment and critical review accompany the process of making the work and can be reflected in several phases; making and assessing is the dialogue; creates the dialogue (Max).

This was informed by educational discourse, of the formative purpose of both guiding and assessing learning aligned with the outcomes of the course (p.12).



IF 3: Formative assessments at UKI

The standard format of the “seminar” group assessments I observed was that the student would silently display his/her works, while his/her peers provided readings and insights into their own experiences of the texts (R1), with various degrees of facilitation by the staff present. Peer readings were offered tentatively, at an appreciative or descriptive level, as was the culture of feedback at

UKI. Once that process seemed exhausted, either the presenting student or staff would speak, the latter making intertextual references and providing guidance.

Ryan related the value of such Critiques to students' meta-cognition of their intentionality.

The teaching structure and audience presentation is totally linked. How much you can direct and how much space you can leave the audience for your work, so that the audience participates.

Intentionality arose within my observation of the assessments. One of the explicit "key questions" a supervisor posed once students had articulated their intentionality or aspects of their subject, was "how do you let the audience into this?". This supervisor indicated his construction of the artist's role, when stating "you have a responsibility to how viewer reads it". He also made explicit the ethical concern that a mis-reading of the work might have consequences for the research subject. However, I noticed that when students spoke about their intentionality, perhaps in his perceived role of problematizing the artist-students' understandings, or because he was carried away by possible readings, the supervisor came across as belittling students' desires when what they envisaged was less valued than other possible interpretations.

With works that were seen as problematic or where students were resistant to articulating their intentionality or unclear about it, the staff would offer possible interpretations to strengthen the value of the work. In one case, a supervisor asserted and persevered with such value maximising without relating it to the student's aims at all, asking the 'audience' whether such an interpretation "made the work complete or not". At another point, a staff member privileged evaluation by the school over a student's self-assessment.

It may work for you but you have to think of it for the exam board... public consumption... make this work for the external...

Such discussions indicated that the work was part of a system of exchange within an academic context where measurement against certain criteria was a concern for that audience of the work.

As a representative of and for summative assessment, when students' intentionality had the potential to result in failure or 'weak' artworks, the supervisor reduced student agency by invalidating or rendering invisible their desires. On more than one occasion, I observed supervisors shift from democratic facilitators of readings, to instructing and asserting anti-intentionalist solutions for production, often before having heard the presenting student. When such assertive feedback did not produce the anticipated deference by the student, the staff combined their power,

in one instance dismissing a presentation as “juvenile” and “ordinary”. In such instances, students were invalidated and their ownership negated by removing the need for the critical and reflective engagement they might have had in response to those readings.

In certain instances, I observed staff attempting to be open to the text as ‘fresh’ in this context, rather than adopting an assessment gaze of seeing them as pedagogised objects (T). The flipside of this was that when a subject struck a chord, the direction and focus of the assessment would be diverted. In one instance, the staff dominated over 15 of a student’s 20 minutes, referring to subjects and associations with very little reference to the particularity of that work. This reader-response could be mapped within the eucharistic band, where the author was made passive, and where meanings and associations which the staff (R2) related to the subject (T1) became all important. Here the metaphor of the Critique as narratological or collaborative storytelling (Elkins 2001) was evident, with participants trading and battling different narratives, genres and conventions. Yusuf explained that peer readings were most often dismissed when constructed from the categorical intentionalist perspective of being “an aspect of a different genre”. He dismissed peer readings when differing from the presenting student’s actual intentionality, because “that’s not the objective of what is being portrayed in a sense and then you feel like, ‘Alright yeah maybe I’m not going to add the wrong point of view’”.

With one group, the supervisor supported either hypothetical intentionalist approaches, or experiences of the artwork. When peers referenced students’ previous work, the supervisor shifted them away from such actual intentionalist approaches by asking what the reading might be without such authorial knowledge. In one such instance, a peer-reader articulated a “conflict of interest” because the associations for reader were very separate from the connection the artist wanted to make with her personal life. Possibly due to the influence of this supervisor, this peer group bought into this notion of using assessment to explore readership.

While the espoused value of such assessments related to such perspectivism and readership (R), many students indicated sharing Yusuf’s experience of the process as particularly fraught when suggestions came directly from the staff, because of power dynamics. Assessors were more free to move between narratives and had the authority of the more authoritative genres behind them. Only one supervisor explicitly constructed the role of readership as of formative value to the presenting student, suggesting one “see[s] how the reader responds differently” when experimenting with her strategies going forward to resolve the work (R1). Two of the staff interviewed saw such interpretations as of value for students’ positioning and contextualising their practice (Gill; Ryan).

I think other peoples' reading of their artwork helps them understand their own position in relation to it... whether they have a lot of irrelevance in the practice that's misleading. Or if they're surprised by the way it's being read, obviously unless the intention was to give the whole meaning to the audience, then they're completely at sea (Gill).

Some of the students indicated that such formative events were where they learnt the most, as the accent of reader-response from their peers resulted in “the most direct and varied responses about work” (James). Joe, who operated outside of the school’s conceptual framework, found the feedback homogeneous in their reception of his work, going so far as to characterise staff as having “the same mentality” and “being the same person”. This was indicative of the larger contextualist framework within which feedback from this school was bounded, which made no allowance for this student’s desires, and was dismissive of his actual intentionality.

Although not explicitly communicated to students as such, this was a formative assessment event structured around anti-intentionalist engagement (R1 + T1) for the student to independently consider how such readings corresponded or complicated his/her actual intentionality (A), and thus inform production processes (A + T).

We do look at authorship and we do look at audience, both with the same root, through the seminars. I think that's probably a very key position that every new student discovers. But we don't identify for them.... Each individual has to identify their position as the initiator and then their relationship to their chosen audiences (Gill).

The event was intended to operate as a point of critical engagement within and against processes of play. However, assessment criteria were not explicitly utilised in this process nor did active scaffolding of the presenting student’s self-assessment occur. Russell believed these peer-feedback sessions created “a double bind for the student”. While it may have showed them possible readings of their work, it “created a narrative for the student without the student doing the work”, removing the necessity for their self-assessment, and enabling those who wished to strategically avoid sharing their intentionality publically.

From the observations I observed, supervisors acted as provocateurs, facilitators and guides in these formative assessments. They adopted strongly anti-intentionalist models of interpretation operating primarily within R1 and T1 at first. Some would shift and consider actual intentionality in relation to this reading in the second part of the Critique. The majority though were value-maximisers, either articulating what they saw as the best possible reading for the work’s assessment at the school (R1 + R2), or suggesting ways for strategic conformity to such readings (T; R1+2).

Student expectations created from such assessments

Whilst student engagement is discussed in B, I think it pertinent to highlight that in the interviews, it emerged that students thought that the approach of formative assessment events would be aligned with the summative interpretative approach. As with many of the students, Elsie was insistent that her intentionality, which she communicated in formative assessments, individual conversations with supervisors, and within the back-up submission material, would have an integral function in summative assessments. Eric's perception was that differing interpretative approaches would be adopted for evaluation compared to interpretation. For his viewers he intended to share "a part of myself and my history" in a non-deterministic manner as "most of the times I want the audience to make their own version of the stories I portray". However, he definitely "wanted" such intentionality to be taken into consideration when the work was assessed by staff, because his research material "was very heavily aimed" towards such intentionality. For the majority of students an expectation had been created that actual intentionality would be considered as a criterion of the works' success in summative assessments.

However, when in the face of probable failure, my sense of formative assessments in the second semester was that true engagement with intentionality was relegated lower importance than strategic necessity by supervisors who mediated between students' development and summative assessment. A number of students described the effect of this. For instance, the conflict between internal motivation and external pressures was destabilising for Fran, resulting in a loss of confidence and sense of achievement.

I live in this constant state of 'Should I be doing what the tutors tell me, just because they've told me?' Or 'should I be doing what I think is right?' And every decision is 'have I done this cause this is what I want to do?' Or 'because somebody else has told me that this is what I want to do?'

As with a number of students who sensed a disregard for their actual intentionality (p.117), a discourse of authenticity emerged in contrast to strategic adoptions of anti-intentionalist interpretations for assessment purposes.

Summative assessments

I have structured this section on summative assessments to map the institutional interpretative approaches, touching on the ways in which such approaches were colluded with, extended or resisted by the agents within this school. A more thorough examination of agency is presented in Chapter Six, drawing from the context of SAI.

Due the large volume of student submissions, a number of panel assessments operated simultaneously over a two day period to make an internal assessment. These panels consisted of one supervisor and two other teaching staff responsible for the assessment of each module. The latter were seen as more objective “outsiders” whose readings would counter-balance the potentially “subjective” assessment of the supervisor (Gill). The espoused process was that each would assess individually, leading to a discussion between the three, however I observed that the grades were a result of a consultative process with the supervisor. The submission was placed in an overall grade (A; B; C et cetera) in reference to explicit criteria, with a later moderation meeting to fine tune percentages, mostly utilising NRA. These grades were provided to the external examiners, who had access to the full submission, the criteria, a number of the key staff members, and the option to request a viva with students.

At the beginning of this process, it was communicated to staff by the Director of Studies that personal information and circumstances about students should not be included during the internal assessments, and the focus should rather be on “the evidence” at hand. The first few assessments I observed began this way, but this was not maintained and did not seem the standard approach. Later, at the moderation meeting the Director stated that the criteria were wide enough to include such information to inform decisions about grades that sat at the borderline between categories. Even at this stage, there was some bounding of information to do with the student.

You can declare what you know but we shouldn't be marking what we know - no 'potential' or what would have happened if circumstances were different (Gill).

Such bounding came from an understanding that while the supervisors’ “subjectivity” might prejudice assessments, it could be countered by the distance of the other assessors.

The personal tutor either defends or loses their voice for a student... [the moderation meeting is] the point where that kind of privileged intel can go into the assessment, when it's challenged by the rest of the group (Gill).

However, with the school’s strong accent on process, the majority of the discussion included authorial knowledge and aspects to do with the person and his/her process.

The role of supervisor in summative assessments

The supervisor acted as an assessor in the internal assessment panels and was active within the moderation meeting. Ryan described the role as representing the student’s process, subject and intentionality to the rest of the internal panel where “you give a kind of thematic blast of what the individual is trying to achieve and hopefully by that introduction give some pointers to the other

assessor". However, I found that individuals affected the role of supervisor differently during summative assessments, as I outline briefly here.

As the supervisor of the first and third panels I observed, Susan was not a dominating presence. Her value-maximising strategies, whether conscious or not, would often fail as she did not seem to have the cultural capital to sway the overall assessment. In the first panel, grouped with more assertive individuals who in general used intentionalist models, she was more tentative and unsure than compared with the third panel, which lent more towards readership and textuality. The school's intentionalist approach did not sit comfortably with her preference for textual interpretations, which she had experienced as a student.

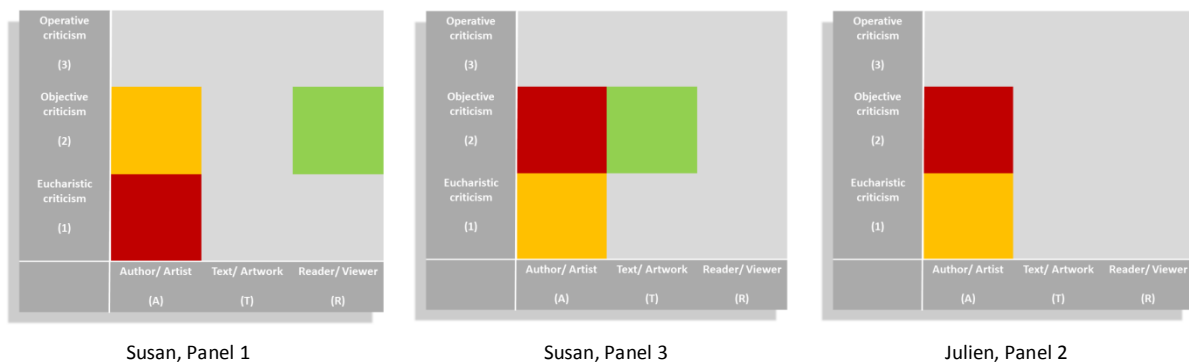
Susan: I always look at everything from where the work sits, not where student sits. I always try to see, 'Okay, where does this piece sit? Contextually, comprehensively, where does this sit in relationship to contemporary practice now?' You know?

Dina: So you're in some senses separating the work from the author and seeing how it sits within the larger discourse of artmaking. It's a contextual thing. But the school system very much supports the other model.

Susan: That's it.

In complete contrast to Susan, Julian had an economical, definitive presence as a supervisor, tolerating very little negotiation. Within the culture of this school and the dynamics of the third panel, this seemed to put him in good stead, where I observed no instances of challenge to his evaluations.

During the internal assessment process of the first panel (IF 4), the student emerged as important to Susan's assessment, with the person constructed as a grade ("she's an A+ definitely"), which has been noted as a characteristic of assessment in this domain (Orr 2007) (A). Susan foregrounded student dispositions, such as "being decisive" or having commitment; possible future studies; personal circumstances; the learning process and how much an individual changed or developed over the course of the degree. Consistently cited was the student-supervisor relationship and student labour. Objective criticism of students' processes was included (A2). She thereby placed the artwork in the wider context of her experiences of her student's learning, noted in other research as common to supervisors' assessments (Orr 2007). Only with very 'strong' works did she make anti-intentionalist readings, claiming that regardless of all that was good about the student and his/her process, "it stands without that". In such rare instances, she acted as a connoisseur of fine art interpreting the text without reference to authorial knowledge (R2).



IF 4: Supervisors' approaches, summative assessments at UKI

When acting as the supervisor in the third panel (IF 4), Susan appeared far more open with her fellow assessors. She provided insights into students' abilities to persevere through failure; their openness to change; and other aspects of their dispositions while in process similar to Panel 1 (A2). She referenced intentionality when the work (or aspects of it) was successful ("purposely"; "consciously"; "decisive"), however it was unclear whether this was actual or hypothetical intentionality as there was no direct relation to the submission. As with the first panel, her relationship with the student was foregrounded, in addition to descriptions of the possibilities she created for their professional practice. She would often blame aspects of weakness within the submission on her feedback. Very little anti-intentionalist interpretations within T and R were made by Susan within the dynamic of this panel, perhaps balancing the explicit anti-intentionalist approach of the other panel members.

Similarly, the subject of the majority of Julian's references sat within A1+2 (IF 4). He identified the student for the panel ("do you remember...?") which might have negated the so-called objective value of their distance from the student. He spoke about student particularities and idiosyncrasies; their emotional responses to previous feedback; their development during their studies; and future possibilities for postgraduate study. He used strongly assertive language, talking about the "brilliance" for instance of one student he felt should be awarded a distinction. He included references to students' critical engagement; their openness or resistance to the artmaking process; and their labour of production (A2). He referenced his relationship to the students, from the consultation process; to how he experienced the relationships; and how the work evidenced his own input ("I put hard work in... she just listened"). In the majority of instances, he referenced intentionality as a value-maximiser, only once utilising it as a criterion of interpretation ("I think with what she is trying to do, it is resolved").

The panel assessment supposedly involved "the supervisor's ability to inform decisions and often lose" (Gill). The comparison between Susan and Julian indicates that group dynamics, individuals'

cultural capital and interpretative approach, impacted on their representations to the panel. However, both supervisors performed this role as intended within the interpretative culture of UKI, adopting strongly intentionalist approaches within A. These were not necessarily actual intentionality as little reference was made to related available material. Constructed as a balance against their intentionalist approach, was the supposedly objective approach of the other assessors whose presumed anti-intentionalist readings were intended to operate as quality assurance mechanisms. Rather than the processes being implicit and opaque, it was espoused that “everyone challenged everyone on marking” (Gill). I found that the panel was a far more stable interpretative community (p.15) than envisaged, and when I noted this to staff, they conceded that the assessment processes had become less competitive as participants had become enculturated with the CRA.

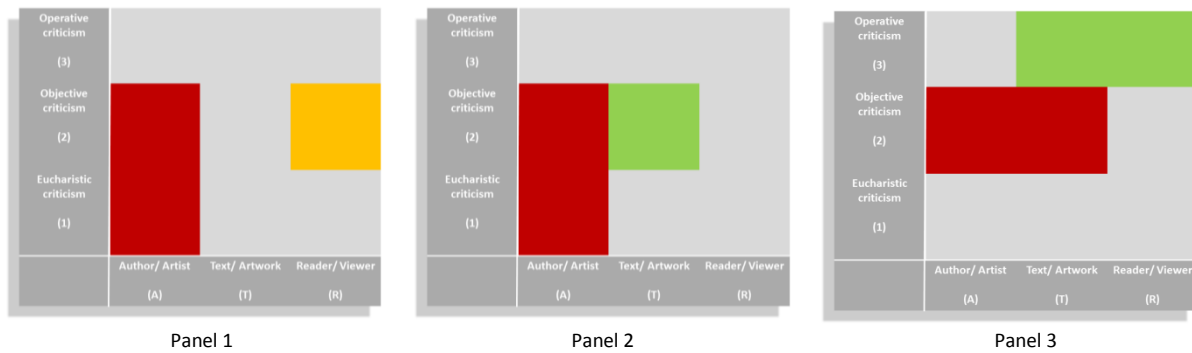
Curriculum structures: Analysing the assessment of the two modules

‘Studio Practice’ and ‘Exhibition/Portfolio’ were constructed to be inclusive of the overall conceptual criteria of the degree, with the former intended as more intentionalist and the latter more interpretativist. In this section, I consider whether these espoused approaches were evidenced in the assessment practices for each module.

The Studio Practice module

Explicitly, Studio Practice was intended to develop the person and the process of artmaking and learning. To assess this, students were required to submit back-up documentation of their process and previous works, and a research log. It was understood implicitly that the supervisor might represent the student in this regard. While the other additional material was to some extent individuated by students, the research log related explicitly to contextualising the student’s practice and intertextual learning (T2+3) (Ryan; Peter). Although referenced as part of the Studio module, Gill believed that this assessment method implicitly engaged students with problematics of reception (R) through their interaction with other artists’ practice because “they have to then think about audience and practice and intention, just through this one thing”.

Drawing from his own experience as an external examiner, Julian contended that such back-up material evidenced whether or not the student had been working towards a sustained outcome or whether the final works were a “fortunate aberration” (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005). This in itself suggested an intentionalist approach, as students’ thinking and research played a role in the evaluation. However, my analysis indicated some variation in the assessors’ approaches (IF 5).

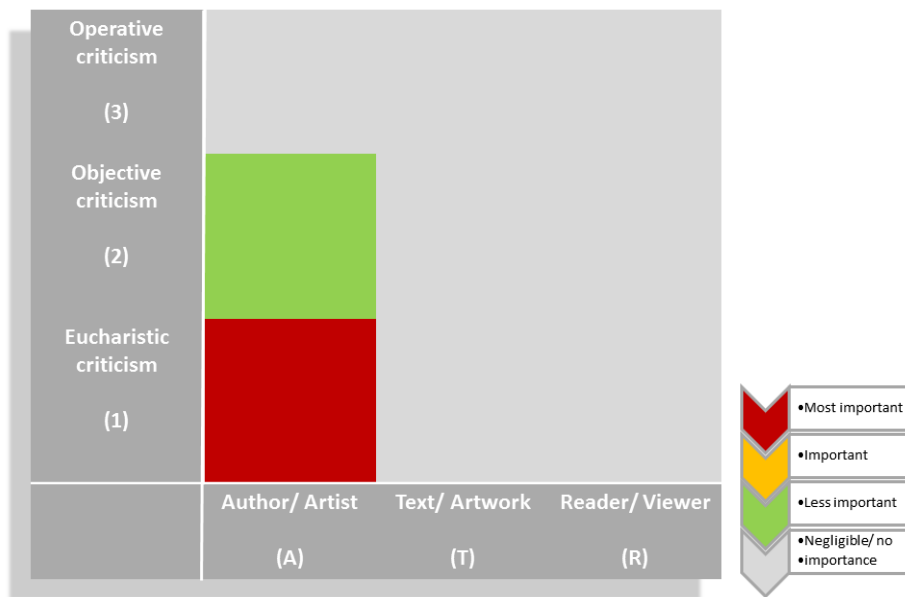


IF 5: Comparing assessments of the Studio Module at UKI

Jane, the assessor of this module in the first panel, predominantly considered the back-up as related to composition. She bowed to the supervisor’s description of this module (A1+2, p.85), to the extent that her own interpretation of the evidence was deferred. Her expectations of particular students emerged. No textual references were made. She norm-referenced work to indicate her preference as a connoisseur (R2). On the whole though, because of group dynamics, the assessment of this module was dominated by the other two members.

Similarly, the assessor in the second panel, predominantly referenced aspects within A1+2, mostly to do with students’ personal circumstances and their development. Gill offered constructions of particular students that were influential, echoing prevalent constructions at the school (p.102). She made references to her own relationships with, and the behaviour of, particular students. As very little of this was taken from the submission but rather from her perceptions, recollections or impressions of students, much of her approach included hypothetical intentionalism. Her assessment practice emerged as strongly norm-referenced, in her desire to identify contenders for the exhibition prize. The few textual references made in relation to ‘strong’ work involved objective criticism relating to form (T2).

Ryan, the assessor of this module within the third panel, similarly situated most of his discussion within A, referencing student development; attributes; and future studies. At times, he drew on evidence, particularly when looking at how the documentation worked differently to what the student intended, but at other times this was disregarded, in one case explicitly constructing the student’s process via his recollection, stating “I haven’t seen back-up but I know X’s work”. In his textual references, he spoke about aesthetics (T2+3); use of materials and techniques at the level of p-creativity (A2). The aspects of readership evident in his interpretation had to do with rewarding work that was less prescriptive of readings (R3).



IF 6: Moderation meeting, Studio Practice at UKI

At the moderation meeting, references were entirely within A1+2 (IF 6). These included how the student was constructed; anecdotes of staff interactions with individuals; and student circumstances, including NRA between siblings and partners. ‘Studentship’ was referenced, a term relating both to the student’s participation and desire to be “part of studio culture” (Gill) (p.102).

In a debate between a supervisor (Susan) and another assessor about what “was intentional” in a student’s work, no evidence was considered to clarify the issue, suggesting hypothetical intentionalism adopted by at least one of them. During a later interview, when I offered my analysis of the criteria wording, in particular “authority” and its relation to authorship, Susan brought us back to that moment.

I wish I had read more of the criteria. That word would have supported my case... if I had actually said, ‘Well, look at how she’s taken these other languages and owns them. It’s authoritative. That’s what sets her above’.

A mismatch arose between what I observed being referenced and the weighting of criteria. The latter indicated there should be an equal split between the author and the text or production. Of the former, “conceptual/analytical skills and critical awareness” counted 30%, and “commitment, involvement and management” counted 20%; while of the latter “coherence, innovation and technical abilities” counted 30%, and “research, knowledge and understanding” counted 20%. However, as has been outlined in this section, textual aspects were not as valued in assessors’ discussions, perhaps due to the ideas-based hierarchy at the school. In almost all the approaches,

aspects that could be mapped within A1 and (to a lesser extent) A2 were most referenced for this module.

The Exhibition/Portfolio and Professional Development module

The submission for this module included a portfolio, artists' statement, and the display of an artwork. Gill spoke about how the portfolio in particular was conceptualized to evidence students' engagement with and understanding of readership, implicitly developed from gathering viewers' receptions from peer feedback and group exhibitions.

One of the interview questions I posed was whether the artist's statements were in the main representative of students' actual intentionality or rather strategically tailored for favourable assessments from staff perceived to have dominance. In response, staff expressed that learning to do various things with the statement would be of benefit later when they wrote as artists for different audiences (such as funders, gallery audiences et cetera), as was explicitly discussed in professional development workshops (Ryan; Russell; Susan). However, the artist's statement was intended to be 'authentic' and aligned with the artist-student's intentionality.

What we hope is that it's not formulaic and they're not playing any kind of game, but that 99% of these personal statements are in a voice that they feel comfortable with (Ryan).

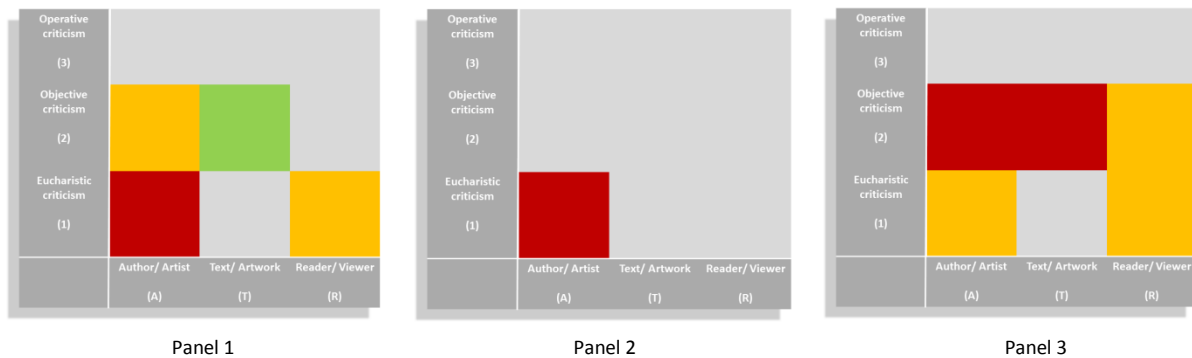
That written statement really talks to the heart of what they are about, and not tailored too much (Russell).

Ryan discussed how the complexities of negotiating the artist's statement were explicitly spoken about in formative assessments.

I mean it's difficult... prime examples we use is that if you don't take that on, you do leave yourself open to misinterpretation. That's perfectly fine, misinterpretation is a good part of the whole thing, 'what's this work about?', and someone else will go somewhere else with that. You don't want 'the script' or an illustration. But you can point your audience to some extent in the direction of the things that you're interested in.

He felt that the artist's statement was constructed as a way for the artist to have "a voice" within the interpretation of his/her work. For some of the staff, in particular Jane, the research log, portfolio, artist's statement, back-up material, worked as a whole to tell "the story of what their work is and aims to be". It was interesting to consider if this latter aspect of intentionality, so distinctly emerging within a number of the staff members' understandings, would be a consideration

in the summative assessment of this module in particular, which was espoused to be about reception (R).



IF 7: Comparing assessments of the Exhibition module at UKI

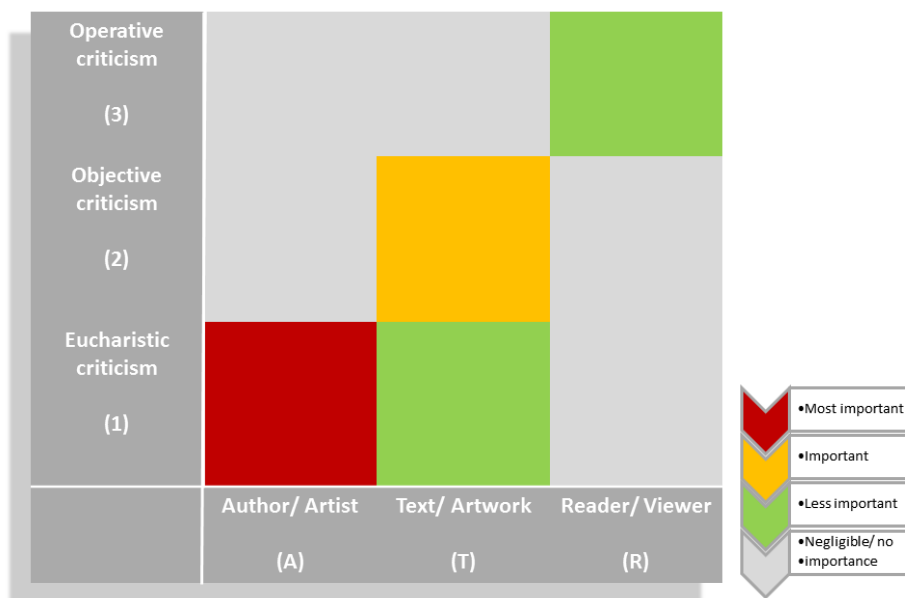
Looking specifically at the first panel's assessment of this module (IF 7), most of Gill's references could be mapped within A. These included student disposition; responsiveness to feedback; and student development. Her interpretations included hypothetical intentionalism without reference to the evidence at hand. In terms of references that could be mapped within T, she made negligible references to technique (such as the quality of the portfolio photography). She used strong language to express her experience of artwork she saw as successful and when articulating her preferences, which could both be mapped within R1.

When Jane performed in this role in the second panel, her accent was similarly within A1. She spoke about the student not reaching his/her potential; valued openness to change; and referred to aspects of their relationship. She did not refer to evidence in all instances, often replacing her own experience of viewing with the supervisor's assessment.

Peter, in Panel 3, referenced students' dispositions and behaviour; relationships to the supervisor; and circumstances, such as their previous studies (A1). Much of the discussion had to do with production, skills, labour and formal aspects, including the quality of technique ("crafted") (A2); scale (T2); with sophistication or "finish" valued as "professionalism", particularly with the portfolio (T2). In some instances he valued works that had merit through anti-intentionalist interpretations, making such statements as "from the work, I would know context" and "they stand up in their own right" (T + R). Most often, he provided his own reading rather than engaging with the intended meaning or how these compared, using strong language to express his experience (R1+2). It was only with this assessor that there was a distinct shift to production and reception for the assessment of this module, despite his being mostly inattentive of the criteria. Asserting himself beyond his role as

assessor, he would often strategize overall grades and although he did refer to it, he expressed irritation with back-up material.

All the panels ignored technical problems of the artworks on display, including video and animated pieces where sound or visuals were not operational; three-dimensional works that required reassembly et cetera. This form of value maximising (R2) was similar to the practice in SAI (p.132).



IF 8: Moderation meeting, Exhibition module at UKI

My analysis of what was referenced at the moderation meeting indicated most references related to A1, with considerable accent on T and to a far less extent R (IF 8). Aspects relating to students’ personal biography, gender and disposition; their development (in relation to interim grades); which students did 50% theory; relationships with peers; responsiveness to staff feedback; failure of students to fulfil potential; their initiative within and outside of the academic context; and presumptions about how they would function in the artworld, all featured (A1). Some references possibly related to intentionality and authorship, such as remarks about the “story” behind the work; hypothetical intentionalist claims that details “seemed conscious”; and exclamations by one assessor that his student was “a young artist [who] found her own voice”. References that could be mapped within T, included technical concerns; intertextual norm-referencing; aesthetics (T2); and references to the subjects and discourses researched (T1). The few comments made in relation to R, had to do with how the work operated outside of the academic framework (R3).

The criteria weighting for this module indicated an equal split was intended between the person (30%) and production (30%), with a higher percentage for reception (40%). Those relating to the

artist (“conceptual/analytical skills and critical awareness” which counted 20% and “commitment, involvement and management which counted 10%) indicated that students’ dispositions should have been seen as less important than their relationship to the conceptualisation and production of the work. The weighting of criteria relating to production and the artwork itself (“research, knowledge and understanding” counted 10% with “coherence, innovation and technical abilities counting 20%), did not tally with two of three assessors’ approaches. “Selection, presentation and audience” was the criteria relating to display and reception (40%), which arguably had the least amount of explicit justification by the assessors observed.

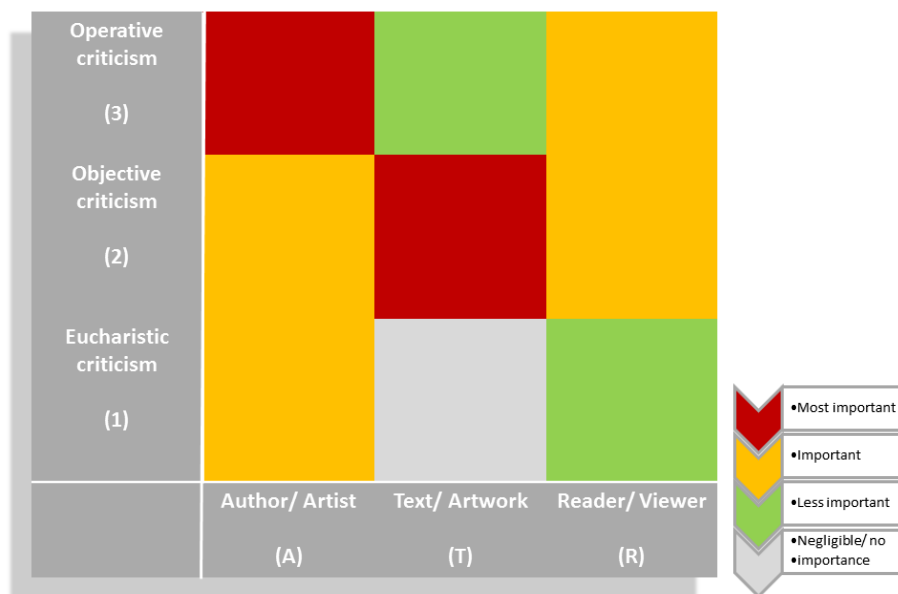
When I presented this analysis to Susan, her explanation helped me understand the nuances of this cultural approach. From her description, I came to understand that one of the implicit purposes of this module’s assessment was to envisage how students would probably “present” or perform as artists (A3), which could not be quantified by the submission alone.

Moderation practices

Internal moderation

A number of individuals (usually 3) acted as ‘internal parity’ to moderate the assessments of the panel assessments, in order to ensure the reliability of those assessments for reference at the moderation meeting. I observed the assessment process of one of these individuals, Jane, who without my prompting kindly verbally articulated her thinking processes while I observed her assessment. She had worked at UKI in this capacity for over a decade and was trusted by her colleagues.

The pattern of her assessments was constant. She would begin with the artwork itself, then engage with the artists’ statement; portfolio; research log; other back-up. As such, she worked from reception, to production, to composition, before providing a grade for firstly the Exhibition module and then the Studio module. Although she began by looking at the artwork as a standalone piece, Jane felt that the additional material allowed students to voice their intentionality within the assessment process, and that this had validity for the evaluation.



IF 9: Internal moderation at UKI

When mapping her references (IF 9), I found that the greatest quantity of the content related to A. Student dispositions and behaviour from her recollections surfaced (A1), however in many such instances, she articulated attempting to be open to the possibility of development or change in those individuals and to be conscious of any bias. However, before commencing her assessment Jane asked for printed portrait photographs of the students, so as to match their face and her recollections to their submission because she “might not know all the students”. This small detail pointed to the enculturated accent on the person. The presumed relationship to the supervisor was referenced (“I think X told him to do this”); in addition, to the person’s process; labour; and evidence of experimentation (A2).

Aspects of her assessment involved a concern with what students consciously intended to portray (“Is that meant to be..?”), spending the majority of her time trying “to understand” the artist’s statement. She considered particular characteristics, such as students’ age and background, and the effect on possible readings (“his biography makes it better”) (A1+3). Of all the assessors, she seemed to be one of the few whose assessment process included, but was not determined by, actual intentionality.

However, the influence of her first step, which was to consider the artwork itself, cannot be underestimated. In relation to column T, she reflected on the “work as it is” (T2); identifying details of technique (T2) and comparing it to other students’ artwork, which indicated an intertextual

interest (T). She spoke about the need to position artworks at the extremes of “strong” to “weak” across the cohort, to plot along the continuum for NRA.

In terms of column R, her articulated self-doubt around her ability to judge mediums not her own, and not to be too harsh on those that were of her medium, was of a connoisseur utilising operative criticism (R3). She spoke about the different perspectives she adopted in her reading of the submissions. For instance, utilising an intentionalist approach, she re-imagined what might be judged harshly within academia from the perspective of a gallerist, whom she gleaned from the student’s submission was the imagined reader. In another case, she spoke about how work she thought ‘weak’ was receiving commercial success, and attempted re-interpretation in that light. She articulated her reader-response of a number of works, but seemed able to gauge when these were “purely personal” preferences (R1). She bounded some of her own interpretations within the larger interpretative community of assessors (“I am not sure but she is well-received by others”).

It is evident from this analysis how Jane’s assessment operated across the spectrum of the interpretative framework (IF 9), as in this role she attempted to weigh, mostly consciously, the influences of context and politics at play. However, as she was not assertive, her assessment played little role in the moderation meetings.

External examination

Competing understandings emerged in the interviews about whether or not the examiners were there to support the school (such as through supporting proposals for additional resources) or to ensure the quality of the curriculum. As with SAI (p.134), the external examiners were constructed by staff at UKI as ‘objective’, providing a balance to internal staff who had knowledge of the student and their process, and who were embedded within the institutional structure and culture. However, these external examiners had engaged with a sample of student work throughout the degree,²² with authorial knowledge emerging when one external spoke about a student “not reaching his potential”, and another noting she “knew it wouldn’t work” at an earlier assessment.

One of the most influential constructions was of the external examiner as the imagined reader (R2) requiring evidence of how the work came into being.

²² This is not question the validity of this arrangement, but rather to question this construction of objectivity as an outdated, external imposition relating to quality assurance in academia, rather than aligned with the professional community of practice and contemporary notions of subjectivity. See p. 10 for more on this issue.

So you might end up making something that looks fantastic but if that isn't mapped onto your research or onto your portfolio... there needs to be evidence for an outsider (Julian).

Unlike other aspects of the summative assessment process, I cannot confidently present a comprehensive analysis of the external examination process at UKI, as I only observed one brief discussion between the two externals and three of the staff. However, this conversation casts an interesting light on the intentionalist approaches at the school, as student dispositions and biographies were shared; the construction of those doing 50% theory as more intelligent was asserted; which students were applying for funding or future studies, and those awarded prizes, identified.

One interchange seemed most valuable for this study. When one of the externals asked about a certain student's work (T), the internal staff immediately referenced her personal circumstances in much detail and with some drama (A1). This included information the student had "consciously", as her supervisor explained it, excluded from the submission. By disclosing this information, the staff were effectively ignoring her actual intentionality for the purposes of value-maximising, creating sympathy for and voyeurism of the student as 'other', and altering the experience of the work for the external. A request was made for a viva, and when it was suggested that this occur telephonically, the examiner's own inclination for a more textual reading emerged, insisting she would "like to talk to her if she is here *with the work*... weird on the phone, [she] must be with the work".

Whilst this analysis is not triangulated, it does point to the strong intentionalist approach of the school, which was often not inclusive of the actual intentionality of the artist-student.

Conclusion to mapping interpretative approaches of UKI

Despite the fact that actual intentionality was not a conscious consideration of the staff, in my analysis UKI emerged as utilising a strongly intentionalist approach. Within the culture of formative and summative assessments, this was most often enacted as hypothetical intentionalism, whilst the structure of the summative assessments espoused a focus on the actual author and production process. Various aspects related to artist, artwork and viewer were referenced to come to summative judgments, with stronger attention paid to the person and production.

What seemed in the ether was a tension between educational and professional interests. It was perhaps from the former that the uncritical elevation and valuing of 'studentship', over the admittedly more complex but relevant aspects of 'authorship', had developed. The staff's

positioning as assessors within the institutional context had them shift from practitioners and practice-based teachers, and away from the possibilities of being practice-based assessors. The artwork and moreover the student became part of a system of exchange, and characterised as grades rather than soon-to-be-artists. This tension, which exists in most academic contexts, was evident even for a Jane who had straddled the academic/professional divide for over 30 years.

I wouldn't be able to tell you who is going to be the successful artist... it's an educational institute, so I can judge what they've gained from the education and that's not so hard to mark.

This tension emerged in a debate that ran behind-the-scenes of the moderation meeting, about what should be made available for the external examiners to reference. While the HoD (Peter) preferred to have the artworks displayed alone and “not all this mess” (i.e. the back-up material), the Director of Studies (Gill) was assertive that the full submission was necessary as evidence for CRA. Peter’s perspective aligned with those of more ‘old school’ art school approaches of assessment-by-exhibition (T1+2), strongly interpretativist and dependant on the connoisseurship of the assessors (R2), as was demonstrated in his interpretative approach within panel assessments (p.91). Gill’s perspective was informed by educational discourses, with a belief in the value of explicit CRA of more than an isolated product, including the process of learning and production, thus requiring an intentionalist approach (A1+2). As she had been given the mandate as Director of Studies to make shifts in terms of educational aspects, and Peter was at a slight remove as HoD, her influence seemed to have gained the most *de facto* currency with the assessors.

The significance of this educational/professional tension for the student experience seemed not to have been given careful consideration by the staff. Gill hoped that by the end of the degree, students would be “aiming their practice” outside of the academic context to the professional context, suggesting a lack of awareness of the power of acculturated habitus and performativity. As the curriculum outcomes, characterised by wording such as ‘authoritative’ and ‘independent’, had been aligned with assessment criteria, she felt she could safely presume that “they're much more confident about their practice and confident about their doubts about their practice”.

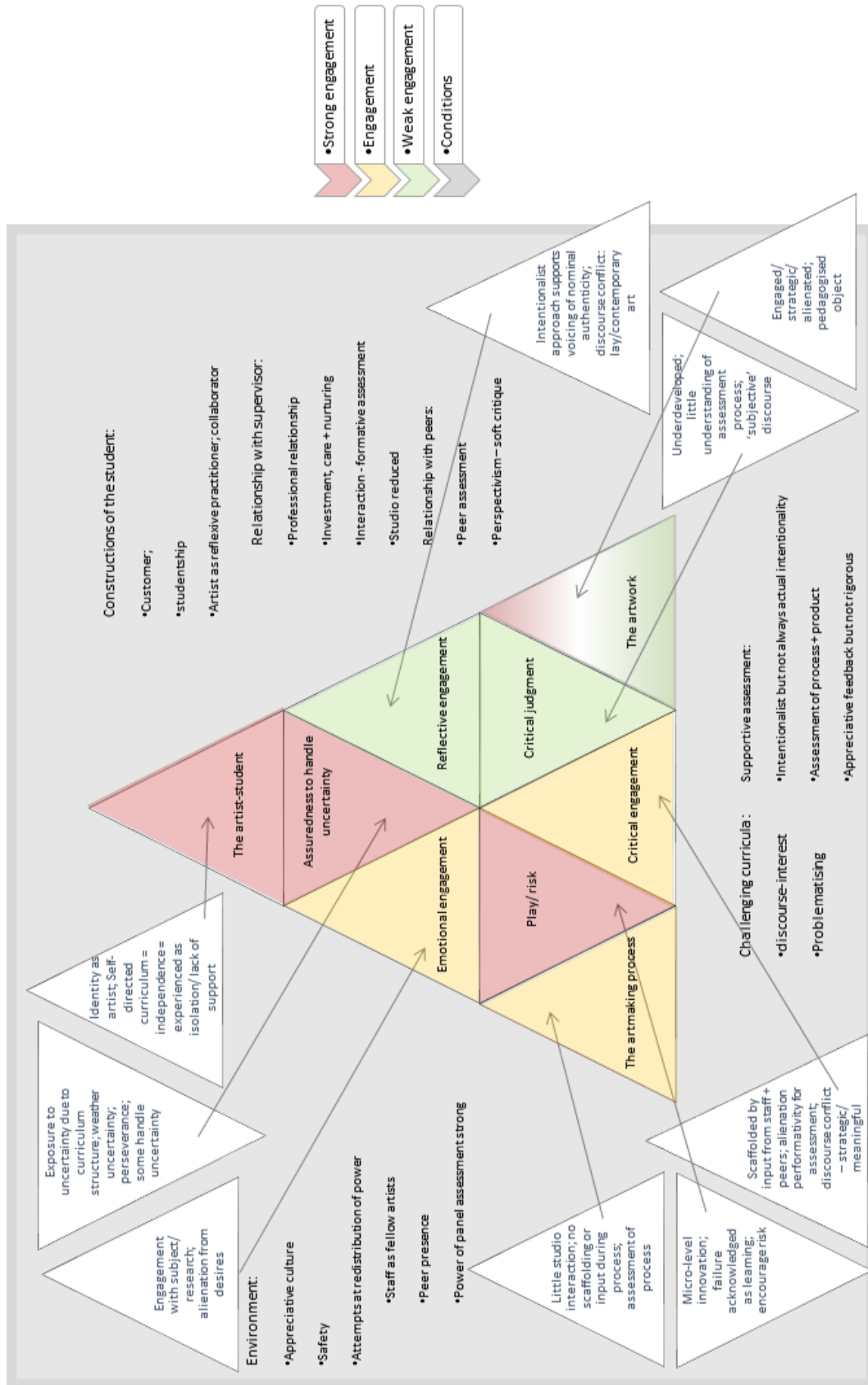
My sense was that somehow, between these two tensions, real opportunity for ontological engagement with the ‘product’ as artwork and the ‘student’ as future artist seemed unexplored. With the relationship between intentionality and authorship mismatched in the interpretative approaches of the summative assessment, and the way in which it would filter back to formative assessments, students’ reflective engagement and meta-cognition would have been difficult to

realise. I explore some of the student data in relation to this, and other aspects of the conditions for creativity, in the following section.

B. Conditions for creativity

At UKI, there had been concerted and conscious attempts made to alter the structures, cultures and relationships of the school towards a more student-centred paradigm (Gill). I noted an appreciative learning environment where there were attempts to redistribute power dynamics between staff and students; hospitality ahead of the student novice entering the liminal space between academic and professional practice; and safety while they negotiated uncertainty and risk.

The conditions established at this school are outlined in this section and represented visually in Schema 2. The red triangles of enabled engagement include student engagement as people; their ability to handle uncertainty; and their engagement with risk and play. Students indicated being emotionally engaged; critically engaged; and being engaged with process (indicated by the colour orange), but to a lesser extent than the red areas. The green areas are those aspects where there seemed far less engagement or even alienation. These included students' critical judgement, their reflective engagement and their engagement with the artwork itself.



Schema 2: Conditions at UKI

Constructions of the staff

Within the school it emerged that constructions of staff had shifted from a strongly mentoring role of the studio atelier model, to more critical engagement through assessment events, inclusive of peer feedback, on self-directed projects. As guidance and feedback were situated within structured assessments, supervisors spoke of not feeling much conflict between the roles of teaching and assessment. Though some supervisors still visited the studio on an ad hoc basis, this was not an encouraged practice. Many students did not utilise the space (Russell; Ryan), possibly the effect of economic factors, such as the limited availability of staff, many of whom were on part-time contracts, and pressures on space per capita (Russell; Jane; Susan). Responsibility for such interaction was shifted to the student, through structures to request individual Critiques.

Expressed in various ways, the majority of staff indicated preferring distance in the relationship to avoid “engaging with students’ emotional life” (Jane), favouritism (Peter) or subjectivity (Gill). This seemed to be part of a structural attempt to “mitigate against” (Gill) inappropriate sexual relations between faculty and students, such as those brandished in the UK press (The Guardian 2014), and the heavy-handed power imbalances of the master-apprentice model which many staff recollected from their own studies. Other reasons were discipline-specific, such as the avoidance of imitation (Ryan; Gill) or asserting a dominant aesthetic (Jane). Linked to this was a ‘no blame culture’ where it was espoused that supervisors were not held accountable for student outcomes, to attempt to avoid dynamics where supervisors became overly invested, territorial, prescriptive or risk-averse. Whilst this school seemed less overtly political in these aspects than SAI, where the supervisor was held responsible for student failure and celebrated for successes, the supervisor’s role and responsibilities were very much a part of the internal assessment process (p.126), where a sense of his/her partial responsibility, and the student relationship, emerged.

It seemed to me that despite this dominant culture there was space for staff and students to connect around their artmaking processes, as would be appropriate for studies that engage students on a number of dimensions (p.19). Ryan, for instance, spoke about his role in mentoring terms, indicating that his pastoral role sometimes continued beyond graduation. Many students viewed the relationship as having intimacy, such as Madeline who spoke about information disclosed “in private” with the supervisor that was “quite personal”.

The reduced interaction with staff was the main reason cited by students to explain their lack of surety of assessment expectations, as they could not familiarize themselves with the school’s habitus (the idiom ‘a fish out of water’ was most commonly used). James felt that this emotional

consequence was often invisible to the staff, in the face of their curricular objective of fostering independence.

In my observations of formative assessments, I noticed that supervisors' power as 'experts' was shown in subtle ways, such as students' body language when speaking directly to the supervisor rather than their peers at Critiques, and the supervisors' directing of the format and who participated; and in more overt ways, when suggestions became proscriptions, or invalidating remarks about work or behaviour were expressed. Some staff acknowledged that the voice of the supervisor was still strongly felt, despite explicit attempts to remove hierarchy, as students realised the supervisor would act as their representative at assessments, and so embodied the power of assessment (Russell; Ryan). Students indicated awareness of power differences between staff ("some tutors have a stronger voice than others", Fiona), developing skills to pre-empt and interpret individual's feedback ("you kind of expect certain things from certain ones", Kerry). Yusuf presented a metaphor of the positioning of students and supervisors in the school, as hierarchical but nonetheless developmental.

There's a saying, about chess. You only get better by playing someone better than yourself. So questioning tutors... they might shoot you down and then you're just outright totally wrong but through learning that way.

As a successful student who I noticed in the moderation meeting was respected by staff, Yusuf's description contains aspects of the 'critical friend' relationship, confirming research that suggests a degree of acculturation is needed for this relationship (Cunliffe 2007).

My overall sense was of the supervisor positioned as a mediator (De Vos & Belluigi 2011) between the student and the two communities of which the practice-based teacher was a part: on the one hand the community of practice as a practising-artist, and on the other, a gatekeeper in the process of summative assessments, including the explicit and implicit criteria inherent to that process. As "working alongside" the supervisor in the studio was no longer the experience for these students, I considered the school's construction of practice-based teaching. Research has explored the identity of the practice-based teacher in studio learning (Thornton 2011), but not different institutional constructions. While UKI espoused priding itself in practice-based teaching as "very important... to expose them to different forms of practice" (Peter), interaction did not involve sharing supervisors' specific practice, nor even the in-and-outs of processes of thinking and making in relation to shared discourses, as these emerged during students production. Amongst key players at the school was a debate as to how much and in what ways structures should be created or removed for supervisors to

share their practice (Peter), a debate which echoed the conflict between educational and professional practice discourses (p.96). The notions of ‘practice-based teaching’ were practiced very differently at the two schools (to compare with SAI, see p.139).

Constructions of the student

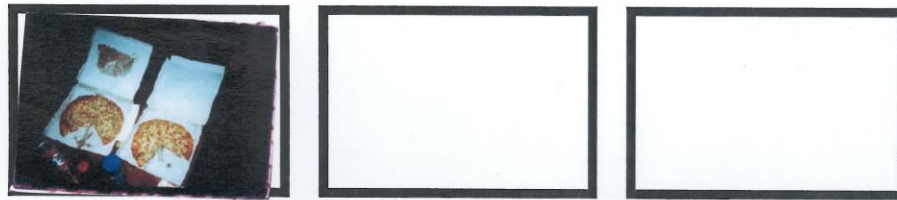
Although there was careful avoidance of associations of ‘the master’ in UKI’s constructions of the supervisor, there seemed to have been less consideration of how the student was constructed. Academics have been found to often default back to that which they learnt or experienced, reproducing the normative values to which they were subjected (Bourdieu 1990; Webb 1996). The ‘ideal’ student becomes the person who demonstrates that learning most valued by the teacher, who then is advantaged by related assessment practices, while the rest often learn in superficial ways and often perform without deep understanding (Elton 2006).

I found there seemed a concerted effort to treat students as these “young artists” (Ryan) capable of working independently, and having the self-assessment capacities to make their own decisions and, when needed, the wherewithal to request additional feedback. Encouraging exhibitions within the public domain from their very first year; and the notion of self-directed learning, put the espoused theory into practice.

As with many FASP courses (Belluigi 2009), creative and critical thinking were twinned in discourses in this school, most noticeably in course documentation, related to developing the artist as reflexive practitioner (p.68). Forms of assessment, such as the back-up evidence and research log, provided structured opportunities for contextualisation and critical engagement, in addition to the formative assessment events. Linked to this construction was a privileging of students who chose a degree structure with more ‘theory’ than the norm, and those who demonstrated writing well.

A dominant construction was the contemporary artist as collaborator (p.77). This notion has been noted in art education literature to extend to students’ connectivity with each other and their supervisor(s) to various different ‘knowledges’, experiences and communities (Hardy 2006). Structures were put in place to construct the student-as-collaborator, with much emphasis placed on creating a peer community, through peer interaction at formative assessment events and for group student exhibitions, and reduced power dynamics between students. This was experienced by many students as particularly enabling, confirming a recent study which found that students, within such a “reverse transmission” approach, perceived themselves as placed centrally as active co-producers of knowledge (Orr et al. 2014). Fiona described how her studies had challenged her

previous individualistic conceptions of art, opening her to the experience of art as collaborative, and shifting her identity away from the autonomist artist. She chose two pizzas alongside each other to represent her sense of the social reward for such interactions (VN 1).



Your words:

Previously to studying at [REDACTED], I perceived art as a solitary and personal process. My experience as an art student had enabled me to understand it from a collective, collaborative viewpoint. Putting on group exhibitions has made me much more of a team player.

VN 1: Fiona's construction of authorship

A minority of the participating students found the studio lived up to its potential camaraderie and collegiality. However, most spoke about elements of competition, intimidation and “nastiness” within the studio, where they felt isolated from the student group.

Traces of the mimetic tradition of the ‘apprentice’ persisted, criticised in arts education research for resulting in a marked absence of student voice and in some cases a lack of concern for students’ aspirations (Harwood 2007). The reproductive accent positions students to disregard their pre-existing habitus in favour of assuming that of their supervisor (Webster 2005). Within the assessment criteria and in the discourse of the assessors, the specific term ‘studentship’ described dispositions of the apprentice who displays deference to acknowledge the formal status of his/her superior. With a weighting of one fifth of the grade, the assessment of ‘person’ was explicitly within the gaze of assessment. Gill described this criterion as students’ “ability to manage a practice, to be able to engage, to come in to make work, to participate more”. In the curriculum documentation this was related to demonstrated “commitment” and “self-management”. Possibly established in an attempt to create a strong work ethic and peer community, such constructions have been noted as informing macro-conceptions of quality in other institutional contexts in the UK (Orr & Bloxham 2012). The flip side of such constructions was a reinforcement of a dichotomous nature of student identity and behaviour. Students who operated well within such norms would have found this

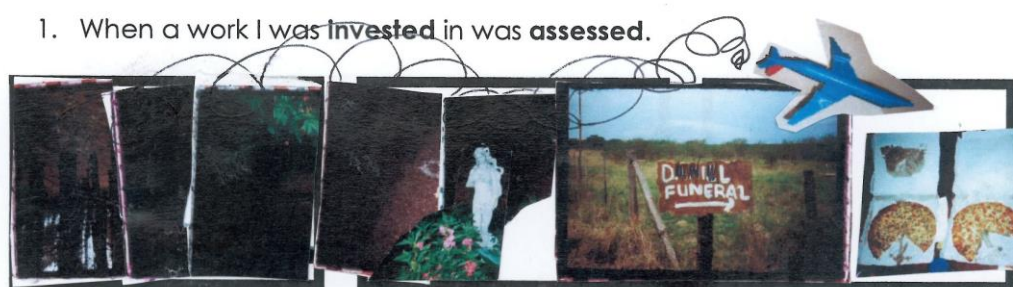
strengthened their strategic inclinations. Many with legitimate desires and commitments, that took them away from such participation (such as Elsie's employment to fund her studies), found themselves doubly punished by such assessment. And those few who resisted such pressures, such as Joe, found themselves rendered invisible.

Another construction that emerged at UKI was of the 'professional relationship' (Jane; Russell), where the individuated curriculum was tailored to the student-customer's needs (Jane; Julian; Ryan) by providing them with the support to actualize their ideas (Peter). Resonating with notions of customer satisfaction, the Director of Studies spoke about the importance of students leaving having enjoyed their experience over and above *what* they may have learnt or demonstrated.

Student engagement

As students did not have first-hand experience of summative assessment, the influence of the assessors' interpretative approaches within that context could at best be inferred. However, as supervisors mediate between assessment and teaching, and as assessment drives learning, there will most often be a backwash (Biggs 1999) from assessment onto teaching-learning interactions. The majority of participating students expressed some anxiety around formative assessment events, which required an aspect of embodied performativity and assessment. While some identified feelings of catharsis, motivation, and critical engagement, almost all expressed feelings of alienation in relation to summative assessments per se, consistent across the range of student success.

In the focus group interviews, many students described conflict between their engagement with the artmaking process and the assessment of their artwork as a 'product'.



VN 2: Fran's experience of assessment

Assessment brought out "dark" feelings and "an overwhelming kind of dread" for Fran (VN 2). She felt exposure and vulnerability, fearing artworks which she had laboured over might be rejected. Attending the assessment event was akin to attending "my funeral", with a sense of inevitable disaster as if "headed straight for like a plane crash". Many times that growing anxiety led not to

catharsis but “a kind of anti-climax” from the mundane and indifferent feedback responses of the staff, represented as “just a couple of pizzas”. Ambivalent emotions of anticipation and disappointment were experienced particularly when she perceived that staff investment did not tally with her investment. Feedback was characterised by participating students as most often neither judgmental nor polemic, but rather suggestive of options for the students to research and experiment with. Fran found the feedback culture often provided little challenge; similarly Dave “wish[ed] it was a bit more rigorous” particularly in the final year to support critical and reflective engagement with the work. In my observations, I found the culture of feedback provided by staff and students at the school was more in the tone of appreciative inquiry than rigorous critique.



Your words:

Cornis project... felt 'invested' meant time & patience. But also felt my work was different, so elephant meant alone 'solidarity'. box 2 = collections, archival ref to work & no escape, all on show. Sunnip felt represented clarity & something close, a physical remembrance.

VN 3: Kerry's experience of conflict from assessment

Unlike once-off rites of passage which legitimate initiates as full members of a community (Bell 1992), many students experienced the repeated habitual nature of assessments as far from celebratory. The image of the swings in Kerry’s story (VN 3) was chosen to indicate her “physical remembrance” of the repetitive nature of engagement with the work followed by alienation as a result of assessment. The other images visualised her contrasting experiences of the unique importance she had felt for her work, before experiencing the normative gaze when all students’ work were compared and displayed. The Critique as ritual is a pervasive metaphor in art education literature (Elkins 2001; Dannels 2005). Each event involves the assessors determining how closely the student’s individual habitus matches that of the community, simultaneously inculcating notions of what is correct for the identity of its members (Webster 2005).

Differing to the two stories above, Eric shared how an assessment experience had motivated him to push beyond that which he felt comfortable (VN 4).

I put it up, I got a lot of praise for it, from everyone. The assessment went great and it was a bed of roses for me... it sort of draws me on to really try hard and continue on with that sort of line of work.

The last image was chosen as a non-mimetic self-portrait, to express his surety of his own identity and the direction of his work, following that external validation from a single assessment event.



Your words:

My first attempt at a high grade digital art work. feedback was great and brought me on the right way. This was also a complete turn/changeover for my line of work, which previously was metal sculpture.

VN 4: Eric's story of external affirmation

This selection of stories offers insights into the impact of both single and repeated experiences of formative assessment.

Alienation

Almost all participating students had experienced some alienation during the course of their studies, as is perhaps to be expected with transformative learning and challenging curricula. However, for a few, these impacted negatively: related to alienation from the product of their labour; as a result of performativity for assessment; of discourse conflict; of conflict with their desires.

Experiences of alienation emerged for the majority of students who chose to highlight the assessment of artworks in which they were invested. As part of her visual narrative, Fiona included the caption "it was difficult to receive an objective assessment for something that was so personal to me". She found the process of having a work that was "so subjective and personal" translated into "very specific marks... to put a number on it" extremely difficult to undergo with passivity. She felt that this process belittled the work, as she had wanted it to be read and experienced by the viewer as an artwork, rather than dispassionately, which she understood was "what they have to do on a

course to grade us". Research on such an assessment gaze has emphasized there should be a recognition that the artwork exists to some extents outside of assessment discourse, as both subject and object in the relationship (Atkinson 2006).



Your words:

I became quite attracted to my work when ~~start~~ creating it. When it ~~was~~ was getting assessed I felt very distant from it. Felt like I wanted to ~~save~~ save it (my work) from something or someone.

VN 5: Yusuf's experience of his artwork becoming an object of exchange

Similarly, Yusuf spoke about the shift, from a work he was connected to in process to a pedagogised object displayed for assessment, creating an uncomfortable distance from his work, represented by the elephant "far in the distance" (VN 5). This had the effect of him wanting to "save" the work from the assessment process and "take it back". Such experiences were particularly extreme with summative assessments, when he was not allowed to enter the building where his artwork was being assessed. He felt this made the work a vulnerable entity, choosing a cage to represent the sense of his work trapped, scrutinised, and reduced.



Your words:

POT ON THE SPOT
UNCERTAINTY

EMPTINESS
WAITING

KNOWLEDGE
REFLECTION

VN 6: James' story of summative assessment

Similarly, knowing that he would not be present to defend or present the work, created anxiety for James (VN 6) during the whole term leading up to the event. "This process of handing the work over" was "a bit tricky", because the assessment event was not as "comfortable" as a public exhibition. The shift in interpretative approach enforced passivity that he felt silenced him in terms

of how his work was received, except through back-up materials he was permitted to include in that submission. This conscious absenting of the artist's presence is not common to the professional community of practice, as James was aware, but had been asserted for academic quality assurance purposes.



Your words:

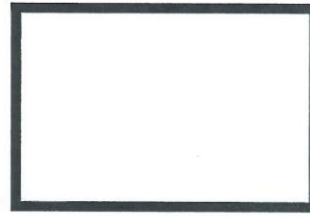
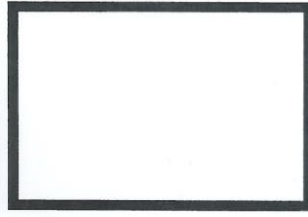
lost, ability to ignore & follow instinct or rebel?
Kerry shows an understanding that you rebel
against your self - own judgement. Spillage - to ignore
if care only for your own thought. Charis-
mading or being scained to create, mess up, fail
or be disliked.

VN 7: Kerry's conflict between internal or external motivation

Another dominant experience of alienation was as a result of being put in a position where the student felt conflicted about whether to follow his/her internal motivations or adopt those externally imposed. Kerry revealed a sense of her own discomfort and uncertainty in the face of the conflict that arose between her desire to exercise her own agency as an artist to evaluate her own work, and the fear of failure that may result from such self-imposed isolation (VN 7). Her caption indicated the emotional conflict she felt when positioned as a 'student'.

Yusuf too felt a loss of ownership and a sense of discomfort with his positioning as a pedagogised subject rather than an artist (VN 8). He highlighted specific events when his own desire was repressed or constrained due to the interference of staff on the course. At one point when "I was told that I can't create the pieces that I wanted to create", he decided to be open to such suggestions, deferring to the staff's authority as a process of his learning. Whilst he accepted this for a while, when "told" again to make a work that he felt was invalid "out of a material that I didn't understand", he found himself deeply ambivalent,

Do I then go for that because I've been told by the tutors? Or do I want to make a piece of work because I want to make it and I want to make this out of this?



Your words:

I didn't know what to do when a tutor suggest me to produce a piece of work that I was not happy with ~~produce~~ claim it as my own art. Who was I making this work for? for me? or the grade?

VN 8: Yusuf's story of uncertainty

His experience of feeling torn between making strategic or meaningful choices mirrored that of a number of students, in particular Joe (below), although they were awarded vastly different grades (Yusuf was awarded a distinction whilst Joe barely passed).

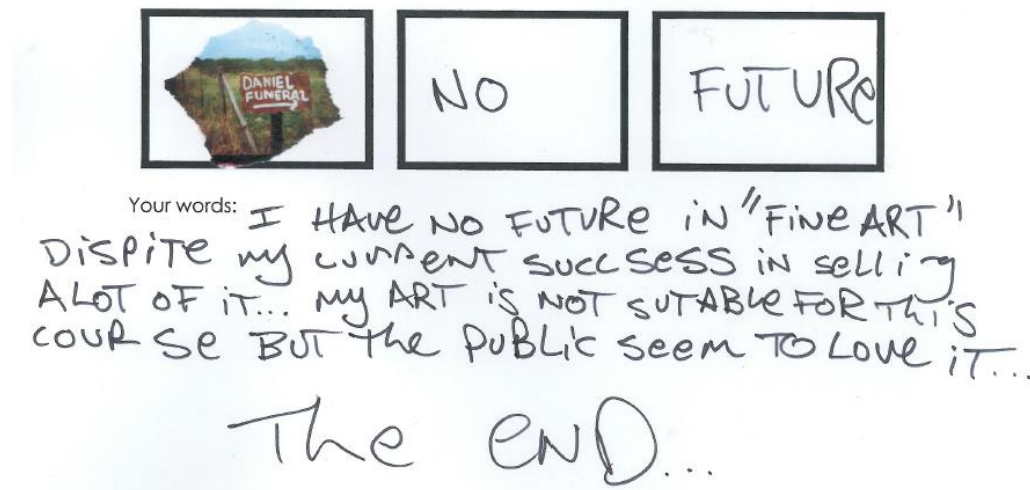
As the school was immutable in their intolerance of that which sat outside of their understanding of the contextualism of contemporary fine art practice (p.68), a number of students expressed experiences of alienation from the conflict between discourses within and outside of the disciplinary and academic framework (see p.149 for a similar occurrence with SAI). A staff member at UKI had identified a recent and growing resistance to this conceptual discourse (Russell), which I observed in a minority of submissions. Joe's experience was particularly revealing in this regard, as his practice represented an extreme resistance to the discourses of conceptualism, with the school's response indicating their response to difference.

Joe found that once he stopped trying to produce "the kind of art that they like on this course... it just all went catastrophically wrong". Producing artworks for a system of exchange in which the student did not have belief, created harsh self-judgment.

When I do this for the course, I feel like a tit if I done it 'cause... I don't know why I done it, I'm just doing it, just tick the box.

When he at first performed for and produced what was externally required of him, receiving validation by experts within that system, his own investment and desires were negated, leading him

to judge the work as inauthentic. When he pursued his desires, the feedback received was invalidating and unreceptive, in addition to falling short of possible intertextual references he had discovered himself from those who worked in similarly liminal spaces between 'fine art', 'commercial art' and 'public art'. Joe's choice of image and text were to indicate the death of his future in fine art, with the caption alluding to differing receptions of his work (VN 9).



VN 9: Joe's engagement with fine art in the aftermath of his studies

On deeper reflection, Joe felt his work should not have to be rationalised in terms of that academic framework and its bounded notions of beauty and meaning.

After 3 years of listening to dribble from hippy art students try to give meaning to their senseless paint splatter, I now realise it is pointless to attempt to describe what is good art and what is rubbish. In the same way one can't say for fact what is beautiful and what is ugly. As a result of its subjective nature there is no right or wrong. Ending up with a bubble of people that feel an incessant need to question the idea surrounded by the reality that the vast majority of the population accept their beliefs on the matter through mass media and subconscious advertising.

This angry response revealed a person grappling with many deeply ontological questions about artmaking. Whilst he belittled such questioning, as he had experienced it occurring within the school, his narratives exposed criticality towards claims for fine art's legitimacy over other discourses.

In email correspondence I wrote to Joe that "your own experience has helped me to get a sense of the parameters of the 'norms' within UKI and the significance of such experiences on your sense of authorship". His responses indicated that his creativity was curtailed by the environment at UKI, although paradoxically he had developed "a greater ability to self-evaluate my own work" as a result of his resistance to accepting this dominant discourse.

Engagement

The school, in its curriculum documents and approach, attempted to create opportunities for students to experience the three aspects of engagement indicated in the schema for the conditions of creativity, namely emotional, critical and reflective engagement.

All of the students were able to identify experiences of deep engagement with their art making. As with most students at both schools, Elsie's emotional engagement was mostly to do with "capturing" the subject within her work as "the most rewarding and interesting part", in addition to being immersed in the work itself and "labouring over the detail".

For Eric, engagement was at its strongest "flow" while in process, becoming immersed on a bodily rather than conscious level when spending limitless time working.

I could just get really sucked up into the work of doing... It was great. Yeah, making my own little bubble.

James' engagement with process was characterised by "clarity, energy, motivation", and a sense of direction. This was the stage when he felt most connected with and immersed in his artmaking, with a strong sense of wellbeing, represented in his visual narrative by a bed of flowers and the caption "everything makes sense, caught in the moment, happiness". Elsie's explanation of engagement with process had elements of transcendence, represented by a landscape which epitomised the sense of having "the most freedom". Fiona highlighted liminality in her process, when she became a "witness to that usual forming but not yet formed. When the artwork is at a turning point... but the final image hasn't formed yet". The work was most open to possibilities and thus also most vulnerable, as "it could go any way and what people say might make me take it one way or another way". Similarly, for Tammy this experience occurred mid-way through projects, and was most productive when she was able to strike a balance between a sense of surety and uncertainty.

Not being able to visualize an ending so that, for me, the work becomes more about the process of doing, rather than like a goal at the end because it's about a kind of experience on the way.

A few students' stories had elements of what could be described as the Janus face of such engagement. For James, one of the consequences of such single-minded immersion was that other aspects of his life become neglected, resulting in disarray. Added to this was his concern that sometimes the art object did not adequately reflect the process, or the original import of the subject, with the initial desire lost along the way.

Acknowledging the fundamental indeterminacy of artmaking (Peter), risk and experimentation were espoused as having a prominent position within the summative assessment process (Gill), particularly through the back-up material acting as “extensive documentation” of process (Julian). Risk was rewarded within formative assessments, such as when positive affirmation of Eric’s experimentation in a medium acted as a catalyst for dramatic changes in his relationship with the school and his work. Fran had been advised to explore works which may not succeed and encouraged to “fail” in the sense of try it out even though it won’t work”. The explicit highlighting of play and risk in curriculum documents was in an attempt to put into practice the principle of safety. I observed a concerted effort in summative assessments to reward the process of work that had ultimately ‘failed’. However, this was not the case in instances when the student or their practice was not within the norms of ‘studentship’, or where such failure of their practice had not been supported by staff. The criterion seemed complicated by students’ dispositions, cultural capital and relationship with the supervisor. Some of the staff acknowledged that despite attempts to establish such conditions, because of the power of summative assessments, most often students practiced a balance between calculated risk and risk-avoidance, thinking strategically for better grades or validation (Ryan; Russell).

A crucial element of the conditions for creativity is how students are enabled to develop the skills and assuredness to handle uncertain experiences or periods in their artmaking (p.22). Tammy offered the metaphor of uncertainty as “an ingredient in making art” where too much would destabilise the process. Dominant experiences of uncertainty which emerged, where due to the curriculum structure of self-directed learning, and pressures from summative assessment.

Yusuf spoke about how, in the first year, experiences of uncertainty were not as threatening because summative assessments did not “count to anything”. However, from second year onwards, the awareness that the grades awarded did have importance, created panic when uncertainty arose. Tammy interrupted, offering this interpretation of what her peer was trying to articulate.

It’s funny in that it’s almost like you’re saying uncertainty is kind of a luxury in first year, and then suddenly in third year it’s like threatening.

Whilst experiences of uncertainty are an acknowledged aspect of artmaking (p.22) and transformative learning (Mezirow 1981), what is most important for the conditions for creativity is the development of student awareness of how to negotiate such experiences.



Your words:

TRAPPED BY
UNCERTAINTY,
STATIONARY,

OVERWHELMED
BY CHOICE,
DON'T KNOW
WHERE TO START.

NOT MYSELF,
ALMOST LIKE I'M
ILL OR NOT SLEEPING
THIS UNCERTAINTY
SOMETIMES I NEED
TO OVERCOME LIKE
ILLNESS.

VN 10: James' expression of being debilitated by uncertainty

For many students, this ability was mostly underdeveloped. James drew comfort from his faith that uncertainty would eventually pass. He inverted the image of a birdcage to indicate feeling “horribly stuck” in the face of many possibilities, represented by the clutter in the second image (VN 10). These possibilities were weighed down by his “baggage”, the mental and physical “debris” from previous projects. He created a parallel between this experience of uncertainty and being immobilised temporarily by physical illness.

I think being uncertain is a bit like being unwell because you can't really go out and do the thing you want to do. You just get stuck sitting there and you got to overcome whatever is causing you to not function properly, in order for you to get into the swing of things.

Tammy described how she found uncertainty due to self-directed learning the most “scary”, visualising the curriculum as uncharted territory she was forced to enter (VN 11).



Your words:

VN 11: Tammy's story of uncertainty due to the self-directed curriculum

She revealed an awareness of how to mediate such uncertainty, and the steps she personally found enabled her to push through such experiences. This included critical engagement of feedback, and selective exclusion of “exterior noise” irrelevant to her desires.

For a number of other students, self-knowledge about their own work processes and affective needs, aided them in dealing with uncertainty. Elsie expressed a sense of loss or discomfort when her practice was “crippled” by uncertainty (VN 12).



Your words:

Uncertainty comes with being un-productive, which makes you even less productive, & not a good cycle.

VN 12: Effects of uncertainty when Elsie felt unconfident

She had learnt that being more certain at the composition stage enabled her to be more confident to exercise the creativity skill of being open to the process. Similarly, Fiona characterised her work at as “disjointed” and “all over the shop”, visualising this disconnect (VN 13), until she learnt that “research and constant experimentation” helped her to “evolve a direction”.



Your words:

1st and 2nd semester of 2nd year my practice was disjointed, and didn't convey any of the themes or concerns I am interested in. Each piece seemed to be by a different artist. Only through thorough research and experimentation did I establish clarity within my usual language.

VN 13: Fiona worked through uncertainty by engaging in process

Yusuf had developed an ability to actively persevere through uncertainty (VN 14). The swing visualised that “it was so hard to get there. Had quite a bit of frustration” in achieving the specific direction he had in mind all along.



Your words:

When I produced my work ~~to~~ at the beginning of the year, I already knew what I needed to do, I had a target. I found myself taking two steps forward one step back. It felt slow but got there in the end.

VN 14: Yusuf learnt to persevere through uncertainty

Many students spoke about aspects of assessment, particularly critical engagement, creating tension with their emotional engagement with play. For Fran, the sense of connectedness with process, when she was able to focus “just on the work” in a single-minded way, was altered once critical engagement from the feedback of others was introduced. She actively sought to return to emotional engagement and focus (what she represented as “finding that chair” in the second and third block of VN 15), a halting process requiring perseverance.



VN 15: Fran attempted to re-engage emotionally after the critical gaze

Similarly Dave spoke about how critical engagement, though in his case with the work of other artists, changed the nature of his previously unfettered engagement with his work. As with many students at both schools, he expressed nostalgia for a time when he made art without this critical gaze.

Critical engagement was communicated in the course documents as an important criterion for assessment. Students were implicitly expected to negotiate their peers' and staffs' interpretations, offered during formative assessments, and to consider how such reception related to their intentionality. For Tammy, the shift from immersion in play to the critical distance of the assessment, "where you see your work from the distance that everyone else is seeing it", was "a profound experience". She found such formative assessments collegial, where all had "a common goal" and were supportive. However, unlike the majority of students who expressed most engagement while in process, Tammy characterised her own process as "so erratic and haphazardly all over the place that it kind of like happens in sort of patches everywhere... a serious monkey-brain". The collaborative critical engagement in and readership of her work was comparatively invigorating.

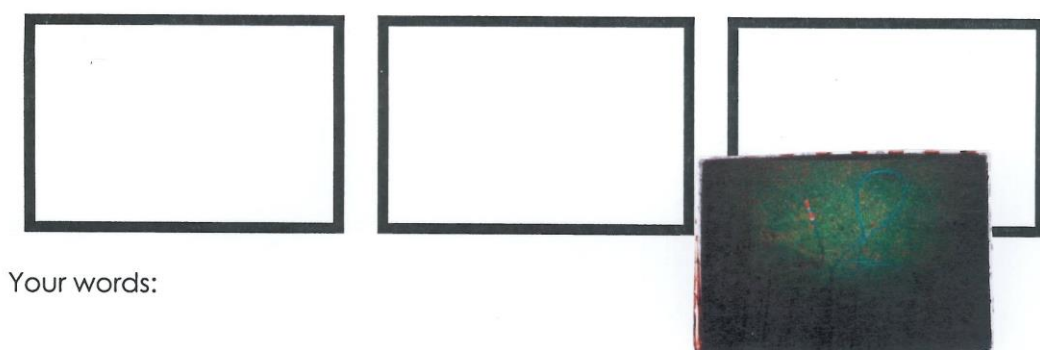
However, Dave found that formative feedback had little influence on his process, continuing after such assessments "as I wished". This may have been because, as with a number of students at the school, he felt much of the feedback was irrelevant or conflicted with his desires, which he felt strongly should be what guided him. Whilst this had resulted in him "developing my own opinions rather than be led", he felt that the nature of the feedback had left him feeling unsupported. Because of not having such self-assessments substantiated, the degree of uncertainty left him lacking discernment of their validity, "I do wonder if I can really trust my judgment or if I [am] delusional or biased about judgments". Echoing a number of students' sentiments, he felt that the feedback, whether verbal or through indicative grades, did not help him develop a sense of the standard of his work and skills.

Whilst opportunities for "critical analysis, reflection, presentation and reception" (course documentation) were created in the various assessment contexts of the Critique, research log and portfolio, it was not made explicit to students that these were opportunities for meta-reflection to develop reflexivity in their practice over time. As the accent was on self-directed learning (p.74), the quality of such engagement was left to student devices. Depending on dispositions and previously developed skills of reflection, varied levels of reflective engagement emerged in their stories. For instance, Else was able to identify aspects of her process and affective aspects of her learning which required attention. Joe's ability to self-assess was a result of his resistance to accepting the dominant discourse. Those who experienced some conflict, with what they saw as 'authentic' aspects of their process, similarly developed reflective skills.

Informed by postmodern notions of authorship, where notions of authenticity linked to autonomous authorship are critiqued (as discussed in Chapter Three), I initially unconsciously avoided the term 'authenticity' to characterise this issue when it emerged. However, I soon found that students integrally related it to their reflective engagement with the artworks. For most of the staff, 'expressive authenticity' (Dutton 2003) was valued, to do with evidence within the artwork of the artist's sincerity, genuineness or passion – dispositions and a relationship to the work that could be surmised by hypothetical intentionalism. However, the overwhelming majority of students who raised this issue were concerned with their 'nominal authenticity' (Dutton 2003), i.e. how the work relates to their actual intentionality. From the students' perspective, authenticity was integrally related to the development of their authorship, not unlike therapeutic notions of "the person as his or her own author" (Schmid 2001).

Students' reflective engagement was often characterised by conflict between their own desire for nominal authenticity and the influence of strategic thinking for assessments. I have included a selection of such stories within my discussion of alienation (p.106). Here stories which had differing significance for students have been highlighted.

To visualise the effects of her vulnerability and unease with assessment pressures on her own identity, Fran chose, with dramatic effect, to paste a dark image of a hosepipe, as a non-mimetic self-portrait, in a deliberate misfit with the last block, leaving the rest of the narrative bare (VN 16). She explained that while she tried "to do good art" with a sense of personal integrity, she judged harshly her perceived personal weakness when choosing to be strategic to "get grades". She was uncertain of how to interpret such grades, attributing her confusion to subjectivity in assessments (p.71).



VN 16: Fran's visualisation of the effects of conflict on her identity

In contrast, Elsie revealed an awareness that what was constructed as successful was contextualised within specific frameworks which the school had adopted. She used scare quotes when she wrote “‘good’ work will be praised” in the text under her visual narrative, further asserting that such constructions were provisionally dependant on the judgements and approval of the assessors.

Experiences of alienation as a result of this conflict led some students to question those in positions of authority within the school. Dave was angered by feedback provided for strategic reasons, exercising his agency by questioning his supervisor.

I said, ‘I don’t want to do X to make my grades better, I want to do X because I’m maybe interested in it’. But that’s what I felt like they were saying to me.

Tammy’s criticality towards the supervisor’s authority over her work (“take it as gospel”) grew as she neared the final summative assessment, with her “feeling a real antagonism” about the effects such institutional authority had on students.

Is it trying to produce free thinking individuals or is it trying to push everyone into the same aesthetic direction?

Assessment experiences had led Dave to question the power dynamics and his own agency in accepting the right of others to pronounce judgment on his art.

Who are these people to assess my work, and if it’s a case of like extensive knowledge and years of experience and stuff like that?

He had begun to extend this questioning to which interpretations should influence his artmaking.

Does it come down to my work has to be loved by majority or taken in by that majority, and now that majority has to say yes, great, good, you’re doing good?

Joe recognized how such interpretations went to the ontological question of what fine art is, implicitly questioning the authority of academia to make such determinations.

Such questions had the effect of causing uncertainty and dis-engagement with the processes of making and the product of their labour, for many of the students. Dave felt that such meta-level reflective engagement about his studies had the unwanted effect of having him question “‘Do I actually like art?’ and I hated that”. However, Fiona noted how her responses to staff feedback had changed over the course of her studies. As she progressed, she felt more agency to “fight against it or say actually we’ve got our formed views”, particularly in times when the feedback was irrelevant to her intentionality, when “we know we can’t take this criticism as much on board because we

know what we want to do". She described this as "a more grounded sense" of how to evaluate interpretations.

In my assessment observations, I noticed differing receptions of work when students had persevered with their authentic desires in the face of opposing feedback of their supervisors. If the work of those who persevered was successful, then they were rewarded, and such terms as "decisive", "vision", "authentic", "courage", "integrity", "honest" were used to construct the students. However, if the result was unsuccessful, students were constructed as being "stubborn", "uncritical", "not able to listen". Such constructions of the student were dependent on the success of the final artefact, rather than the characteristics of perseverance or authenticity. For students, however, such authenticity was of prime importance. It was here that the distinction between the positionality of the student-artist and of the assessor seemed most at odds – for while students were hoping to develop their own authorship, albeit within the bounds of contemporary art making, the assessors were divorcing the submission from the students' and excluding their actual intentionality when evaluating the work.

Concluding this analysis of UKI: The problem of authorship

I began my analysis of UKI with a discussion of how the staff constructed authorship and the role of intentionality in student learning and assessment. Gill's articulation of its importance was most representative.

*Partially important - because the work must move towards a standalone position...
So the relationship is progressive: important in first year and relatively unimportant
in the final year.*

Whilst the work at the end of the degree needed to operate in a contemporary art context where it was understood that the author could determine neither its meaning nor significance, her contention was that for their own critical evaluation as developing artists, the students' intentionality was important. This distinction was also made in the *Intentionality Fallacy*, where Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) differentiate between the role played by interpretations for art criticism, and those made for the composition of artworks. As summative assessment sits in the threshold between the evaluation of the artmaking of novices and gatekeeping for the professional community of practice, the complexities of interpretative approaches emerged. The analysis indicated that students' actual intentionality was not taken into account for summative assessments, despite the recognition of the role it played in their learning. The effect of this mis-alignment on formative assessments, where staff were best placed to develop meta-cognitive skills, was evident

when staff acted as representatives of assessment processes rather than mediating those purposes as members of the professional community of practice.

While many of the students at UKI experienced alienation about this issue, I end with two successful students' reflections at the end of their degrees. Eric carried the confidence characteristic of a number of students at this school, no doubt bolstered by a culture of appreciative feedback and reception of his work at formative assessments. He described coming to a sense of his own authenticity and ownership during his FASP studies as a fraught personal struggle.

I managed to develop my works and myself as an artist, figuring out what I actually wanted to do, instead of doing what I thought I wanted to do or what others thought that I should do!

Many students were far more uncertain of themselves as artists and their future in contemporary art. Tammy for one felt that there was "mystery and uncertainty" in artmaking that had not been decoded or made transparent in her studies, leaving her feeling "confusion" in terms of her identity and "vision" for the future. However, this seemed to her appropriate as "having a certificate does not equate to suddenly you're an artist". I have chosen to end with that insight because I believe it demonstrates a disposition to handle uncertainty which emerged more strongly with students in UKI, possibly due to how students were constructed, and the implicit contrast between intentionality and interpretation at formative assessments, which such a high level learner was able to recognise independently.

Part III.

SAI institutional analysis

Constructions of authorship

I asked staff at SAI whether they believed the artist, artwork or viewer to be most influential on meaning in contemporary art. Nick's acknowledgement of the complexities was playfully elusive, "All are problems 😊". What emerged in general was that while contemporary constructions of authorship as collaborative or pluralistic were seen as appropriate for contemporary practice, they were complicated by the educational context. A construction of the students as novices (p.139) created a sense of their immaturity to handle the lifelong problematic of authorship at the undergraduate level, where instead authorship was conflated with expressive authenticity, described as investment in, commitment to, or ownership of their projects (Nick; Adam; Helena). The shift from authorial determination to an awareness of the multiplicity of reading was conceptualized as occurring over the entire undergraduate and postgraduate duration, compared to UKI's understanding of this occurring in the undergraduate years (p.77).

By the end of 4th year, the issue of intentionality as a framework should be more or less in place... By postgraduate level, the student should have developed, or be developing, the confidence to play around with their intentionality more: to question it and have an awareness that it can change without it losing value (Sophie).

As with UKI (p.77), intentionality was related to the artists' maturation to better guide and ascertain readings of the work. Some of the staff appreciated the role it might play for students' critical engagement. Faye spoke about how intentionality played an important formative role in her interface as a supervisor between students' works and their emotional and critical engagement. Sophie and Helena felt that critical reflection on intentionality was important for authorship beyond the academic framework. Helena felt that the product-orientated curriculum helped students relate their practice to imagined readers.

The emphasis on professional practice, in terms of each student mounting a mini-exhibition, conjures an imaginary audience and, I think, affords them a critical perspective from 'outside' of the immediacy of their impetus-bound making.

While staff espoused that "in undergrad we try to develop their own voice and way of working" (Faye), there emerged an acknowledgement that the anti-intentionalist summative assessment complicated such development. How these structural and cultural tensions were negotiated between agents at SAI is the subject of Chapter Six.

A. Mapping interpretative approaches, SAI

Assessment at SAI

In terms of formative assessment, the structural approach at SAI differed quite considerably to UKI. Intensive informal one-on-one assessments occurred on an ad hoc manner in process in the studio. At least once a term, group formative assessments within the specific medium led by the supervisor as medium-specialist occurred, in addition to horizontal formative panel assessments with all final year participants. At such Critiques, students would speak briefly about their work and/or process, before the staff provided feedback, mostly without active participation of the student's peers. In addition, a formative panel assessment with indicative grades and feedback occurred mid-way through the academic year. The format of such assessments were that the work (excluding additional material and without the student present) was assessed by panel assessment, followed by feedback to the student. The final summative panel assessment involved assessment-by-exhibition of a curated body of work, including the artists' statement, a title, and the student's name displayed within the gallery (or site-specific location), mimicking professional exhibitions. Internal assessments involved all the practice staff working as a single panel, followed by a brief moderation meeting. One external examiner assessed the work with the internal panel present. In this chapter, I focus mainly on panel assessments, both formative and summative, with consideration of supervisor-facilitated studio assessments in Chapter Six.

Formative assessments

Staff claimed that intentionality was implicitly supported when students or their supervisors presented an oral defence of their works at formative assessments. Drawing from my observations, I asked why intentionality was neither used as an explicit nor implicit criterion, and noted the low level of presentations and staff questioning. Adam explained that staff developed a shared recollection of the work from other events that did not require re-articulation. He acknowledged that an unfortunately implication was that constructions of the student as fixed sometimes impacted on the reading of the work (p.139). He spoke about the complications of the actual versus imagined author when acting as an assessor/interpreter (similar to Elkin's description, p.26). These, and other 'external' factors, were seen to be minimised by a focus on the artwork rather than its defence (T). Thus students did not present at grade-bearing assessments. Following on from each internal assessment, students were provided feedback on how their processes and engagement could be improved (A1+2). Most of the assessment was formulated around ascertaining whether the direction of the project would be successful, due to the backwash of summative assessments. Thus

the role of the panel at the mid-year formative assessment was constructed as guiding the trajectory of projects while in process (A2 + T2), thereby supporting the role of the supervisor.

All the staff agreed with my analysis that the panel was for the most part a stable interpretative community (as at UKI, p.87). Whilst newer staff privately intimated not feeling comfortably part of the community (p.228), the majority of the staff felt that the panel approach ensured the validity of the assessment in terms of readership, making up for what was perceived as the deficit subjective interpretation of the supervisor who had worked in process with the student.

Having one's work assessed by more than one individual is key to this, as an outside point of view may be able to give a broader and more objective vision of whether meaning is coherent for more than those who were involved in the making from the start (Faye).

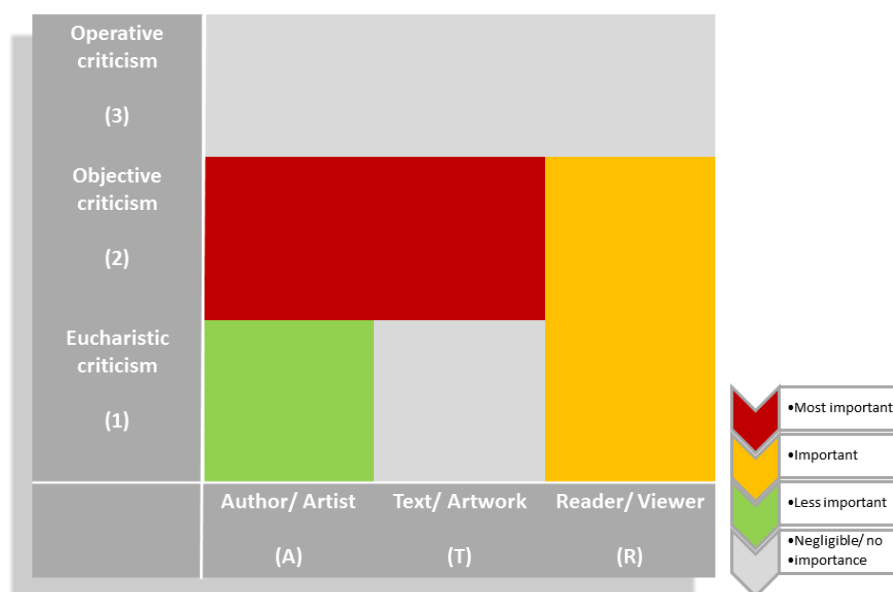
However, for some staff this was dependant on whom specifically was making that reading, and not necessarily always the panel's judgment as a whole.

Sometimes just by 'reading' the reactions of the colleagues I respect, I can 'see' my students' work more clearly. So I guess I'm saying that the process of 'group marking' is workable, if there are people in the group that one can trust (Helena).

A few students experienced the stable interpretative community of assessors as helpful, particularly when the "general consensus" was persuasive for those debating options (Tessa). However, most students expressed finding this "unified force" of the assessors frightening, even "bullying" (Lenore). Suggestions were filtered according to whom students perceived had the most dominant voice or understood their aims.

You get to know their personalities more, so that helps you out a little bit because you know where they're coming from... but [it] still like hurts, no matter what (Lenore).

Overall, the majority of the interaction within the formative panel assessments I observed related to students' relationship to the text (A2 + T2) with direction provided by the panel as experts (R2) (IF 10). References and feedback mostly operated within the objective band, with the accent primarily on composition and production.



IF 10: Assessors, formative panel assessments at SAI

Assessors made considerable references within column A. Student investment; the time dedicated; and the person’s work ethic were valued (A2). Students’ processes were compared (A2), with the rewarding of those who had experimented more expansively and arrived at innovative solutions (at a micro-level as at UKI, p.112), compared to those students who remained within their comfort zones. However, possibly due to the anti-intentionalist approach of summative assessments, such experimentation was not rewarded if it had led to failure or ‘weak’ work.

Despite a similar concern with “marking potential” (Helena) to that voiced in UKI (p.71), and explicit attempts to assess “what is here” (Faye), a number of references related to the ‘potential’ of both the person (A1+2) and the artwork (T2). For instance, labour emerged as a complex issue, where there was disparity between the consideration given to “weak students” who had produced quantity output, compared to “strong students” who had not produced quantity nor quality at that point but whose potential carried as much weight. Such ‘potential’ was based on assessors’ recollections of past submissions or supervisors’ arguments. This issue emerged when deciding indicative grades, with students who had the “same potential as others” placed within similar grading bands.

Discernment of the potential of the artwork came from the practice-based research context, where the sensitivities of materiality and process-based artworks necessitated assessors attempt “to take into account the nature of the submission” (Helena) (A2 + T2). Many works required envisaging where they would most probably progress. Supervisors were most sensitive to the indeterminacy of artmaking, whilst assessors often enforced summative assessment expectations. For instance,

Sophie was happy for her most 'promising' student's work to be unresolved because the panel should "not be looking at resolution as a criterion now" but rather "the quality of the idea". However, the resolve of work (T2) definitely emerged as a criterion for work not vouched for by supervisors.

In terms of column T, what was most noticeable was the assessors' behaviour. When a work was successful, it was given time and silent attention for initial consideration; however when unsuccessful, it was not engaged with the same way, most noticeably when a video piece was switched off midway. As these individuals took on the role of assessors, their viewer experience was often negated, becoming evaluative and directive than exploratory and open to experience as readers (R1) and expert practitioners (R2).²³

The attempt to "mark what's here", a repeated mantra, positioned much of the references within T. Intertextual comparisons were made between students' work, their subjects (T1) and within mediums (T2), to position them within grading bands. The relationship between form and content (T1+2) was given particular attention, and communicated to students. Similarly, the little students' articulated during these feedback sessions occurred within this band. A number of students indicated their frustration with objective criticism at such events, indicating that guidance in terms of realising conceptual aspects of actual intentionality, which would have been appreciated.

On the whole, references within R were anti-intentionalist. In a few instances, assessors indicated their disdain or appreciation for aspects of the work as readers (R1). Many of the assessors became strongly passionate and prescriptive in their feedback to students diagnosed as not succeeding, with the learning process often hijacked to prevent failure, and student agency reduced if not deemed having the potential to successfully 'produce'. Such readings were from the position of connoisseurs or experts directing the work of novices (R2).

Only with a student constructed as an ideal (p.140) was there slippage from 'assessors' and 'students' to a conversation between fellow artists. Evidencing a concern with how Mark's work may operate (T3), Helena shared her understanding, almost as a plea, of the importance of reader accessibility (R1), and Adam's discussed how aspects of this student's intentionality performed, in

²³ Sophie as a new staff member found this shift created profound discomfort for her (p.250), although Adam who had been assessing within an academic framework for longer, seemed more acculturated and thus less sensitised (p.201).

some works being “depicted”, in others “embodied”. Such atypical operative criticism was reserved for the very few operating “at Master’s level” (Sophie), indicating the interpretative approach taken for postgraduate studies. More common was a lack of operative criticism. For instance, a student’s concern to include a notorious symbol was dealt with in a cursory manner, neither side utilizing the opportunity to discuss larger concerns around the politics of representation, readership or responsibility.

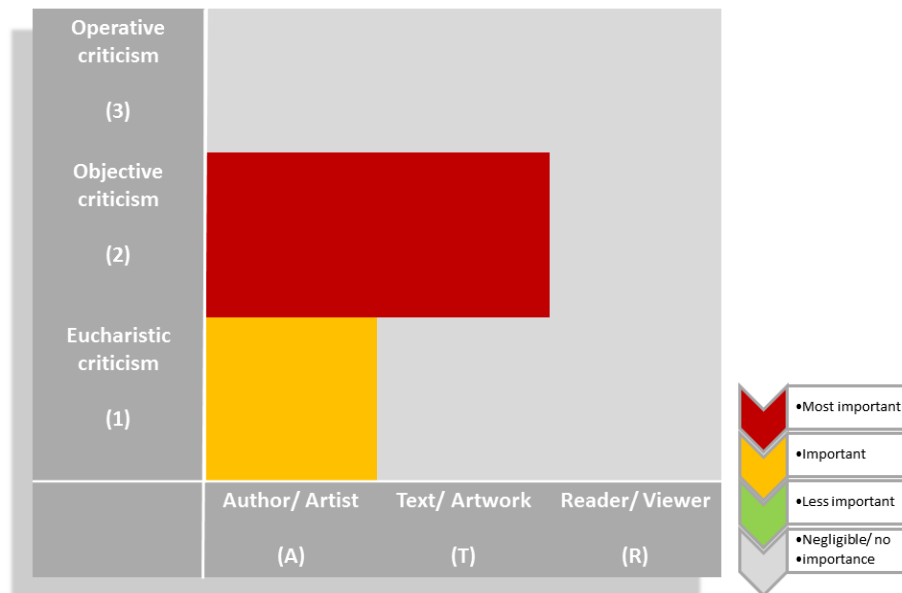
The supervisors’ interpretative approaches

Assessors were much more accommodating of supervisors’ arguments in this formative context than the summative context. Within the culture of this event, supervisors were given a strong influence on the feedback and grade provided to their students. Without additional material to reference, the influence, bias, shortcomings et cetera of the supervisor could all potentially come into play. At times, assessors would challenge the judgment of the supervisor in relation to particular students s/he constructed as ideal or if their reading did not tally with the submission (p. 164). There was an affective dynamic within the panel, with articulations of empathy and solidarity between colleagues as supervisors, in addition to awareness of the political ramifications of conflict or tacit agreement, such as when Helena spoke about “choosing battles” and Faye about negotiating trade-offs between student grades.

In Chapter Six I discuss the specific variations in each individual approach (p.164), focusing in this section on how the structures and cultures of this school positioned this role. A dominant understanding of the supervisor’s role at this event was to represent and even defend the student and his/her interests. This was explicit in the structure of the supervisor commencing the process by introducing the submission. The expectation of moderate actual intentionalists, included sketching information about the person and his/her making and learning process, especially development of the work from its starting point or conceptualism, and technical growth within production, but not necessarily how the student hoped the work be received (A1+2). Unlike the summative assessment event, most of the supervisors were not value-maximisers at this formative stage, alluding often to the shortcomings of their students’ dispositions, approaches, skills and processes.

Whilst the espoused theory of most supervisors was to enable student “voice”, in practice this seemed limited to those aspects legitimated by the supervisor. Only in two instances did supervisors (Nick; Faye) specifically request that their students articulate their reasoning for doing aspects of the work, and of the two students only Jacob spoke directly to his intentionality for the work’s reception. Tessa provided an outline of her ideas (T1) and the envisaged technical process (T2) but

not why or how she imagined it would be read. Triangulation indicated that Tessa was not strategically avoiding sharing her intentionality, but rather conceptualism and objective criticism were perceived as where the assessors' gaze was drawn.



IF 11: Supervisors, formative panel assessments at SAI

The relationship of the student to his/her supervisor was referenced, as was their reception of feedback (A1) (as with UKI, p.84). At times this was seen as a strength, constructed as the student's openness to change; at others, the student's weakness to have slavishly or uncritically accepted suggestions. My sense was these interpretations served as justifications for the interpretative community to forge ahead together when presenting to students what they considered the best reading, and thus most successful direction probable, for the work.

Of the references within T, these were mainly from the perspective of objective criticism, about production and details of form (T2). Its relation to the concept or subject, within eucharistic criticism (T1), was dealt with in a cursory manner, perhaps not to seem patronising of their colleagues' familiarity with cognate areas of discourse about the subject, which they may not necessarily have of discourses around the medium.

From my observations, the most persuasive role the supervisor played was as a mediator of the processes of assessment and the student's artmaking, particularly evident when supervisors utilised the "mark as a message" (Faye), negotiating their students' reception of the grade and feedback. At some points, supervisors were permitted to presume whether students had the capacity to utilise, or

disposition to receive, suggestions, acting as a filter which reduced student agency to critically engage with such ideas.

Student expectations created from such assessments

Assessments events created expectations in the minds of the students. This was the dominant reason cited by students who believed their actual intentionality was referenced at summative assessments (10/14 respondents), as it was at UKI (p.83).

I feel like through the assessment process they've come to understand my process and intentionality and would therefore take that into consideration. And I hope that they have (Tessa).

Stanley pointed to the knowledge that assessors had of him, expressing incredulity at the possibility of anti-intentionalist approaches.

The lecturers that have known me for these four years. I can't really see them trying to analyse work like formalists.

Most students who felt supported by their supervisors indicated a belief that their intentionality would be presented at such events.

Of course Adam, who I worked with closely through the year, understood everything I was trying to do and helped me a lot with getting my ideas across (Katy).

However, those who had experienced extreme alienation, from relinquishing their desires in the face of the anti-intentionalist approach from summative assessments, felt that actual intentionality was not of concern to staff at this school.

I don't think so. I think they were simply looking at concept and interpretation. And how it reads all together (Jade).

What is of interest is that 13 of the 14 students who responded to this email indicated that they would choose for their actual intentionality to be taken into consideration for summative assessments, with only one student indicating that she could not expect that, as she had purposefully not revealed her intentionality to protect herself. This tallied with the discourse of nominal authenticity of students from UKI (p.117).

Summative assessments

All practical staff came together as a panel to assess each submission, which consisted of a curated mini-exhibition of a body of work and an artists' statement.²⁴ Following on from the internal assessment was a brief moderation meeting. External examination occurred within a few days of this assessment.

Assessors drew from their recollections of students' processes and articulation at formative assessments; the supervisors' presentation; and the artwork. In my observations, staff rarely engaged with the artists' statement displayed on the wall of the show (unlike the practice at UKI, p.90). Disregard for the statement was indicated by comments such as, "We need to read the long schlep²⁵" and questioning, "Does it matter?" when trying to ascertain the significance of elements which were unknown to the supervisor. Many staff admitted to heavily editing these statements, and not emphasizing them as a part of the submission. Students too were ambivalent, such as this student's indication of unease with how it represented his supervisor's value-maximising interpretation rather than his actual intentionality.

I feel a little embarrassed for even having the blurb.²⁶ Working with my supervisor, I did come to that idea as a way of framing the work but to me it's also quite far from something which encapsulates the work (Mark).

The majority of references made by supervisors were within column A. Faye consciously differed from this positioning to allow students' work "to speak for itself" (p.167). The dominant culture was for supervisors to make ipsative assessments, particularly of students' development since the mid-year formative assessment, which Helena and Sophie in particular used for substantiation of grades suggested. Student engagement; labour; skills; techniques; and micro-level innovation were given credence (A2), in addition to future plans and prospects (A1).

In terms of how artworks were presented, all the supervisors presented readings as experts (R2), and made norm-referenced comparisons. Some used strongly emotive language for their students' submissions, distinct from the dispassionate readings of the other panel members. In addition to presenting moderate actual intentionality, as in the formative context (p.126), the majority of

²⁴ As such, the structure of this section necessarily differs to that representing the analyses of summative assessment at UKI.

²⁵ A colloquialism adopted from the Yiddish word indicating something tedious (Delahunty 2008, p.309).

²⁶ A term informally used for the artist's statement.

supervisors acted as value-maximisers by strategically presenting the best possible interpretation of the work in terms of the criteria of the school, and/or the students' dispositions. I discussed this analysis in my interviews with the staff, all of whom concurred that this happened mostly unconsciously.

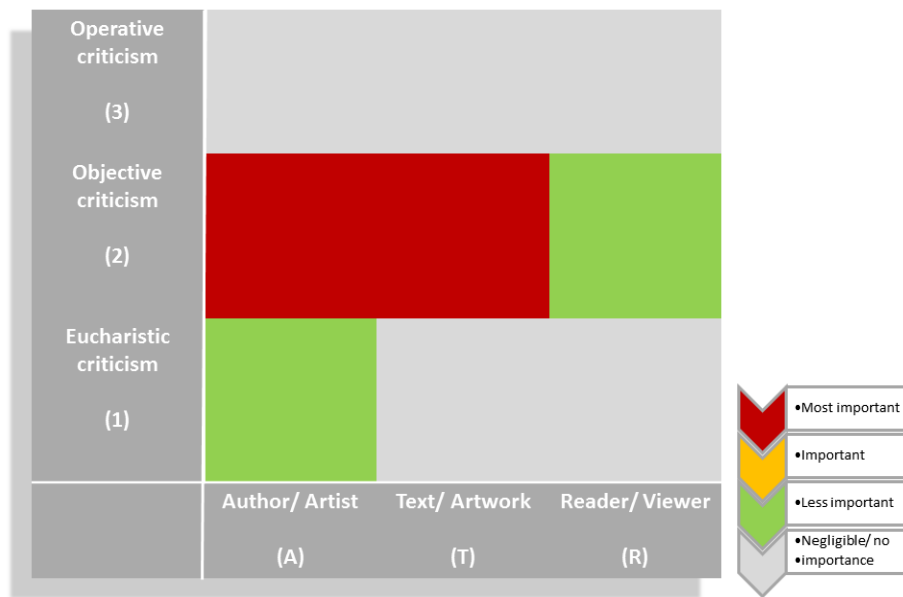
Dina: I think most of them operated as is 'value maximisers'. It is a horrible term, but it is the intentionalist model where – [interrupted]

Faye: I know exactly what you mean, although I've never heard that term.

Whilst the supervisors' assessment was not as dominant overall in this summative context, because they acted as medium experts, their assessment of formal aspects was respected (R2).

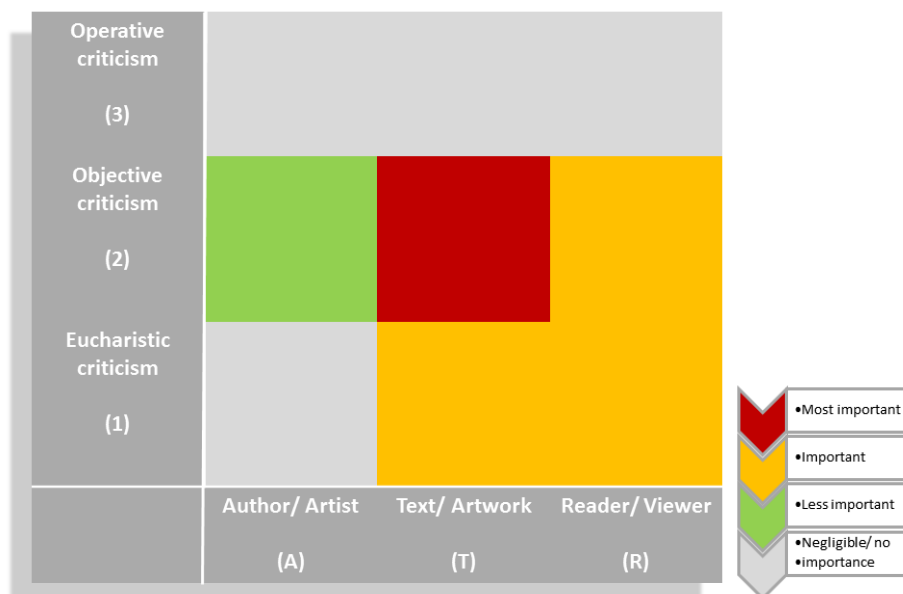
There were minimal discussions about students' conscious choices and realising their intentionality (A1) within supervisors' representations of their students' work. When supervisors made rare statements, such as "her intentions or strengths as an intellectual artist have become clearer to me" (Sophie), these were most often not followed by explanations. There were however definite indications of hypothetical intentionalist approaches. For instance, when aspects of a work's display were altered by the assessors, one joked "we can come up with intentional reasons for it".

Whilst supervisors were given a central position in terms of students' processes at formative assessments, here their involvement sometimes penalised their students. For the purpose of individual measurement, collaborative authorship was re-cast as a dependency on expert direction (A1). Supervisors sometimes tried to deflect negative marking of that which was a result of their interaction (as at UKI, p.85). Students' responsiveness to feedback was interpreted as positive or negative depending on the ultimate success of the final work (T). When successful, students' commitment, despite differing advice, was rewarded by supervisors as "having integrity", a discourse at both schools (pp.117; 155).



IF 12: Supervisors, summative assessments at SAI

In contrast to how the majority of staff positioned themselves as supervisors, when acting as assessors they espoused positioning their justifications and arguments in relation to the reception of the artworks (T + R) (IF 13). If this wavered, there would be explicit reminders to “try focus on the work” (Nick) because “you want to judge what you see” (Faye). Work that “can hold its own” (Nick) without authorial knowledge were seen as most successful. This indicated a distinct shift from composition and production carrying weight at the formative assessments.



IF 13: Assessors, summative assessments at SAI

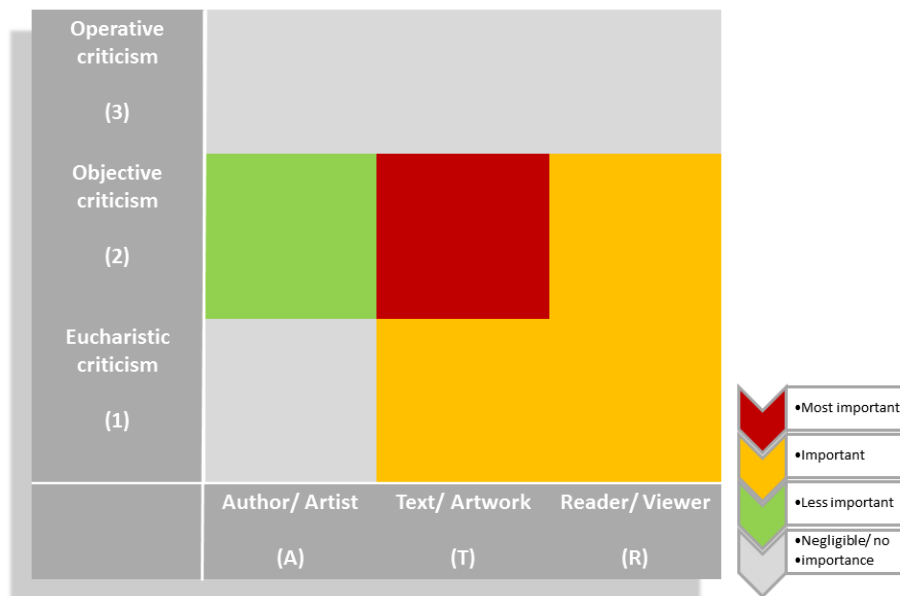
There was a strong accent on objective criticism, as might be expected in the curriculum context of medium-specific specialisation, particularly within T2. References were made to the mid-year assessment, to reward ipsative development and productive reception of feedback. The reciprocity of form and content was a concern, as was cohesion within each body of work. Intertextual comparisons were made between students' work, particularly those within medium-specialisations (T2), and when comparing the handling of conceptual discourses (T1).

I noticed that the time given to consider artworks differed. Adam, Helena and Faye were consistent in spending considerable time with works, while Nick and Sophie did so mostly only with those works considered 'strong'. Much of the technical glitches were ignored, as with UKI (p.92), and formative suggestions were for improvement of the shows before examination and public access. Reference was made to those works which were not selected. As such, much within T might not have related exclusively to "what is there".

One of the concerns I voiced was how assessors could judge whether the work before them was the outcome of the student's 'authentic' engagement, a strategic outcome, or a fortunate aberration. Their responses indicated an admission that any of these options were possible, but the supervisors' knowledge was referenced to ascertain which – indicating the important role that this source of insider knowledge played within this context. However, as the majority of supervisors acted as partial intentionalists and value-maximisers, rather than representatives of actual intentionality, it was questionable whether they could perform this espoused quality assurance role, weakening the anti-intentionalist approach. In many instances grades were high despite indications that students' had not intended such interpretations.

A tension between assessors as representative of academic or professional communities emerged (similar to UKI, p.96), most particularly when determining grades. I noticed a different engagement with the artwork when staff shifted gear for this summative purpose, using NRA and implicit criteria to come to a decision. Because of the gate-keeping role when awarding grades, the formative constructions, of the 'student' as artist-novice and their work as 'art', were re-cast as pedagogised objects within summative assessment.

Moderation practices



IF 14: Moderation meeting at SAI

Following on from the panel assessments, the staff ended with a brief informal moderation to double-check and refine grades assigned to students' submissions (IF 14). This involved NRA with active debate of implicit criteria, including students' artmaking processes (A2); their development across their degree (A2); p-creativity risks taken with controversial subjects which challenged students' beliefs, and technically (A1+2). Most supervisors argued for accrediting student investment and labour (A2). As with the summative assessment, supervisor involvement in their students' projects sometimes impacted negatively, and other times positively, on the assessment.

In terms of column T, there was a strong accent on what was evidenced within the submission (T), and intertextual NRA of form (T2) and conceptual discourses (T1). These aspects were not as debated as those mapped within column A, possibly because they had more explicit legitimacy within the anti-intentionalist approach. Whilst assessors' referenced their own interpretations and appreciation as readers (R1), their references as connoisseurs were privileged (R2).

With the summative panel assessments (IF 13), assessors' references were mostly within T and R, while supervisors appealed to aspects related to composition and production (A2 primarily, as in IF 12). However, as the role of supervisors was not given as much credibility in this context, the actual artwork and its reception carried more weight when determining the grade.

External examination

The HoD was concerned not to jeopardise the external examiner's quality assurance role and so preferred I did not observe those interactions. Instead, I drew from references made to this process, by the staff themselves, in the various assessment contexts. All those references were mapped within column R, the strongest relating to whether the external examiner as the imagined reader would legitimate their justifications (R2). Both art schools positioned the external in this manner (for UKI, p.95). Most often, assessors at SAI would play the game of erring towards conservative grades, to avoid the perception of their judgement as lenient.

This most privileged reading sat between academic quality assurance pressures of academia and the professional communities privileging of critics' readings over the artist's. The examiner's interpretative approach was constructed as 'objective' as it was presumed that s/he would read the work without access to authorial knowledge, and thus could not be swayed by subjectivities related to knowledge of the person or his/her process, instead focussing on the text (similar to UKI, p.95). This artificial construction (p.15) did not acknowledge that unless operating within outdated formalist objective criticism, the external is a reader who might interpret the work in a myriad of ways. Without explicit criteria, s/he would most probably have made NRA of expectations of quality at his/her own institution; intertextual references with contemporary practice; responses to questions posed to the staff; his/her understandings of interpretation from contemporary criticism, from his/her educational experiences, and art practice; and of course his/her particular reader-responses to each work. What was not recognized was that while such interpretative agency may conflict with conservative notions of objectivity, it need not undermine its validity (Morgan 2011).

Conclusion to mapping interpretative approaches at SAI

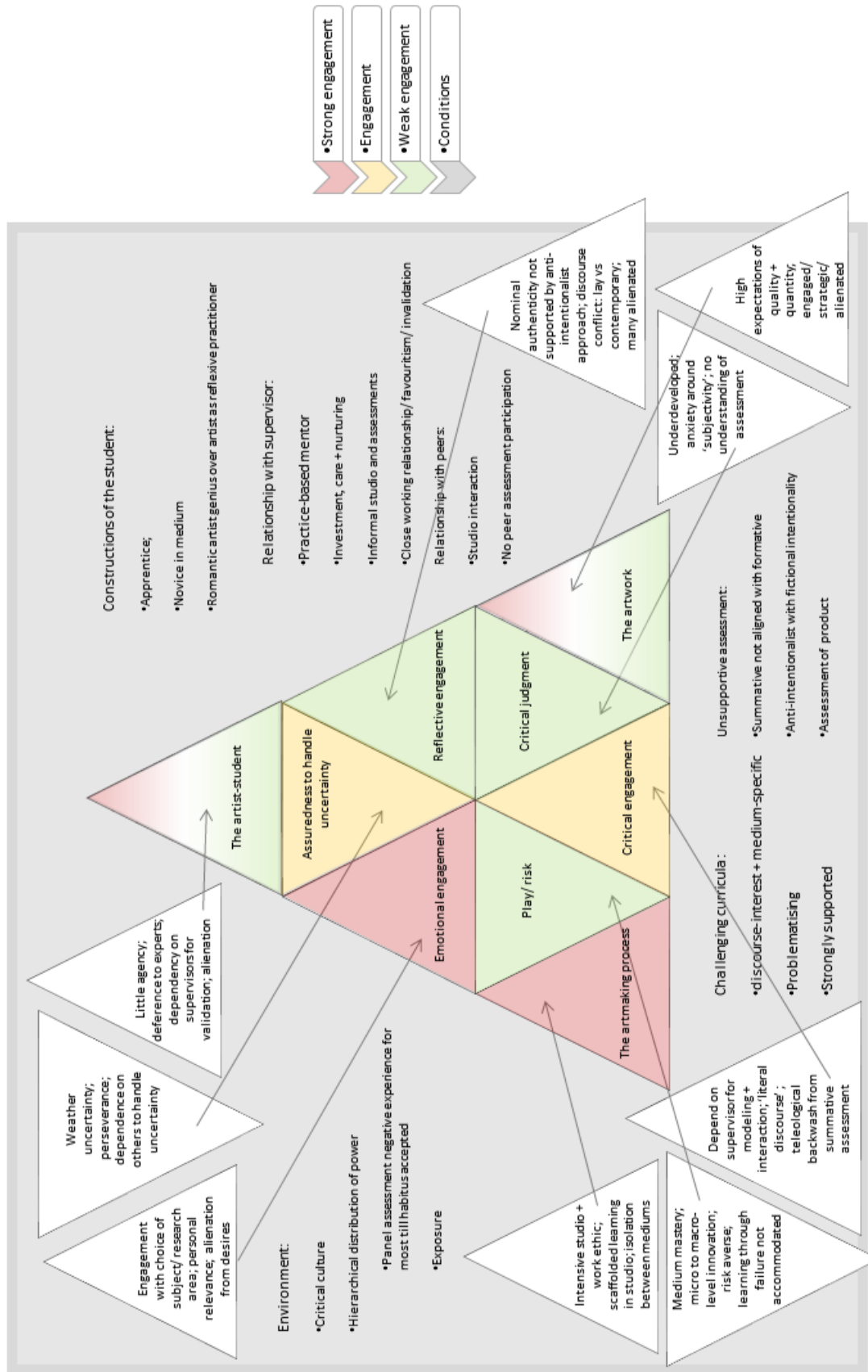
This school espoused anti-intentionalist approaches to the summative assessment of submissions. From the data I collected, there was a definite shift towards interpretations focusing on the text and its reception in the summative assessment, compared to references to composition and production in formative contexts. That which was presented by the supervisor was given less legitimacy than anti-intentionalist interpretations of the assessors. Articulation of students' actual intentionality was the exception to the rule, with moderate actual, hypothetical, and value-maximising intentionalist approaches adopted by supervisors. This cultural approach was aligned with the structural requirements of the submission exhibition, where material about composition or production was excluded, except for what was represented in the artists' statement, which was ascribed minimal importance.

The backwash of such anti-intentionalist approaches was most evident in the feedback provided to those students diagnosed as not performing well according to the implicit criteria of the school. While composition and production were the areas most concentrated on by the supervisor, whose voice was given the most weight at this formative point, this was mostly for the purposes of enhancing the artwork as a product within a system of exchange, than student development. However, with students who had learnt to practice the habitus of the school, whose desires accorded with and were validated by the assessors, or whose artwork showed the potential to succeed, the experiences of such formative assessments in the last year of their studies were considerably different. In the next section, I consider in more detail how such experiences impacted on their engagement.

B. Conditions for creativity

Whilst most of the staff at this school indicated a rejection of the ways in which they were taught, and the previously formalist curriculum now embraced contextualism, there had been little conscious reconsideration of the learning conditions at the school, perhaps because there was little buy-in to educational discourses. Therefore, whilst solidarity emerged between participants in the studio, there was mostly little disruption to the distribution of power within relationships, nor was safety for uncertainty or risk enabled by the structures of assessment by product. In this section, I outline the discursive positioning of the roles of supervisor and students, before considering student engagement.

Schema 3 provides a visual representation of the conditions at SAI at the time of data generation. The red triangles indicate those areas where engagement seemed most enabled, such as emotional engagement, and engagement with the artmaking process. Lesser enabled was handling uncertainty and critical engagement (orange areas). The green areas are indicative of where on the whole students felt constrained or underdeveloped, including play/risk; critical judgement; and reflective engagement. Two triangles, engagement as artist-students and engagement with their artworks, are shaded with the polarities of red and green to indicate students feeling either intensely engaged or alienated.



Schema 3: Conditions at SAI

Constructions of the staff

Both staff (p.122) and students constructed assessors as having the power to direct or instruct their processes. However, student experiences of the different roles of teaching and evaluation seriously threatened the validity of the guidance offered at the formative panel context. Interaction with the panel was perceived as not important enough to risk being vulnerable (Alison; Lenore). It was explained that this was because student articulation was not 'heard' by assessors, possibly because they did not bear responsibility for students they did not supervise; lacked intimate shared understanding of students' aims and desires; and had little time available before moving on to the next student. Students felt that "if they are not your medium lecturer, it really does not matter", indicating that the feedback of the supervisor was seen as more valid and important than that of other staff.

When given the opportunity to define the construction which most related to their one-to-one studio conversations (Appendix D), all the staff selected the atelier method, of the supervisor as 'coach' (Harwood 2007). This espoused theory involved offering constructive criticism on ideas and proposals, and helping students realise their ideas. Questions as to the value of this method, and the expert's influence, extend back to the Romantic academies (Elkins 2001). Many staff indicated that the atelier relationship was not fixed, varying in relation to the capacity or personal orientation of each student, and supervisors' strategies to "bring out the best" (Adam) in that person's production. Whilst a number of the staff indicated that other models appealed, particularly the liminal servant and critical friend, it emerged that at undergraduate level these were not practiced (confirming Webster's (2004) findings).

A strong accent was on guiding production towards resolution, an implicit criterion at the school (p.70). However, because the supervisor was tasked with the greatest responsibility for success of production, this reinforced their power in the teaching-learning dynamic. The medium-specificity in the latter years of the degree; geographic isolation; autonomy of individual supervisors who all held tenured positions and worked in different spaces; and national deferential culture in education (p.64), further enforced such authority. Strong mentoring was observed, with formative feedback on the artmaking process provided by the supervisor acting as medium-specific expert, contemporary artist, and future assessor. The value of such mentor-apprentice dynamics for acculturation and epistemological access have been lauded as a more contemporary version of the traditional master-apprentice model (Cunliffe 2007).

Whilst the supervisors' studios were alongside students', staff all saw this role as *managing* and scaffolding production processes, rather than their practice being emulated. The learning environment, with its small numbers of one to eight students per supervisor; intensive studio hours; high assessment expectations; many one-on-one formative assessment opportunities per week; and other such factors, created an allowance for closeness. Very possibly because of the nature of learning in FASP, which operates on a number of dimensions, supervisors exhibited a strong culture of affective concern and attentiveness. Practiced differently in the studio (Chapter Six), as a panel community their empathy with uncertain artmaking processes was voiced when providing formative feedback.

Close personal relationships are seen by some as an expected student-supervisor dynamic, with informal interactions a major advantage of the studio (Austerlitz & Aravot 2006). As I explore in more detail in Chapter Six, two of the supervisors newest to teaching (Sophie; Faye), extended relationships outside of the professional context, with some of their students voicing discomfort with these social dynamics when favouritism seemed to emerge (p.141). The more experienced staff spoke about having learnt to maintain boundaries and safeguards by focusing on production, particularly since at that residential university the majority of students were young and beyond parental protection and advice (Helena; Adam). On the whole, such closeness revolved around the ins-and-outs of the artmaking process, where the rapport and history of students' processes, individual challenges and desires, informed their interactions.

Such structured guidance and support indicated that student learning was not constructed as self-directed. Observations indicated there was a far more collaborative process than realised. I recognised an irony when comparing the schools. While UKI mostly eschewed notions of the solitary artist and actively embraced the construction of the artist as collaborator, because peer learning in the studio was minimised and supervisor-student interaction reduced to emphasize self-directed learning, UKI unwittingly prepared their students for solitary production. And despite the national reality of the undergraduate studies being entrance to professional practice in South Africa, whilst students from SAI had solo shows to exhibit, the majority would probably not be able to operate independently after such a prolonged collaborative teaching-learning dynamic.

Emerging from the medium-specific accent was the figure of the artist-teacher as the expert medium-specialist. In the studio assessments I observed, when supervisors shared the specificity of their knowledge of the medium, its processes and its history, in relation to particular aspects of the students' practice, these students seemed appreciative. The majority indicated that the shift to a

single supervisor relationship within the medium-specific context, coupled with having more autonomy of choice in the last two years of study, helped them gain greater surety and security in their learning processes.

I offered my interpretation of how the construction of medium-specificity impacted panel assessment practices, to which the staff agreed.

This case is a stable interpretative community where agreement is the aim during assessment. Where you are seen as distinct, is that each individual lecturers' role is constructed as a representative of a medium-specialisation, and this is more clearly and explicitly valued than the person's interpretations during assessment.

Whilst all assessors felt competent to comment on conceptual aspects of the work “across the board”, when acting as assessors, staff neither pretended to be authorities in mediums with which they were unfamiliar nor felt constrained by the medium they taught, as many worked in cross-disciplinary ways (Sophie; Helena).

Many of the constructions hinged on this school's understanding of practice-based teaching. The mentor-apprentice dynamic was not about the master's research, but rather about modelling ‘ways of being’ of the artist and medium-expert (such as a ‘painter’, ‘photographer’) and discussing processes of making in relation to each student's needs. A costly process in time and energy, it paid dividends in that students responded with attention and appreciation, as such guidance and feedback was perceived as directly relevant to their projects. Knowledge of practice allowed for supervisors to articulate students' processes back to them in appropriate discourses (Northedge 2003), making their often unconscious and embodied processes more visible, and thereby more open to critical reflection. Intensive interaction during conception and production processes in the studio, enabled supervisors to communicate an empathetic response as image-maker to their students' uncertainty, while emphasizing the value of weathering this, because of the insights they had gained from their own practice. In such ways, they demonstrated solidarity (p.22) as fellow image-makers. However, whilst supervisors at SAI may have had free reign to preside over their own territories, this power was reduced at summative assessments, where implicit individuated curricula and negotiated criteria were undermined by the anti-intentionalist approach (p.129).

Constructions of the student

In many ways, the constructions of students at this school were aligned with how teaching staff were constructed (above). Because of the accent on product and sophistication of medium-specificity at the school, the dominant construction was of the student as an apprentice who should exhibit

deference to the expert and his/her guidance as to the direction of the work; and practice a strong work ethic, dedication, and conscientiousness as s/he learned experientially and pushed through challenges. Because of this vertical hierarchy, structures such as formative panel assessments were almost entirely dominated by the teaching staff. Differing approaches, such as Faye's explicit inclusion of peer learning in studio assessments (p.196), were invalidated by the dominant assessment culture. In addition to peer-assessment not being valued, students were reminded of their novice status by never being referred to as 'artists' and often being treated as presumptuous if they did so themselves.

A dichotomous construction emerged (see Bourdieu on this, p.17). Some students were constructed as lateral thinking, intuitive and more sensitive than the mainstream. Such notions have roots in myths where 'creative' is associated with that which comes 'naturally' (Grierson 2007), such as the Romantic and humanist artist as the ideal of fulfilled selfhood (p.32). Fendrich (2005) cautions that many of today's artists allow themselves to uncritically believe they are morally superior to non-artists, with their emotional sensitivity "pitted against a cold and corrupt society". Whilst in theory the artist is transcendently free and beyond contextual influence, Romantic myths of the autonomous, authentic, artist-genius can be seen to unwittingly silence the student as his/her work is cast as autonomous of its unconscious maker. Such expressivist notions of artworks embodying traces of concretized subjectivity (p.291) have emerged in other studies of FASP (Addison 2007).

At times such constructions were prized, particularly when the artwork was successful, with the student characterised by talent, honesty, authenticity and general niceness. But when unsuccessful, such students were re-cast as stupid, unable to articulate themselves or adapt to change, and open to manipulation. Edeen believed that the staff had disregarded her because of their estimation of her lacking conceptual capacity, which she in turn internalised.

They give me technical advice because as far as they're concerned I cannot do conceptual. I'm pretty useless at conceptuality.

This construction, of privileging conceptual thinking over material responsiveness, was echoed by a number of students.

"Intuitive" students were polarised from constructions of the intelligent, assertive, and self-critical student, linked to the artist as reflexive practitioner (p.68) when successful at the school, but even in such instances, treated with an element of suspicion. One such student was described as "too clever for his own good" and "pretentious". Students, who did exhibit such intelligence but were self-

deprecating and self-effacing, were more accepted and 'liked'. It was perhaps because of this unconscious dichotomy, in addition to a concern that students' work not be "over intellectualised", that there was resistance to the idea of written meta-cognitive engagement.

Almost all the staff made references to such traits, of creativity versus intelligence, as fixed and innate, and seemed less invested in those students not constructed as 'talented', a continually questioned notion in research (Gaztambide-Fernández et al. 2013). Students were often bound by their own "histories" (Nick) within the school, where "profiles" created early on were difficult to rupture or overcome (Adam). When success was a surprise it was attributed to the input of the supervisor, and when not, students were doubly punished as they were often measured against their 'potential'. Lenore spoke about being constructed as a certain type of artist by the school, both in terms of the person and in terms of their artwork.

In this environment I feel as though they trying to suppress certain things in the artists they're trying to create and make other things bigger, exaggerate and suppress in certain aspects of personality and practical application.

Initially, I could see little agency for students to be independent or critical, both because most were strongly enculturated, and because supervisors exhibited a strong investment in and over the success of their artworks. A tacit discourse of guilt emerged from students when having critical thoughts about relationships and assessment at the school.

Obviously it's almost unrealistic to be angry because you do need some sort of guidance and control within the process of artmaking, especially in school (Grace).

The critical disposition central to the content of their artmaking (p.71) was not been permitted within the disposition of 'students' within the institution itself. When the latter was exercised, resistance to feedback was seen as stubbornness or due to an inability, rather than lee-way for difference or independence. When combined with potentially doing badly, students were coerced through the combined might of the stable interpretative community.

Specific students exhibited their agency by manipulating these constructions and relationships. This included the adoption of certain approaches to learning; and performing as expected, whether displaying deference or being assured (p.145). Students noticed some of their peers consciously manipulating staff to get such attention. Lenore expressed moral indignation at the "favouritism" of some students over others within the school which she felt was "quite unjust". Those of her classmates present at this focus group interview agreed, applauding her courage to voice the issue. Lenore felt it was "horrendous" to be the person out of favour. To represent herself positioned

outside of the ideal and rendered invisible, she absented the figure from the ground in the two images on either side of the central iconic figurine of the ideal student (VN 17).

4. Use this space as an opportunity to express something you have not had an opportunity to 'say' about your studies this far.



Your words:



VN 17: Lenore expressed her sense of the injustice of favouritism

Whilst in her first few years she had “fought” to be like one of those “favourites, because you know that they get all this extra stuff and extra attention and extra opportunities”, she found herself without the cultural capital to do so. She realised it had little to do with the academic project as she achieved high grades. It emerged in this discussion that students had not considered the responsibility of staff for such dynamics. As we chatted in the interview, they spoke about noticing that such dynamics had occurred across a number of the years, making them wonder whether the culture rewarded specific students over others, particularly male students. My own sense was that such students conformed more strongly to constructions of ‘ideal’ artists.

Student engagement

I begin this discussion by considering the dominant discourses that emerged about student experiences of alienation, before looking at student stories of emotional, critical and reflective engagement.

Alienation

A number of students experienced alienation due their lived experiences of being positioned as novice artists assessed by knowledgeable expert practitioners (p.139). This was exacerbated by the assessment of the person in relation to their work rather than as a whole being. Edeen explained that although assessors' responses were to the artwork, she internalised that as a criticism of her identity as an artist, so that something inside her "died a little bit; it died a lot".

I feel like I'm small, really, like everyone's looking down on you, throwing out test-like sentences at you, where you're supposed to taking in like what is going on.

Intimidated, she felt "like such a small fish compared to, there are so many artists in the world and I think of that every time I'm critted". Her physical response to panel assessments included nausea and a strong compulsion to flee, because of feeling forced to undergo a process not of her own choosing.



Your words:

A second-year drawing project ~~was~~ was one of my favourite and most successful pieces throughout my studies. A self portrait that highlighted my insecurity and feelings of vulnerability when put on the spot and being the centre of attention. ~~At~~ During my assessment the work perfectly summarised the way I felt. Even though the assessment was positive, I felt judged and anxious.

VN 18: Laura's experience of exposure

Laura felt judgment and anxiety, both for herself and her artwork, when positioned within the assessment context (VN 18). That to which she alluded, emerged in many stories: that alienation as a result of performativity often impacted on individuals' identities. Similarly Chelsea communicated feeling inadequate and exposed, due to the anxieties of performativity when she first started her FASP studies, until learning how to be validated through her artwork's success in that system of exchange (VN 19). She represented this as having "scored a goal" within the game.



VN 19: Chelsea's experience of performativity as a novice

Edeen's engagement with her artworks was brought in to conflict with the assessors' reception (VN 20). She expressed anger that the assessors did not validate her identity and failed to provide the guidance she felt was needed. This was exacerbated by the realisation that her work was one amongst many others to be assessed, rather than an individual entity worthy of intense attention, an unconscious expectation of the Critique as amorous (Elkins 2001).

'So fuck what they think' and so that just leads to other thoughts, like then you've got to think about why they said that and what they're going for, 'What do they want from me?', and then eventually you find out that you're not really all that great, you're not really good enough..

Her act of resistance led to a "downward spiral of negativity" about herself. As with many of her peers, the discursive and interpretative frameworks utilised within assessment shifted "to a self/ego level in which the learners' energies go into reconciling the mark with their view of themselves as learners" (Stobart 2006).

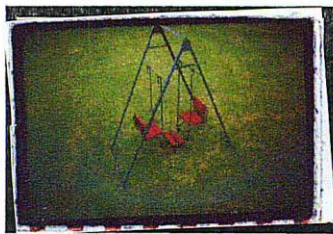


Your words: *Daniel was a cat. He didn't last too long in the wilderness.
He was a great cat.*

VN 20: The effects of alienation on Edeen's identity

At different times, the power dynamics between students and staff were experienced as skewed. In the focus group interviews, the majority of students articulated feeling little agency against the inflexibility of Critiques which they had submitted to early on when least confident, and thus had never considered challenging. Alison exclaimed "it's terrifying, so you just accept [it]". Stanley

described his sequence (VN 21) as “a crèche almost” where, in their artmaking infancy, students learnt the habitus of the school. Contrasting images with associations of play and safety with those of authority, the swing related to his being a novice and the birdcage the studio space, while the authority of the religious figurine stood for the panel in “a position of like supreme judgment [where] your judgment needed to, if you wanted to get anywhere, line it up with theirs and become what they are like”. Such power dynamics were experienced as “nerve-wracking”, particularly when witnessing those students “who got extremely shat on, and that was like the scary part, there were always kids crying”. When asked what the emotional implications were for his engagement, he responded, “I linked that to something that could happen to me if I let myself slip”, making him averse to repeating similar “mistakes”.



Your words:
Play



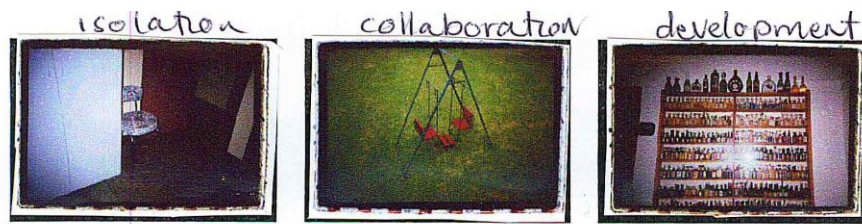
Sadty,
confinement



Moral Jesus/
HOD

VN 21: Assessment of a work in which Stanley was invested

At my observations of the formative panel event, the majority of students performed with deference to the assessors. 7 of the 16 students did not speak in response to feedback, except to thank the assessors on leaving. Such silence may have indicated passivity or intimidation in the face of the strongly assertive nature of the feedback. For a number of students, such deference was strategically risk-averse. Jade, for instance, actively asked the assessors for their perception of how she was progressing (“what do you think?”), which when triangulated with other data, related to her relinquishing her desires for validation. However, it should be noted that with the more enculturated and successful students, the relationship was more collaborative (p.138) and created the perception of student agency. For instance, Grace’s initial vulnerability to disclosure was later replaced by an “almost collaborative process for me, where I take into account what the lecturers are saying to me” (VN 22).



VN 22: Grace's experience of her relationship with assessors as collaborative

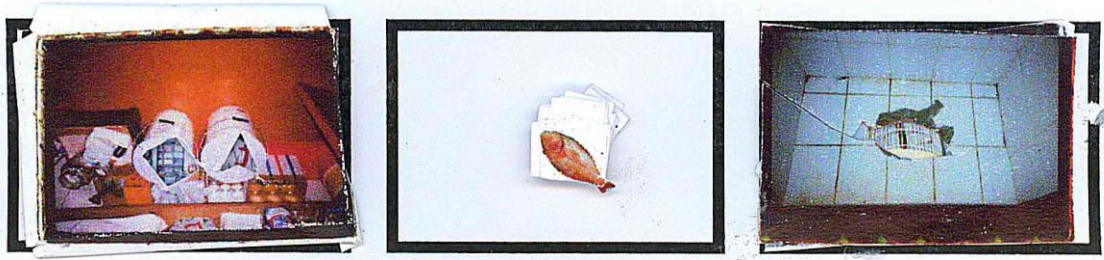
She perceived staff feedback as “an arsenal for my artmaking process”, in a metaphor of the Critique as warlike (Elkins 2001). This could be linked to the principle of ‘solidarity’ (p.22) where staff input aids student negotiation of the transitional space as their artworks enter public reception.

However, the majority of students spoke about extreme experiences of alienation as a result of power imbalances within the school. Katy’s story (VN 23) indicated such experiences left her bereft of the capacity for creativity, which she felt had remained with her, and been reaffirmed throughout her studies.



VN 23: Extreme alienation resulted in a loss of creativity for Katy

Emotional upheaval occurred when the panel presented Lenore with an “ultimatum” to alter her practice according to their dictates or abandon her studies (VN 24). The three-dimensional self-portrait, as a fish on the top of a concertina-like plinth, embodied her feeling “almost on a pedestal in an isolated sort of way which wasn’t in the end that great, which resulted in this sort of empty caged feeling”. The panel’s feedback seemed “an attack on my person, you know, like it was ‘fix yourself not your artwork’ in a way”, further exacerbated by the culminated power of multiple assessors “ganging up on you and they all have the same opinion, it’s quite scary”. This experience had the impact of “cutting me down in a big way. That really needed some quite serious rebuilding of the self”.



VN 24: Lenore's story of the assessment of work in which she was invested

When probed, Lenore made sense of the assessors' intentions at that time. She thought they were perhaps trying to shift or challenge her to react to their critique, an approach she observed when other students seemed "stuck". However, she felt such "purposeful" interventions were not suitable for all personalities. From this experience, of her work and identity invalidated through the relationships of power and system of exchange, Lenore chose to become defensive in her interactions at assessments, by not risking "putting myself out there like that again".

I think that was a very important learning curve when dealing with assessments and the art that you made. There is a certain level that you must not disclose... I think they train art students to develop that.

She felt that such an impoverished way of being was not of her choosing.

I don't know if that's the right way for people to live because I feel like there's sort of closing a part of you off that can be quite important to your development as a person.

A number of students' stories pointed to such experiences of alienation impacting on their engagement with their artworks.

I think fearful was quite like a big word for me when I was very into the work and I had nowhere to turn (Jade).

Jade's story indicated extreme alienation due to invalidation of her work and labour by those who were in positions of power to proclaim its legitimacy (VN 25). As Jade's work was perceived as being at risk, she was instructed to disregard it. The feedback had not been sufficiently substantiated this decision, so she could not comprehend what could warrant her relinquishing an area of interest that had such personal import for her. Despite being unconvinced, Jade abandoned the project.

Maintaining belief in the subject matter, Jade assumed blame. I noticed a sense of double failure in such cases: failure to succeed according to the academic framework, and failure to do justice to the subject in which such students were invested.



Your words:

disappointed, fearful... No idea which way to turn because I really was completely invested and the assessors responses ~~was~~ were more than awful, completely on a different page to me. uninspired. Bleak. the end.

VN 25: Jade's despair as a result of invalidation

Jade synonymized engagement with feeling "relieved that they were finally happy with something and then that's what I could work towards, their happiness".

The lecturers were excited about what I hadn't even thought about. But they were like 'Oh, we're excited about this!' And then that triggered, 'Ok, they, they're happy about that, so that is what I should work on'.

The goal of the educational endeavour for this student was no longer the engagement with a subject or the development of her authorship, but rather negating that to please her assessors.



Your words:

criticism can teach you things about yourself.

VN 26: Uncertainty about validation was an alienating for Sindisiwe

In such stories, alienation resulted from the artwork becoming a product in the assessment system of exchange. Echoing similar experiences of UKI students (p.105), Sindisiwe's uncertainty about the reception of the work, and whether it would be validated or not, created a tension as to whether she should remain committed to the work or begin to distance herself from her desires, creating alternating experiences of engagement and alienation represented by the back-and-forth motion of the swing (VN 26). As with Jade's story, such experiences were more extreme when subjects with

personal relevance became objects open to scrutiny. The central image of a bed enabled her to speak about her discomfort with being powerless to resist the violation of assessors “invading my private space, should I allow someone to invade my space?”

In addition, alienation was experienced as students tried to negotiate different discourses about art (similar to UKI, p.108). Layperson’s understandings of artmaking in South Africa are mostly unsophisticated, due to a low level visual and cultural literacy within the population, which Chelsea experienced through public reception of her subject matter as “a bit strange”, which she found “quite hard”. However, as she was not sure whether she would continue with fine art, she found herself being less dismissive of such reader-responses (R1), recognising they had power in other discourses.

Betty’s narrative was revealing of the effect of such conflicting discourses. Having ideas dismissed by staff, because they were judged “too literal, too obvious or too contrived”, had resulted in her being alienated from her desires, capitulating to more strategic choices to succeed within that framework.

Then you end up just producing what they sort of want you to produce, so that you can at least pass. So now you’re not doing it because you invest in it at all.

Such loss of agency undermined Betty’s self-confidence as an artist, to the point where she seemed adamant she would never make art once awarded her degree. She was melancholic of her previous emotional engagement and assuredness with her artmaking before her studies.

I’m very self-conscious now. I’m very cautious and scared of what the crits going to be, whereas before I just did it flamboyantly and freely and I was naïve.

For different reasons, Mark’s email after the submission show hinted at similar nostalgia for a time before enculturation within the academic framework had shifted his work from more accessible discourses.

I see how it has changed me and mourn the changes in a way. I feel like it has partly contributed toward my work becoming slightly inaccessible to larger audiences.

Alienation from such experiences and discourse conflicts occurred across the cohort: from Jade who received one of the lowest grades, right through to Mark who was awarded one of the highest. Students found different ways to cope, from relinquishing their desires to performing strategically. Lenore exhibited a feigned bravado during the mid-year assessment feedback session to display the habitus she knew was rewarded (p.139), requiring a balance between seeming assured and appearing receptive. Alison described having created “a filter” to her reception of the feedback,

where she presumed that half of the feedback would be unhelpful to her as irrelevant to her own strategy, thus reducing her expectations and disappointment.

Engagement

Many students' stories indicated emotional engagement with the subject of their research. Grace spoke about the importance of the personal relevance of self-chosen thematics.

Choosing project themes and concepts that personally engage you help strengthen the overall artmaking process. Choosing an idea which is unique to your own experience.

Material "which is really rich" helped her "feel more attached to what I am doing and why I am here studying art".

In terms of engagement with process, Tessa's story spoke about how formative feedback fed her confidence to experiment and push her own boundaries, rather than depend on skills with which she was comfortable. When I inquired whether the curricular push towards a final exhibition, and implicit expectations of resolution and mastery of skill stunted experimentation, her experience was "the opposite with that. They were happy to sort of go, 'Do something different'". She believed that because of her proven track-record of technical proficiency and "delivering", she had earned the liberty to push beyond those parameters. Tessa's narrative indicated how assessors made calculations based on their surety that risks would not jeopardize success. However, the vast majority of students realised that the principle of safety to risk (p.22) was not supported by the assessment structures which disallowed extended periods of uncertainty. The pressure to be strategic in the face of the drive for a finished product, particularly for those constructed as 'weak', often resulted in alienation from process. Because they mediated between assessment and teaching, "the guidance of our superiors sometimes shadows and influences our process to the point where it can cause rigidity and predictability within our processes" (Grace).

Critical engagement by students themselves, rather than directed by the staff, was an area that seemingly could have been better facilitated at the school. Lenore spoke about her disenchantment with formative feedback. Only in her final year had she gained enough confidence to act on her frustrations about the lack of "value" of such feedback, but found even the approach of asking for specific feedback was not that fruitful. A number of students voiced feeling uncertain about whether their critical engagement was aligned with the criteria at the school. Jade's narrative (VN 27) related directly to her lack of capacity to discern the school's criteria, and to understand what was rewarded within this habitus, common to students at both schools (p.70). Such constant uncertainty stunted

her development as she felt unable to proceed to the “end goal” the assessors envisaged with any confidence.



Your words:

Whole of my final year has been uncertain regarding my art. I Never know if they are going to be happy.

VN 27: Jade's growth retarded by uncertainty within her critical engagement

As a way to comprehend such a lack of shared understanding, Tessa compared FASP to other studies. She focused on the artefact produced for assessment purposes: how guidelines for essay writing in a standard Bachelor of Arts degree empower students by making transparent how essays may be strengthened, as “there is a formula there” upon which feedback could be based. Her experience was that FASP was far more complicated and uncertain.

I think that sometimes it can be very frustrating, and then at other times it can be really fun, and other times you're sort of ok with things not really working. But then I wonder if that comes from how invested you are in something?

Laura's assessment experiences had forced her “to grow thicker skin” to less favourable reader-responses. With this came a passive acceptance of criticism as inevitable, rather than having developed capacity to evaluate its worth or relevance.

You have to accept peoples' judgments and their criticisms and their advice, no matter how good or bad it is... having people say something negative about my work, I can accept it but I won't hold on to it for too long now.

Stanley spoke about having developed more surety about his own ability to respond to criticism.

I think the way I respond to criticism and ideas has improved since I've been at X and allowed me to improve on myself and my work.

While he respected the assessors' feedback explaining that “I take all my lecturers' words seriously, I know they've got the experience”, because as he felt more equipped to interpret and evaluate their

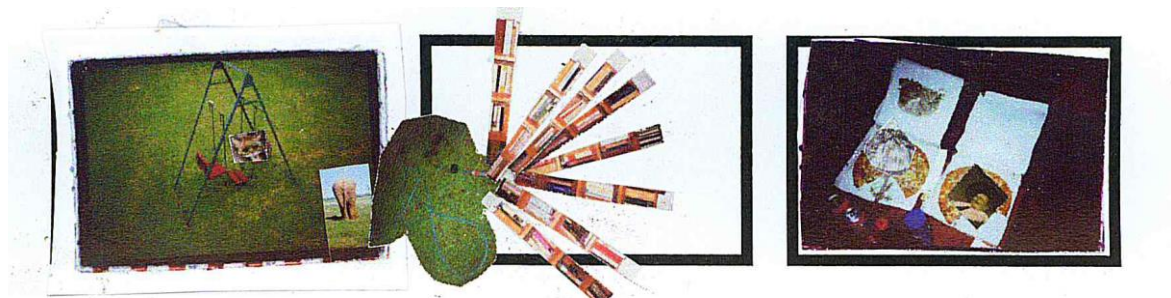
professional practice, “it levels it a little bit more”. His peers’ opinions and understandings about artmaking were now beginning to “carry more weight in terms of what I want to produce” as he felt they were more current and valid to the local context than staff understandings as “the older generation of artmakers”.

Sindisiwe had experienced staff feedback as helpful for her self-knowledge, despite her own experiences of alienation (p.148) and discomfort with the assessment event.

When I look at where I started and when I look at myself now, there’s a lot of growth, and all that criticism at that point in time, it looked like it was so unnecessary and harsh, but actually it got me where I was now.

Reflective engagement with the artwork was not an explicit concern at SAI (unlike UKI, p.74). The anti-intentionalist summative approach constrained individual supervisors’ facilitation of such skills in the studio. Aspects of reflective engagement which emerged from students’ stories related to skills of self-assessment and the relation of their meta-cognition to their intentionality.

In terms of self-assessment, Lenore’s independence and in turn development of her own skills of reflective engagement had been born from experiences of invalidation.



VN 28: Lenore’s development of self-assessment skills

She re-traced experiences of staff-student relationships throughout her degree (VN 28). In the first year, she felt isolated as “the only cat on the swing” and as a result developed a resistance to the invalidation of the assessors, explaining “I gave them the bums up”, visualised by an animal’s hind quarters. This echoed Edeen’s gesture of resistance (p.144). Both students had freed themselves from an expectation of being validated by relationships, a paradox of resentment (Govier 2002) which echoed experiences of some UKI students (p.109).

I let go of that need of dependency on the lecturers, which I think I was holding onto in hoping (Lenore).

Release, from having deconstructed the assessors' authority, was visualised in the spliced bookshelf fanning out from the act of resistance.

That's sort of what's resulted in a pizza-like reflection of collaborating with yourself more than collaborating with what someone might potentially want you to [do].

Whilst recognising such developed self-assessment capacity as a strength, Lenore felt anxiety about whether such critical judgment could effectively decipher a 'successful' or 'good' artwork, as there was a lack of positive affirmation or making the most of achievements or good practice in assessment contexts.

There's never really a good, strong enough voice of reason I find, that gives you that feeling like, 'Ok, I'm actually achieving'. They never actually just sit you down and say 'you know what, you're actually doing great'. It's always 'something needs to be fixed', and 'something isn't right'. I don't know why they can't just tell me I'm doing alright?

Similarly, Tessa felt unable to decode the criteria for successful work at SAI.

But one thing that I never quite figured out, is when someone says 'yes' to a work, when they think it's great and it's going really well. What I still haven't figured out is - why?

In an attempt to answer the question, Tessa constructed the evaluation of art as "all so subjective", both in the academic and real world contexts. Although a high achieving student, she too dipped into this discourse of subjectivity (p.71) to explain the complexity of the process. Alison questioned the validity of such judgements in the face of the supposed "subjectivity" of aesthetic criticism. Futility at submitting herself to pedagogic processes, rather than engagement with larger questions around the reception of the work, emerged.

Art marking is subjective, I really do think it is. But if you want to be an artist, you go to art school, and get marks. You're trying to say something with an artwork and whether or not the lecturers think that it works or not, chances are you actually don't really know, because it may not be out in the public or, I'm not sure, it's very hard.

She felt that the assessment gaze weakened comprehension of the nuances in the work. In Alison's grappling with this issue, she placed intentionality as central to nominal authenticity, as did many others (p.155). Katy's assessment of her work, after the submission exhibition, similarly indicated the powerful role intentionality played in her estimations of its success.

I was so so so happy with my show. I feel that it turned out exactly the way I imagined it, in my mind, and I think that is what you essentially hope for in the end... The show had the feeling that I wanted to express to the viewers.

The high response rate (14/16) to the questionnaire (Appendix F) enabled me to map how students negotiated their intentionality in terms of the public reception of their final show. Only three students' intentionality could be mapped entirely within column A. Stanley indicated a desire for the audience to connect with him as a person (A1); Edeen was not focused on the reception of her work at all, but rather her own self as an artist and the process of making the work, constructing artmaking was akin to a layperson's understanding of therapy (A1+2); and Jade indicated very low level expectations of her work's reception, focusing rather on how her investment (A2) might lead to affirmation for her as a person, rather than an experience of the works themselves for the viewer. Reading this within the context of her extreme experiences of alienation, due to the final project not being an artwork she authored but rather a product for exchange, her hope for validation from the audience echoed what she sought from staff.

Most students' explanations of their intentionality related to A but not exclusively, possibly because the complexities of reception and authorship in contemporary art was comprehended. For instance, after extensively outlining that readings she hoped for, within objective criticism and intertextuality (T2+3), Tessa indicated an understanding of the collaborative nature of authorship.

I do like the idea that each person would bring their own meaning to each work or to the overall show and therefore that the work could be interpreted in multiple ways and could take on a completely different meaning than what I intended.

Katy was interested in the artwork interacting with viewers. Whilst her imagined readers were more knowledgeable about art (R2), she added that "I wanted non-artistic viewers [R1] to enjoy the show as well, even if my intentionality wasn't clear to them". Laura's story indicated the complexities of intentionality, with aspects related to the readers' knowledge of her specific biography (A1); collective memories of historical events (T1); and a specific genre of representation (T2). She allowed for less prescriptive engagement from readers (R1), through the formal details (T2). Although drawing from similar subject matter, Zosha was hoping for viewers' experiences (R1) to mirror her own (A1). Mark's intentionality was aligned with the formalist nature of his artwork (T2), strongly directive of the imagined viewer's response (R2). Jacob's intentionality sat at a meta-level, as his work operated as a corrective to past texts, performing by engaging with reception within a specific historical context (T3). Whilst Grace's work was initiated from a personal context to which she wanted the viewer to be privy (A), much of her intentionality related to T and R as she attempted to guide the viewers' experience.

Some students were entirely interested in anti-intentionalist interpretations (R) made without reference to authorial knowledge of composition or production. Alison's intentionality focused entirely on reader-response (R1+2), and Lenore was interested in how such readings function (R3).

What I exhibited was open to interpretation, as all mythology is, and in this way allowing the viewer to reflect on themselves through generating an understanding... a psychological social experiment that people don't realise they are taking part in. The best way to access the viewer is through posing a hypothetical, which is what I did. My intention was not something that I thought-out completely beforehand. It has been more clearly revealed to me through my and the viewer's experiences of the exhibition.

She consciously withheld her intentionality in her artists' statement, indicating her awareness of its effect on reception when stating "I usually don't discuss my intention as it can be misleading in trying to get the viewer to develop their own impression".

These students' actual intentionality of their works, which they had not been given the opportunity to express, and which had not been taken into consideration in the interpretations for the summative assessment of their artworks, indicate what rich material this might have provided the staff, as both a reference for summative purposes and a formative tool to develop students' critical judgment.

Whilst students' desires and intentionality were not recognized as valid by the summative panel, as authors of their work, they were highly valued by these students. An authenticity discourse emerged in relation to this issue, as it had at UKI (p.117). Staff too alluded to such constructions of authenticity as part of the integrity discourse in the privacy of our interviews, though it emerged once, as an anomaly, in my observations of panel assessments. This was when a high-level student was made to respond to the assessors' questioning of the "integrity" of his work in the face of their anti-intentionalist interpretations: that he was either posturing as too "academic" or was unaware of the issues the work was raising. That moment alone, required a demonstration of the skills of reflective engagement bringing actual intentionality into proximity with interpretation.

When faced with conflict between authentic or strategic choices, Chelsea felt she had the agency to choose her own desires, despite assessors' encouragement of pursuing interpretations which would receive a more favourable grade.

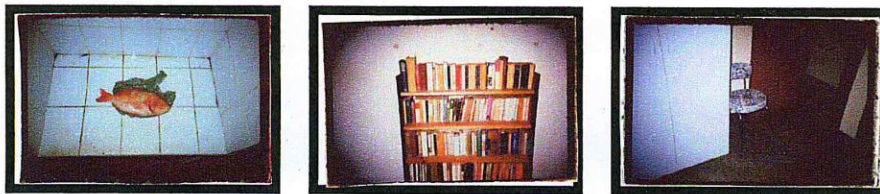
I wanted it to be sort of hopeful and they don't like that, so I'm going along with what I enjoy, but it's just such a strange tension between two worlds.

As I explore more in Chapter Six, some of the supervisors negotiated and enabled such difficult decisions through affirming their students in the safe confines of the studio, whilst not masking the risk this may have to students' grades; whilst others encouraged risk-averse strategic approaches in the face of the anti-intentionalist approach of summative assessments.

Due to the expectations created from formative assessments, the majority of students believed that their intentionality was taken into consideration at summative assessments (p.128). Those who did not, had experienced the impact of the anti-intentionalist backwash on their identities. Grown from a defensive stance, after repeated invalidation of her intentionality, was Edeen's adoption of a Romantic construction of the isolated emotional artist who finds solace in his/her artmaking against a hostile world.

The world is not going to go according to what you want it to go to. It's not going to follow your idea, your fantasy of how it's supposed to work. People will hate you and people will love you, it doesn't really matter, and as artists especially, it will become a lot harder.

The impact on individual identity of assessment practices that delegitimized student intentionality, and in the process invalidated nominal authenticity, in the name of success within that a framework and system of exchange, was most evident with Jade and Betty.



Your words:

Although I've learnt a lot, and am entirely grateful to have studied what I love, I am very ~~good~~ aware of myself and don't ever want to paint for anyone but myself after I obtain my degree.

Also, has made me look at my life in a very different/new way ... scared?? alone?

VN 29: Jade's representation of the effects of a lack of authorship

These two students indicated that engagement with the academic framework, which was meant to have led to their development as contemporary artists, had resulted in a loss of confidence to practice in any capacity within the art world. Situated outside the boundaries of what was validated, Jade described herself as so self-conscious to feel isolated (VN 29). Both students acknowledged that as an act of self-preservation, they had buried the desire to make art.

Concluding this analysis of SAI: The problem of authorship

The institutional approach at SAI was analysed by considering references made by the interpretative community of assessors during assessment events I observed. The school, as it espoused, adopted an anti-intentionalist approach to the summative assessment of students' works. References made by value-maximising supervisors about their students' engagement with their projects were included but given less value. This was in contrast to references made in formative assessments, which were mostly intentionalist in orientation. The gaze of assessment seemed to shift assessors' engagement with the work.

There is something blocking the lecturers from accepting to have the experience. I can offer an experience but the viewer has to take it as well (Lenore).

Such indications, that reception was complicated by assessment, relate to similar tensions between professional and educational interests as those which arose within UKI (p.96). These tensions emerged in students' reception of assessors' feedback as not coming from readers or a possible future audience for their work, but rather from assessors within an academic system to which one had to submit to succeed. Such feedback was often directed at the grade itself rather than a larger framework, and often utilised to make students strategic about the costs associated with their decisions. Lenore mimicked the type of feedback the assessors would provide.

'Well, if you improve this you could get a better mark', you know, 'but if you don't improve this then you'll maybe get the mark I'm going to give you', or 'even less because we know you didn't improve it'. So it's once again between taking their advice or not, it could be to your detriment.

Conflicts students experienced, as a result of the heavy-hand of the summative interpretative approach and curricula pressures towards a finished body of work, exacerbated by close relationships with staff who acted as representative agents of this approach, often resulted in experiences of alienation.

Whilst not all student experiences were extreme, my analysis of SAI does raise questions about the significance of institutional assessment cultures on the conditions for creativity, particularly in the

face of constructions of contemporary artists as reflexive practitioners, and more contextual expectations of the post-colonial artist's responsibility. Few opportunities were created for reflective engagement, partly due to a lack of value ascribed to self-assessment of actual intentionality in relation to viewers' interpretations. The overarching outcome, the development of contemporary artists as reflexive practitioners, seemed in jeopardy.

Comparing the significance of institutional interpretative approaches on the conditions for creativity

In this chapter I have considered two art schools as cases for mapping and contrasting interpretative approaches evidenced at assessment practices, structured by curricula, and at times supported and others complicated by the practice-based staff. In this conclusion, similarities and differences in the institutions' assessment practices are highlighted in relation to the problem of authorship. As this is a massively complex and tricky problematic, the interpretative framework and the schema for the conditions for creativity have served to limit and structure this discussion.

UKI's espoused intentionalist approach was confirmed as a dominant implicit theory-in-use within summative assessments. This was purposefully complicated by formative assessments which incorporated anti-intentionalist readings of the students' work. However, because actual intentionality was not referenced as a self-assessment criterion in relation to such readings, meta-cognition was often underdeveloped. As this degree was conceptualised as the beginning of the artist's lifelong learning process of negotiating the complexities of authorship, this finding may not be of concern for this school.

The espoused anti-intentionalist interpretative approach at SAI was confirmed within summative assessments. However, this was misaligned with formative assessments approaches and the close working relationships of supervisors and students, where an expectation was created in student perceptions that actual intentionality would be a major criterion of assessment. Students at this school were similarly underdeveloped in terms of their reflective engagement as those at UKI, due to their dependence on their supervisors, although this enabled sophisticated mastery of production. A major concern about these students' ability to operate as reflexive authors of their own work emerged, particularly in the context of the conceptualisation of this degree as an entrance to professional practice.

Thus while in both schools concerns about the development of students' meta-cognition of interpretation arose, the implications of this finding may differ, due to the contextual conceptualisations of the function of the Bachelor of Fine Art.

Comparing how the larger conditions were impacted by interpretative approaches revealed that the cultures of both the schools were empathetic to aspects related to the affect and artmaking. This was undoubtedly because staff members were practice-based researchers, who knew well such feelings of emotional (dis)connect in their own practice. Student stories and staff interviews indicated it was a relatively common reflex that the practice-based staff, recognising similar tensions between student's desires and strategic pressures experienced during their own studies, and not dissimilar to those which occur within the community of practice, felt a moral obligation to support students, despite their own roles as assessors. This emerged more strongly at SAI due to the pressures of the anti-intentionalist structure, as I explore more in Chapter Six.

Regardless of the constructions, characteristics, and culture of each school, the overwhelming majority of supervisors wanted the students they worked with to do well, exhibiting the principles of hospitality, investment, care and often a nurturing (Pratt 1988) approach. This affective aspect influenced assessments, where many supervisors became value-maximisers (pp.82; 132), referencing whatever 'evidence' might achieve the best possible grade within that panel, and when not advantageous, excluding student intentionality, even at UKI which was more intentionalist.

Much more of a hard-line was taken by SAI staff, perhaps in an attempt to develop students' "tough skin" (p.147) or due to curriculum pressures which led them to coerce students who would not comply. Whilst in general a softer, more appreciative tone was taken at UKI, the distance between staff and students on a one-to-one formative level was experienced as indifferent and sometimes insensitive to students' desires. Research has pointed to similar problematics in self-directed learning structures, where without the 'masters' modelling in the studio, students are left to rely on Critiques (Harwood 2007).

It was evident that students at both schools had experienced curriculum challenge, particularly in terms of conceptual aspects of their artmaking. At UKI, the demands of self-directed learning provided the most challenge in terms of student independence and uncertainty. The allowance for expansive play, due the degree's construction as an introduction to formal education in fine art; a module with explicit intentionalist criteria recognising conceptualisation and production; and the inclusion of additional material in the submission, provided structural support to the culture of

encouraging experimentation and risk. However, mostly those whose final artworks were successful were rewarded for their risk-taking, with the majority remaining within safe parameters. At SAI, the structural expectation of a solo show as entry into professional practice, with a high standard of sophistication and refinement, further exacerbated by the anti-intentionalist approach, dictated that the culture constrained risk. Calculated risk was for the privileged few who had proved that they would not fail. This study confirmed the argument that risk-taking is not improvisational in nature, but structured by previously learnt and regulated thinking (Cunliffe 2007, pp.97–98). As such, risk and play are only possible when supported by principles of safety (p.22) aligned with curricula, assessment structures, cultures and environments which establish trusting relationships (Hardy 2006a).

In terms of constructions of roles and relationships, UKI evidenced a far more appreciative culture between staff and students, with respect for the student as an 'artist' further extended by the construction of the student as customer. This culture was supported by the intentionalist recognition, of the importance of person and process to students' learning, within educational discourses. Because SAI's accent on text and readership had resulted in an intensive focus on students' artmaking processes (A2) and works produced (T2), there was sometimes a neglect of the whole of the person and his/her learning as not commensurate with, and thus not important as, the success of the artwork. Many students experienced alienation as a result of this selective gaze. The close working supervisor-student relationship, and the supervisor's role as representative of the artwork within assessments, created opportunities for favouritism and territoriality on the one hand, whilst enabling social validation of aspects, such as students' courage to pursue their desires, on the other. An interest in the student, wider than those aspects which related to their artmaking, was central to the summative assessment process at UKI, perhaps surprising considering its espoused distancing from relationships and personal subjectivities.

Structures existed to develop peer relationships as collaborative and collegial at UKI. However, student stories indicated this interaction was not necessarily a positive feature of their learning experience. Combined with supervisory involvement at a remove, many students felt isolated and unsupported, which perhaps explained the tangible anxiety a number of students experienced when their work was assessed without their oral presentation. Students at SAI were more confident of such summative assessments, as their supervisors were perceived as fully privy to their actual intentionality, to provide a defence on their behalf. Whilst supervisor guidance was experienced positively by the majority of students at SAI, it added an even larger risk of invalidation for feeling

conflicted. Students from SAI expressed far more experiences of extreme alienation, from these staff-student relationships, than at UKI.

An irony arose around formative treatment of authorship within the schools. Despite espoused constructions of authorship as collaborative at UKI, factors such as the self-directed learning structure, little studio staff-student interactions while in process, resulted in a de facto accent on authorship as individualistic. In contrast at SAI, due to the construction of the student as a novice and the strong guidance of the practice-based staff in studio, in addition to intensive studio interactions with peers, a far more collaborative authorship of final projects resulted. These inversion of the espoused constructions was despite structures such as the formal formative assessment interactions at each school, where at UKI peers provided interpretations and feedback on each other’s work, while at SAI peers were mostly silent, passive and undervalued in the feedback process. What cannot be underestimated is the influence of informal interactions within the experiential learning space of the studio, and the feedback of supervisors to individual students while in process within such problematizing curricula.



Schema 4: Comparing creative triads, institutional conditions

Having considered the larger environment, I now focus the discussion on the significance for the creative triad in particular (Schema 4). When it came to ‘the person’, references to student attributes and dispositions resulted in an assessment focus on personality at UKI. This may raise questions about the validity of such references, though this could be countered by the argument that the school was concerned with how the students presented as artists, rather than seeing their

production as autonomous of the necessary cultural capital of the future artist. Such notions, in addition to the adoption of consumerist lifelong learning, and student experience discourses, seemed to have resulted for the most part in more happy and confident artist-students. At SAI, the construction of the student as a novice artist, which focused assessment discussions on the task of developing production and related capacity, increased the possibilities of invalidating individual identity. However, this allowed for more ontological mentorship around 'being an artist' with the practice-based staff.

In terms of process, although learning was intended as self-directed at UKI, staff still gave assertive suggestions. As the relationship between intentionality and interpretation was implicit within the formative assessments, students' critical engagement of such feedback was often uncertain and doubting. The strongly scaffolding interactions between supervisors and students at SAI, when students' desires were supported, enabled strong experiences of emotional and critical engagement with process. However, the inverse often resulted in alienation and passive acceptance of staff direction. Important for their lifelong learning as artists, many students at both schools indicated awareness of how to weather uncertainty, with a few having developed skills and processes to handle this affective eventuality. However, few students were provided the conditions to rest assured in the face of their experiences of uncertainty, most particularly because of their lack of comprehension of the referential frameworks for assessment.

When considering students' engagement with their artworks, data generated at both schools indicated that whilst some were engaged with and proud of their work, when the artwork was reduced to a product of exchange or its production was primarily strategic, there were extreme experiences of alienation. Strategic approaches were judged harshly as inauthentic by the students themselves.

In neither school was reflective engagement with the artwork scaffolded, despite what was espoused (p.74) or structurally provided for, such as back-up material at UKI. Whilst at both institutions, the curricula allowed for deep emotional engagement with the subject and discourses students were interested in exploring (though SAI scaffolded the development of mastery in the discourses of form more), and created possibilities for critical engagement with process, student stories indicated that there were insufficient opportunities for meta-level reflective engagement with their work or their learning process. Many students saw such engagement as the value of their participation in this research, particularly in the scripting of their experiences as visual narratives and the related discussions in the focus group interviews. Some suggested that such processes should

become part of the school curricula. It became evident to me that this study points to the importance of actual intentionality, as a potential tool for enabling meta-cognition for the author of the work, an area into which neither school had ventured at the time of the data generation.

Arguments from art criticism point to the purposive difference between interpretative approaches made for interpretation, evaluation and the development of artworks. This distinction in the purpose of the interpretative approach had neither been consciously negotiated or discussed amongst assessors at either school, nor explicitly communicated to the students whose authorship was the overarching conceptual outcome of these studies.

With a sample size of two comparative cases, the findings presented in this chapter cannot be seen as quantifiably 'certain'. The influences of context, individual agents, my presence as observer, the particularities of the student participants, and other such complicating factors, create caution that 'findings' about the cultures and structures of these two schools not be taken as typical of all such curricular approaches, or indeed all such institutional interpretivist approaches. These analyses provide nuanced sketches of the larger context within which individual supervisors operate within, perform to, and resist their own positioning, as I explore in more detail in the next chapter. While this chapter included comparisons of two contexts, the following chapter looks at differing individual approaches within one contextual setting (SAI), so that nuances, between the different individual approaches from within one baseline context, could emerge.

Chapter Six

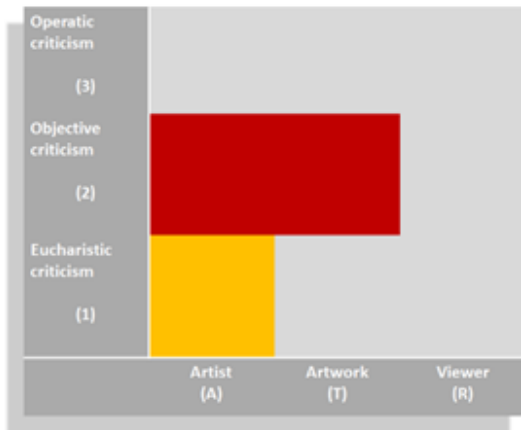
An analysis of the significance of individual approaches to interpretation on the conditions for creativity

This chapter considers the agential influence on the significance of interpretative approaches for the conditions for creativity in FASP. In Chapter 5 Part I and Part III, I sketched the larger culture and structures of a specific institution (SAI), with some indications of the ways in which these were colluded with or resisted. In this chapter, I look specifically at the staff and students within this context, to consider the ways in which their agency was enacted, constrained or enabled. Due to the autonomy of each supervisor enabled within this school, as a research-intensive university with tenured academic staff, and geographically isolated medium-specific sections, a climate was established where difference in approaches to studio engagements could develop. The degree of difference in interpretative approach was bounded by the overall conditions established, and the dominant interpretative approaches of the school, explored in Chapter Five. This chapter considers the nuances and variations in such conditions, and the ways in which the individual supervisors' interpretative approaches may have impacted on those conditions, and in turn their significance for students' development as artists.

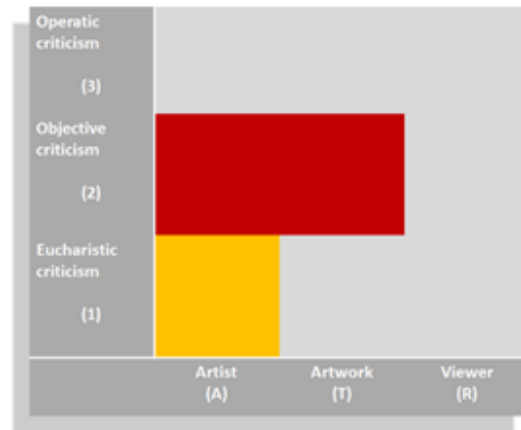
Comparing individual interpretative approaches within panel assessments

The discussion begins with a brief consideration of how each person enacted their roles within panel assessments. Included are visual representations of the institution's cultural expectation of interpretative approach (reproduced from Chapter 5), to compare similarities and differences of individuals' approaches from the norm which was legitimized, given relative weight, and value by this stable interpretative community.

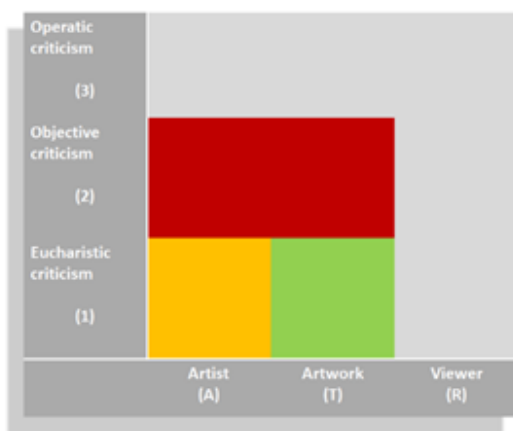
The formative panel assessment was important for this research in that it indicated not only what references the panel made in their deliberations, but what was communicated as important to students, both explicitly in the feedback sessions and implicitly in the backwash to the studio, impacting on the conditions.



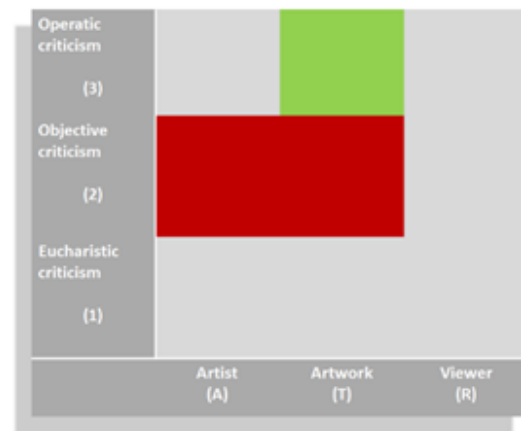
Cultural expectation



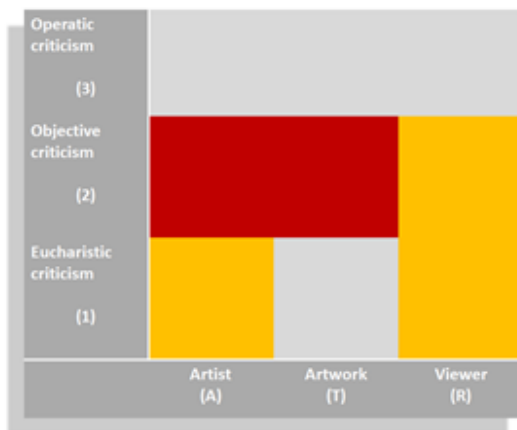
Adam



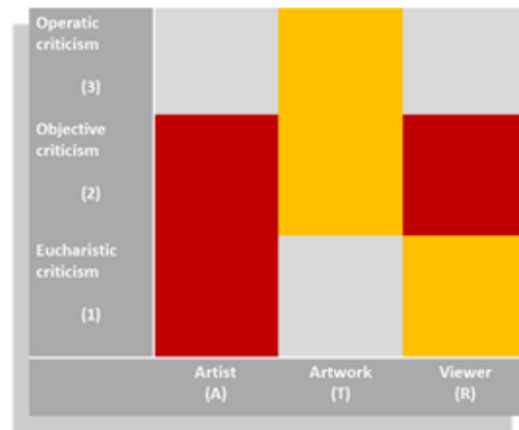
Faye



Helena



Nick



Sophie

IF 15: Comparing supervisors' interpretative approaches, formative panel assessments

Supervisors were expected to present their students' work to their colleagues. In the context of the mid-year panel assessment, this included objective criticism of aspects of composition and production processes, with some references to the student as a person, mostly for formative

purposes of understanding how to motivate better production. Adam, Faye, and to a lesser extent Nick, mostly conformed to that expectation (IF 15).

Helena's accent was similarly on objective criticism (A2 and T2) with some concern for how the text operated (T3). In her presentations, she spoke about research subjects and how works operated within discourses, but not students' actual intentionality nor their critical evaluation. The assessment of one student's work indicated how fortunate aberrations could occur within this anti-intentionalist culture, when Helena accredited the text over the author, articulating to her colleagues "it reads more ambiguously than she meant it, thankfully" and that "her works land up more sophisticated than her ideas". This value maximising approach rewarded whatever aspect was the strongest.

Similarly, Sophie's appreciation of when "the meaning is oblique" indicated an anti-intentionalist approach for value-maximising, particularly noticeable when such readings, in direct contrast to the students' actual intentionality, resulted in a better grade. Differing from her colleagues, her operative references related to discourses of form, a concern to avoid literalness and aesthetically-pleasing representations (T3). References in R2 served to provide substantiation to her evaluation as an informed reader in that medium. However, her emphatic language made it unclear whether she was making interpretations within R1 or R2, particularly when her reactions were positive. She placed importance on her personal experiences of the work, which as I discuss later in this chapter (p.228), was motivated by a desire to engage with submissions as artworks and not pedagogised objects (R1).

However, where Sophie's approach differed most noticeably was in her emphasis on the student as a person (A1), rather than the standard characterization at the school of 'art students' (p.139). In my observation notes, I described her presentation having "a sense of making private conversations public", with intimate insights into students' personal desires, emotional states, cognitive processes, and internal motivations, which she recognised students themselves may not have wanted to be shared. When artworks were successful, her relationship with those students was constructed as collaborative, but often when not, a master-apprentice dynamic emerged in her references to guiding the production process. At times in her feedback in this context, she disregarded student agency to the point where resistance was capitulated and in turn ownership relinquished. Such interference, where the power of the assessors was exercised in an attempt to manipulate students into submission, was not considered problematic within the culture of the school.

Although Sophie's approach may mirror the formation of Nick's interpretative framework, it is important to note that Nick explicitly included reception for the purposes of realising actual intentionality when he supported students' visions. He was receptive to the interpretations of his colleagues as connoisseurs (R2), explicitly referencing actual intentionality (A1+2) to compare with his colleagues' perspectives as informed viewers (R2) and personally (R1). As this actual intentionalist approach was an anomaly at this school, I asked whether it arose from a sense of collaborative investment he felt in artworks which he saw as having potential, or for the purposes of students' learning development. Nick felt it was from his excitement for innovation, at a level higher than the individual (broadening p-creativity to h-creativity), which informed his enthusiasm for and focus on the potential of the work itself (T2).

However, as with Sophie and Faye, when Nick did not support actual intentionality, he used the event to harness the assessors' collective power to impress upon the student the direction he saw as most productive. What emerged was that the espoused theory of most supervisors, to enable authorship, applied when the student's agenda was evaluated as valid by the supervisor. I presented Sophie my analysis that she would utilise the panel, as a united front, to pressurize those of her students, who were producing potentially unsuccessful works, to adopt her suggestions. I wondered aloud if this was because "your responsibility in getting them to pass, trumped their intentionality, their agency to fail", to which she acknowledged "you're absolutely right, that is very true".

Adam, Faye and Helena differed in that they were protective of the teleological backwash of summative assessments impacting negatively on their students' processes, and so shielded aspects of actual intentionality from their colleagues. Adam explained that interceptions from less informed sources, over-direction, or premature interruption, could be destabilizing or close possibilities, in an unproductive sense. As with Helena (p.204), he attempted to create space for individuals' processes to unfold. To calm his colleagues' anxieties, he assured them of his students' abilities, and implicitly conveyed confidence in his role in guiding them through the process. Due to the general culture of the supervisor having the strongest voice in formative assessments, the other assessors often accepted such judgment.

Unlike many of her colleagues, Faye did not act as a value maximising supervisor in either the formative or summative panel context. In my analysis and subsequent conversations with her, it was on the issue of the interface of these two roles, where she emerged the anomaly of the group. Despite espousing belief in the rigor of interpretative communities, in practice she actively

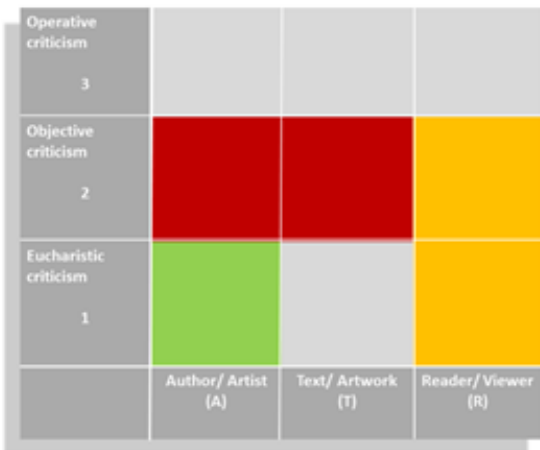
problematized individual judgments of her colleagues. She reacted passionately to value maximising approaches, having recognized how such representations interfered with readers' experiences.

It makes me cross, because what it does is unfairly sets me up to want to have an argument about it, 'Well here's the pink elephant'. The fact that it's got these qualifiers, and I'm not seeing that, makes me actually dislike the work more than if I were just allowed to look at it.

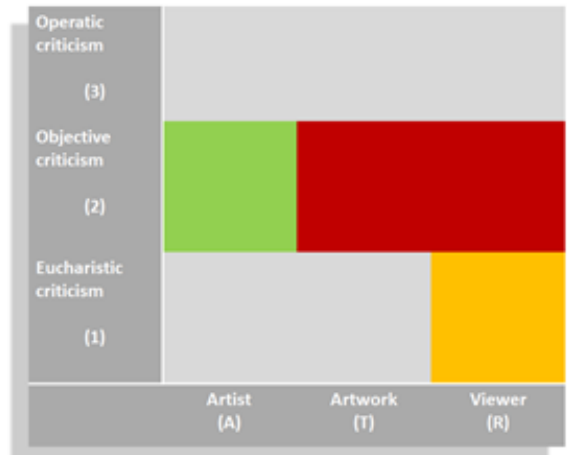
Her understanding, of the authorship of the artwork as related to its reception (R), dominated how she approached her role (p.190).

When acting as assessors in formative panel assessments (IF 16) the staff shifted to anti-intentionalist readings, believing this mirrored the interpretation of art within the community of practice. Whether this understanding was warranted, or had been substantially influenced by objectivity discourses within academia (p.15), with the external examiner placed at the top of that hierarchy, is debatable. The interpretative framework (p.38), drawn from aesthetic and literary theory, suggests a more complex picture.

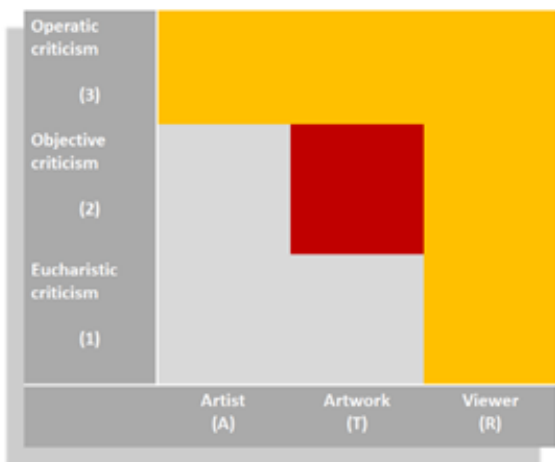
Objective criticism was most valued in this context, taking into account the information provided by the supervisor (A2 + T2), and their reception of the work (R1+2) to gauge the potential success of the work from an anti-intentionalist perspective. When considered individually, none of the staff conformed exactly to this approach, rather cumulatively balancing what the supervisor referenced. Sophie and Nick included authorial knowledge (whether fictive or actual) as central to their evaluations, and to a far less extent Adam and Helena. Faye placed emphasis on the reception of the work and how it operated, indicating her support of and alignment with the anti-intentionalist summative approach, by consciously avoiding actual authorial knowledge. What she imagined would be interpreted, through hypothetical intentionalism, as a conscious choice or gesture, was seen as having more value than that which was actually intended by the student.



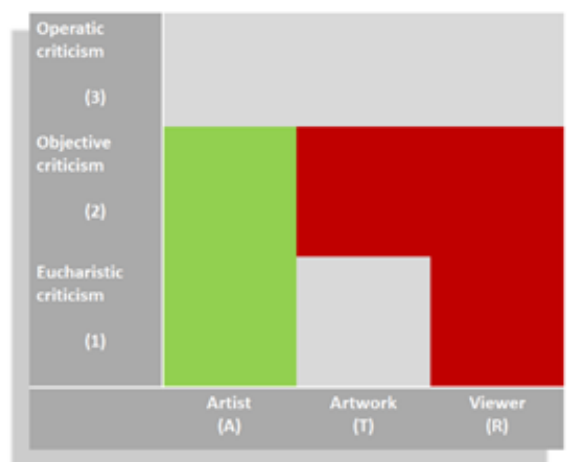
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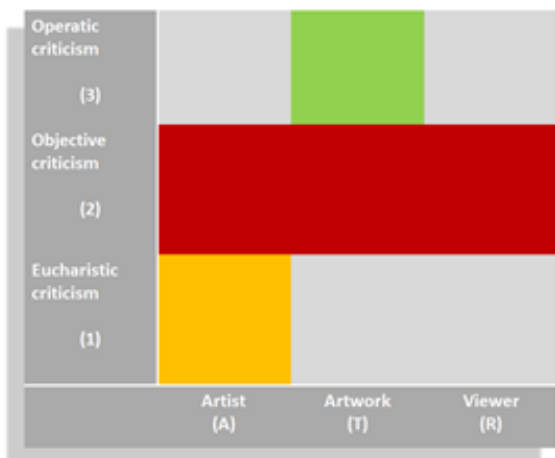
Adam



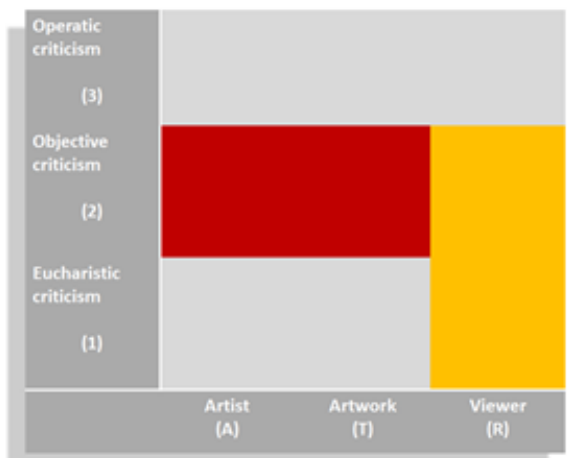
Faye



Helena



Nick



Sophie

IF 16: Comparing assessors' interpretative approaches, formative panel assessments

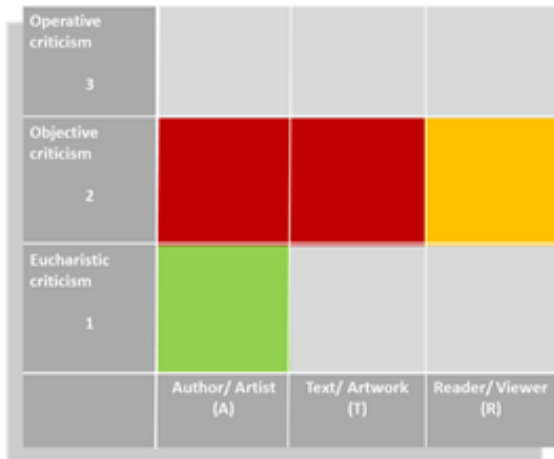
Similarly focussed on the text and processes of artmaking in this role, as she was in the role of supervisor, Helena made references to how artworks may be “compelling in itself” despite not communicating what students had hoped (T). Following supervisors’ discussions, she would revert back to a textual focus, reinforcing the value of works which were “still quite intriguing” regardless of that knowledge, indicating that the locus of value resided not with authorial knowledge but rather with hypothetical intentionalism. Operating as an expert within R2, Helena would become more directive and instructive of students who were not coping, explicitly providing guidance for the direction of their work, which had implications for student agency in the face of assessment requirements, pressures, and power. She drew students’ attention to what she felt was the importance of the viewer’s experience, and what she saw as problematic implications of “inaccessible” and “over intellectual” artworks (R1). Even with those perceived as ‘strong’ students, Helena would provide guidance for how such students could be more strategic in terms of the readings of expert readers and the ultimate imagined reader – the external examiner (R2).

In this role, Nick expressed concern that students not be wrongly accredited by their supervisors or by others assessors, as the anti-intentionalist focus enabled “happy accidents”. The internal pressures from the product-focused curriculum allowed for the text to be given most prominence, creating what he felt were mis-educational implications for preparing future artists.

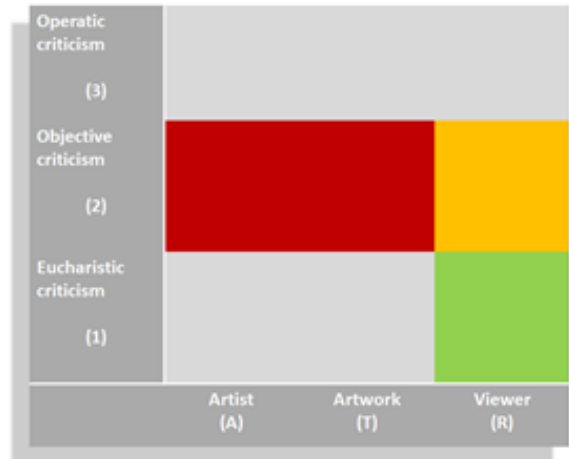
While the student may get a better mark, they may not be as prepared for future challenges as their mark may suggest, and this is a weakness in the system which is being perpetuated.

Due to the quality assurance obligation Nick felt as HoD, he challenged value maximising and hypothetical intentionalism approaches in panel assessments.

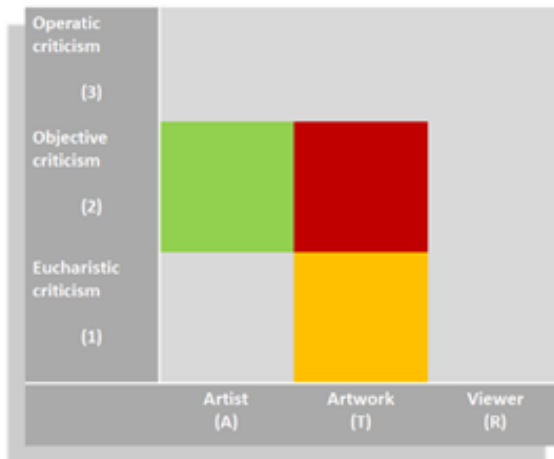
When acting as supervisors in summative panel assessments (IF 17), it was considered appropriate to include references to the production process (A2 + T2), as with formative assessments, from the perspective of their evaluation as medium-experts (R2). The majority of staff, when acting in this role, conformed to this expectation of objective criticism. To a lesser extent, information about the person’s biography, his/her intended future prospects, and receptiveness to student-supervisor relationships were given space to be voiced (A1).



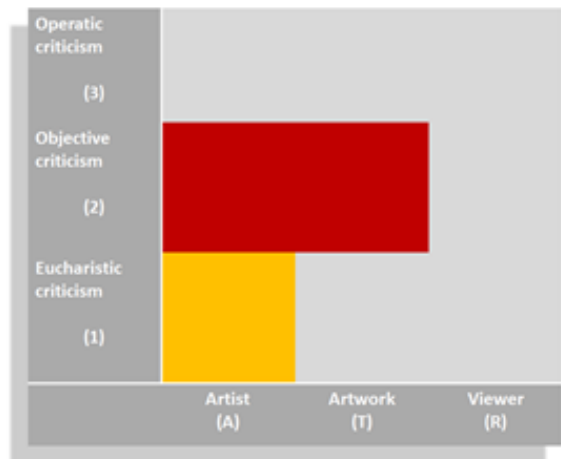
Cultural expectation



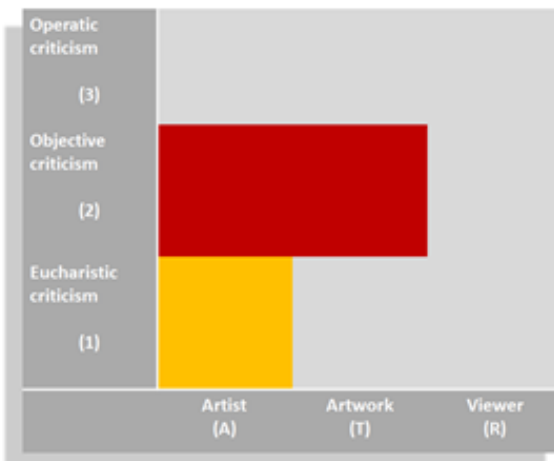
Adam



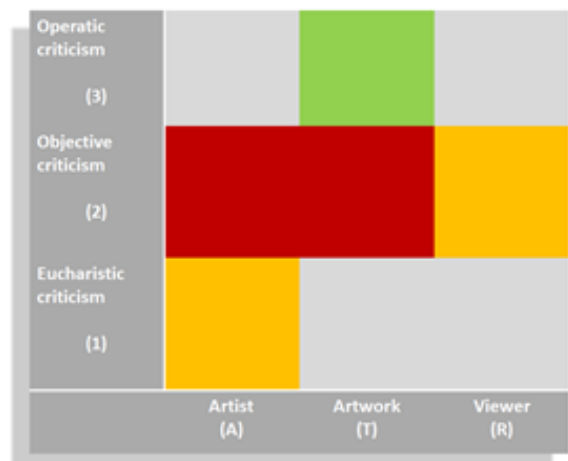
Faye



Helena



Nick



Sophie

IF 17: Comparing supervisors' interpretative approaches, summative assessments

In general, when staff at SAI acted as supervisors during summative assessments, they presented as hypothetical intentionalists and value maximisers, while acting as mediators of the assessors' and students' processes. Helena, Nick and Sophie were more emphatic about information relating to the person and their relationship (A1). When presenting Helena with this particular aspect of the analysis, her reflections indicated that she had imagined herself to be more 'objective' in the summative context.

Sophie acted mostly as a value-maximiser in this context, accentuating the strengths of her students' abilities and process (A2 + T2), and using strong language in her interpretations, particularly in terms of medium (R2). At one point, during an assessment, she stated she felt she was "butting heads" with her colleagues because her students' actual intentionality was not given value within their anti-intentionalist approach. Possibly as a result of repeated experiences of this conflict, I observed that her rare intimations about the "story" of students' work, were kept at a briefly descriptive level about the subject matter (T1), and represented as autonomous of both student intentionality and her own reading of the work.

Unlike the dominant practice, Nick was not a value maximiser. My observations of the assessment of two years' cohorts enabled me to note that, when he did not positively evaluate a student's development or work, this would impact negatively on his representation to the panel. For instance, a student's lack of ambition, focus, investment and work ethic, in addition to problems in the relationship, overshadowed assessment discussions about the artmaking process and readings of the work. A pattern emerged: with 'strong' work, a textual approach of objective criticism was adopted; with 'weak' work, references to the person over-shadowed engagement with the product.

Faye was the least intentionalist in this role, paying comparatively less importance to information relating to the actual author's processes. When asked why she avoided presenting interpretations of the work, providing mainly descriptions of what was visualised (T1+2), she relating this approach to her distaste of the "horrible habit" of value-maximising. She shared this anecdote.

The external came in, and I was 'Here's the exhibition'. They stood and said 'Ok' and then I stepped back, and X said to me 'You are allowed to say something,' and I said 'I will not say anything because you've got the pieces, you've got an exhibition, and I'm here if there's a particular question'.

Adam and Sophie included explicit evaluative perspectives as medium-experts (R2), with Nick providing some references to reader-response (R1). Sophie was the only person to make references to how the works operated (T3), mostly in terms of the discourses of form.

Operative criticism 3			
Objective criticism 2	Green	Red	Red
Eucharistic criticism 1	Green	Grey	Red
	Author/ Artist (A)	Text/ Artwork (T)	Reader/ Viewer (R)

Cultural expectation

Operatic criticism (3)	Grey		
Objective criticism (2)	Green	Red	
Eucharistic criticism (1)	Grey	Green	Yellow
	Artist (A)	Artwork (T)	Viewer (R)

Adam

Operatic criticism (3)	Grey	Red	Grey
Objective criticism (2)	Grey	Red	Red
Eucharistic criticism (1)	Green	Grey	Red
	Artist (A)	Artwork (T)	Viewer (R)

Faye

Operatic criticism (3)	Grey	Yellow	Grey
Objective criticism (2)	Grey	Red	Red
Eucharistic criticism (1)	Grey	Yellow	Red
	Artist (A)	Artwork (T)	Viewer (R)

Helena

Operatic criticism (3)	Grey	Green	Grey
Objective criticism (2)	Yellow	Red	
Eucharistic criticism (1)	Yellow	Grey	Yellow
	Artist (A)	Artwork (T)	Viewer (R)

Nick

Operatic criticism (3)	Grey		
Objective criticism (2)	Yellow	Red	
Eucharistic criticism (1)	Grey	Grey	Green
	Artist (A)	Artwork (T)	Viewer (R)

Sophie

IF 18: Comparing assessors' interpretative approaches, summative assessments

Whilst in the formative assessments, the supervisor's voice in terms of marks and feedback took precedent, this was not the case in the summative assessments (p.131). In the latter context, the interpretative community ascribed much importance to the artwork as a physical entity itself (T2), indicating coherence between the espoused theory and the practiced anti-intentionalist approach (IF 18). Individual members of staff contributed differently as assessors to this panel assessment. Consistent throughout was the emphasis on the formal properties of the artwork (T2) and their reading as informed viewers (R2). Nick, in particular, valued the medium-experts' assessment of works in their respective mediums, arguing "that is why the lecturer should proffer a mark". He and Helena made considerable references to the external examiner as the ultimate imaged reader (R2).

The text (T2) was the primary point of negotiation, with staff contending that students' labour and process (A2) was evident in the work itself. Whilst such hypothetical intentionalism had currency in the evaluation of the work, the success of the final artwork (T2) and its reception (R1+2) had the largest effect on the grade awarded. This included an intertextual emphasis on coherence within students' submissions and norm-referencing between them.

Nick, Sophie, and to a lesser extent Adam and Faye, made references to authorial knowledge, albeit for different purposes. Sophie was inconsistent, seemingly making use of whichever interpretative approach would achieve the desired grades. At times she attempted to use authorial knowledge to better inform her interpretation of aspects of the work of which she was uncertain, similar to her approach to contemporary art (IF 28, p.225). She expressed desire to engage with students' artist's statements and posed questions to supervisors for clarification of students' intended meanings or rationale. However, evidence of hypothetical intentionality imposed by her as a reader (R2) was more prevalent. As with her colleagues, she would at times argue for certain submissions on the anti-intentionalist basis that "at the end of year the final submission is what you see".

Faye utilised actual intentionality to question her colleagues when they represented their students' work ("was it intentional?", "did it do what she intended?"), to tease out the actual from the hypothetical, despite being strongly anti-intentionalist in her readings of contemporary art (IF 22, p.190) and in her own representations as a supervisor (IF 23, p.191). As with Sophie, she seemingly adopted approaches and discourses purposefully. Her assumed quality assurance capacity as a representative of the community of practice, rather than a facilitator of student development, emerged strongly, as did Nick's quality assurance role as HOD. Both Nick and Faye's position made apparent that while participation in a discourse demands a recognition of the basis on which argument, exclusions, and hierarchies of value and meaning are built, this does not preclude

“strategic presentation as much as belief and conviction: playing the game as much as striving for self-hood” (Mitchell 1996, p.143).

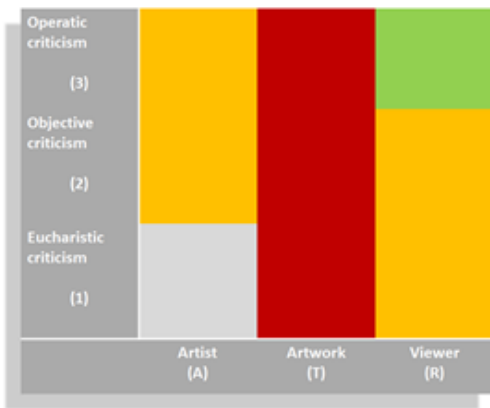
In this role, Helena and Adam were least responsive to authorial knowledge, valuing anti-intentionalist approaches. A general shift was discernible in the references made by the interpretative community, from A towards R, as the purpose shifted from formative assessment for production towards summative evaluation of the text itself.

When considering individuals’ approaches across these different contexts, which I revisit when discussing them individually, it emerged that these agents’ approaches were strongly influenced by the role they were enacting or occasionally resisting.

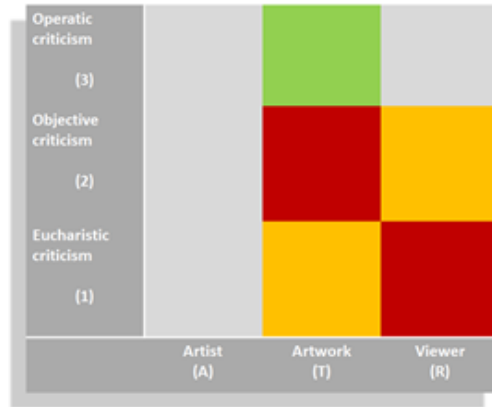
Comparing formative interpretative approaches in the studio

When acting as supervisors in the formative studio context, there was more autonomy for these individuals to choose which interpretative approaches they adopted. Supervisors individually performed the role of facilitating Critiques and providing feedback, and as such did not have to balance, manage, or respond to their colleagues’ interpretative approaches in this context. Staff members were not privy to their colleagues’ interpretative approaches in the studio, presuming it would be similar to how they performed this role in the panel assessments. It is interesting to note how differently each of these five individuals operated in the studio (IF 19). Each person’s interpretative approach is considered in more detail when discussing each case in this chapter.

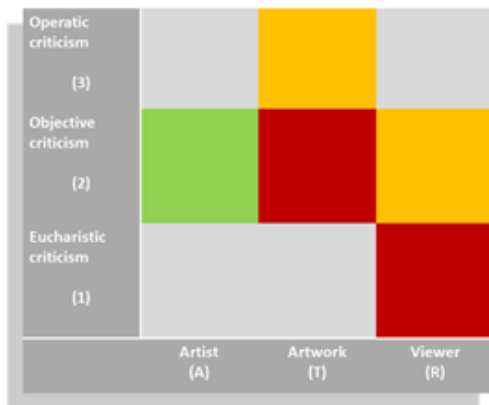
In terms of column A, Sophie and Adam made such references mostly related to skill development, with Adam considering how the artist operated as a figure within that specific medium (A3). A constant between the approaches was objective criticism (T2) with feedback aimed primarily at developing the artwork, aligned with the panel’s interpretative culture. Adam, and then Faye, most emphasized aspects of textuality, including discussions on the discourses of form and content, and the ways in which they might operate (T1-3). Operative criticism was espoused by all the SAI staff, in relation to contemporary art criticism and notions of the artist as reflexive practitioner. Adam most explicitly referenced this construction. Helena, Nick, and to a lesser extent Faye, placed some importance on the way in which the artwork operated (T3), and Sophie on how readings might operate (R3). All of the staff explicitly valued readership (R). Faye and Helena placed more emphasis on the affect, accessibility, and viewer experience in reception (R1).



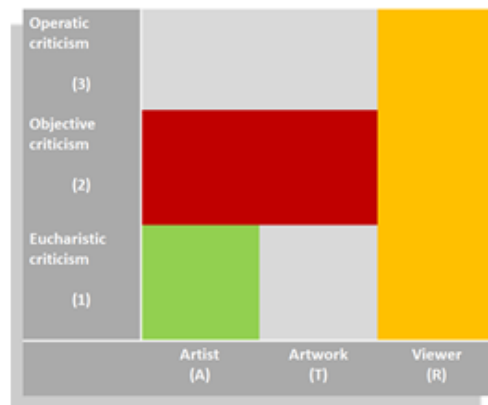
Adam



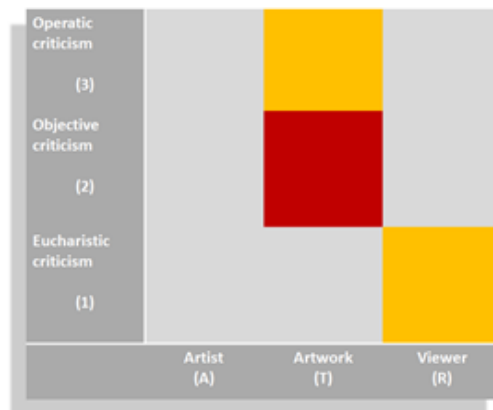
Faye



Helena



Nick



Sophie

IF 19: Comparing supervisors' interpretative approaches, studio context

Whilst these comparisons are useful for differentiating individuals' practices from each other and from the dominating panel approach, important for this research project is the significance of individuals' approaches for the conditions experienced by their students. In this chapter I explore the

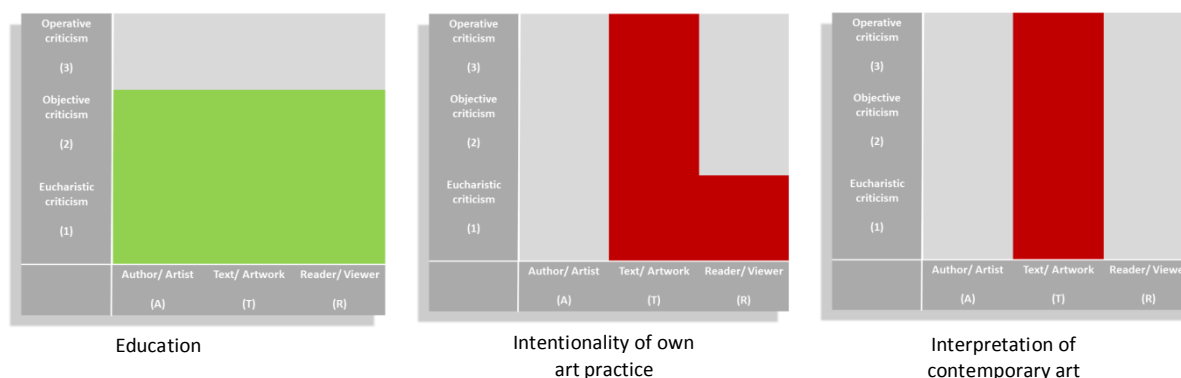
influence of the formative interpretative approaches in studio, where individual supervisors provided feedback to their students while the artworks were in progress.

Towards this, the rest of this chapter is divided by single case analyses of all the studio practice staff at SAI (1 = Adam; 2 = Faye; 3 = Helena; 4 = Nick; 5 = Sophie). In the first part ('A') of each single case analysis, I present the individual's interpretative approaches, including his/her understandings of authorship and intentionality, and the dominant influences on his/her approaches, such as the way in which s/he was taught; what his/her intentionality was in general for his/her own art practice; how s/he approached interpreting contemporary art. This choice of focus was informed by studies that have indicated that supervisors' previous experiences as students in fine art inform their assessment practices, as does their own sense of artistic identity (Barrett 1988; Orr 2011; Logan 2013). To present my analysis of the conditions ('B'), I look specifically at these individuals' constructions of roles, how their relationships were characterised and experienced, and their specific students' emotional, critical, and reflective engagement.

1. A. Mapping Adam’s interpretative approach

Data from Adam and his three final year students, Katy, Chelsea and Sindisiwe, who achieved distinctions or near distinctions, informed my analysis of this case.

Adam felt that undergraduate students were unable to grapple with the complexities of authorship in contemporary art, which he constructed as pluralistic. He conceived of quality artworks as those which led to multiple readings, however without removing authorial responsibility or criticality from the artist. He chose the artwork (T) when asked to indicate what had the most import for the interpretation of contemporary art, explaining that “you can produce a brilliant artwork in spite of oneself and what one says about the thing you have created” (IF 20).²⁷ In his teaching, he most emphasized this construction of authorship through a discourse of the subject as an active participant in the making of the work, which he explicitly valued in his students’ processes, and utilised directly for scaffolding their critical engagement. This related to the politics of representation, a post-colonialist concern which impacted on his construction of the artist as reflexive practitioner.



IF 20: Adam, dominant influences

In our interviews, Adam related authorship to student ownership, linking this to the prevalent discourse of the integrity of the artist (p.155).

When the student comes with an idea, there is the author, their authorship or idea or the terrain, it’s them. One can argue about how that eventually evolves, involves my voice.

²⁷ For the purposes of a better reading experience in this chapter, as each section relates to a specific ‘case’ of a single staff member, excerpts of his/her direct speech are not referenced in the direct manner they were in Chapters Four and Five, where more than one participants’ perspective was cited. Clear indications of the student participants’ quoted insights are provided in section B as these refer to more than one individual.

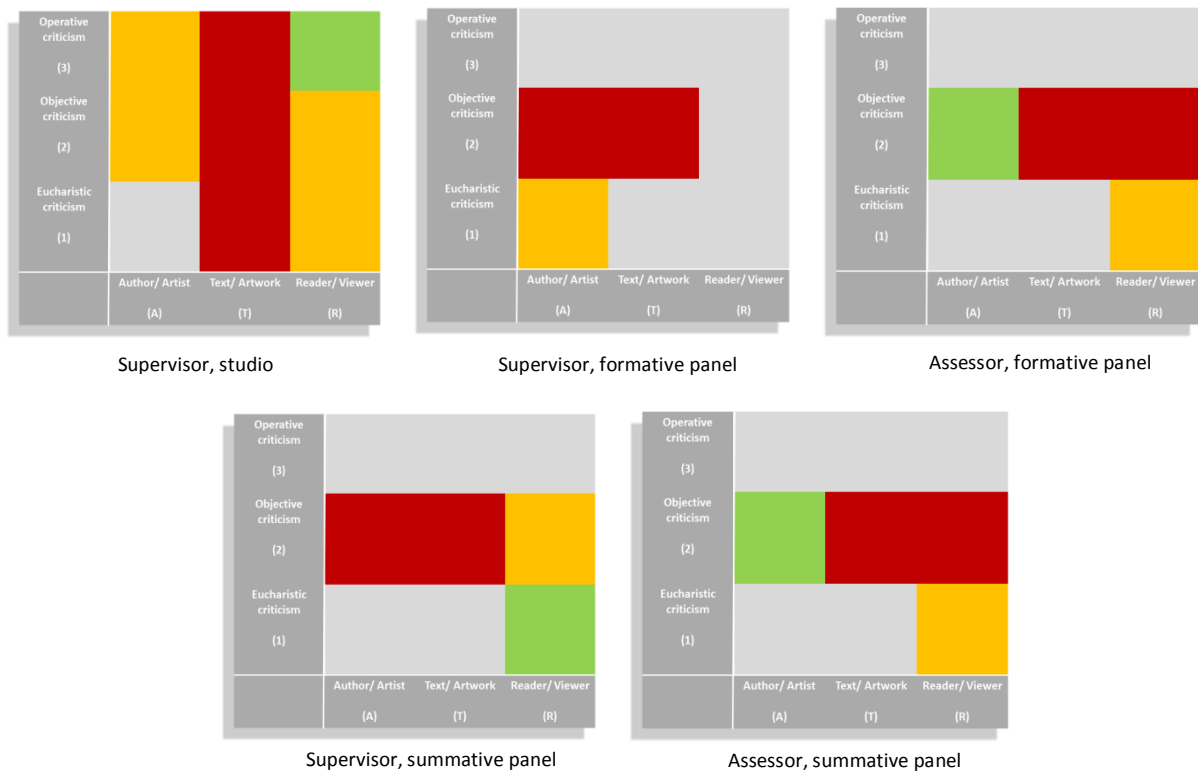
Acknowledging in such statements the collaborative nature of the supervisor-student dynamic, he also emphasized that students' intrinsic motivation, at the composition stage, was where authorship most resided for him at an undergraduate level. This notion, of an initial impulse and drive towards or from a certain idea which originated from the "authentic self" of the student, is a modernist notion of the artist that was shared by Helena, Nick and Faye. In the studio interactions that I observed, Adam explicitly utilised such initial desires as a criterion to judge the validity of assessors' feedback, privileging such evaluation over strategic adoptions of feedback. This was despite some instances when such adoptions may have resulted in more politically expedient artworks. In an interview, he spoke about helping students negotiate conflicts between their own desires and those of the assessors, by acknowledging those tensions and discussing the costs of taking risks. Adam's handling of conflict between internal motivations and external pressures tapped into the authenticity discourse (p.155).

In his questionnaire responses, Adam wrote that intentionality "is important - the student needs to know what they want to 'say' - how they say it is a learnt art", suggesting that intentionality itself grows with maturity. He indicated its worth for critical engagement while in process, stating that intentionality "is vital - key to clear rationale and thought". However, whilst their initial desires were supported, his students' meta-cognitive engagement with meaning-making in their artworks in light of reception, was not explicitly scaffolded.

Analysing Adam's interpretative practice

Whilst both the studio contexts and formative panel assessments were espoused as developmental, Adam's enactment of this role differed (IF 21, p.180). As a supervisor in the studio, Adam chose to have much individual contact with his students while in process, on average two to three times a week. In addition, he scheduled group sessions to enable students to prepare practically, emotionally, and cognitively for the panel assessments, with debriefings following such assessments.

The importance placed on the references that Adam made in this context was weighted towards textuality (T). Adam made extensive use of intertextual references, both to do with discourses of form and concept. When discussing students' works with them, he would explicitly interpret aspects of the work from a number of angles, such as the subject (T1+3), form and/medium (T2+3), and techniques (A2), and would guide the student through the possibilities such different accents made to readings (R), to critically inform students' decisions while in process. As such, a strong characteristic of these formative studio discussions was the accent on readership as a tool for critical engagement.



IF 21: Adams' interpretative approaches

His approach in the studio was mapped across most of the interpretative framework, as he used various interpretations to aid students' critical engagement with their work in process, towards better realizing their actual intentionality. Only in this purely formative context did he engaged with operative criticism, talking about the significance of decisions made in terms of the medium and composition to the 'author' in that medium (A3); the artwork in various contexts (T3); and to a less extent dominant readings of the work (R3).

When asked to consider his evaluation of student artwork in relation to his interpretative approach for contemporary art, Adam claimed "It's the same process - the work appears on the wall/floor and is opened out into the world of interpretation and experience". However, I observed his approach as an assessor was far more closed to the experience of the artwork. When I specifically asked him about this, a distinction emerged between experiencing and engaging formatively with the student and his/her work while it was in process in his role as a supervisor, compared to how the text was engaged with as a 'product' in his role as an assessor.

There is more freedom to experience the artwork being produced because we are in process. Once the work is produced the other cap has to be put on, you need critical distance from the object.

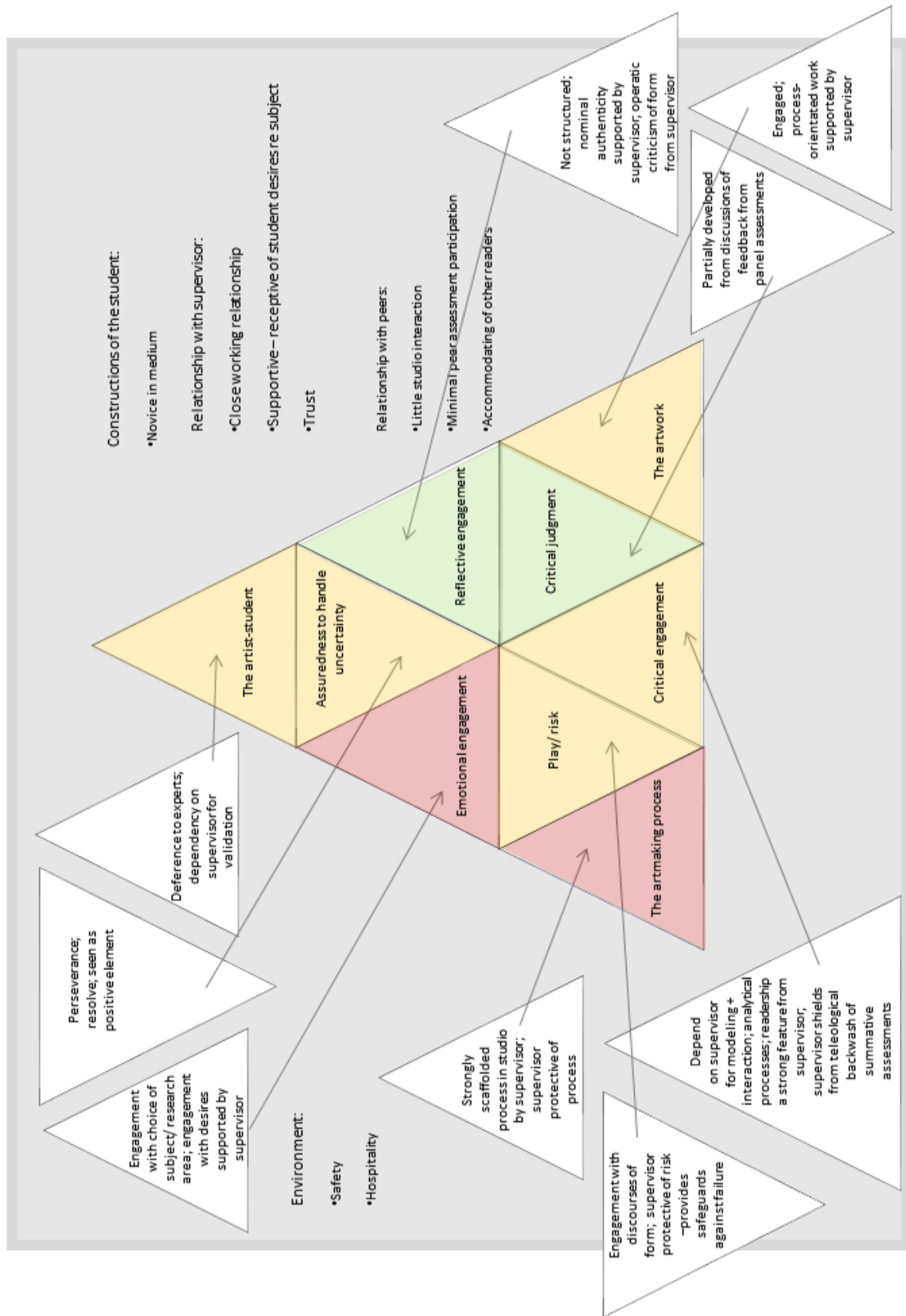
Compared to the interpretative approach he enacted within the purely formative studio context, Adam adopted different approaches when acting within the culturally imposed constructions of the school (IF 21). In the role of supervisor in panel assessments, he referenced mainly A2 and T2, while as an assessor he shifted to mainly T and R. A constant throughout the different contexts was the importance of objective criticism for Adam, a continuation in emphasis of his own education (IF 20, p. 178). Adam was one of the three staff members (including Nick and Sophie) who had studied at SAI when objective and eucharistic criticism were most valued at the school.

When I presented him my analysis of his interpretative approaches, Adam spoke about how such contextualism was communicated as provisionality to his students.

I now understand artmaking and the world as a pluralistic and multi-dimensional realm, where context starts to become ever-increasingly important. In one school, work may be amazing but in another it may be weak. It's all about context, approach and philosophy.

To guide his students through such flux and uncertainty, he acknowledged such provisionality and provided tangible support for their internally motivated desires over and above the expectations of the framework within which they found themselves. In the following section I explore more holistically the conditions he established.

B. The conditions for creativity



Schema 5: Conditions, Adam's supervision

Characteristics of the learning environment

As a supervisor Adam applied the principles of solidarity, safety, and hospitality (p.22), as he understood his role as a bridge between the demands of academic assessment and his expectations of quality professional practice, and his student's own desires as a soon-to-be artist.

He constructed final year students as novice artists, where their voice was recognized as buffeted about by dichotomous tensions between academic and professional discourses. Although as an assessor he at times colluded with the school's construction of the student as fixed, he spoke about attempting to individualize his specific students according to their desires and in response to the nuances of students' relationships with their research subjects. A central aspect of this was how students operated as artists within the medium-specific discourses they explored (A3).

Adam agreed with my analysis of the characteristics of his student-supervisor relationships, adding further insights. When asked to indicate his own sense of his teaching practice, aligned with my own analysis, he chose the atelier model, contending that "the relationship is everything". Working alongside the students in studio, as a practice-based supervisor, Adam saw his role as guiding them empathetically through their processes. The depth of expert guidance necessary to scaffold production to the level of sophistication required for summative submission, emerged in my observations of their studio interactions. Whilst Sindisiwe required considerable support during such selection processes, meeting with Adam a few times a week, Chelsea and Katy were more independent, using his feedback as a retrospective gaze on the editing they had done alone.

Adam explained that the closeness of the working relationship was central for ipsative assessment. I noticed how the close dynamic played out in Adam's affective sensitivity. Shared knowledge of practice in that medium enabled open discussion of difficulties students were experiencing. Adam was able to anticipate his students' responses from the "history" he had developed with them over the years, and his own responses to similar experiences as an artist. Affective consideration extended to the collaborative and invested nature of his supervision approach, most often indicated in an inclusive discourse ("our project", "we are excited") where the student and supervisor slipped from mentor-apprentice to fellow artists. Students exhibited trust in him, 'earned' through certain behaviours he adopted, such as being protective of the students' desires and process in formative panel assessments they witnessed (Chelsea; Sindisiwe). However, such closeness did not readily extend to personal aspects outside of the studio context.

He described hoping to act as “a supportive friend that you respect but can talk openly to”, where authority played a role in guidance and mentorship, but not as an assertion of power. In his non-verbal communications to students, this mentorship-in-process was how he constructed his role as “basically here to guide, suggest and fine-tune your process this year”. Such enactment of mentorship involved epistemological acculturation into contemporary artmaking rather than academic practice, with much of the interactions I observed being about negotiating the complexities of engagement with the subject as an artist, and how the work may be read.

Student engagement

All three of Adam’s students experienced his influence as productive for their identity formation as artists. For instance, Adam’s validation of Katy’s independence was experienced as empowering and affirming of her identity. She felt that after having surmounted “the chaos of possibilities” available to her in the final year, by being enabled to choose for herself, she could claim “it is your own thing so you have to get out of this chaos what you need, no-one gives it to you, but that’s why it makes you a better artist”. Sindisiwe similarly indicated powerful experiences of self-worth and achievement with her project. Chelsea had a more complicated response, indicating how being enabled to take on a degree of autonomy, led her to realise the responsibility she had for the subject of her research.

Such engagement with the subject was characteristic of Adam’s students. He strongly encouraged, gave attention to, and rewarded this, relating it in our interview to how he constructed the artist as a figure (A3). His students drew on this discourse, most notably during the mid-year panel assessment, for justification in their feedback discussions. In their stories, all of the students indicated that such a relationship with (and in the cases of Chelsea and Sindiswe participation of) the subject(s), enriched their learning experiences.

All three students indicated prolonged and intense emotional engagement with the composition and production processes of their artmaking. In the documents he gave his students at the beginning of their final year, Adam appealed to such affective connectivity with their projects.

So, come up with ideas, brain-storm, sketch – whatever you need to do to get your creative juices flowing. Find what gets you excited, what in your gut you really want to do.

In my observations of Chelsea’s and Sindiswe’s verbal articulation at the studio interactions, they seemed at ease to discuss their emotional investment in certain ideas and choices relating to the subject source itself, in addition to how this might be linked to the form of the medium.



VN 30: Katy visualised her emotional engagement with her artwork

Katy revealed internal motivation as “an almost religious dedication”, with external motivation encouraging strategic manoeuvring to succeed in “a game that you have to try and win, like completing projects and getting them right” (VN 30).



Your words:

“experiences make the best artworks.”

VN 31: Emotional engagement expressed by Sindisiwe

Sindisiwe spoke about working with source material from her own life experiences, and the emotional journey that such explorations of personal subject matter had taken her (VN 31). The first image represented her expectations at the composition stage, where she felt calm and unchallenged. The second image had to do with a shift to feeling uncertain in process.

As soon as I actually started getting into it, feelings were everywhere. I felt frustrated because it seemed like it was easy but then as soon as you do something that is personal to you, you feel different feelings and [get] very confused.

She ended the narrative and caption on a high note, communicating a sense of pride and achievement in the final artwork. When probed whether this was from internal or external validation, she privileged her own assessment over that of the assessors, stating that “I felt that I achieved something which I wanted to”.

While the explicit use of critical engagement and operative interpretations distinguished his interpretative practice in the studio (p.179), Adam felt that he allowed for failure and

experimentation during students' engagement with process. Similar to Helena (p.210), he held students' processes through structured guidance to protect them from being reckless with such risk. Within contexts that involved other staff, Adam consciously shielded these processes, vouching for students with more uncertain outcomes to prevent teleological influences of the product curriculum. In an email, Chelsea noted the panel's risk-aversion, "I think that our engagement with 'play' in art is promoted in theory, by this I mean they encourage us to play but seem apprehensive towards the result of this". Against this, the guidance of the supervisor was trusted, with Chelsea having internalized experimentation as a labyrinthine process of learning through artmaking.

Creating art doesn't happen so easily so the very nature of creating is something that requires you to try many solutions. If I am uncertain about something I have made, I do not feel that I will fail, because there is always an opportunity to redo it. That is why I love art. It is ever-evolving and changing.

She reflected specifically on how uncertainty was enabled by feedback from her supervisor which problematized the work.

When observing studio interactions, I was impressed with how these students embraced the challenges of uncertainty and the unknown in their making processes. Sindisiwe was comfortable to express her enthusiasm for prospects she and Adam had discussed, in addition to her uncertainties. In the focus group interview, and in particular the caption she included as part of her visual narrative (VN 32), Sindisiwe expressed how her inner voice enabled her to practice being assured during her conceptualising process.



Your words:

"Believe in yourself Relax... Ideas will come to you."

VN 32: Sindisiwe's assuredness in the face of uncertainty

The first image encapsulated her initial feelings of uncertainty when she "was frustrated and irritated and lost". The second image represented the "time where even though you're very uncertain, you have to start believing in yourself". The last image was "the better you, the 'you' that

believes in yourself". When probed, she revealed that she had developed such self-belief during her studies, after persevering through repeated uncertain experiences towards successful outcomes.



Your words: WHEN YOU FEEL UNCERTAIN ABOUT A PROJECT, YOU ARE LOST IN THE DARK, LITERALLY UNABLE TO ~~MAKE~~ ^{SEE} A WAY OUT, OR A SOLUTION.

VN 33: Katy's uncertainty with assessment judgments affected her confidence

Katy "chose all the dark images because I feel if you feel uncertain about an art project it's like being in the dark and you can't quite see where to go" (VN 33). This most often occurred when assessment shifted her own sense of her work. She noted that despite feeling as if "you are doing it all wrong" after the panel assessments, she had learnt to overcome that response with the help of her supervisor.



VN 34: Chelsea's experiences of uncertainty

Although initially very uncertain about the outcome of a process, Chelsea reflected on how she had followed the affirming feedback of her supervisor, working through uncertainty to find an emerging pattern (VN 34). I noted in my observations of their studio interactions that she drew strength and encouragement from Adam to trust uncertainty. When she articulated that the responsibility to do justice to the subject "is so scary", Adam's response reassured her "but you can... you got it" with tips on how to build her relationship with the subject, and ways in which to get insider access. This led her to the conclusion that "it is an anxiety I have to get over", indicating a determination on her part, and a realization that this affective response was finite. The second image related to

uncertainty from conflicting receptions of her work from fine art and more conventional readers (a conflict shared by others, p.149), where opposing experiences of validation and rejection from external others complicated her relation with the subject.

Whilst Adam supported emotional engagement and perseverance, he actively utilised the studio space to enable students' critical engagement. He asked them to "be self-reflexive about this thinking – why do you think you were drawn to this subject?" in the preparation documents for the year. Once this desire was fully explored in the composition stage by the student, he supported them to pursue it, while challenging the discourses and manner in which such exploration was represented visually. He utilised readership for critical engagement, such as in this excerpt from his guidelines for proposal writing.

How do you imagine the viewer(s) will respond? This [proposal] process helps you to get some objective distance from what you want to do, and helps you to think of other angles and interpretations that you can add or should be concerned about. This is an invaluable issue, because essentially the viewer is ultimately who you are communicating with – so it is important to know how they might receive your work, if they think it is an interesting and challenging angle or topic, or if what you want to say is not coming across at all. Think of the politics of representation and how to reflect sensitivity to any such issues. Consider discussing the project with other people and making notes about what they think.

Adam approached the suggestions made by staff at formative assessments in a similar manner. At debriefings after formative assessments, he constructed such feedback as informed interpretations while encouraging students to evaluate such suggestions (R2). Similarly, when Katy spoke of laypersons' readings she had elicited (R1), Adam helped her to evaluate those readings against her own intentionality, asking her "Do you want to push it into that direction?"

During the studio interactions, I observed how Adam scaffolded students' critical engagement with the work in process. He would compare a number of the student's images, discuss how s/he might assess the success or strength of those works towards the production of further images. A strong feature of the studio interactions were questions Adam posed to prompt student self-assessment at a broader level than that point in time, shifting from critical engagement in process, to reflective engagement with each student's artworks and development over the two years. However, as responses to such questions were not talked through, there was little structural enablement for the student to develop and practice such metacognitive skills independently.

The accent of operative criticism in Adam's formative feedback may have been influential to the reflective engagement practiced by his students (p.179). For instance, Chelsea chose to highlight

ontological uncertainty around authorship and originality as a contemporary image-maker in the focus group interviews, an uncertainty she felt inherent to the medium she had chosen to specialise in, where appropriation blurred the lines of authorship. Such indications of reflective engagement with discourses of form were more prevalent at this school than at UKI (p.162), enabled by the medium-specific curricula and supervision.

Adam was able to not only support his students' desires, through scaffolding their processes and validating their choices as a supervisor, but he created conditions where they felt both a sense of safety and his solidarity with them, even within a potentially hostile assessment context. When it came to the conflict created by strategic pressures to adopt an implicit criterion, Chelsea felt enabled by the conditions created by Adam to choose her own desire despite the assessors' encouragement of a more critical or 'sinister' interpretation of her subject. Such instances of support enabled all three of Adam's students to realise their desires, feeling confident of his validation as a part of their own self-assessment, over and above, and sometimes in conflict with, that of the school's assessment processes. Sindiswe privileged her own assessment over that of the assessors.

It's more personal and internal. Even if they didn't like it, I wouldn't have minded, because I liked it.

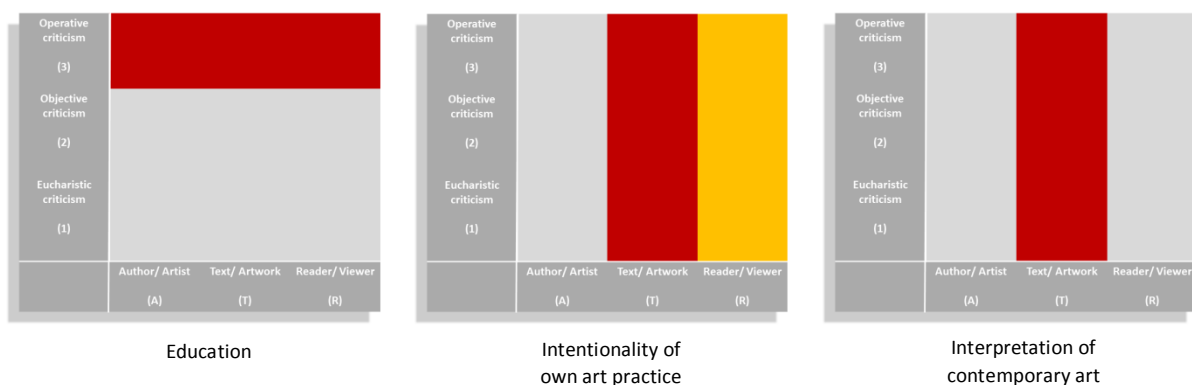
Indicated in the emails sent me after their submission exhibition, actual intentionality played a role within their evaluations of their show (to compare with their peers, see p.83).

In terms of the significance of Adam's interpretative approach for his students' engagement, Adam seemed to enable the development of an 'authentic' notion of authorship, and students' confidence to rub against the grain as informed authors of their own work. Acknowledging the tensions they faced, he rewarded individual's integrity and perseverance in their formative interactions, despite strategic pressures of the school. Modelling professional practice, he complicated and deepened their actual intentionality through critical engagement with possible readings, including assessors' interpretations in post-assessment sessions. However, production processes were scaffolded to such an extent, that it was questionable whether such critical engagement would be translated into critical judgment, when the student worked independently after their studies.

2. A. Mapping Faye’s interpretative approach

This single case analysis considers Faye’s interpretative approach and its influences on the conditions for creativity for her four students, Lenore, Alison, Jacob and Hayley. The first three did well, with Jacob receiving one of the highest results, while Haydey received the lowest grade in her year. As Haydey did not participate actively, I decided to minimise references to her as a student, as I could not triangulate the data as fully as with the others.

Faye understood authorship as collaborative and participatory, in that the work came into being as an experience for the viewer, thus valuing works that were not didactic and ‘literal’ (a concern dominant in the school, p.72). For her own practice, she saw the viewer’s experience (R) determining meaning, constructed through the experience of her artworks (T) (IF 22). Her ideal approach to interpretation of contemporary art was a textual model (T) purely, although she begrudgingly acknowledged that “the artwork is read as an interplay” of the artist, viewer and context.



IF 22: Faye, dominant influences

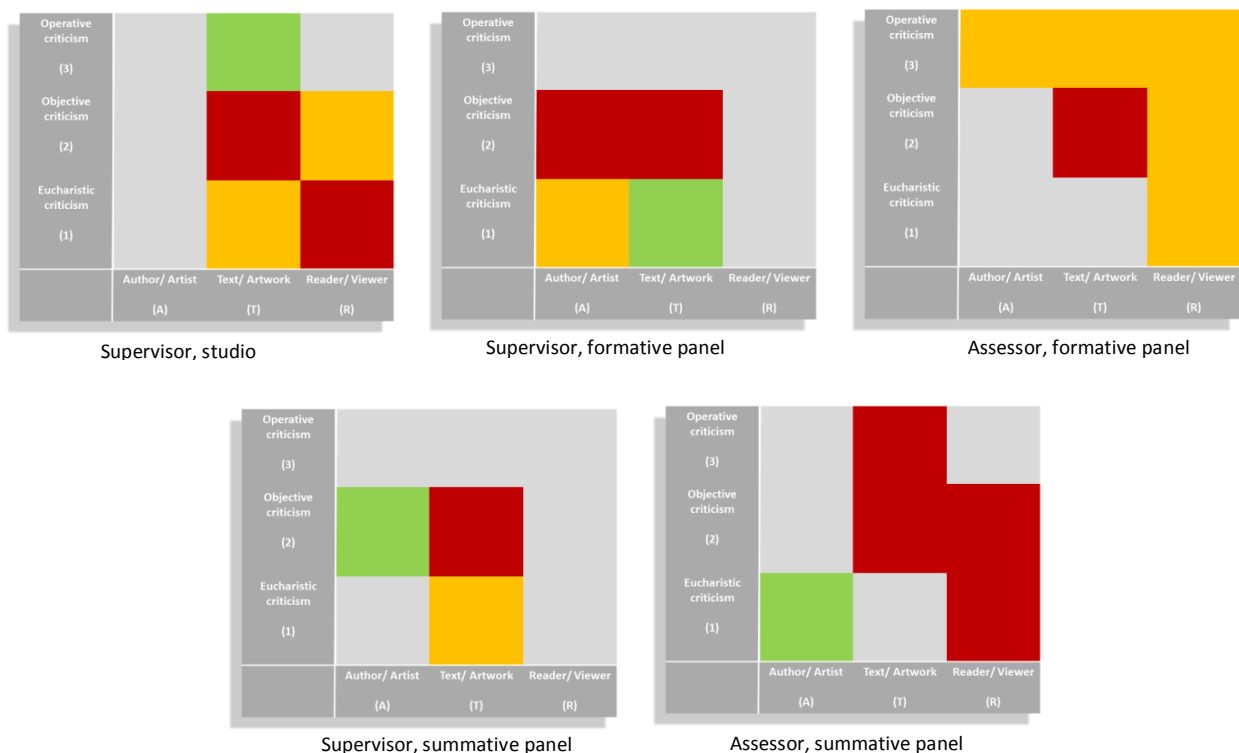
Whilst Faye valued anti-intentionalist approaches to interpretation in contemporary art (IF 22), she espoused utilising intentionality within students’ composition processes for formative purposes. She felt that readership (R) was necessary for students to gauge the efficacy of their intentionality, particularly for those who worked more intuitively (a construction of the student dominant in this school, p.140), thus creating opportunities in the studio for her students to access such perspectivism from their peers, in addition to the panel’s feedback.

‘Intentionality’ I feel is about making meaning clear to another viewer, so whilst a certain construction or medium may have a particular resonance for the maker, it is always good to ask others (peers or supervisors) whether a certain choice is equally resonant.

In an interview, she described a strong emphasis towards readership (R) and away from eucharistic criticism, as a way to support students' growth as contemporary artists to develop "their own voice".

I asked Faye how the assessment structures of the school may have supported or complicated this pedagogical objective. She distinguished between success in academic and professional frameworks, as "getting an A and being an Artist is not necessarily the same thing" because the rewards from academic NRA "doesn't translate into anything further down the line [where] out there, this exhibition can be as good as that, and yet they are probably different". She recognized she could utilise social validation to encourage students to "be true to their integrity" even if risking lower grades, creating a hierarchical discourse between integrity as personal wellbeing and strategic approaches as "selling out". Similar to Adam (p.181), she felt making a distinction between academic and professional success enabled students' awareness of the provisional nature of assessment, as "that's one group of people's opinion on who you were at some very formative point in your life".

Analysing Faye's interpretative practice



IF 23: A comparison of Faye's approaches

Discerning a pattern in Faye's behaviour and speech within assessment contexts was challenging. In this section, I indicate the variations (

IF 18) and point to possible reasons for this, some of which were provided by Faye when I discussed this issue with her in a report-and-respond style interview.

Faye chose to hold one-on-one assessments with individual students and vertical group assessments with third and fourth year students in her medium-specialisation. These peer feedback sessions were one of the distinguishing characteristics of her teaching practice. Whilst she provided responses as an informed reader in other formative contexts (R2), in this context she would most often provide readings as a person (“it is not the thing itself but what it does to you”) (R1), seemingly to coax out similar reader-responses from student peers.

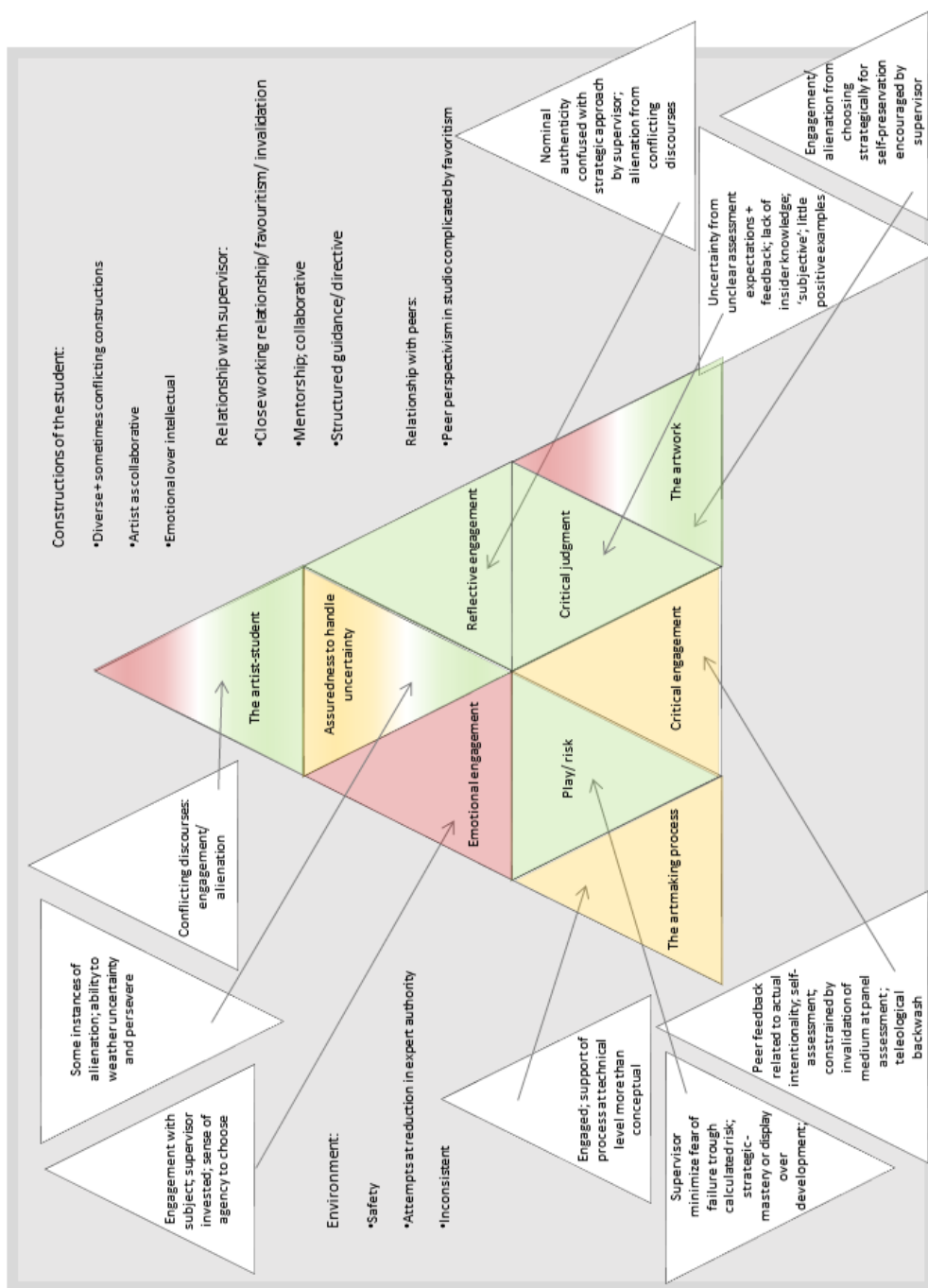
Faye argued that, through the perspectivism of readership, she was able to move students away from “horribly self-indulgent” art to where they could understand that art is about “eliciting a response from somebody” and understanding “how you speak to them”. I noticed this was particularly the case in the discussion of Alison’s work, where her peers asked questions to clarify what Alison was attempting to achieve and what she wanted the viewers to do when engaging with the work, indicating they saw intentionality as an important criterion for the success of the work. However, Faye was less responsive to intentionality, presenting a different interpretation of the work to Alison’s intentionality, possibly to balance the peers’ interpretative approach, or because she was asserting that reading as a ‘better’ interpretation for the student to adopt. However, when comparing Faye’s approaches (IF 19, p.191), it emerged that for the formative purposes of composition and production in the studio, Faye acted most closely to the summative role of assessor, making references that were mapped mostly within T and R. Her practice in studio was the most aligned of her colleagues’ with summative anti-intentionalist assessments, to prepare her students for that context.

On the whole (IF 19), Faye acted within columns R and T, deviating when acting as a supervisor in formative panel assessments, where she conformed to the expectations of guiding, and when necessary coercing, students towards more strategic production. I noted to her that she did not seamlessly occupy the expected role of assessor. Faye explained that tensions in the purposes of assessment emerged for her, particularly the politics of grading.

For me, I look for the learning process and this is difficult, because when awarding marks I feel one has to mark what is there, not what you know was enormous growth. This sometimes means you reward the 'fortunate aberration' in the realm of marks.

However, as with her colleagues Adam and Helena, the focus on the product (T) was perceived as warranted in demonstrating the harsh realities of the anti-intentionalist approach of the contemporary art world. She described using other ways to develop students' lifelong learning, such as through validating internal motivation, which she described as a "one of the joys" of the studio relationship. However, she felt strongly that such relationships should not feed into summative assessment processes, as the formative efficacy of that role would be disrupted. Regardless of such protestations, the relationship was referenced during the assessment process, in addition to affecting the motivations of students, as I explore in the next section.

B. The conditions for creativity



Schema 6: Conditions, Faye's supervision

Characteristics of the learning environment

Although Faye saw the supervisory relationship as a mechanism to deepen student engagement and validate integrity, students' stories reflected varied experiences of the relationship in particular.

Distrust and competition amongst students evolved from their perceptions of peers who “played favourites” (p.141), exacerbated by Faye’s appropriation of diverse and often conflicting discourses, drawn on inconsistently as the need arose.

Faye recognized the importance of the supervisor’s feedback on students’ long term development.

It is a thing that you’ll remember 10 years down the line, the thing your supervisor has said to you, even if you never see them again (Faye).

In a discussion with me, she used familial metaphors (spouse, parent, friend) to characterize the closeness of the relationship (echoing metaphors of the artist-teacher’s identity in Parker 1953). To enable closeness, she demonstrated investment in her students and their projects through individuated curricula and ipsative formative assessment in the studio, which when in contrast to the product-focused assessment approach of the school, reinforced that intimacy and dependence, where Faye was positioned as protector and defender of the student against the adversarial interference of other staff. The territorial culture of medium-specific “disciplines” further united them in a shared discourse against those without such insider understanding, albeit that some students felt alienation from such positioning (p.196). Students, such as Alison and Lenore, expected that Faye’s support and knowledge from studio interactions would inform panel assessments. Lenore emphasized the importance of such representation by the supervisor, citing an imagined inability of students to be heard by other staff (“coming from you it sort of just gets brushed over during the crit”); the pragmatics of long Critique sessions with many works which disallowed full explanations by students; and assessors’ impatience with comprehending projects different to the norm. Alison described how much more difficult it had been previous to that relationship, when “they just kicked you in the butt and they’re like ‘deal with it’ and ‘get over it yourself’”.

On the one hand, Faye enacted a weak mentorship role, possibly because of the less canonical nature of her medium, but also to encourage student independence, which ranged from explicit (“You will find yourselves working more independently this year”, non-verbal communication) to implicit gestures, such as less emphasis on studio attendance. On the other, she believed that a balance between autonomous experimentation and expert guidance helped prevent students wasting time “re-inventing the wheel”. As with other supervisors at this school, Faye exhibited a collaborative approach to students’ composition processes in her language (“We still need to work on bits... we need to fix format... I want it to be as slick as possible”). However, I noticed that this

usage of the inclusive 'we' was most prevalent with works that were seen to hold potential. When this was not the case, a more directive 'you' was used ("it's a struggle for you"; "you gonna get stuck behind"). I observed dependence on her guidance for making decisions, particularly when preparing for panel assessments.

Faye espoused a construction of the student as collaborative, attempting to support this through explicitly articulating the importance of peer learning, and encouraging peer readings within the horizontal structure of her studio assessments. She felt the newness of the medium required intertextual comparisons and discovery learning. Her students responded differently to the dynamic and interactive vertical Critiques. Alison, for instance, shared her emotional engagement with the work in an assertive and confident manner that was in stark contrast to her quiet and submissive behaviour at the panel feedback session. Jacob completely resisted the peer dynamic, asking Faye for a private meeting, despite her repeated attempts to get him to speak audibly to the group. Lenore seemed threatened and doubtful of peer interactions, indicating discomfort with its confessional culture. Her discussion was at a surface level, providing descriptions rather than rationale, possibly a result of self-preservation and non-disclosure in that public space. Whilst these three different responses to one context indicate how the students were able to exercise some agency, it emerged that they did not ascribe much validity to

peer interaction, because they experienced differing degrees of favouritism exhibited by the supervisor. The privacy of the one-on-one meetings, where the most important decisions were made, thwarted responsibility being shifted to students, rather strengthening the supervisor's status as the expert in authority. As occurred at UKI (p.138), the lack of a culture of studio attendance negated the peer learning culture she was hoping to instil.

Student engagement

As discussed above, Faye's students were alienated as a result of the invalidation they experienced from the relationship, and the prevalent discourse about their medium not being ascribed legitimacy by the other staff and students. In addition, alienation emerged as a result of the inconsistent discourses Faye used, particularly the integrity discourse which was intended to rub against strategic thinking for assessments. An example that Lenore provided was one that I had observed, where Faye encouraged her to work with the skills or mediums she had mastered instead of pushing her boundaries.

Faye always says to us, 'Play to your strengths', which is probably a good idea, but it doesn't leave much room.

Lenore experienced such feedback as constraining, encouraging her to make a better product at the cost of her development and the development of the specific project.

Should I suppress what I'm, where I'm moving with myself to fulfil that? Or should I suppress what she's saying and go where I'm going, you know?

This "weird little play" (Lenore), between internal desire related to nominal authenticity and external pressures for assessment, is one that many students experienced at both schools. Neither Alison nor Lenore felt the agency to explicitly question, resist, or talk back to such feedback, where Faye's role as mediator of assessment processes interfered with the formative role she played for their development.

Of Faye's four final year students, three strongly demonstrated feeling engaged with the subject of their projects, which did not preclude being open to change. Alison in particular, in her discussion to her peers in the group assessment, indicated openness to the ways in which her engagement with the subject and the process of artmaking might shift her original intentions for the work. Similarly Lenore and Jacob revealed understandings of authorship as collaborative, although passionate about their area of research in its compositional stages.

These students exhibited engagement with the process of their artmaking. However, Lenore's strongest experience of engagement in the process of her artmaking was towards the end of the degree.

I felt most engaged in play when I was given the freedom to experiment in something I enjoy without the pressure of someone trying to mould me in a specific direction.

Similarly, whilst working on the final project, Alison was better able to envisage her future independent choices as an artist rather than those in response to assessment expectations.

By elevating readership over students' feelings of intimidation or embarrassment at the sometimes inelegant process they might undergo along the way, Faye attempted to minimize students' fear of risk and failure. She claimed that "no one will care" about the process and that "they won't appreciate the turmoil" undergone. However, a disparity emerged between Faye's espoused encouragement of play and risk, and her strategic suggestions. She intimated that staff might be tempted to operate strategically too.

A lecturer who sees their success measured in A's, will encourage their students to work in a less risky ways, in order to achieve this.

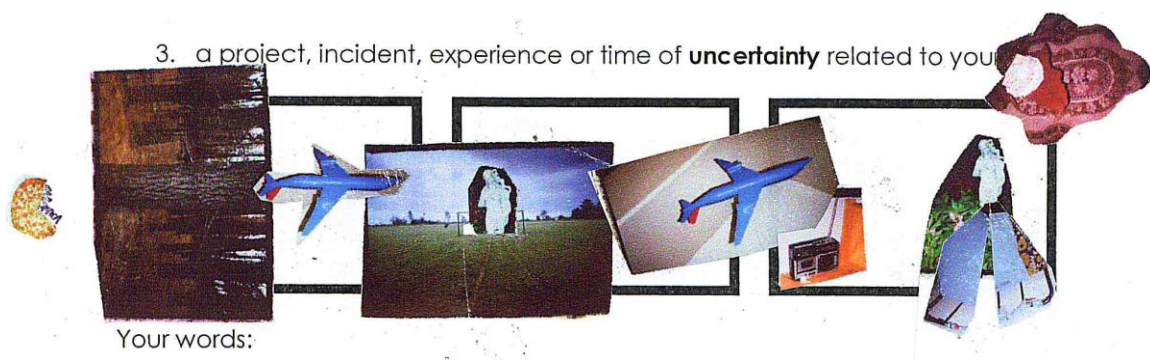
While this construction utilised an idealized integrity discourse, at a later point in our discussion she pointed to the realities of making calculated risks within the assessment system (similar to an argument made by Cunliffe 2007).

Good art always involves some kind of risk, though this should be carefully managed based on the potential rewards. It's the difference between being brave and being stupid.

An aspect of this engagement with process was how students were enabled to handle uncertainty. For Alison, Faye's support was particularly necessary at the composition stage of a project, when she experienced the uncertainty around "finding myself, what to do, what should I do?" Reflecting on other instances of uncertainty, she spoke about her bewilderment after receiving feedback from her supervisor.

I did not know how to get there, so I just felt overwhelmed... I lost like all confidence in myself that bit of the year, it was terrible. I just did not know what to do.

However, she was able to recognize this was not a unique experience and that she would be able to summon the motivation to persevere. When asked whether the feedback would have been less debilitating if more prescriptive, or if the opacity helped her to make her own decisions, Alison expressed "I understand why she said that I must do it, because if she did it for me, it wouldn't be my work, it wouldn't be me growing". However, she intimated that the emotional impact was severe. Her email at the end of her studies reflected on her ability to handle uncertainty, including coping mechanisms encouraged by Faye, such as having "confidence in what you believe is a good idea, as well as to bounce ideas of other creative minds".



VN 35: Lenore expressed uncertainty during her studies

Lenore explained that uncertainty underpinned her experience of artmaking in ways that productively pushed her to explore and not to settle within her comfort zone, using an image of an airplane to represent how it “stops you from ever landing” (VN 35). Pasting a figure within football posts, she spoke about how uncertainty came from external pressures to achieve certain expectations because “it’s always a goal-oriented launch, they’re always kicking you in the butt”. Instead of such positioning, she had learnt to develop a sense of her own security, constructing a portrait of herself as an artist, as part sculpture and part prosthesis (in the last block). She problematized the image by including a thought-bubble, because “someone needs to tell you that you’re going to make it in this field all the way through your career”. This necessity for external validation acted as “a suppressant” of her autonomy.

Faye espoused the importance of encouraging both emotional and critical engagement in her students, arguing that the “inability to see someone as support and critic is usually schizophrenic if the supervisor and student are not honest with each other”. Faye used the studio Critique as a mediation point between the expansive ‘play’ of the studio and decision-making towards panel assessments, explaining in an interview that it was important to prepare students for the less ‘safe’ space of panel assessments. In an interesting contrast to Ochsner’s (2000) arguments, she held that art education “is not art therapy, even though there might be a therapeutic quality to it” because eventually the artwork would have a “public platform”. The push for a product was exerted on students whose work was not as progressed as the others, adopting a norm-referencing metaphor of competitive racing despite her espoused disdain of such practices (p.190).

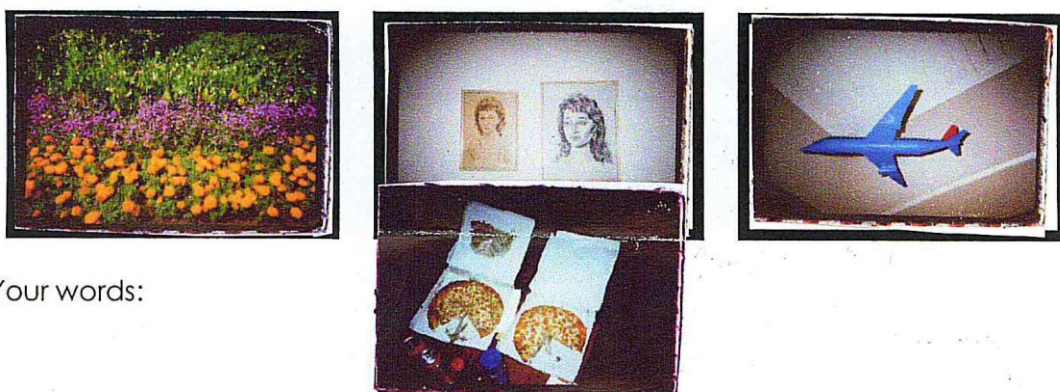
Alison felt enabled within the studio to consider aloud how her technical choices may affect readings, with discussion of her intentionality in relation to her peers’ reception. However, whilst Lenore had a sense of her own abilities to self-assess, such evaluations were underpinned by anxiety that they were not strong enough to determine what was a ‘successful’ or ‘good’ artwork, as this was not articulated in assessment contexts characterized by negative or harsh critique (p.153). What these student experiences of critical engagement indicated was how Faye’s strongly critical, anti-intentionalist readership accent in the studio, when coupled with the strongly critical accent of the panel’s feedback, resulted in a loss for positive options to explore and standards to pursue. Alison felt she had developed the surety to handle not only constructive but negative criticism, by evaluating what was relevant and persevering beyond emotionally upsetting feedback. A skill Lenore had learnt was how to temper such feedback in relation to her own internal critical voice, so that the result was more constructive than debilitating.

On the one hand, Faye constructed panel assessments to her students as having a formative purpose, with the assessors as imagined readers outside of the internal process of making. On the other hand, the summative component led her to explicitly encourage some students to “be strategic as to what you share”, such as when responding to Lenore’s anxiety over what to show and what to conceal, indicating a protectiveness of her student’s wellbeing.

She agreed with my suggestion that by doing this she was encouraging the separation of their identities from the artwork for strategic purposes. She felt that by making explicit that the academic framework was not the one of most importance in the art world, students would be less invested in how it constructed them and their work. The importance of her interpretative approaches and accent on readership showed itself in how Faye attempted to help her students survive invalidation from this system of exchange.

You see somebody struggling to make this thing work, because this is the course and this is the requirement, not where their heart is. ‘Well, how do we construct this thing in the best possible way, so you can get the most suitable mark for your degree and then you can go and do the thing you really want to be doing?’.

The link between critical engagement in process, reflective engagement with the artwork, and students’ development on a broader scale is an important one. A number of the students indicated that there were impediments to their reflective engagement, particularly from their lack of understanding assessment processes. Alison revealed frustration in her lack of insider knowledge, and questioned the validity of staff judgments in the face of the perceived subjectivity of aesthetic criticism (a discourse common to both schools, p.71).



Your words:

VN 36: Alison reflected on her studies

Alison emphasized positive, contented feelings about her studies, her relationship with her supervisor, and her project. The image of flowers and pizza were about “comfort and security,

happiness, joy - what you enjoy”, with the central image as a portrait of her, and the airplane “a metaphor for going out and being successful from what you learn here” (VN 36). However, she emphasized that having learnt how to look beyond the personal effects of societal hierarchies was of most value. This emerged as an unintended outcome of these conditions.

This analysis revealed that Faye utilised conflicting discourses and was inconsistent in how she constructed her students, and in turn, their relationships. Whilst she strove to create an environment where students worked more independently, she unconsciously rewarded those who interacted with her intimately. Whilst she attempted to emphasize collaborative, peer learning through vertical assessment contexts, this was undermined by her devaluing of the shared studio space; prioritisation of the one-on-one interactions; and the “favouritism” she exhibited to some. Perhaps the greatest conflict arose in her competing discourses of integrity and strategic submission to external pressures. Here she mostly colluded with the school’s framework in daily interactions, believing she consoled those who were not successful within it, by asking them to be larger than the very system that was assessing them. In this case, when students felt unsure of how assessment judgments would unfold, they adopted and reproduced the interpretative approach enacted by their supervisor, which in Faye’s case leant more towards readership.

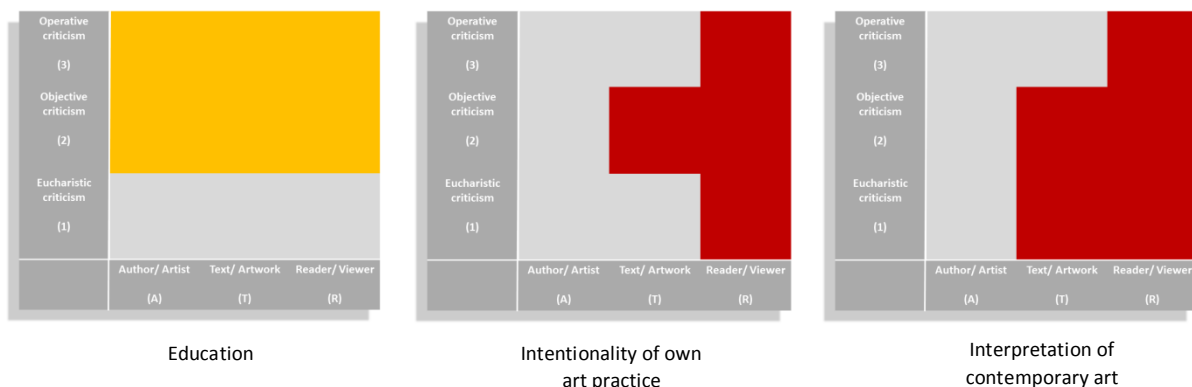
3. A. Mapping Helena’s interpretative approach

In this section I present an analysis of Helena’s practices, and the insights of her high-achieving final year students, whom I named Stanley and Grace.

When I presented Helena with my analysis that she focused primarily on the artwork (T) in her assessment interactions, she teased out some of her thinking about why this might be so. Her response indicated the influence of

... conflicts that I experienced very much being an author as opposed to being a reader. The death of the author sounds great except when you’re an author, then you sort of think, ‘maybe not so much’.

Helena was resistant to the interpretative approaches she had experienced in her education (IF 24), particularly those which imposed constraints on her agency as the author of her work. She was thus critical of both intentionalist readings as deterministic, and anti-intentionalist approaches which disregarded authorial intention completely. Her practice-based research had created awareness of the production process complicating such one-size-fits-all interpretative approaches.



IF 24: Helena, dominant influences

As an artist, she felt it important that her work be accessible and stimulate reader responses on an emotional level foremost (R1) while operating across other levels (R2+3). The artwork (T) was the most important determinant of meaning in her interpretative approach to contemporary art, as she felt that “the artwork is, in effect, the interface between artist and viewer”, suggesting a conversational model of interpretation. Although she was against deterministic impositions on her as author, she gave more legitimacy to anti-intentionalism in her own approaches to contemporary art “because the terms of this interface are always shifting, the meaning is never static or stable”.

Why I’m interested in ‘text’ is because it’s at that thing that I’m looking at both as a reader and as somebody who’s assisting the maker, but I know that I cannot assist the author indefinitely, and ultimately I will have to read the work. So there’s always

a part of me that's engaging in that exercise that's already critically assessing the work and weighing it up.

Helena acknowledged that the positioning of her roles in various academic assessment contexts complicated her enactment of such espoused professional approaches. Being a supervisor and assessor placed her in a double-bind: whilst not wanting to constrain the artmaking process by theoretical impositions, she explicitly imposed parameters on her students' processes to guide them towards success for academic assessment. As a practice-based supervisor, she assured her students that the submission exhibition was "a false endpoint... with the resulting exhibition being one of many. The year is one sentence, albeit an important one, in a larger narrative"; while as an assessor, she colluded with the emphasis of the product-based assessment.

Similar to Adam and Nick, Helena thought that the appropriate extent of student authorship was for the original intention to inform composition processes.

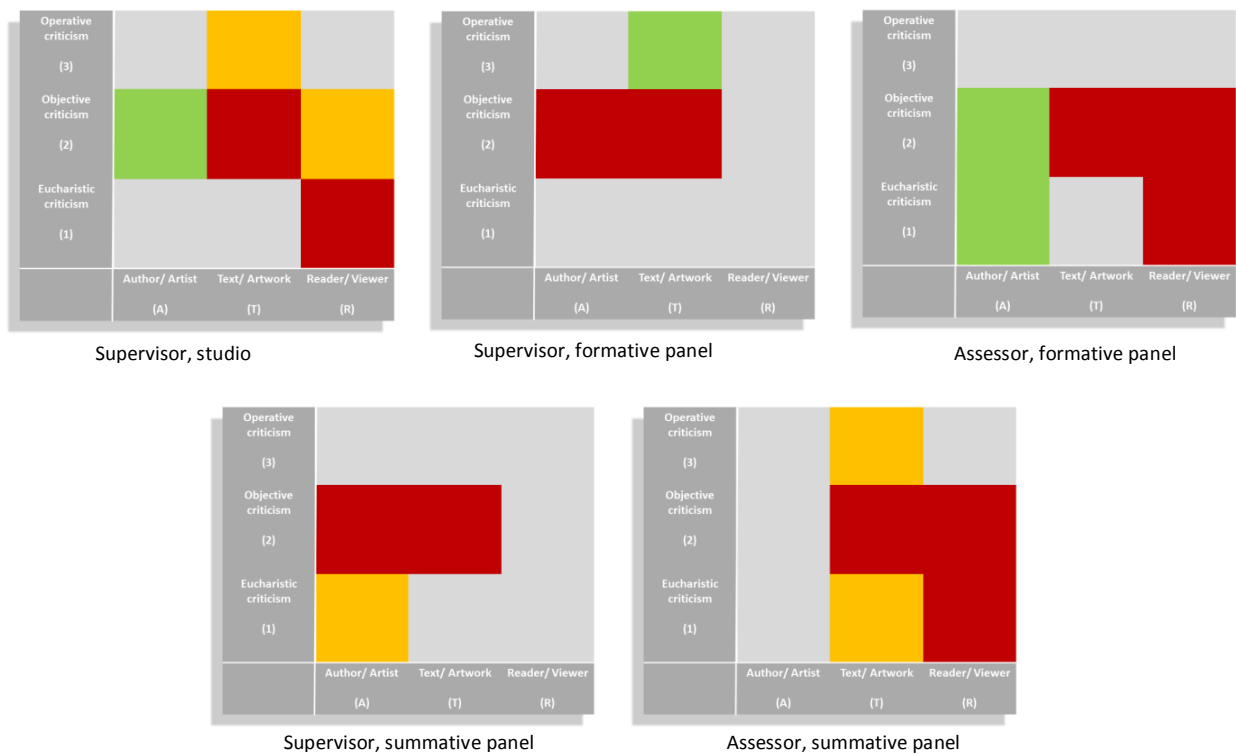
How I frame things for students... is that you have to have your impetus, to neglect the author is ridiculous, the thing must matter to you, if it does not matter to you as an author it's not worth making. But that's the impetus for producing something and the impetus pulls you into the process from which you evolve a product.

This pointed to the collaborative nature of authorship for Helena: where from early on in the production process (T), the artwork was distinct from the aims of the artist, most evident once engagement with the visual form began, which then exerted its own force in negotiation with the reader. An expression theory of art emerged (p.291), both in discussion with me and with her students.

The text is the moment where the narcissistic kind of self-obsessed impetus for making something starts to accommodate a reader.

At the same time, a judgmental understanding of the self/other relationship emerged, where she constructed the artist as a Romantic, psychological self who tended towards indulgence, obsession and narcissism, if not checked by interaction with the reader as other. This harsh construction, which echoed Faye's (p.192), was informed by post-structuralist approaches where the critic is legitimized over the artist.

Analysing Helena’s interpretative practice



IF 25: A comparison of Helena’s approaches

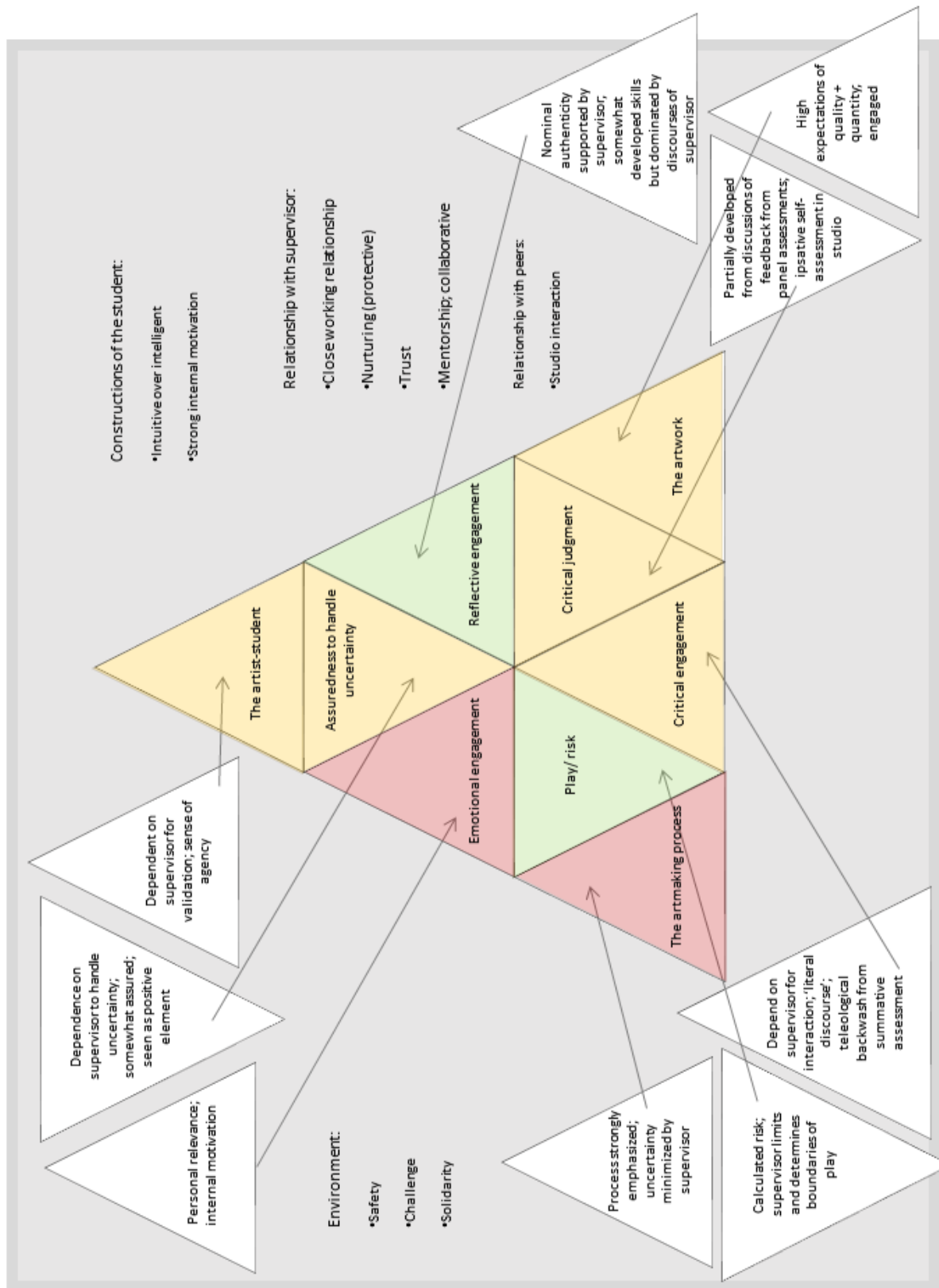
Aligned with her espoused theories, Helena’s feedback during studio interactions was mapped mostly within T, as it related to processes of production, and within R, where readership was used for critical engagement.

The few references Helena made that could be mapped within column A related to her demonstrating solidarity (p.22) in the working relationship. Following her guidance, each student began his/her Critique by articulating a reflective narrative or “plot” of their process up to that point in time. Shifting students’ foci from their desires in the composition stage to the unexpected outcomes of production, she stressed the importance of “allowing the original impetus to change” where “solutions will present themselves”. Only once did she refer to a student’s actual intentionality, adopting the perspective of the reader, warning that “the story is not evident here... explore ways to bring story in”. This related to her belief in the importance of accessibility (R1). In response to Stanley’s concerns about how the significance of the work may be lost if shown in different spaces (T3), the supervisor focused the discussion not on his intentionality but how different contexts might affect the reading of the work, suggesting he chose “what is more compelling”. A value maximising preference for the best reading emerged at this formative stage.

As such, readership featured strongly in this context. The imagined reader featured prominently, where it was suggested that students explore different options and try to envisage viewers' readings and dominant associations (R1). She communicated possible associations without always being clear whether these were her personal readings (R1) or as an informed fellow artist or connoisseur (R2). When she imposed her readings, such as Stanley's work having a potentially "sinister quality", it was left unquestioned by the student, particularly when the reading related to a valued criterion of the school (p.72).

The analysis of Helena's interpretative approaches indicated consistency in her enactment of roles within this interpretative community (IF 25, p.204). When acting as a supervisor in panel assessments, where she would balance and counteract the gaze of her colleagues as assessors operating more within T and R, she made more references in columns A and T. She operated within T and R as an assessor, as she was in agreement with the school's anti-intentionalist assessment approach. However, when interacting formatively with her students in studio assessments, she did not have to counteract the interpretative approaches of the others, although her awareness of pre-empting such roles emerged. This may be the reason why her interpretative approaches in that context spanned across so much of the interpretative framework, but also because she favoured the critical engagement of readership of the text while in process.

B. The conditions for creativity



Schema 7: Conditions, Helena's supervision

Characteristics of the learning environment

Helena wrote about being “very clear about my role - which is to oversee, enable and facilitate a student's growth within Fine Art” by “recognizing and responding to the agency of each unique person as a ‘whole’ person”, with a strong mentorship component. While this accent on the person and their developmental process was espoused and to some extents evident in the studio, it was complicated by the summative assessment drive towards textuality and readership, which she in turn imposed. Even during the panel assessments I observed, she intimated the difficulties of balancing a desire to instruct with not over-directing students’ work. She acknowledged this in our interview, speaking about the sophistication the work might achieve with expert guidance,²⁸ while retaining a sense of it being the student’s ‘own’ work.

I can provide solutions that would presumably translate into a successful body of work, but I want the students to own those solutions, to own the process, to feel a sense of ownership over what they’ve accomplished, and to have a sense of agency as a result of that.

Helena hoped to create a balance between guiding the student and affirming their ownership, but was not sure autonomy was possible in undergraduate interactions. Grace’s reflections shed light from her perspective.

I feel that as a student, a lot of the creative and artistic responsibility has been placed on me. Which in a way is a healthy way to learn in art. On the other hand, I feel that the lecturers have only been there for guidance purposes... I used to feel that pleasing the lecturers by taking their advice and doing what they have asked of me, is what I had needed to learn to do. I needed to learn how to think for myself in developing my identity as an artist and the ideas that I wish to portray within my artworks. Although the lecturers are also my assessors, my art is my own.

The guidance Helena offered was foremost about production of the work towards the final submission, and implicitly about student development. She communicated the importance of the artmaking process being 'held' by the supervisor, who observes the direction the student is taking the work (she used a metaphor of train tracks) and has the responsibility to evaluate when a change in direction is needed, rather than it being self-directed (using a metaphor of the supervisor as ship captain). At times this guidance was stronger, suggesting collaborative authorship from composition through to the editing process of curation. This collaborative accent was most explicit during times

²⁸ Here Helena was expressing an implicit understanding of the zone of proximal development (Vygotskiĭ 1978).

of uncertainty (p.212), when she became strongly directive, feeling justified in preventing the students' work from failing.

Helena utilised varied discourses when constructing her students. One such construction was according to the student's ability to feel assured. Another construction, prevalent at this school (p.140), drew on the dichotomy between intelligence and intuition. She rewarded behaviour which evoked Romantic notions of the artist (p.32), and which did not challenge the authority of the staff. As with many of her colleagues, Helena indicated that her intended relationship of the atelier model might differ in response to "the parameters" needed to best guide individuals' production, such as "policing" Stanley and "pushing" Grace.

Helena exhibited affective solidarity with her students and a nurturing approach in her teaching. She had learnt the value of this approach when a student, comparing the times when she felt emotionally "held" to distanced supervision and harsh Critiques which had made her risk-averse. At the feedback sessions following formative assessments, Helena was actively involved: having the last word; offering reassurances; and translating the assessors' feedback into language which she felt her students would respond. Her students' skills of articulation, integral to the studio interactions, were not seen as a valid skill in this context where they were the recipients of feedback. Helena spoke for them, with Stanley providing only surface descriptions, while Grace said nothing.

Helena gained her students' trust through being invested in and partially responsible for their success. While initially an "ally", she had to come realise the worth of "critical distance" in her role, putting in place measures to "safeguard" against inappropriately close relationships and avoid negative "abuse dynamics" she had witnessed in her own studies (concerns shared by UKI staff, p.100). She described the supervisors' role occupying a "contradictory space: on the one hand, openness, vulnerability, confidence to express concerns but at the same time at an arm's length – professional rather than entangled emotionally".

One of my interests was how the conditions she created, for safety and challenge, impacted on the ways in which her students behaved. Her students willing adoption of Helena's suggestions did not seem passive relinquishing of their desires, but rather trust that she was acting in solidarity with them. For instance, when asked in the studio Critique to articulate their "plot", they did not pause before following her lead. There seemed a tacit understanding that such skills of articulation and reflection were necessary to be developed or practiced in anticipation of the 'performance' of the panel assessment. However, when it came to the panel assessment event, Helena spoke for the

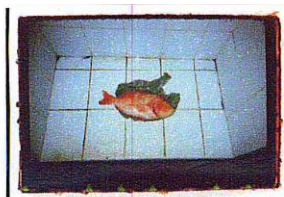
students, to such an extent that it became unnecessary for them to do so. Such articulation did however serve to develop their reflective engagement, creating a narrative about their learning over time (p.212).

Student engagement

Helena's sensitivity to personal relevance strongly supported the engagement of the student as a person. She was aware of how feedback impacted on their identity, utilizing this argument to justify her focus on the artwork (T) in her feedback.

I remember being on the receiving end of that kind of quite insensitive criticism as a student, of feeling personally under attack, which is why we [the staff] have to be so careful to talk about the work.

Helena's strong accent on personal relevance supported students' emotional engagement and their investment in their personal vision. Perhaps because of this accent, her students were unaware of the anti-intentionalist approach at summative assessment, despite Helena utilizing similar interpretative approaches in the studio (p.204).



Your words: 3rd year + 4th year

Choosing project themes + concepts that personally engage you help strengthen the overall artmaking process. Choosing an idea which is unique to your own experience

4th year - last year of study

Strong vision yet chaotic process - seems daunting and therefore pushes me to be engaged with what I am doing because I want to achieve the vision.

VN 37: Grace's story indicated her emotional engagement

Grace's work dealt explicitly with content that came "from a personal place". In her narrative, she described that while she felt "more attached" to such "really rich" material (VN 37), it "has made me more vulnerable to the situation" of its reception, indicating an implicit awareness of the complexities of authorship.

It's difficult to put across those personal ideas to other people. You have to do it in a way where they will understand. There will be like a link between the artist and viewer, which is cool. I really do enjoy trying to figure out what those links are.

In projects where Stanley's personal experiences fed into his art, he found himself questioning "that exploration between 'What is it?' and 'How do you represent it?' and 'Do you represent it?' and 'Is it right or is just something that is in your art underneath all that other shit?'" I offered an interpretation to which he responded positively: that his questioning of what might be "real and authentic" was about the impossibility of representing the unsayable.²⁹ At times, Helena's implicit criterion of personal relevance was experienced as delegitimizing other ways he approached his research.

Helena's biggest accent, on the artmaking process, was carried through from her espoused theory, to studio interactions, and her assessment focus on production (T). She linked such process-based approaches to what she called "intuitive" work (p.139). Stanley believed that his enjoyment of engagement with process had "informed the direction of the art that I am making, definitely" in his process-based final year project, which he felt could not be consciously determined. However, this accent on process was bounded by the assessment culture of the school, creating an acknowledged tension between encouraging play or experimentation, and creating boundaries to guide the work towards resolution. Articulating in an interview that "it makes me nervous if there is too much play and no resolution, I feel my job is to guide solution", Helena scaffolded students' measurement of risk through critical engagement, rather than allowing them unbridled space to fail or present unfinished pieces. Although she had appreciated her own supervisors' responses to her taking risks and rewarding adventurous work, the effects of her own experiences as a student when supervisors did not prevent public failure in Critiques, were what she was trying to avoid.

There is something to be said for learning the hard way. I was so cautious. It just teaches you not to take risks, to take the safe option because you were hauled over the coals.

Recognizing that such learnt self-preservation undermines creativity, she saw her role as protecting her students by helping them make calculated risks to achieve success within the framework of the school.

²⁹ I have explored similar thematics in previous research on South African art (Belluigi 2001), and noted this as an implicit criterion in a study on South African studio learning (Belluigi 2009).

Play might yield productive learning experiences, but it does not necessary yield successful works. And people aren't going to thank you for letting them play, if they do really badly at the end of the year.

This protective role was further exacerbated, in Helena's perceptions, by the artistic medium she taught, which took considerable time "to be resolved" and where "failure is massive", requiring her students to be more "smart" about the risks they took. She felt that the assessment process, being so product-driven towards resolution, was insensitive to these medium-specific particularities, thus requiring the medium-specific expert to speak for it during assessments.

Little value was placed on learning from failure, due to the anti-intentionalist evaluation of the artwork alone rather than student development or desires, of which in the excerpt below Helena seemed almost cynically suspicious.

There have been moments when I've been compromised by the fact that I have misjudged. In other words, I might have supported something and almost gotten carried away by the conviction of the student's impetus, by the sincerity behind the thing, and by the fact that they're damn-well trying so hard and all of those delicious things. But they don't equate to successful artwork, and I have had to take a step back to realise that what is being produced, the product that is being assessed, is not resolved.

At the feedback session following assessments, Helena asserted the need for students to shift towards more critical decision-making. She confirmed my analysis that she constructed the purpose of the mid-year formative assessment event as providing strategic direction to progress students' work towards the summative assessment.

Grace found such pressure "super frustrating" because of its impact on "the whole process [which] gets shut down and it becomes almost static to me". She felt it difficult operating between the two different discourses: one which suggested that there were no limits or possibilities of failure in artmaking; and the other, a strong sense of immanent failure and judgment about the nature of art, from within the school. She reflected that for many students this uncertainty led them to be strategic "where they feel that they have to appease their markers above taking risks and learning who they are as artists".

Grace felt guilt at having such questioning thoughts, indicating how the nurturing humanistic approach enacted by Helena, unwittingly domesticated the criticality of her students.³⁰ Safety and criticality were at odds, most probably because her intended studio approach was not autonomous, but constrained and impacted upon by the larger assessment culture. In an attempt to combat this, in her “post-mortem” sessions following panel assessments, Helena signalled that all readership is not unproblematic, even from ‘experts’ (R2), and should rather be actively negotiated.

The handling of uncertainty is a central concern for the conditions of creativity. This supervisor espoused that uncertainty in process was productive, and she would attempt to “hold it” for her students, in addition to protecting the process from premature interference or closure. To a certain extent this emerged in observations of studio interactions, such as when she responded to Stanley’s anxiety at “just experimenting and playing” by assuring him that at that point it was not necessary for his “plot” to have narrative coherence.

In the focus group interview, Grace described how she experienced, and therefore characterized, most of her artmaking process, from composition through production, as involving uncertainty with only “moments of clarity”.

I am still learning and I don't think that I will ever stop learning, as long as I work within the field of artmaking. I believe that the uncertainty in process and creation can be considered a condition within artmaking.

Whilst aware of her risk-averse nature as a person, she felt her increased assuredness to handle uncertainty had been gained from her FASP studies, enabling her to be more creative in terms of practising the skill of ‘openness’ (Torrance & Ball 1984). It emerged that Grace was able to exercise reflective engagement with her learning process, possibly because of such openness; her relationship with Helena; and the skills of reflective articulation she had developed. Her initial anxiety with assessments was later replaced by an “almost... collaborative process for me, where I take into account what the lecturers are saying to me”, with the staff as sounding boards for potential interpretations of her imagined readers. She nonetheless exercised her agency to evaluate such feedback.

³⁰ For more on the significance of this tradition, see Usher & Johnston’s (1997) convincing critique of the traditions of adult learning.

I can do what I want, but taking into account what the lecturers are telling me, and that helps my development and my growth.

Grace felt certain such interaction developed her self-assessment skills.

I've realised that critical thinking and critical assessment of oneself has taught me how to assess and challenge my own passions and ambitions within my process, allowing me to aim higher and not settle on the simple ways of creating art. I feel that these challenging processes have allowed me to expand on my idea of art and its creation.

Stanley's reflective engagement echoed some of Helena's discourses, from which he experienced an underlying sense of uncertainty or doubt (VN 38). The one had to do with an aesthetic sensibility he perceived himself strategically imposing on his work to receive external validation; whilst the other was perceived to be "more authentic" or "pure" in terms of being motivated through the production process. He challenged himself critically, to gain a deeper understanding of his own motivations and choices in terms of this conflict, which underpinned his nominal authenticity as an artist.



Your words:

aesthetics vs morality

VN 38: Stanley's experience of discourse conflict

When asked if assessment events were catalytic for such engagement, Stanley felt it was not necessarily the content of that reception, but rather his self-evaluation of pieces as reflection-outside-of-action (p.10). He focused on the experience of uncertainty itself as negative, rather than the strength of his own critical judgment.

That uncertainty is, I think, like definitely the downfall in my development of my artmaking process, because when I stay true to what I think is going to be good or what I would like, it seems to work out a lot better than trying to force what I think is someone else's views.

My sense was that Stanley was conflating uncertainty with a lack of confidence in his own internal motivation to make the work from its conception, and at times seemed almost despairing of what he saw as a personal weakness to be influenced by external motivation. Here he echoed the

understanding of artmaking that his supervisor held, where she privileged process-based intuitive work as a “less of an art-ified way of thinking about things, so more of honest response”. She othered more conscious influences as external to the monological self, in a manner similar to that of the humanist tradition of adult learning.

Despite the lack of emphasis on reflective engagement in the school culture and summative assessment practices, the power of this supervisor’s validation was reflected in these students’ perceptions, which strongly indicated that they felt supported in their individual development. For instance, when asked about responsiveness to his intentionality, Stanley stated matter-of-factly that “the lecturers are here to encourage our development in this and that’s their job”. In addition, these students were able to reflect intertextually on their works, as Helena encouraged such thinking in their studio interactions. However, at such discussions, the intertextual interpretations of their work were most often those imposed by her as a value maximiser rather than considered in relation to their actual intentionality. This may have been one of the underlying reasons why Stanley was unable to manage the internal/external conflict he alluded to above.

I asked Helena explicitly about the implications of not utilizing student intentionality to develop metacognition. She thought this ideal was currently not utilised institutionally because “it’s so difficult to assess”. She acknowledged that her validation in studio differed to the summative assessment because “personally it really excites me” when students assessed their work utilizing their own criteria, as she felt Stanley had done. However, she recognized such self-assessment was mostly student driven. Although acknowledging the value for their lifelong learning and authorship, she was ambivalent about how critical judgment might be valued within the overarching anti-intentionalist approach of the school. ---

Helena was one of the staff who wholeheartedly supported the anti-intentionalist assessment process. While resisting such impositions on her own authorship (p.202), she perceived her students’ development as less fraught in terms of authorship. Emotional engagement was strongly twinned with critical engagement in her students’ learning, aligned with her espoused approach. Her students internalized this as a way of being, utilizing critical engagement to guide their processes. The risk-averse product-orientated curriculum resulted in this supervisor supporting calculated risks and a learning environment she characterized by safety, protection and nurturing, which helped her students feel assured in the face of the uncertainty of the assessments. The skills of articulation developed in the studio, although strongly influenced by the supervisors’ discourses and not drawn on for panel assessments, were influential to their reflective engagement.

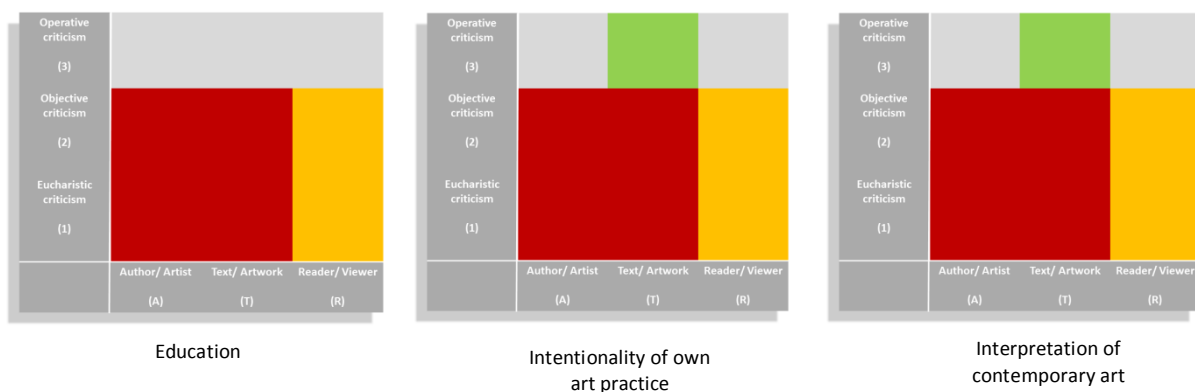
4. A. Mapping Nick’s interpretative approach

I observed summative assessments pertaining to two cohorts of Nick’s students. However, data generated from formative assessment observations was limited to one year’s cohort, when Nick had one final year student, Tessa. She was able to draw comparisons between her experiences of another art school and SAI to inform this study.

As was dominant in the school (p.155), Nick utilised an integrity discourse in his interpretation of contemporary art.

It’s about reading work that you’re looking at... And then you have to make judgment calls on that: how sincere the art is, how much integrity is there in the work.

Implicit within this notion was that such ‘integrity’ could be read from within the work itself (T) and as such hypothetical intentionalism emerged in Nick’s interpretations of contemporary art (IF 26).



IF 26: Nick, dominant influences

Similarly, in terms of his own intentionality for his art practice, Nick included authorial knowledge but not authorial determination. A belief that a better interpretation of the work was made possible with authorial knowledge emerged, writing that “I do think that the insight into the creative making/process allows for a more informed, and sometimes sympathetic or affirming, assessment”. This allusion to composition (A) and production (T) suggested that he had a more intentionalist preference than the majority of his colleagues (notably Adam, Faye and Helena).

Nick related maturity to the artist being authoritative about how the work may be read (similar to staff at UKI, p.77). For the most part, authorship was associated with student dispositions he valued, such as ownership, commitment and investment, tied to the integrity discourse and expressive authenticity (“So if they’re invested in that way they will be valid authors”).

As discussed earlier in this chapter (p.167), Nick was the only supervisor whose interest in actual intentionality was shared openly with his colleagues. This arose not only in relation to his student's actual intentionality, but when as an assessor he countered value-maximising or hypothetical intentionalist readings of his colleagues. He confirmed that his utilization of actual intentionality was both for the formative purpose of realizing those projects he felt had potential, and as a quality assurance mechanism (similar to Faye's usage of actual intentionality, p.174).

Due to the value placed on intentionality by her supervisor, who would set the tenor and focus of the feedback in studio assessments and in other formative assessments contexts, Tessa had constructed an understanding of the panel as responsive and receptive to her intentionality in formative assessments.

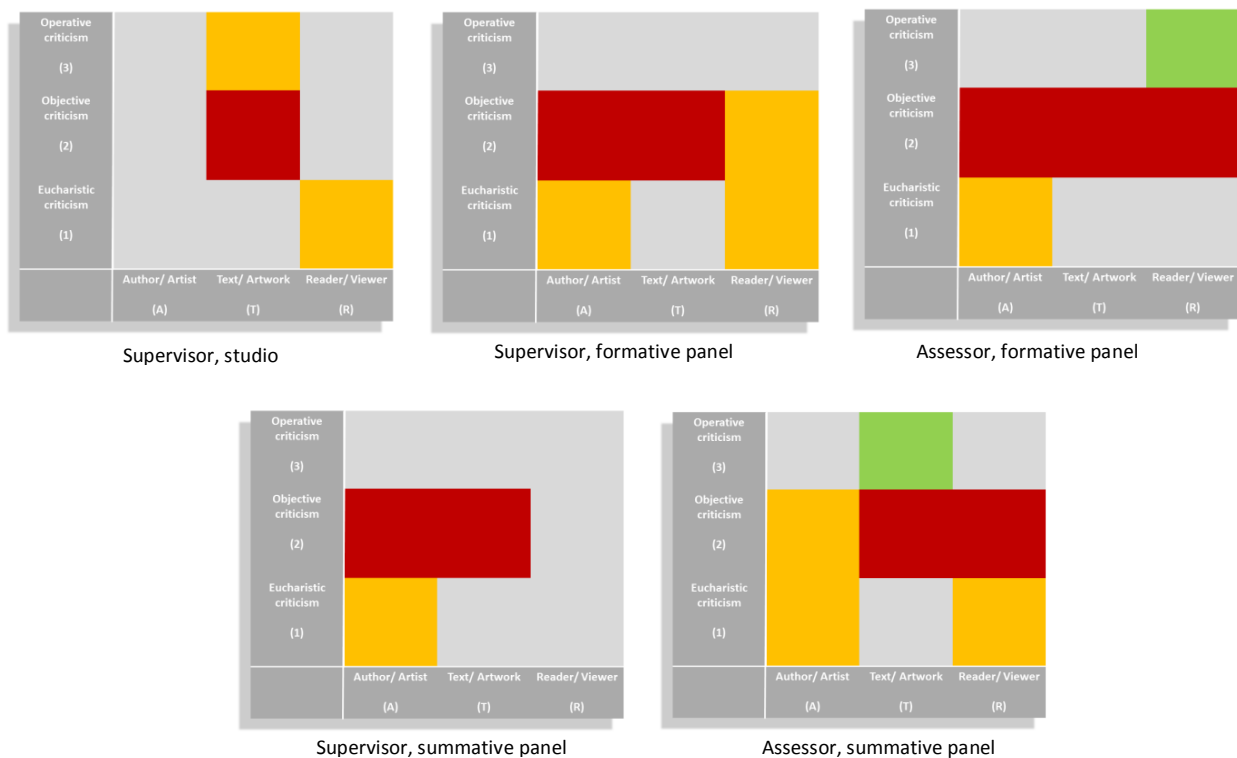
They do definitely listen, they hear you out, and in crits at the end of year your lecturer speaks for you. So there is sort of a push towards discovering what the student was trying to do, and I think that also helps in determining whether or not that actually worked.

Although this was the student's perception, the summative assessment approach of the school was not aligned with this developmental purpose. I presented Nick with a summation of the educational argument that "if we're talking about developing authors in the long term, then there should be a concern about the person", to which Nick concurred, while acknowledging that student development did not explicitly inform the school's assessment focus. He reflected that, over his years of teaching experience, he had shifted his focus from a concern with how the assessment of the product reflected on him as a supervisor, to his students' learning.

I feel more confident now (though the whole proceedings induce anxiety still). I feel that I need to have helped the students understand how to align ideas and art-making, how to manifest their work, how to work productively and how to develop that internal set of criteria. When they are marked, this is what should come through.

However, he oscillated between such internal criteria relating to students' intentionality and their internalization of the implicit criteria of the school.

Analysing Nick's interpretative practice



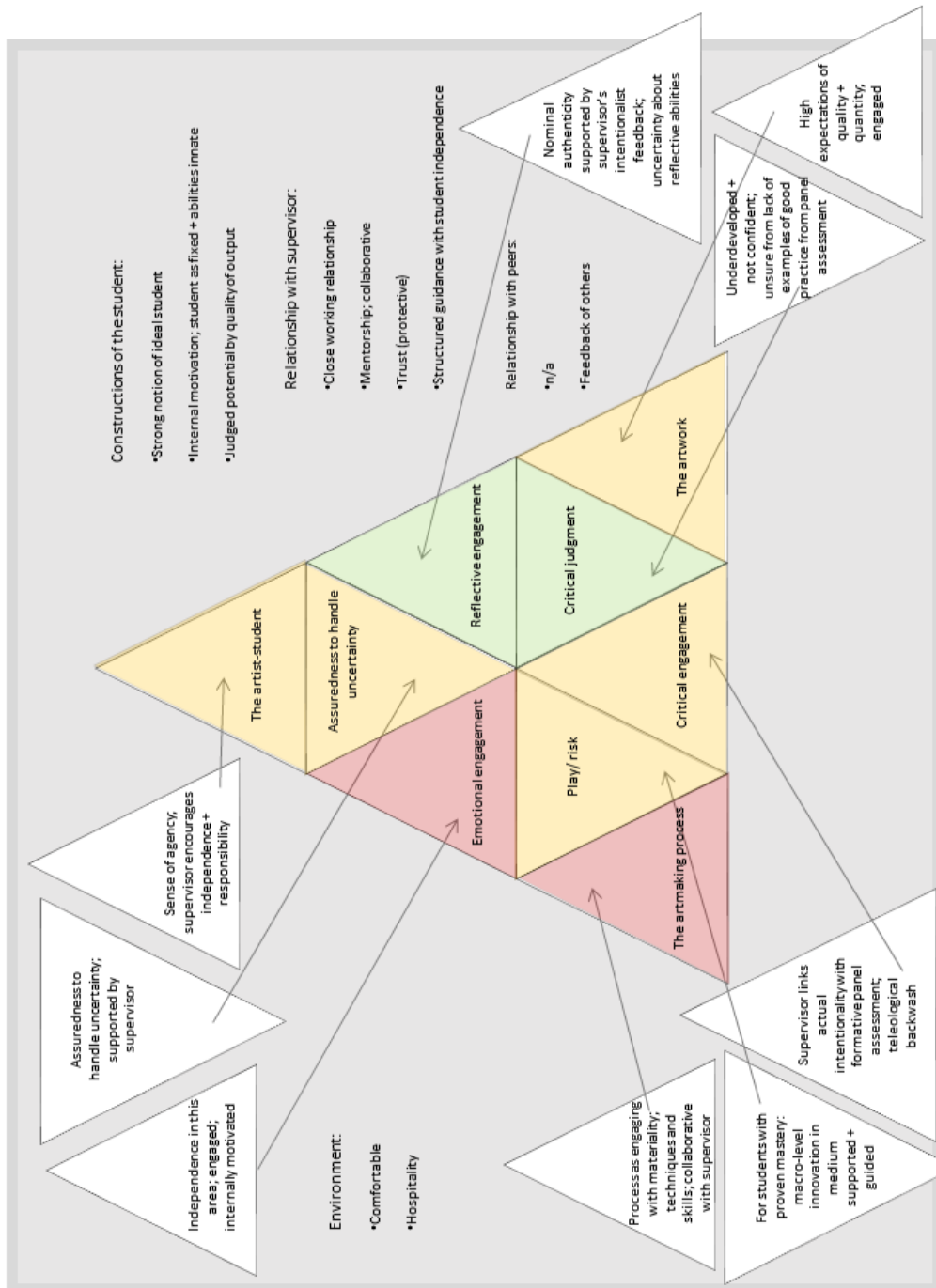
IF 27: A comparison of Nick's approaches

Nick's references in the studio assessment with his student, Tessa, were positioned mostly within T and R. In this context, a third of the way through the academic year, discussions about the content of the subject matter and the students' desires were at a minimum, with feedback focused on issues of production (T). Many intertextual references were made, most particularly those that had an aesthetic relation in terms of objective criticism (T2). A concern for cohesion between the pieces of work was evident in Tessa's verbal articulation at this assessment, which was an indication of her awareness of such intertextual criteria. In one instance Nick's response to a particular materiality focused on how readings of that component would operate (T3), implicitly referring to the imagined viewer and anticipating his/her response (R1), and how this might complicate or negate Tessa's intentionality. At another point, Nick explicitly referenced his own response as a viewer (R1) and related that to her intentionality, a concern he continued in the interpretative approach he adopted as a supervisor in panel assessments (p.167).

The comparative analysis of Nick's approaches (IF 27) revealed that objective criticism dominated his interpretative approaches, with references made to the artwork consistently foregrounded regardless of role or context (T2). From the data collected on the influences on his interpretative approaches in FASP assessment (p.215), Nick was influenced by intentionalist approaches (A + T, to a

lesser extent R), with a dominance of objective and then eucharistic criticism. This to some extent was reproduced when Nick acted as a supervisor in panel assessments. As an assessor he included informed readership (R2) in the formative panel assessment, to the extent where less weight was given to references within column A in the summative assessment.

B. The conditions for creativity



Schema 8: Conditions, Nick's supervision

There is a definite limitation to this analysis that should be kept in mind by the reader, as the data generated for this section was primarily informed by two sources, Nick and Tessa, in addition to my observations. However, I do think that valuable insights into their dynamic were revealed which indicated some of the significance on the conditions of this supervisor's interpretative approaches.

Characteristics of the learning environment

A characteristic of Nick and Tessa's relationship was the ease born from continuous formative dialogue in the studio, which occurred weekly for whatever duration the student felt necessary. A sense of mutual respect and interest in a shared medium was confirmed by Tessa, who presented images of empathy, safety and hospitality in her construction of the relationship. When he characterized his role in the studio, Nick described himself as "creative facilitator, constructive critic (hopefully! I like the notion of 'critical friend'), supportive of a mutual commitment".

From observations of panel assessment discussions, it emerged that Nick constructed student attributes as fixed or innate, and that he was less appreciative of those students whose motivation or development was not independently and internally generated. Those whom he perceived as not shirking responsibility received less of his investment in scaffolding their process.

If a student's lazy you can only do so much, and then if they're not going to apply themselves and if they're going to continue to just be like that, I leave them to their own devices, quite honestly.

Such constructions informed the ways in which he approached the student-supervisor relationship. As Nick constructed Tessa as a student "with potential", telling the staff that "she is a student [who] if her shit comes together she will get a distinction", they could operate in a collegial manner in the studio observations. The dispositions he valued in art students included, being self-motivated (a disposition he used to describe himself as a student); responsive to supervisory feedback; having a strong work ethic; and sincerity. These were linked to the integrity of contemporary artists (p.215).

The allowance for closeness, enabled by the school structures and culture, was not as encouraged by Nick. He explained being guided by the necessities of each project, an approach which differed from many of his colleagues, who espoused responsiveness to individual student needs. That being said, Nick's approach was in no way insensitive or inhospitable to Tessa's artmaking processes. She seemed confident to verbalize her areas of insecurity and saw his role as guiding her developmentally to find solutions to technical problems so she could master them. This focus on objective criticism underpinned Nick's structured guidance. In this capacity he was more assertive, indicating to his colleagues during formative assessment that it was in relation to innovation in form

that his student “needs pushing”. He agreed with my analysis that he constructed his role as guiding the student to go further in terms of the medium that she could alone.³¹ However, in terms of conceptual aspects of the conversation, the student seemed far more independent, leading the dialogue.

Nick preferred the term “self-directed” to “independent learning”³² as he believed this allowed for supervisory involvement while having an accent on student ownership. Tessa confirmed that her supervisor was “there if I needed him but for the most part he was happy to let me discover things on my own”. Nick felt that this approach was more beneficial for long-term learning and work ethic, albeit there might potentially be a short-term loss in grades when he was not “dragging students through or kicking arse”. At the end of her degree, Tessa reflected on how this relationship had partially shaped her learning experience.

Being at X has really allowed me to discover what works for me, what I am interested in but also what I am capable of. And I think that comes down to a balance between being guided by supervisors and peers but also having the ability to get it done on your own.

Nick’s ideal scenario was possible for students able to take up the challenge of “agency in terms of independence”. Such a “guided system” (Tessa) confirmed studies which suggest that for the supervisor as liminal servant to be enacted effectively requires high level or enculturated students (Webster 2006).

Student engagement

Tessa described the culture at SAI as “sincere”, where she felt her engagement as a person and development of individual voice was encouraged.

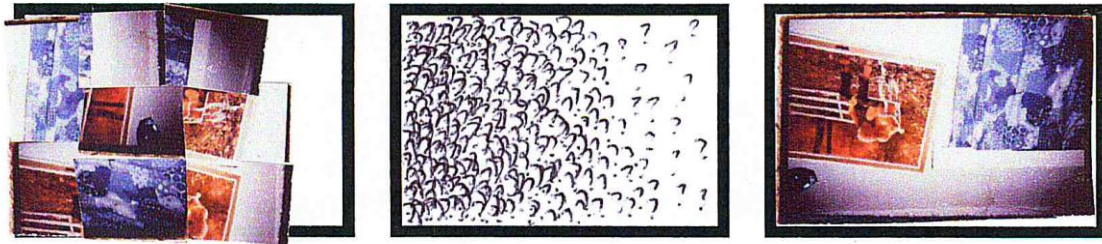
I really do think that at X each student is really encouraged to find that thing that interests them and then to go with it and work around it until it works, whether that's an idea or a medium. This way you do begin to develop your own identity.

She described feeling emotionally invested in her final year project. Nick recognized that feedback from others may negatively impact on such internal motivation and so he consciously attempted not

³¹ Possibly related to this school’s construction of learning as supported, a number of the staff had such implicit notions of their role, related to the “zone of proximal development” (Vygotskii 1978).

³² I have chosen not to use this wording as it does not conform to common understandings of that term in art education literature, such as its use at UKI.

to reproduce the “slash and burn”, “scorched earth” culture of feedback he had experienced as a student. He used the metaphor of submitting to army conscription to describe the lack of student agency in such contexts.³³ His international travels at a postgraduate level exposed him to alternative models of teaching, which enabled the questioning he felt necessary for his teaching not to be reproductive.



VN 39: Tessa's engagement with process

Nick's responsive approach of continual formative assessment created a hospitable environment, with Tessa feeling he “began to understand my process” early on in their interactions. She described the artmaking process as “a weird process”, representing discovery process through the repetition of the found image and marks (VN 39).

I'm thinking about it: how there isn't like a formula or anything that can get you from point A to point B. Things happen and happen and happen and happen, and then you watch it coming together at the end. Which is sort of 'what the fuck was that about?'.

As if the artwork autonomously “just happened”, Tessa positioned herself in a passive role as observer. The worth of experimenting, as a way of trying options out in practice, was explicitly suggested as a *modus operandi* by her supervisor in the studio assessment. In an interview, Nick highlighted the importance of experimentation and failure, which he came to realise through teaching experience. He claimed that “I like to credit that when we come to do our marking”. However, whilst such intentionalist approaches were possible in formative studio contexts, they were not supported at summative assessments, where the pressures of the product-oriented

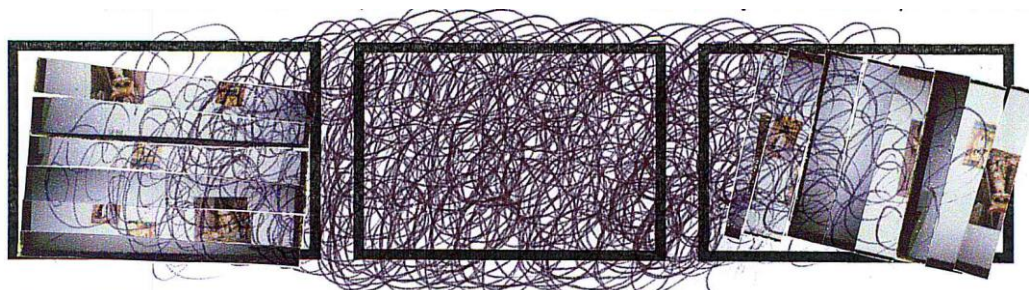
³³ Having lived as a white South African male during *apartheid*, Nick would have been conscripted to the South African Defence Force. This metaphor was not casually chosen, but rather consciously eluded to extreme experiences of alienation in that context. The scorched earth metaphor relates to the policy utilised by British soldiers to defeat civilian support of the Boers during the South African war. Both metaphors carry associations of the abuse of power where there were dire consequences for those who experienced such structures.

curriculum emerged as conflicting with this experimental ethos. With the fourth year conceptualized as concerned “with a refined outcome” (p.70), Nick expressed concern that not enough risk was enabled at undergraduate level.

An environment of experimentation seemed possible only for ideal students where risks were minimal. Tessa recognized this, feeling she had earned the liberty to risk because of her “incredibly hard” work ethic and the standard of mastery she had exhibited the year before. Nick provided challenging feedback to extend her innovation from p- to h-creativity.

It's one of those things that still makes it exciting for me, but you want your students to also embrace that and realise that they can do stuff which helps move that.

I shared with Nick my sense that within this culture and structures this was possible at undergraduate level with only a few students and with collaborative input of the medium-specific expert supervisor, to which he agreed.



VN 40: Uncertainty experienced by Tessa

Tessa felt uncertainty when experimentation “that doesn’t come to anything” results in a similar version of what she began with, neither of which were successful (VN 41).

You keep finding yourself in this loop where things just aren't working... that makes me feel very uncertain about what I'm doing and whether or not I should be doing it, and, 'Why am I doing a Fine Art degree?'. There's points at which you go, 'If I can't do this, why am I here'?

At such points of almost debilitating ontological uncertainty, Tessa believed the interaction with her supervisor invaluable, as without such intervention she would have “just given up a long time ago”. Having her supervisor ensure risks were measured, created a sense of assuredness for Tessa in the face of such uncertainty. Enabled by this environment, Tessa characterized her artmaking journey as one which led her to be more open as that final year progressed, having moved quite far away from her initial ideas, to a point where “I’m also not fazed if my final exhibition isn’t a sort of a completed finished clean thing, I’m quite happy at this point for it to be a sort of area in which people see

progress-work". She had found that a balance between periods of play and critical engagement was required to minimise risk. Nick saw such assuredness in the face of uncertainty as a type of "courage" which the novice artist should develop. When asked at the interview if she thought that she could work without such external assurance, in her own estimations she felt that she still very much needed external affirmation to persevere.

Nick's support of Tessa realizing her actual intentionality and his active eliciting of related readings from his colleagues, was fundamental to this students' critical engagement while in process. In addition to such relevant feedback, Tessa sourced diverse additional opinions. The stable interpretative community of assessors was experienced as helpful because "the fact that there's like a general consensus helps make me more convinced". However, despite this, Tessa articulated her realization of how very different and uncertain FASP assessment was compared to other studies at university.

Sometimes if something is not working, no one really knows why, you can't figure it out. And then sometimes things just work and once again, sometimes you know why, and other times you just like 'Well, so cool'.

In terms of her engagement with the artwork as a product, a focus on the show's cohesion emerged in Tessa's verbal articulation at the studio and mid-year assessment. This seemed an indication of her awareness of such intertextual criterion forming part of her supervisor's, and in turn the assessors', interpretative framework.

Her desire to work in more process-based ways was to some extent constrained by the assessment expectations of the school. Her supervisor's teleological focus, despite his own concerns for experimentation, applied pressure on her while in process, expressed in such statements as "the sooner you get to that final stage the better". Tessa expressed feeling "ready" for her undergraduate studies to come to an end, to remove such interference in her process. The knowledge, that she would soon be free of the academic framework, had made her more daring to submit work in process, and less concerned with the uncertainties of what made the work successful in that context. Whilst other students found the inevitable change in frameworks frightening, Tessa felt more assured of the risks she took in the current framework.

Towards the end of your final year you are sort of left to determine what you consider to be good or bad, or what works and what doesn't. And really, if you are happy with the final product then does it really matter what anyone else thinks?

She noted the conflict between discourses of authenticity, in terms of metacognition as a developing artist, and systems which created conditions for strategic thinking about the assessment of the product of one's labour.

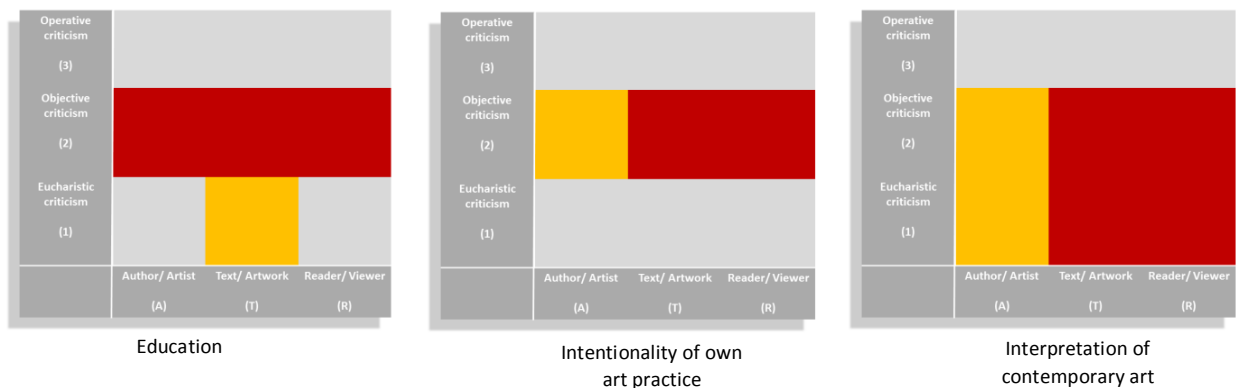
I think that it is important to develop the skills to be able to evaluate your own work, and that can be difficult when you are working within a system that gives you marks for your work that determines your future at a university level.

In such ways, Tessa demonstrated criticality about her studies and the larger assessment framework in which they were embedded, although she felt lacking in her skills of independent critical judgment.

Making conclusive generalizable claims from this case based on the experiences of one student would not be reliable. However, Tessa's insights indicated that when a student conformed to and performed ably within this supervisor's expectations of the ideal student, such conditions supported her engagement. Nick's interpretative approach, with its accent on the skills and processes of production (A2 + T2), and his commitment to support the realisation of her actual intentionality in formative feedback in studio and in contexts with the other assessors, enabled an open, collegial relationship which created a safe space for Tessa to disclose uncertainties and difficulties, and actively seek solutions collaboratively with her supervisor. This interpretative approach fed into a working relationship which satisfied the desires of both parties, leaving them feeling positive about the roles that they played.

5. A. Mapping Sophie’s interpretative approach

The fifth case of individual studio supervision at SAI is a consideration of Sophie’s practice, and the experiences of her students, Edeen, Betty, Mark, Jade, Laura and Zosha. Most did well in terms of academic success, from Mark who was awarded one of the highest results in the school, through to Jade, who was awarded a mediocre result. Their experiences differed considerably.



IF 28: Sophie, dominant influences

Sophie believed that textuality (T) in dialogue with readership (R) informs the meaning of the contemporary artwork (IF 28). However, as with Nick (p.215), she felt that the best interpretations required authorial knowledge (A), suggesting a conversation model of moderate actual intentionalism in her questionnaire responses.

While that 'conversation' can happen without an awareness of the artist or the artist's intent, when it comes to nuance, there exists space for a misinterpretation of the artwork.

The imagined reader of her own art practice was informed (R2) and responsive to both form and content (T), with a desire for intellectual and affective reception that was sympathetic to her authorial intentionality (A).

In contrast to the way she was taught (IF 28), Sophie explicitly embraced the conceptualist framework of SAI. Her teachers has been antagonistic to conceptualism in artmaking, basing their readings on objective criticism and aspects of eucharistic criticism (T1+2). Possibly because her education had not prepared her for the conceptual curriculum, and as she had been in academia less than 5 years, Sophie’s notions of authorship seemed more informed by her identity from her professional practice. This led her to foreground the perspectivism and provisionality of different discourse communities (as with Adam, p. 181, and Faye, p. 191).

In the international art community, the constants are difference, conflict and change. I agree that we operate (as an art school) as a community. An art school has a particular character. Students need to be aware of this. Students also need to be aware of the nature of the international art world... If they have a set of internal criteria that can be self-reflexive and evolving, hopefully they can negotiate the slippage between the two and develop their own stance.

Students would need to negotiate such frameworks, and develop their own position in relation to them. However, she felt role conflict when assessment pressures created a “strong desire” to direct students towards achieving a “better” product for academic assessment purposes, a conflict Nick identified had occurred early on in his teaching career too (p.216). Her ideal approach would be “to stand back” from such interference in students’ artmaking processes because “it would be immoral” in terms of their authorship. As with her colleagues, Sophie felt that student ownership was important and related to their sense of authorship.

As a practitioner, she recognised “intentionality is crucial for the artist's internal evaluation”, and viewed it as important for artist-students to have developed such intentionality as part of their lifelong skills of critical and reflective engagement.

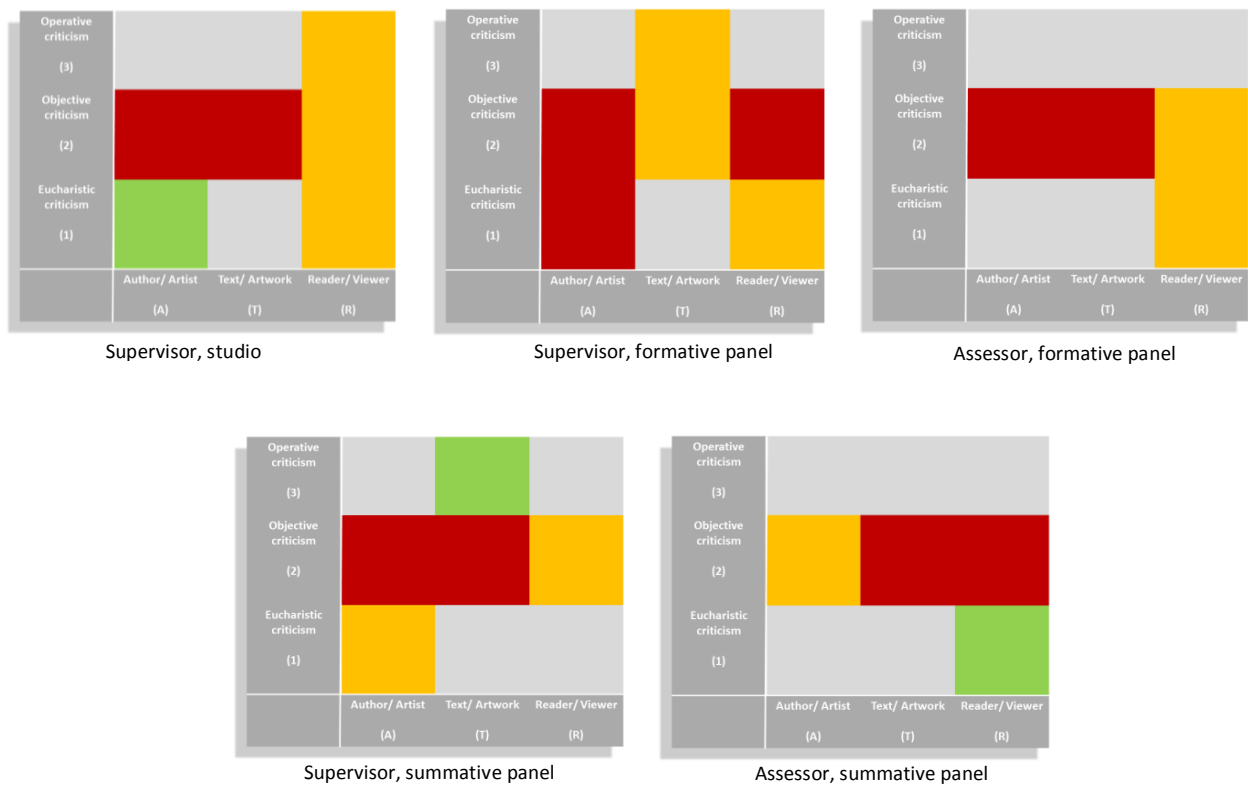
I sometimes see the creative process as... drawing up a series of questions about how to best embody their idea... that can be relatively fluid and open. If the student can retain this constantly evolving internal set of criteria, then the lecturer has provided them with the tools they need to work in the future outside of the institution.

In her espoused theory, Sophie saw formative assessments at SAI as providing the conditions for such critical engagement, aided by the perspectivism offered by the assessors’ judgment as informed readers (R2). However, in practice, she was not yet able to comfortably position her teaching practice within the discourse conflicts she experienced at the school, where she “would struggle in sheer frustration” with the anti-intentionalist assessment approach, which disregarded aspects that were “absolutely crucial to the reading of the work”. She felt that interpretative approach constrained and at times undermined the efficacy of her own formative intentionalist approach in the studio, particularly when she was invested in the potential of students’ actual intentionality.

I can't teach in the way that I'm teaching if you disregard that intentionality, because then what is going to happen to the assessment system? I'm going to rate this person highly in their success in their endeavours, and you're going to rate them very low, whereas they have encompassed the breadth of stuff that I'm trying to teach.

Perhaps as a self-preservation strategy she had learnt, I observed that at panel assessments she would most often present about the source material and the subject the student was engaging with, but not his/her actual intentionality.

Analysing Sophie's interpretative practices



IF 29: A comparison of Sophie's approaches

I observed that, despite what she espoused, as with her practice in panel assessments (p.166), Sophie's approach to students' actual intentionality in the studio context differed according to the potential for academic success of the artwork, in terms of the implicit criteria and framework on the school.

In this context, Sophie would include readership for critical engagement with work that was progressed in terms of production, but for works in composition stage, she would be more empathetic to students' interests. References made in A1 were for the latter students, placing the most emphasis on objective criticism relating to production (A2 + T2). She indicated appreciation of ipsative student development, linking new ideas to skills and techniques of previous work (A2), and encouraged experimentation to see what emerged in the intertextual relationship between pieces.

With works that were more progressed, she shifted her interpretative approach towards reception (R), such as considering how readings may shift with changes to the scale, context, or medium. Many readings were of her personal response as a reader (R1). Experiencing the artwork was a positive aspect of the formative process for Sophie, whether or not these tallied with students' actual

intentionality. She did not seem conscious of the emphatic power of her readings as a future assessor and an informed reader (R2), which student data indicated was difficult to resist.

Sophie placed operative emphasis on work being open-ended in terms of its readership (R3). She gave strongly political readings of one work, to problematize what she saw as a “lockdown of meaning”; and in another, invalidated literal representations to problematize the discourses of form. When analysing this case, I wondered if there was perhaps counter-transference from the lack of such criticism in Sophie’s own studies (p.225), and her colleagues’ vilification of anything literal (p.72).

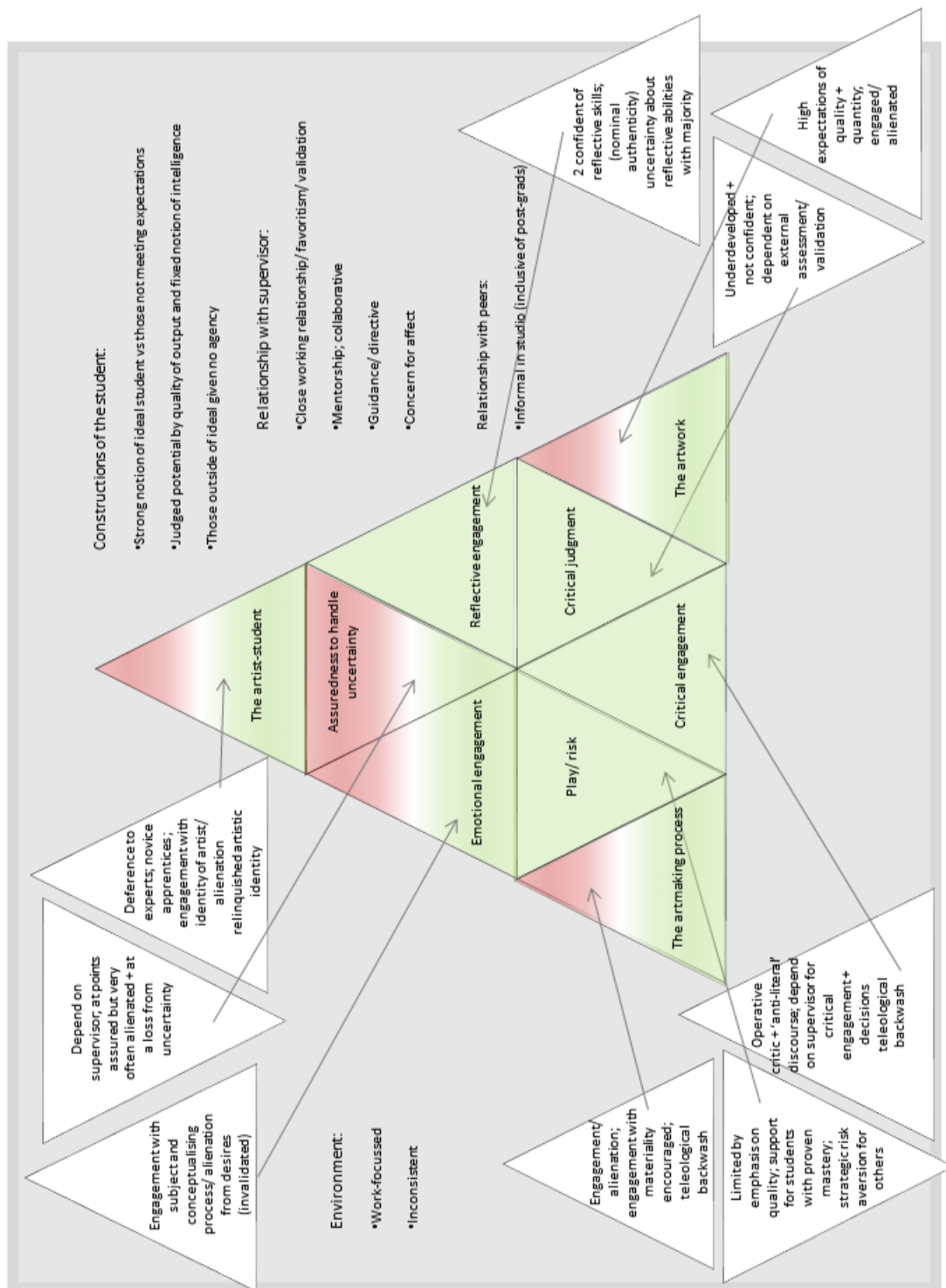
When comparing her approaches (IF 29), shifts were evident in relation to expectations of each role. When in the studio, without the panel’s readings to respond to, her interpretative approach focused primarily on objective criticism (A2 + T2), and readership (R). Operative criticism was evident in this context, and to some extent when she acted as a supervisor in the panel assessments, possibly because the formative purpose enabled her to feel at liberty to address her students as fellow artists. Her inclusion of aspects of authorial knowledge of the production process (A2) was evident in all the roles. However, the anti-intentionalist structure and culture encouraged hypothetical and value-maximising intentionalism, which she too adopted.

I asked Sophie whether the reason why her approach seemed inconsistent might be because she had not yet been enculturated or ‘bought into’ the assessment culture of the academy. She revealed that although “I really haven’t given it much thought at all” engaging with this research project had “raised actually how unhappy I feel about the assessment process”. While expressing a desire for collegial interaction on these issues, she perceived the summative assessment event as an inappropriate space to be vulnerable as a fellow teacher, because of her perception that her own teaching was being evaluated, through the assessment of her students works (a concern of Nick’s in his early teaching career, p.207). She described it as “a dreadful process” of “unrelenting standing and emotion” where supervisors were at “cross-purposes” in a “battleground”.

Moreover, her discomfort came from the interpretative shift academic assessment engendered. The pleasure of reader-response of the art produced in the studio was “disturbed” and constrained by the socio-cultural and political context of assessment (as in other academic contexts, Mann 2000), which was tailored for academic purposes in which she professed not to be invested. Studio conversations were “more complex than the after-the-fact assessing” and “more open-ended and more interesting than a summative value judgment” because she could engage with the artwork (T)

as a fellow artist (R2) or reader (R1). As with her engagement with contemporary art, both “criticality of thought” and “generosity and space on the part of the viewer” were required. The panel assessment process shut down such engagement to one of evaluating a pedagogized object, an implicit shift towards the dispassionate gaze of academia which “treats the works as a resolution”, constraining the possibilities of how the work might operate and be extended by readership (noted as a concern in Aitchison 2005). This is an ontological concern about what is brought to bear on the authorship of an artwork.

B. The conditions for creativity



Schema 9: Conditions, Sophie's supervision

Characteristics of the learning environment

Sophie seemed to prioritize the quality of the product over students' agency and learning processes (as did Nick, p.219), which in turn impacted on studio relationships. This approach was supported by the curriculum orientation and the structure of single medium-specific supervision, which obliged her to feel personally accountable for the success of student production.

There were distinct indications as to which students Sophie constructed as 'ideal'. While both Mark and Laura did well and were appreciative of Sophie's role as medium-expert mentor, Mark was given more attention and value because he operated within contemporary notions of the artist as reflexive. Other staff and many students were suspicious of this student, as he seemed to strategically garner favours (p.141). Sophie believed she tried explicitly to problematize her expert status with her students and had successfully shifted some from initially "conservative" expectations of her role, to where they "would regard me as somewhere between critical friend and liminal servant". She spoke, for instance, about how Mark was able to "accept that our conversations are there to guide and deepen him, but not to overly direct him". This may confirm studies that argue that such relationships are only possible with high level students (Webster 2004), or may suggest that such relationships are dependent on constructions of the student.

Due to SAI's high curriculum standard, only those performing very well fitted within the ideal, with most of the rest seen as problematic. Added to Sophie's understandings of student potential as fixed, this resulted in externally imposed limitations which impacted on the relationship ("if I had great hopes I could shift this student I would", she told her colleagues). Although she described herself as "not particularly pushy or a strict lecturer" she had little tolerance for those who demonstrated a low work ethic ("fart around").

Such constructions underpinned the general characteristics of her relationships: when the student had a high work ethic, valued cultural capital or potentially successful work, the relationship was more collegial and autonomous; when not, the relationship often invalidated students' desires by becoming prescriptive. Sophie acknowledged that the assessment gaze might have compelled her to be more directive. I observed those students she experienced as "resistant" or "stubborn" coerced into submission in formative panel assessments, with the anti-intentionalist summative approach allowing for such impositions. Edeen reflected that "It was frustrating at times to be constantly directed, as opposed to being worked with, and confused my identity as being an artist at all". Such reduction of student agency and invalidation by the supervisor had the effect of creating experiences of alienation for a number of her students, as I discuss in the next section.

When operating from the perspective of a medium-expert (R2), utilizing objective criticism, she was particularly assertive in her feedback. Comments indicated she felt it legitimate to make conclusive decisions about the students' work, often unconsciously articulating a shift from the student as the locus of control towards Sophie's own her vision ("I think your choices about where you are going are critical... but we might change our minds... I can see..."). Unlike the other medium sections, I noticed that her students' artworks demonstrated mimicry of her subject matter and genre interests, suggestive of a master-apprentice dynamic.

The significance of such directive approaches to those 'weaker' were indicated in a number of interchanges, although I highlight one as illustrative. When offered a suggestion by Sophie, who then asked her to indicate "What do you think of this, or is it a direction you would not go in to?", Betty simply paraphrased the suggestion without evaluation, in turn asking "Do you think that would work?". Indicating to what extent Sophie's validation were passively accepted, Betty physically discarded a work "that you didn't like".

When offered this analysis, Sophie expressed concern that such dependence on her guidance was unhelpful outside of the academic context.

If you do molly coddle somebody too much, how are they going to be independent, in a situation where they are not being held by a supervisor? And that's tricky.

However, she believed that if students operated without such guidance, they would be unprotected from situations where "they go outside and they speak up, and somebody laughs their head off at them". The notion of the outside world as hostile justified her approach, although it was plausible she was protecting the students and herself from the more immediate threat of academic assessment.

Student engagement

Some of her students felt an intensity of engagement as a person. For Laura, one of the students constructed as 'ideal', her studies had been an overall developmental experience for her "identity as an artist as well as an individual" because she felt the school "offers the perfect environment to explore and grow as an individual". However, she now needed "a few years away from the controlled context of an institution to find out who I am as an artist (as well as an individual for that matter)".

In contrast, Betty, Jade, and Edeen expressed alienation from their sense of self and artmaking, due to experiences of discursive positioning by the academic assessment within the school, and their

supervisor. Betty described how her identity as an artist had been negated during her studies, partly because of affective invalidation.

It is unfortunate that I still don't view myself as an artist, and possibly never will. I feel completely ill-equipped and unprepared to move into the real world and present myself as one - because I am still not confident about my ability.

She spoke about struggling to cope with the vastly different discourses for assessing artworks, specifically that of her personal background as a layperson in comparison to the academic and contemporary art world, and the cost of fitting within different parameters of in/validation. This struggle had ultimately resulted in an identity impoverishment, with a gradual acceptance of what she believed was the assessors' evaluation that she was not worthy of being an artist.

Edeen was more assertive about what she saw as the source of her alienation from her artistic identity.

X as an art school almost killed my sense of artistic identity... with regards to the institution, I found it extremely stifling and very much unwilling to see beyond their own ideas of contemporary.

Presuming that her artwork's reception in the "real world" would conform to the anti-intentionalist readings she had experienced at this school, Edeen adopted Romantic myths of the isolated emotional artist who finds solace only in artmaking, rather than in communication with an audience. This understanding seemed to have grown out of a defensive stance she had developed for self-preservation, after repeated exposure to invalidation at assessments, and her intentionality not given consideration.

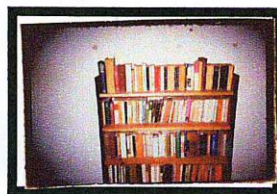
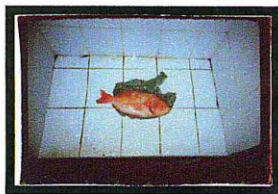
A number of students' stories indicated emotional engagement with their artmaking. Laura's engagement with her desires led to a sense of confidence and self-gratification. She described feeling "more free to depict what I'm wanting to do to, make what I want, and I felt a lot more confident and at ease". This enjoyment was linked directly to the validation of her work by the panel, thus connecting her emotional engagement to positive outcomes. Betty's narrative about investment related directly to the subject matter she engaged with her final year project. Edeen revealed she was most engaged during the initial conceptualization process, where feedback from a person who validated her "passion for art" could be sought, beyond those within her formal education who constrained and invalidated her desires.

However, Jade evidenced extreme effects of experiences of emotional alienation, "After four years I feel restrained. Blocked up. And no emotions". She relinquished ownership of her work because of

the anti-intentionalist culture (VN 41). Only once the assessors had validated the possibilities for her work, did she allow herself to engage with her subject and artmaking.

Because with everything else they were not happy with the thing; but when they were happy then I was happy.

Jade's story exposed the effects on her agency when conditions allowed for artworks to become objects in a system of exchange, where those who legitimized the worth of those objects had the power to determine her creative output. She synonymized engagement with relief "that they were finally happy with something, and then that's what I could work towards, their happiness". The goal of the educational endeavour in the case of this student was no longer the development of her authorship, but rather working to please her assessors.



Your words:

Although I've learnt a lot, and am entirely grateful to have studied what I love, I am very ~~good~~ aware of myself and don't ever want to paint for anyone but myself after I obtain my degree.

Also, has made me look at my life in a very different/new way ... scared?? alone?

VN 41: The effects of experiences on Jade's self-concept

Jade's narratives pointed towards the significance for individual's identities of assessment practices that delegitimized student intentionality. As with Betty, Jade indicated that the very academic framework which was meant to prepare her to be a contemporary artist, had caused a loss of confidence to practice in any capacity within the art world. Situated outside the boundaries of what was validated, Jade described herself as without any firmament on which to operate outside of academia. As an act of self-preservation, her experiences had led her to "bury" her desire to make art, leading to a melancholic defensive resolve that she would "never" share her work publically after her degree.

In terms of students' engagement with process, at the studio assessment Sophie suggested experimentation as a way for students to open themselves to the materiality of the process, and to find possibilities on an inter-textual level. For instance, when Edeen described a visualization of the end product, indicating a teleological approach to her process that was quite deterministic and linear, her supervisor attempted to complicate this construction. In other instances, Sophie suggested bounded timeframes for students' experimentation, following which they would make decisions. However, when it came to the panel assessments, such processes of experimentation were not rewarded, regardless the amount of labour or innovation, if they did not lead to 'successful' work at the summative assessments. In her written communication to students, Sophie indicated that the fourth year required a shift towards resolution. Zosha noticed this shift had the effect of "homing me in", which "constrained" and "hindered" her. She spoke about play and experimentation being espoused, but then receiving feedback at the assessments which revealed the assessors' anxiety. Mark felt his process similarly constraining, expressing that "it is hard working in this context in some ways when you have a process like mine, where often you are unsure and you let the making of works guide you rather than an overarching idea".

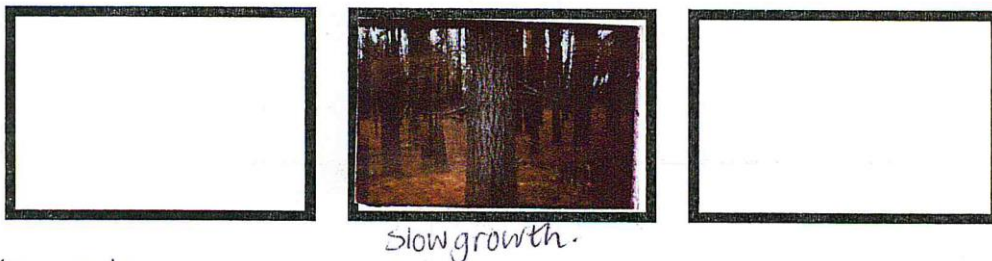
Important for students' creativity are the ways in which the environment aids their assuredness to handle uncertainty. A number of the students indicated feeling assured in their processes at the studio assessment I observed. Laura for instance was able to identify at an early stage in her project that she was assured with uncertainty, despite feeling "it is still very up in the air for me, I don't know what to focus on and I don't know what to do with that". Some of the students described having Sophie assist them at such points of uncertainty was helpful. Edeen felt that having a supervisor was "very very nice" when it was necessary "to ask about your agonising decision whether to lighten or darken an area, or possibly how to fix an intangible thing that is simply wrong but for no obvious reason". In the studio assessment I observed, Sophie utilised her nurturing relationship to assure students who felt uncertain by alluding to the protection she offered through her guidance. For instance, she told a student "I am not worried 'though I know you are frustrated". After her degree submission, Zosha wrote confidently that her "ability to deal with uncertainty has changed dramatically" because she had learnt that it is "part of life, and your ability to deal with it is critical". She described feeling more able to practice the creativity skill "to keep my mind open", and the ability to persevere.

The majority of students experienced alienation as a result of uncertainty of assessment expectations. Laura's anxiety about 'refinement', an implicit criterion of this degree, indicated her

motivations to do well within the school's framework. When she articulated this at the studio assessment, her supervisor ensured her they would work collaboratively towards the surety of the supervisor's vision. To some extent this moment, in the microcosm of their engagement, illustrated my interpretation that this school's curriculum push, towards sophistication that artists at this level struggled to meet, required collaboration with and mentorship by an expert. Laura revealed feeling "very very lost and very confused", until she had figured out and adjusted to Sophie's expectations, and the habitus of the school. Mark, despite being a student with the cultural capital to succeed at the school and whose close relationship to his supervisor should have enabled him to discern what she validated, acknowledged he made strategic decisions to present a facade of surety when it came to assessments.

It's hard to work within an institutional context when you don't really know what you are doing. I found myself getting very stressed before meetings and crits because I didn't know how to talk about what I was doing. So when I stumbled on that idea, it was more a relief because I could finally talk about my work, and not because I had found out what it was essentially about.

As a student who displayed far less cultural capital than Mark and Laura, Jade's narrative about uncertainty related directly to her lack of capacity to have discerned the criteria of her assessors, and to understand what was rewarded within this habitus (VN 42).



Your words:

Whole of my final year has been uncertain regarding my art. I Never know if they are going to be happy.

VN 42: Uncertainty with assessment requirements affected Jade's engagement

The caption and triptych of a tree framed by two blank spaces were to indicate her isolation due to constant uncertainty because she could not discern purpose or "end goal" of the project prescribed by the panel. She explained that "I still, every day, I don't know what I'm doing", which "holds me back" from proceeding with any confidence.

Sophie's espoused theory was that critical engagement was crucial to students' development as artists (p.225). In the studio context, she implicitly referred to the viewer to insert considerations of reception while in process. Laura found Sophie's feedback increased and scaffolded her critical engagement. Edeen, though mostly critical of the school, acknowledged that she had developed in her critical thinking during her studies, despite being resistant to such an approach to engaging with her work.

In general, I am glad to say goodbye to art school: it was frustrating as hell and I found it very stifling most times. However, I am glad it gave me the tools for critical thinking. The very thinking that makes me despise it, ironically.

However, most often in the assessments I observed, when students received feedback from this supervisor, they accepted it passively without criticality; except in a single incident, when Mark was given autonomy by Sophie to participate in a debate with his assessors as informed readers at the mid-year assessment event (p.125).

A concern of this research project is the ways in which conditions encourage engagement with the artwork. Sophie was aware that the curriculum expectations for the final year had a product-orientation. As such, despite the latitude she espoused, her feedback often had a teleological push towards "direction" in her students' works. Synonyms for the word 'direction' emerged often in her feedback ("my question is, where does this go?"; "going nicely and on track"). The curriculum did not allow for large periods of uncertainty, but rather 'direction' towards that which seemed to have the most 'potential', or risk-aversion for those who were constructed as 'weak' or who had not as yet displayed a track record of success.

When I asked the students to reflect on their works after the submission show, it was interesting to note that some of the students had gained confidence outside of the academic framework, while others, such as Mark, had lost theirs.

I feel like I have taken a very unexpected and unusual journey with these artworks... I'm not really even sure if I get the works... Somehow I feel that they are not strong enough without something more conceptually rigorous and package-able to back them.

Very few of these students reflected on readers' responses nor demonstrated in-depth self-criticality. Those that did reflect on the reception of the work, used this mostly to affirm their own feelings of achievement as artists. For instance, Jade's reflections on the show indicated her alienation from the product of her labour, and in turn her disappointment with the result of the process of her studies.

I am happy it is over. Sad that it's not what I had imagined 4 years ago when I had started this journey. Actually as much as I am relieved I am also disappointed.

Zosha believed her evaluation skills “improved greatly” during her studies. As with Laura, she felt her abilities to reflect was developed through studio conversation with Sophie, who encouraged “us to have an opinion and trust ourselves”. Although Jade acknowledged that the school had “definitely enabled a skill to work with challenging contexts”, because of the invalidation of her desires within its anti-intentionalist approach, she had not learnt how to reflect purposefully.

I feel like there was little acknowledgment for self-reflection, and if there was it was biased or unfair. I felt like I could not express myself fully and still can't. Lastly I do feel like I have gained skills in evaluating art, maybe not my own but around me. For me I still have a lot of obstacles and emotional burdens to overcome until I can be more self-aware as an artist and look at my work in a constructive way. I am upset that it hasn't happened yet.

Laura had learnt on one hand to accept and become comfortable with staff expectations, and on the other hand, that she was able to develop her own capacity for self-evaluation which surpassed their assessment in determining the work's integrity.

Maybe it's just because I got used to the expectations of the lecturers, but over the years, I took their comments and their crits into account, into forming my own way of thinking about art but not in a way that their opinions completely influenced me. I used my own discretion and developed a way of thinking that was true to me still, rather than them influencing me completely.

Only the two top-achieving students' articulations during assessments were at a meta-level. After triangulating the data, I wondered if in some instances this was strategically adopted. For instance, despite Mark's ability to perform confidently in other contexts, only at the end of the year did he seem to engage with his critical judgment independently.

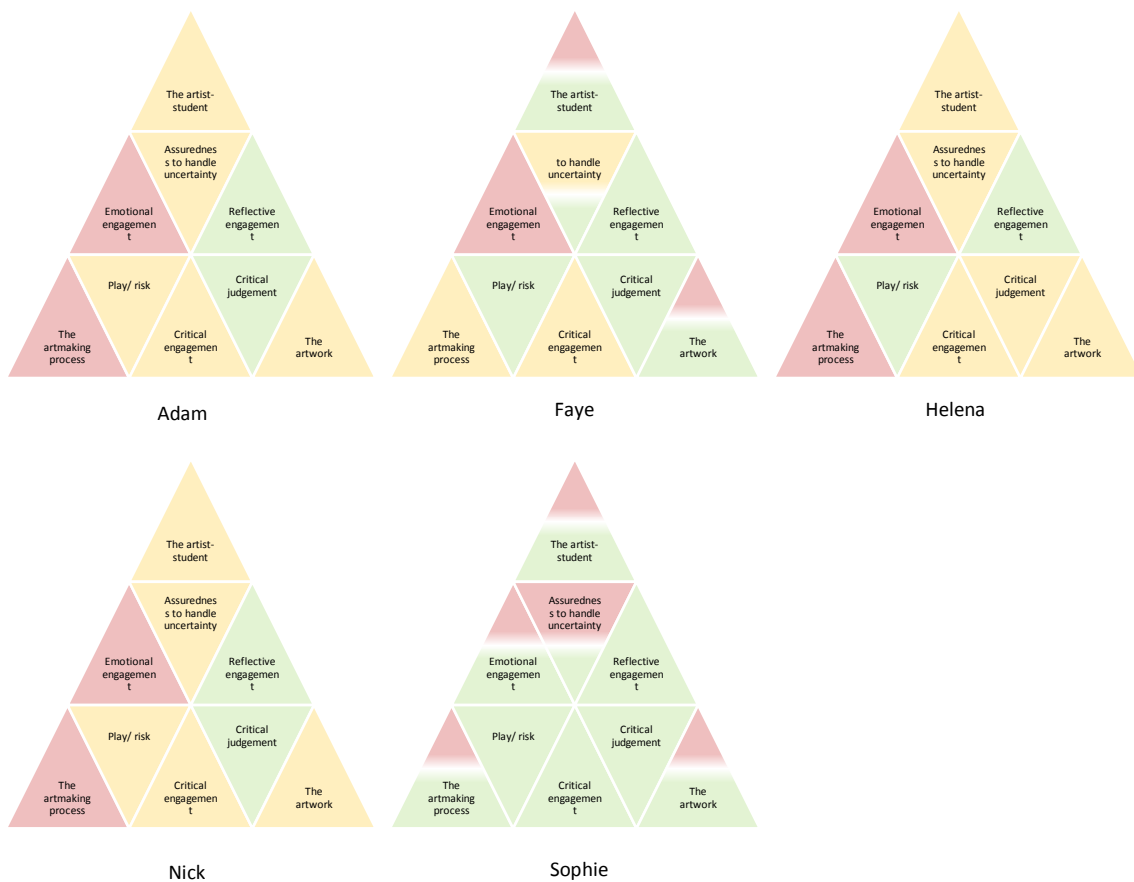
I know that this is the stuff which Sophie found interesting in the work. So I'm not sure why I found these elements to them... unacceptable as the conceptual backdrop.

When considering the significance of Sophie's interpretative approach on her students' engagement, it emerged that the internal criteria which she hoped to develop did not feature in her representations in panel assessments, possibly due to the anti-intentionalist approach which frustrated her goals as a supervisor. It emerged that such criteria, including actual intentionality, were supported in the studio only when she was assured they would result in quality artworks. Due to the high expectations of the school, and in turn this supervisor, very few students would have

been able to perform to that standard independently, requiring a mixture of cultural capital, skill, and the ability to sell their potential. As a person new to teaching, and feeling pressurised to perform through her students' production, Sophie utilised social in/validation to motivate, and when necessary coerce, students to perform to her expectations. Student agency was enabled when it was safe for her to do so, and thwarted to protect herself and her students from negative assessments. For this reason, over half of her students expressed having experienced alienation, adopting surface or strategic approaches to their artmaking.

Comparing agential influence on conditions

This chapter’s analysis of these individual supervisors’ interpretative approaches indicated their agency was bounded by the conditions established at the school, which I sketched in Schema 3 (p.136). Thus, whilst the schemas visualise varying student engagement (Schema 10), these cannot be ascribed to the impact of the supervisor in isolation. Rather the import of this analysis is the ways in which these individuals negotiated the effects of the school’s interpretative approaches, and the ways in which they strove to assert, within that context, their own conditions.



Schema 10: Comparing creative triads, agential influence

When comparing conditions, most similar were the conditions established by Adam, Helena, and tentatively Nick. Adam and Helena were consistent in their interpretative approaches in the studio, albeit tailoring aspects of their teaching in response to each individual. They seemed to practice the ‘ways of being’ of the reflective practitioner model (Schön 1983), where reflection-in-action requires “sensitive, trusting and responsive teacher-student relationships necessary to facilitate, continually respond to and adapt to what emerges from the process” (Usher et al. 1996, p.169). Ideally the

panel assessments should have provided reflection-outside-of-action, however when situated within the larger interpretative approaches at this school, and the different strategies staff and student adopted, it is debatable whether this could have been affected.

Their students were strongly engaged emotionally with artmaking processes as people, accepting the construction of their identities as novice apprentices to their elected medium. They were able to identify and describe ways in which to handle uncertainty, with indications that there was some degree of feeling assured to do so, albeit with dependency on an external other. Whilst Adam's students seemed more enabled to play and take risks; Helena's were influenced by her caution to take only calculated risks. This difference may have been a result of the different allowances for failure (and recovery) inherent to the mediums they taught. In addition, it may have been indicative of the social validation that Adam provided his students to risk for the sake of the nominal authenticity of their actual intentionality; while Helena attempted to manage her students' processes more strategically towards success within the framework of the school. These students were able to engage critically, with expert guidance, and demonstrated engagement with their artworks. Whilst Adam's students were more dependent on his guidance for their critical judgment, Helena's emphasis on her students' scripting of their ipsative narratives in studio assessments, seemed to have enabled their confidence in critical judgment.

In many ways, Nick's schema is similar to these two staff members, although it bears remembering that this analysis of conditions is based on the experience of a single student, who epitomized his ideal. As Nick's constructions of his students were similar to Sophie's, I imagine that his schema might have been similar to hers in its polarities, if the research participants had not conformed to his expectations or if he was not as convinced of the potential quality of their output, to be invested in realizing their actual intentionality (p.167). With the student who participated in this study, Nick was able to create conditions experienced similarly to those of Adam's students, enabling play and risk for a student he believed had the potential to innovate at the level of h-creativity.

Noteworthy is how all of these three supervisors' students felt consistently validated within their relationships, confirming arguments which recognise the affective role of supervision (p.19). Within the last two years of their degree, whilst in these supervisors' care, they predominantly felt engagement with their artmaking process and learning. My sense is that this was because of these students' belief that their supervisors were invested in supporting their nominal authenticity, a presumption of support for their actual intentionality based on the formative guidance of those staff members. This perception served to develop students' confidence in their authorship, validating

their processes and identities, as they approached the liminal space between academic and professional practice on completion of their degree.

Comparatively, many of Faye's and Sophie's students felt the teleological and deterministic pressure of summative assessment expectations for high quality products, through their supervisors' feedback. Some of these students expressed feeling coerced, to relinquish their desires for strategic gain, when their supervisors adopted anti-intentionalist approaches in formative contexts. Primarily due to the nature of the relationships which these staff established with their students, which was dependent on cultural capital, their students had experiences of feeling either strongly engaged or strongly alienated from their identities as future artists. These supervisors' inconsistencies, as mediators of the different interpretative communities and discourses, created extreme alienation when the products of their labour became objectified. In Sophie's case this was perhaps exacerbated because, unlike many of her colleagues who adopted vastly different interpretative approaches in the studio compared to the other contexts, Sophie's interpretative framework in the studio was aligned with those aspects she most emphasized as a supervisor in the panel assessments (A2 + T2). Thus she did not develop her students' skills of critical engagement, in relation to the reception of the work (R), as explicitly. Evidencing the effects of her power to either collaborate (with ideal students or work perceived to have potential) or be prescriptive (when not), her students indicated extremely polemic responses, in terms of their emotional engagement and engagement with process. Similarly, her students seemed either assured to handle uncertainty or debilitated by it. They seemed less able to engage critically with the work, perhaps due to the lack of agency within the master-apprentice relationship, which she adopted from her own experience of being taught, and in an attempt to ensure high quality production.

Faye's students either demonstrated dependency on her as an external other to deal with uncertainty, or alienation in the face of uncertainty. They seemed less engaged with process than the majority of other students at the school, possibly due to the nature of the medium which lent itself less to material than virtual engagement, and possibly because of their supervisor's lesser accent on studio presence. In other respects, her students experienced their studies much as others within the school (p.136).

It is noteworthy that these two staff members were the newest to academic assessment and most uncertain of their investment in this discourse community and its processes. The difference in conditions established may have depended on their individual capacity to apply the principles of solidarity, hospitality, safety and redistribution of power (p.22). It is probable that in time these

supervisors would learn to manage more conducive conditions for their students, as such capacity for awareness of the conditions in which the teacher works; capacity for awareness of his/her responses to those conditions; and capacity to recognize an opportunity to act on this awareness, is born from opportunity, experience, and/or scholarship (Mann 2001).

In addition, this analysis revealed how complicated it was for individual supervisors to attempt to problematize their expert status within a mentor-apprentice culture, where in this case the supervisor was constructed as medium-expert and the student constructed as novice (p.137). This was enabled by particular structures, such as the power of the supervisor to represent their students' work at panel assessments, and the anti-intentionalist assessment of the connoisseur (R2). Sophie, through her attempts to relate to students as fellow artists' intellectually, and Faye, who created a peer participation culture in studio assessments, were the two staff members who were most explicit in their attempts to shift such expert status within their student-supervisor interactions. This perhaps partly explains why their students experienced their enactment of relationships as most inconsistent.

The mentorship approach at this school was enacted through the responsibility supervisors took for guiding students' processes towards resolution and success for summative assessment, raising questions about the authorship of the work and their students' dependence on others for critical judgment. All the students' reflective engagement was underdeveloped, with the majority of students lacking confidence in their critical judgment. Due to a filtering back of the anti-intentionalist approach, self-assessment of reception against intentionality, and meta-cognition of their development and oeuvre, did not factor into students' processes nor panel discussions. This underdevelopment was evident at UKI too (p.162), despite implicit opportunities for reflective engagement, such as in the written representations for submission. Neither school explicitly scaffolded meta-cognition an undergraduate level, although many staff indicated this was an explicit factor within postgraduate learning.

The comparison of the schemas from these cases (Schema 10), indicates that the interpretative approach of the supervisors at this school had a powerful impact on the conditions for creativity of these students, whether that framework colluded with, managed, further exacerbated, or counter-acted the overall anti-intentionalist approach of the school. What was noticeable was how students' perceptions, of their supervisors' investment in their actual intentionality, had a powerful effect on their engagement across the creativity triad. Due to the high assessment expectations at this school, the collaborative nature of that relationship strongly impacted on the students' experiences. The

influence of these relationships, whether enacted as familiar (such as with Sophie and Faye's ideal students), more professional (Adam and Helena), or at an arm's length and entirely focused on production (Nick), in/validated the student as a person and his/her engagement on a number of levels. When the student felt validated by his/her supervisor and protected by him/her to take risks, s/he felt enabled to choose his/her own desires over and above the pressure of the panel assessment, and to better handle uncertainty.

This chapter, and the one preceding it, presented my analysis of the cases with a particular focus on identifying interpretative approaches, and considering their significance for the conditions for creativity. In the following chapter I take a step back, at a critical remove from the rich details of this empirical research, to make suggestions as to the findings of this research project.

Chapter Seven

A discussion and reflection on the significance of interpretative approaches for the conditions for creativity in FASP

In this chapter I consider, at a meta-level, the significance of interpretative approaches which emerged from this research. This discussion is firstly constructed in relation to the structure of the document. The focus then shifts to aspects of student engagement and the conditions for creativity which mostly strongly emerged, pointing to the limitations of the study and possibilities for future research. I reflect on this research process, connecting it briefly with my larger research journey, and the ways in which this project has contributed to, and extended, both my methodological practices, and my interest in such areas as ethics, responsibility, and agency. I expand this reflection to an argument for re-thinking the positioning of the author in FASP.

Interpretative approaches

This research project has focused on identifying the interpretative approaches of the institutions and individuals studied, so as to comprehend the complex interplay of structure, culture and agency on assessment within the academic context. Whilst the interpretation of art is a well-tilled field, my concern when I initially embarked on this project, was that transference of such approaches from art criticism to the studio learning context, was not cognizant of the significance of such approaches on the conditions for creativity of the artist-student. My aim has not been to determine the 'right' or 'wrong' interpretative approach according to the philosophies which inform or underpin them (such as those outlined in Chapter Three), but rather to consider their significance for the development of authorship.

My analysis revealed that the purposes of interpretation in FASP inform the processes of *composition* and *production*, which relate to the development of the student-artist and his/her artwork; *reception*, which involves both reading and experiencing the artwork as a viewer might in a real life context in professional practice, whether a layperson, connoisseur or informed reader; and *evaluation*, specific to academic summative purposes. Whilst such dynamics may arguably come into play within artists' experiences in their professional practice, the power of evaluation in assessment as it is exerted in the academy, which allows less 'play' and openness than interpretation by critics and other readers, cannot be ignored. Staff seemed unaware of the acknowledgements of some

anti-intentionalist proponents in criticism, that interpretations made without inclusion of authorial intention may not be appropriate for formative purposes (for instance p.308).

In Chapter Two, I referred to the many invaluable contributions and insights of my peers' research into FASP assessment practices, which have revealed both fraught problematics of power and rich potential to engage diverse learners actively and provide epistemological access. Their studies indicate that, informed by educational discourses, many 'western' art schools now utilise outcome-based assessment approaches, or at the very least assessment criteria, in an attempt to create transparent referential frameworks on which to base feedback, equalize power dynamics, and empower students to guide their own learning. In addition, many of these schools have shifted the traditional curricular emphasis on the product, including consideration of the learning process within the summative assessments, and written components to provide opportunity for reflection.

However, from my experiences of researching and teaching FASP, in addition to HES courses on assessment to academics from other disciplines in various institutional contexts, I came to be concerned that there may be competing discourses operating within assessment in FASP that were unacknowledged and under-researched. I had noticed in previous research that implicit interpretative approaches within a specific institutional context had the unintended effect of encouraging students to relinquish responsibility for the reception of their artworks (Belluigi 2011). I realised that research in FASP assessment might be enriched by a more thorough consideration of the discipline's embedded referential frameworks in varied institutional contexts. The empirical research of this project revealed that, whether or not staff members were informed by the educational development discourses, and whether or not explicit CRA was bought into and utilised by the interpretative community, the more powerful and implicit discourses were those of art criticism understood from their professional practice. Certainly such tensions between academic and professional discourses and identities operate within many disciplines (Becher & Trowler 2001), however this finding points to the importance of questioning the validity of referential frameworks utilised for assessment.

Concerned with the significance of interpretation, Chapter Three highlighted how interpretative approaches are interwoven with the philosophical problematic of authorship. The contribution of my analysis of dominant approaches, in Appendix B, was that it made explicit their significance for constructions of author, text and reader. However, unlike art historians and critics who carry no responsibility for the impact of such interpretations on those who make the artwork, staff at art schools are tasked with this responsibility. The context and purpose of interpretation emerged as an

important consideration. The staff who participated in this research all believed that the overarching intended outcome of the FASP degree was to develop artists as reflexive practitioners. Their interpretative approaches differed, often substantially, when teaching and assessing, compared to how they espoused interpreting contemporary art.

Chapters Five and Six explored the analyses of empirical data generated from two art schools, and five supervisors within one of the institutional contexts. Although limited in scope and breadth, these perspectives provided what I believe are valuable insights into the discourse conflicts which emerged at the levels of structure, culture, and agency. The tensions between educational, academic, and professional discourses seemed most on the surface at UKI, possibly because those staff were more explicitly engaged with HES and thus cognisant of its friction within FASP traditions. However, the unacknowledged influence of the dispassionate academic gaze and its validation of 'objectivity' were evident in both schools, informing the construction of the external examiner as supposedly neutral. In the case of SAI, this notion of objectivity was used to substantiate the privileging of anti-intentionalist approaches at summative assessment.

These tensions are rooted within different philosophical assumptions in assessment: the traditional, objectivist, utilitarian, positivist, scientific movement in education; and more subjectivist, intuitionist, constructivist assumptions (Gray 2002). In addition, approaches to interpretation have, to varying degrees, been influenced by modernist politics of establishing the study of artmaking as a 'discipline' in the university, with the strategic adoption of the modern theory of impersonality and its Enlightenment discourse (Preziosi 1989). Logic, rationality and rigorous processes were seen as better synchronized with the positivistic assumptions which dominated the university, separating the analyst's task from any expressivist or subjectivist leanings. In a bid to appear legitimate in the eyes of the academy, artworks, as the objects of study, were given the status of static entities with determinate significance. The assumptions that underpin this notion have direct implications for the place of intentionality within interpretation. The first assumption is that determinacy was grounded in authorial intention. The rise of the art historian to the point where the critic or connoisseur rivals the importance of the artist, relates to the second and third assumptions. The second is that the analyst could provide such determinacy; and the third, that the analyst as 'expert' has the authority and legitimacy to produce readings of art objects that are reliable, in that other experts would agree with the interpretation. What this research project indicates is that, despite creating discomfort, such assumptions have not been challenged but rather often bought into and furthered by assessment panels, despite their being composed of practice-based artists.

The valuing and privileging of one reading over another, the authority of staff interpretations over students' intentionality, are where the politics of assessment in FASP is most fraught. The interpretivist approach to assessment, where members of the connoisseur community constitute a stable readership during panel assessments to ensure consensus, reliability and objectivity, emerged within both cases, despite their structural differences. Informed by this analysis, and notions of the validity of transgressing boundaries, and destabilizing discursive positioning, I wonder if we should not question the traditional framing of assessment by discourses from the academy or professional practice.³⁴ Postmodernist approaches suggest an alternative approach, of interpretation as discourse (Gooding-Brown 2000), to allow for more exploration and questioning of readings in relation to each participant, and in relation to their significance for the roles of artist, artwork and viewer. Disruptive readings which "bring the student back into the 'centre' of meaning" (Gooding-Brown 2000, p.40) may better empower students to see how their own, their peers', supervisor's and assessors' positions are constructed. It would be valuable to generate empirical research of the practice and experiences of all participants, including external examiners, of such discursive approaches to interpretation.

Whilst the suggestions above relate to the larger cultural and structural approach effected on an institutional level, this study confirmed arguments that relationships are a crucial aspect of the conditions for creativity (Clarke & Cripps 2012; Belluigi 2013). Chapter Six revealed that individual staff members within the same context, responded differently to the ways in which they were positioned, by managing, colluding or resisting those influences and, most important for this study, their significance for students. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the analysis revealed that those who had been at the school longer had developed a capacity to manage their positioning and the effects of assessment expectations on their students' experiences, creating more conducive conditions than those new to that context. These included more consistent parameters to their relationships with students; consistent discourses and constructions of the student and the artist; and adopting particular strategies to minimize negative effects of the anti-intentionalist structures and cultures in which they were situated.

³⁴ Similarly, the significance of such tensions between academic and progression discourses was a finding of Fletcher & Mann's (2004) study, which indicated that underpinning different constructions of postgraduate study lay competing assumptions about the nature of art as research or as professional practice.

Some argue that it is the responsibility of educators “to engage in a reflexive understanding of the emotionality of space and the way we all, each of us, bring our psychosocially constructed identities, desires, fears and power-games into this space” (Sagan 2008, p.183). A central aspect of this is the teacher’s modelling (Dineen et al. 2005; Spendlove 2007) of the emotional capacity to cope with difficult aspects of learning, such as uncertainty and risk (Carabine 2013); and self-motivating aspects, such as their emotional engagement with artmaking, creative processes and the subjects they explore in their work (Austerlitz & Aravot 2006). Partly this responsibility is born from understanding the affect and creativity as linked, and the often personal nature of artmaking, and partly from the increasing recognition that both the studio and the assessment event often become a theatre of the repressed (Morris 2005) with unconscious and potentially harmful psychological dynamics between student and supervisor (Ochsner 2000). This research pointed to many instances where being in a situation where the student’s self was not validated, resulted in a loss of ‘self’, agency and desire.

This research confirmed that placing sole responsibility at the foot of the supervisor would be disingenuous, as while they managed the conditions within the studio to some extent, these were impacted on by the larger cultures and bounded by the structures in which they are situated. This project indicates that even if staff willingly engaged in development courses on teaching and learning, they may not surface implicit domain-specific referential frameworks or enable negotiation with related discourse conflicts. Even those steeped in and engaged with debates on interpretation and art criticism (such as educators from Tate Britain, Arriaga & Aguirre 2013), have been found often unconscious of their interpretative approaches *in practice*. Whilst it was beyond the scope of this project to utilise the interpretative framework constructed to conscientise staff of the interpretative approaches they adopt, it may yet contribute to research which aims to help staff (Hendry et al. 2012; Allison 2013) bridge gaps in their communicative intent (such as Lasserre 2012).

Another aspect which emerged was the way in which students’ perceptions, of the interpretative approaches utilised, affected their own conceptions of learning. The majority, who did well and were most engaged in the process, presumed that actual intentionality informed summative assessments. Students who perceived the interpretative approach to be anti-intentionalist, did so as a result of experiencing the pressure of such approaches in formative assessment contexts, where they relinquished their desires, strategically performed the habitus, or persisted in isolation, often with detrimental effects on their identities as artists. The metaphor of assessment as linguistic or bad

translation (Elkins 2001) is perhaps most pertinent, as it points to how participants utilised different interpretative approaches, and operated within and under different discourses.

Important for this transdisciplinary project, was the way in which the interpretative foci of artist, artwork, and viewer were constructed within *this context*. While I analysed the significance on such constructions of dominant interpretative approaches in Appendix B, this contextual research uncovered that the interpretative foci were both informed and complicated by their contextual constructions, both within the institutions and by individuals, who brought with them their own understandings of interpretation and authorship. Included were Romantic, Modernist and more contemporary notions, emerging as something of a messy pastiche for students in both institutional contexts to negotiate unaided, whether their learning was in general strongly supported, as in SAI, or more independent, as in UKI. The ways in which these discourses aligned with practice was again complicated by academic discourses. For instance, the professional discourse community's various constructions of the 'artist' was further complicated, and sometimes undermined, by constructions of the 'student', 'apprentice', 'novice' or 'consumer'. S/he was to defer to the more knowledgeable and legitimate 'expert', 'assessor' and ultimately 'external examiner', who in the professional community would be constructed as fellow 'artists', 'viewers' or 'critics'. These constructions impacted on relationships formed between students and staff, often negating the potential of practice-based teaching, in addition to how the students came to negotiate and eventually define their own identities. Similarly, the 'artwork' operates in various ways within the professional community of practice. Regardless of the diverse practices of individual staff and how they managed assessment expectations, it was ultimately constructed as a 'product' of exchange to 'submit' for assessment purposes. This influenced the ways in which staff and students engaged with the 'work', impacting on the quality of learning and production. And whilst readership was acknowledged at both schools, whether explicitly or implicitly, as being important for offering perspectivism and formative feedback on students' work and the ways in which it might be received by the public while in process, it was largely reduced to the assessors' gaze and that of the external examiner as the most valued 'objective' imagined reader. Neither school was focused on developing the students' critical judgment of such receptions in relation to their actual intentionality .

Conditions for creativity

This project contributes to creativity research by exploring how constructions of creativity relate to authorship, both explored philosophically in Chapter Three, in addition to constructions emerging from the empirical analysis in Chapters Five and Six. Furthermore, the application of the analytical

schema to explore the conditions for creativity in FASP, has furthered creativity research within the specificity of this domain. The scope was however limited to considering the significance of interpretative approaches for art makers at this formative stage of their development. While this study does not pretend to measure the effects or impact of interpretative approaches, as if these were causal in a linear manner or those who were affected were homogenous, the significance of FASP approaches which did not consciously consider *actual intentionality* emerged as negative.

Whilst there has been compelling research on how constructions of creativity impact on how learning and teaching is affected (Reid & Solomonides 2007; Lowry-O'Neill 2011), and how constructions of learning impact on learning (Marton & Saljo 1984) and teaching (Prosser & Trigwell 1998), this study indicates the importance placed on actual intentionality for the artist-student. At this stage in the development of their authorship, students were strongly informed by nominal authenticity. When such authenticity was threatened by discourse conflicts, most particularly those which imposed external pressure for strategic gain or which constructed the student and artwork as pedagogical objects, students in this study demonstrated experiences of alienation, which often weakened their capacity for reflective engagement and the exercising of their critical judgment. Most of those who bowed to such pressures relinquished their desires and often suffered emotional alienation from the process and/or product. In addition, alienation from themselves and their identities as artists occurred, as they judged such strategic actions harshly. This affective aspect proved most influential for student engagement, impacting on the ways they responded to risk and uncertainty. Conflicts of external and internal motivations have been a concern in arts education research for some time (Parker 1953), because of the problem of authorship and the power dynamics of assessment. This was despite staff and students in this domain acknowledging that success in the academic framework counts less in the long term than any other field.

Whilst more research on the postgraduate context is required, this analysis revealed a concern for the quality of undergraduate reflective engagement. Interwoven within art education research is a recognition of the value of meta-learning (Nickerson et al. 1985; Winters 2011; Hargrove 2012; Clarke & Cripps 2012), considered central to student creativity and the reflexivity of the artist as “practising intellectual” (Dallow 2003, p.53; Hargrove 2012). However, participating students, from both institutional contexts, evidenced underdeveloped metacognition and critical judgment. Neither institution explicitly scaffolded such development, despite their constructions of the contemporary artist. Some have questioned whether formal education actually values such accents on self-actualization in developing creativity (Habermas 1971; Friere 1972; Danvers 2003) over and above

predetermined outcomes, bowing to political interests at the expense of ethical concerns (Craft 2006; Burnard 2006; Burnard 2007).

In my interactions with staff during this research, I found some were suspicious of my interest in intentionality, presuming that by giving it importance one would collude with or enable out-of-favour notions of the author determining the meaning of the work. Rather, how I envisage its possible role, would be to consider the ways in which student-author's intentionality operates in relation to the readings of the assessors and other readers, to develop self-assessment capacity and place some responsibility with the students for guiding the readings of their work. Considering the perceptions of and investment in actual intentionality of the students in this study, I imagine it would be a useful criterion or focus for developing and motivating the critical judgment of students and their peers. This would impact on their critical engagement during the process of their artmaking and their reflective engagement with the artwork to "help students to think about the space from which they are thinking, the context in which they are interpreting" (Gooding-Brown 2000, pp.48–49). Such engagement might serve the purposes of better aligning their work to their intentionality, or reconsidering both new, towards willingly and consciously deciding, for that piece, how reception might inform production.

Such negotiations therefore need not be deterministic or teleological, but rather pragmatically interweave intentionality with contemporary notions of readership and collaborative authorship. This would enable students to have more informed agency to pose questions and make decisions about their work, as they would when working independently as artists outside the academy. I imagine that this would better scaffold their development as reflexive practitioners, with their taking responsibility for their awareness of the ways in which their works' meaning and significance may shift through its reading in context. This insertion of the author may also serve to add an element of uncertainty to the authority of the assessors' interpretations, similar to Derrida's notion of meaning and authority being deferred (p.298). Negotiation of criteria has been shown to improve students' perceptions and motivation (Eshun & Graft-Johnson 2012), however whether these tentative suggestions would yield the potential I envisage warrants additional empirical research of interventions in practice.

Foregrounding the referential frameworks utilised in professional practice, and having participants grapple with the complexities of the problem of authorship and its rubbing against interpretation in contemporary art, may significantly improve the ways in which students negotiate what many in this study experienced as 'subjectivity' in FASP assessment. As this research project has shown, frames of

reference in FASP assessment processes are far more complex than NRA or CRA portend, extending into the interpretative approaches and discursive positioning utilised, implicit or explicitly, by individual staff members in their roles as studio supervisors and assessors within panels, situated within curriculum structures and institutional cultures, and positioned amongst competing discourses. It is possible that staff development courses, which many of these participants had attended, were inadequate in preparing staff for the complexity of the referential frameworks and tensions they experienced in FASP assessment.

A possible expansion of such research, to interventions in the assessment of composition in other creative arts disciplines in HE, may prove interesting. For instance, in film studies, where debates on authorship continue to flare, staff may possibly be less suspicious of experimenting with approaches inclusive of actual intentionality than I imagine FASP staff might be. The problem of auteurship is debated partly because of the late push for its valorisation as ‘serious’ art; privileging the role of the director or film writer in the collaborative production processes; and more recent possibilities in electronic media for the author and critic to validate or challenge each other on public platforms (Sayad 2014). With the reception of film, academic debates on authorship and the importance of the critic are seen to pale in the face of the public prominence of the author figure (Caughie 2007). In addition, utilising the framework to map interpretative approaches in other disciplines, particularly at postgraduate level, may help participants be more cognisant of their positionality within those dynamics, in addition to understanding how interpretation of the work produced, in whatever form it may take, extends from composition and production to reception.

Methodological reflections

In this document, I felt it important to be openly ideological about my philosophical orientations to this research, a practice noted as uncommon to HE researchers (Tight 2004), both for my own reflexivity while in process, and to create openings for choice and scepticism in your reading of this text.

Over the past decade and a half, I have continued to wrestle with postmodern perspectives on being a researcher, an academic, a teacher, an artist, a woman and more recently a mother, living in South Africa, a so-called developing country in the post-colonial, postmodern world. Excluding the practice-based research of my artmaking, my first research project, in my Honours year, looked at an artist whose practice I now realise falls under the postmodernisms of reaction, which left me rather dissatisfied with its *lasse faire pastiche*. My Master of Fine Art research began my search into understanding how to ethically relate to the other (both outside and within oneself); the difficulties

of living as an artist under the weight of history (what I termed 'historical melancholia'); and the responsibilities of representation (Belluigi 2001). A different lens through which to consider FASP was developed through my Master of Higher Education Studies, where I engaged with and streamlined a critical postmodernist methodological orientation (Belluigi 2008).

Older and perhaps wiser, in this research project towards my PhD, I have found myself opening more profoundly to the complexities of the subject of the research, and although wary and sceptical, I am a little less assured of my conviction of what 'must be' right. I think my sense of how I construct the self and how this translates fundamentally to self-other relationships has made me more self-reflexive about the assumptions of the critical tradition (Usher & Johnston 1997) within which I had previously operated. The possibilities for engagement, transgression and creativity, made possible within postmodernisms of resistance, have been fruitful in this project. In many ways, this sense of the validity of an uncertain methodological approach is echoed in recent studies on the negotiated space of the uncertain curriculum for FASP (Wallin 2008; Kalin & Barney 2014) because of uncertainty in artmaking (p.22) in a supercomplex world (Barnett 2000). I found participating staff who were appreciative of this approach, expressed unease with research approaches more incongruous to their practice. The more open, dialogical manner was described as providing opportunities for individuals to reflect on and debate a problematic central to their own internal conundrums in their professional and teaching practice. Similarly students were appreciative of engaging with the concept of creativity and its problematics in their own reflections on their learning (confirming a study by Eshun & Graft-Johnson 2012).

Disconcerted by a propensity for those within the critical tradition of research to unwittingly speak for, and possibly silence, those they represent (Poster 1989; Roberts 2007), I was interested in exploring how research practices, as with pedagogies of possibility (Giroux 1988), hold the potential to create conditions for more agency of its participants, and the incommensurability of the research subject. If one is not careful, the alterity of the individual account and 'little narratives' can be consumed when producing the singular research report where "the power-relation of subject and object reduces the world to categories and concepts" with the result that "the concept is privileged over the actuality it pre- rather than de-scribes" (Miles 2006, p.94). This proved a powerful challenge when bounded by such conventions as word-limits et cetera, as I felt I had done justice to the subject and my participants when this document was over four times this length. The inclusion of the actual words spoken and visual narratives were intended to rub against homogenising voices.

In my reductions, one of the many compelling emerging concerns which were not fully represented in this document, related to gender, authorship, and assessment. Whilst I included allusions to this where relevant in this report (pp.67; 142), I believe such discussions would be strengthened by additional institutional analyses. In addition, further exploration is warranted in examining cultural capital and background in relation to notions of authorship, which is of increasing concern in the face of what many see as failed attempts at massification and epistemological access in HE globally (Case 2013), and in South Africa (Fisher & Scott 2011; Lewin & Mawoyo 2014) and the UK (Williamson 2013) in particular. These relate to continued concerns with *difference* in the visual arts in HE (Sprio 2013; Hayton et al. 2014). Whilst falling beyond the scope of this initial study, I decided it was important for traces of such diverse structures of identity to be alluded to in participants' pseudonyms, thus implicitly flagging these issues for readers of the text.

What I came to realise was that the process of selection and construction had value in and of itself. By this I mean that, the value of the processes employed resides not so much in your interpretation, as similar to the role of the external examiner for FASP students, your value as an imagined reader has been in my self-evaluation. Rather, the process of writing allowed me to engage reflexively and self-critically with my choices and responses to the challenging complexities of the subject itself, in addition to attempting to honour the incommensurability of each participant's perspective.

Situating the artist-student

Whilst my reflections above relate to the methodology of this project and the form of this representation, I would like to turn to the subject or content, and how some of the strands running through my previous research have been extended and complicated. This project emerged from a previous study, where I found that due to an interpretative approach that denied intentionality, coupled with authoritarian, coercive feedback from assessors, a sense of relinquishing the student-artist's responsibility had the significance of denying students' agency for meaning-making in their own artwork (Belluigi 2011). Whilst Reimer's (2007) Romantic notions of the self and 'autonomy' may be dubious, I found his argument for the inclusion of intentionality as offering opportunities for ethical decision-making compelling at that time. With contemporary artmaking involving decision-making and choice towards imagining ethical resolutions (Johnson 1993), I was aware of the strong arguments being made for the importance of having moral or ethical frameworks in which to evaluate creativity (Craft 2006), and of students' identification with valid and ethical traditions in which assessments make sense to them (Alexander 2005). However, such arguments were predicated on notions of agency which seemed fundamentally complicated within

FASP, where the focus of the curriculum and assessment for the most part is on the final result of the educational process rather than on development or the student him/herself. Driven to understand this tension, its traditions and effects, led me to the fundamental problematic of the friction between interpretation and authorship in FASP.

Earlier in this chapter (p.252), I make an argument for the negotiation of interpretation as discursive and inclusive of students' actual intentionality in assessment practices in FASP. However, I am neither arguing for Plato's notion of the artist as essential deified ideal (p.29) nor the Romantic Identity Thesis of a successful artwork being that which realises the author's intentions (p.284). To expand more, I return to the placement of authorship in western philosophy, and the argument that such positioning came from mis-reading authorial intention.

Burke (1995) points to a tradition of *situating* rather than *detaching* the subject from the text and world. Nietzsche's epistemological method places importance on authorial intention: the text is retraced back to the author to uncover the ethical drives that motivated the text, to understand the will-to-power beneath the text's façade of disinterested will-to-knowledge. Re-readings of Marx and Freud position them within this tradition of authorial situatedness, where the historically full 'I' replaces, and to some extents is intended to act against, the Kantian ontologically void 'I'. Whilst Derrida was construed as anti-intentionalist (p.298), a different reading suggests he avoided the polarities of either/or. In his work, intentionality is seen as important to writing and reading, although not all encompassing in terms of signification. Miller offers, against the transcendental subject of patriarchal aesthetics, a 'materialization' of female authorship by situating feminine subjectivity, in a construction of authorship open to flux, difference and uncertainty (p.303). Even with Barthes, the person who conflated the death of the divine with that of the author (p.296), this position towards authorship was later revised.

One can see that so many of the problems that bedevil the author-debate arise from the failure to realise that the notion of the author has been falsely analogised with the transcendent/impersonal subject and that the only way to deconstruct this latter subject is not to replace it with theories of language, difference, anonymity, ecriture feminine and so on, but to reposition authorship as a situated activity present not so much to itself as to culture, ideology, language, difference, influence, biography (Burke 1995, pp.xxv-vi).

Marx's valuing of the critic over and above the author (p.301) set the scene for political critique focusing on the ideology of authorship over and above, and most often at the cost of, the author's relation to ideology. This idea has been challenged in isolated instances since the 1980s, most clearly with the controversy of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism. In art, such challenges

have been more prevalent, such as Leni Riefenstahl's rise and fall from favour due to her patronage by the Third Reich. It was with the Salmon Rushdie controversy, where his texts were received as sacrilegious of Islam, that the dilemma of the theoretical approach to authorship and its implications in terms of ethics in the political arena arose (Ni Fhlathiun 1995). The ethico-political dangers of divesting the author power to respond authoritatively to readings of his/her text, is an unwitting implication of the separation of intention from the text. Postmodernisms dispersal of agency empowers readers to construct the author from their readings of the text and use this figure to consolidate ideological positions. Against this postmodern dispersal, is a feminist (p.303) and postcolonial demand for authorial agency (p.304), echoed in criteria for social justice art education (Dewhurst 2011). A re-reading of one of my texts (Belluigi 2011) on the ethical dilemmas of a denial of intentionality contrary to espoused aims of educating politically responsible artists, would suggest that my own understanding was very much informed by such a post-colonial neo-political drive. In a country such as South Africa, where artists are often called to account for their transgressions in the politics of representation, this tangible obligation influenced my own analytical approach.

The roots of this concern with 'responsibility' can be traced back to Sartre's work, which Burke (1995) contends is perhaps the last place of the idea of the social engagement of the author (A) and his/her potential for social change (rather than that of the text, or reader). With a commitment to individual choice, agency and freedom, which distinguishes his from Marxist theory, Sartre extends 'authorship' beyond the text to one's being-in-the-world, in an existential philosophy of political responsibility and continual responsiveness to contemporary social conditions. His understanding of the author's historical groundedness and situated historical agency is an ethical one, holding potential for historical change and political action³⁵. In many ways, it is this construction of the author that seems most aligned with notions of the artist as reflexive practitioner.

³⁵ Whilst some may balk at such notions as outdated, in the case of Sartre's philosophical position, or marginal, when it comes to feminist and postcolonialist arguments. However, even within mainstream contemporary art debates such notions emerge. For instance, Irvin (2005, p.123) claims that "far from undermining the concept of authorship in art... appropriation artists in fact reaffirm and strengthen it" because the distinction lies with the responsibility, that the artist holds, for all aspects of his/her objectives and outcomes, including composition, production and reception. Similarly, in recent discussions of art-based educational research, connections between 'self' and 'other' being about social and ethical responsibilities (Prendergast 2014) and the ethics within aesthetics (Snowber 2014) have been highlighted.

The undecidability enabled by situating the author moves reading beyond the play of disappearance and transcendence, absence and presence, intentionality and interpretation, within which literary criticism has oscillated this past century. The shift being suggested here challenges the assumption, which is supposedly contrary to postmodernist notions of the self, that the subject is purely uniform, conventional or functional, but rather than there exists differences between authors. Possibilities of agency and the responsibility of ethics force the question of authorship to resist closure, with intentionality utilised to open certainties in interpretation – possibilities that may be particularly useful within teaching, learning and assessment in FASP.

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Appendices

Appendix A

List of abbreviations

A	author/artist (in reference to the interpretative framework, p. 38)
CRA	criterion-referenced assessment
FASP	fine art studio practice
HE	higher education
HES	higher education studies
IF	interpretative framework
NRA	norm-referenced assessment
OBE	outcomes-based education
T	text/artwork (in reference to the interpretative framework, p. 38)
R	reader/audience (in reference to the interpretative framework, p. 38)
VN	visual narrative

Appendix B³⁶

Interpretative approaches and their constructions of ‘author’, ‘text’ and ‘reader’

In this appendix, I present an analysis of dominant interpretative approaches in aesthetic and literary criticism, to demonstrate the framework’s application within this philosophical landscape. More than simply mapping or identifying where the approaches would ‘sit’ within the framework, I have attempted to explore the significance of each approach to constructions of the author, text and reader. In this way, the analysis of the empirical data generated from the specificity of the FASP assessment context (presented in Chapters Five and Six), is situated within interpretation. Implicit within this, is recognition that the problematic of authorship is embedded within these demarcated spaces of ‘interpretation’ and ‘assessment’ (albeit that on the surface this research may be constructed as ‘transdisciplinary’).³⁷

Informed by these debates and limited by the foci of this study, I have structured this analysis of approaches to interpretation in the order of the horizontal axis of the framework. I discuss intentionalist approaches which focus on the author as the locus of meaning (A), and then go on to discuss anti-intentionalist approaches which clearly privilege the text (T), followed by those that privilege the reader (R). This is to frame the various movements or philosophies which have been most influential in the 20th and 21st Century, particularly those that fall under the umbrellas of Phenomenological criticism; Semiotic criticism; Psychoanalytic criticism; Political, cultural or contextual criticism; and New Historicist Criticism and Cultural Studies.

Intentionalist Approaches

Whilst not exclusively, in the 20th and 21st centuries, many Anglo-American analytic philosophers of art have adopted intentionalist approaches. An agreement across the different intentional approaches is that the goal of interpretation is the understanding and appreciation of a ‘contextualist ontology’ of the text/artwork (Davies 2010: 167). Its identity is seen as determined by

³⁶ Initially this analysis was included as Part III of Chapter Three, but has been shifted to an appendix as a recommendation of the thesis examiners.

³⁷ Another implicit aspect is that this analysis may be useful for other scholars, working within contexts not specific to FASP, who are interested in analysing the significance of interpretation on authorship, textuality or readership.

the context of its creation or origin, including the author's intentionality and the particular art-historical context. As such, intentional approaches can be placed in quadrants A1, A2, T1 and T2.

Whilst there have been various manifestations of intentionality in criticism, including for instance Auteur Theory, the three dominant intentionalist approaches are driven by different purposes (Davies 2010). Actual Intentionalism holds that interpretation aims to discover what is meant in the work, where the author's 'actual' intentionality leads to the 'correct' readings. It is a realist approach of eucharistic criticism, linking signified and signifier, and rejecting interpretations not intended by the author. Hypothetical Intentionalism holds that interpretation should reveal what could have been meant, with the actual author's intention one of many other possible readings. Value Maximisers hold that interpretation should provide valuable ways of reading the work, which may or may not correlate with the author's intentions. Both Hypothetical and Value-Maximising Intentionalists contend that interpretation cannot be determined exclusively by the meaning intended by the author. In their extreme versions such approaches can be read as anti-realist (Livingston 2007) in that authorial intention is constructed through the interpreter's projections.

For actual intentionalists, intentions are real states of mind connected to the individual's will or volitions, and so may relate to understanding an artist's oeuvre or corpus, the ways in which his/her work has been coordinated over time, assuming a linear trajectory towards one larger underpinning intention. 'Actual' intentionality is used as evidence external to the work to support claims made by analysts (Livingston 2007). At its extreme, 'The Identity Thesis' of Absolute Intentionalism proposes that the meaning of the work is identical to that which the author intended to convey, communicate or express (Stecker 2006), and therefore it is the author's meaning which determines the work's meaning.

Understanding the notions of authorship which underpin Absolute Intentionalism may be the key to understanding how the authorial self is constructed, and resisted, in other conceptions. Influenced by phenomenological humanistic notions (p.294), the actual author is attributed an extreme degree of conscious control over his/her goals, and appears to be more divine than human (Kennedy 2005). One of the influential proponents of Absolute Intentionalism was E.D. Hirsch, whose 'Validity of Interpretations' (1967) argued that a speaker's intentions are a necessary condition for meaningful communication. In a bid to be objectivist, the historical and context-bound nature of knowledge is denied, creating a distinction between the 'meaning' of the work as that which is linked to authorial intention, and its 'significance' as a subjective evaluation of the text by the analyst or reader (Habib 2005), that is a clear separation privileging A over R.

Moderate Actual Intentionalism holds that authorial intentions partly constitute a work's meaning, in addition to aspects of the text and the historical context in which the work was made. What this approach allows for is the possibilities of unintended meanings, and unrealised or irrecoverable intentions in the "failure of texts to perfectly represent the author's intentions" (Rosebury 1997, p.15). A more tolerant view of the purposes of interpretation (Livingston 2007), in cases where more than one interpretation emerges, authorial intention is the final determinant (Nathan 2006). However, when readings of the artwork seem not to approximate the author's unsuccessfully realised actual intentions, then there is an allowance for the alternative reading to stand (Davies 2010). This suggests an emphasis on A with more latitude for R.

One of the dominant approaches of Moderate Actual Intentionalism is the Conversational Model, proposed by Noel Carroll (2001) amongst others. In this conception, the experience of art is as an act of conversation or communication, where the goal of the analyst and reader becomes to understand the speaker's 'utterance' or meaning, and a fulfilling experience of art comes from the surety that the author's intention has been grasped (Livingston 2007). Elevated above more Romantic notions of aesthetic satisfaction, the experience of art is a "human encounter" (Carroll 2001, p.122) between the author and reader with the text as the medium of a message. A number of objections to this approach have been raised, such as those that question whether the analogy between communication and the experience of art (Dickie & Wilson 1995) and its interpretation (Nathan 2006) can be drawn.

Another approach falling under the umbrella of Actual Intentionalism is Conventional or Categorical Intentionalism,³⁸ which holds that the convention under which the artist intended the work to be interpreted should be utilised by the analyst. The artist's intention disambiguates and determines the category of art, so that the aesthetic properties of the work must be perceived through this 'correct' category (Dickie & Wilson 1995). This interpretative approach is inclusive of T, in addition to A and R. A strong accent is placed on the connoisseurship of the expert interpreter (R2), over and above that of lay readers. A number of objections relate to the notion of conventions and genres, for instance that generic labels should not be applied to heterogeneous works (Kiefer 2005), and that many artworks fundamentally depart from their genres (Gaut 1993; Kiefer 2005).

³⁸ This is called Convention-constrained Intentionalism in Stecker (2006).

There have been many objections to Actual Intentionalism. From anti-intentionalist New Criticism is the 'publicity paradox', which contends that since a fundamental intention was to produce work for public consumption, the artwork should operate as a self-contained object severed from private meanings (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1946). Another questions the validity of applying linguistic approaches to the plastic and performing arts (Kiefer 2005). In terms of notions of the self, the 'Identity Thesis' has been critiqued for ascribing divine mastery to the author (Gaut 1993). Additional objections arising from non-realist paradigms have questioned Actual Intentionalism's claims to surety of 'objective', 'correct', and 'exhaustive' readings (Kiefer 2005). This has been termed the 'knowledge of intention dilemma' (Trivedi 2001), which questions how the author's intentions may be determined when this includes unrealised intentions gleaned from external sources and unintended meanings discovered within the text (Stecker 2006), described as "fortunate aberrations" in art education literature (Cowdroy & de Graaff 2005).

In response to some of these objections, Hypothetical Intentionalism weakens the distinction between 'actual' and 'virtual' authorial intention (Stecker 2006), in so doing shifting from the author as source of meaning to the text as a determinant, and through this process incorporating the intentions of a 'fictive', 'implied', or 'postulate' author (Livingston 2007, p.165). Two understandings of Hypothetical Intentionalism are most dominant: the emphasis on the analyst (R) proposed by William E. Tolhurst; and Jerrold Levinson's focus on the text (T1).

Tolhurst held that the work's meaning is determined by the interpreter's hypothesis about the author's intention, where the analyst is placed as the author's intended or target audience (Gaut 1993). In this way, the resultant hypothetical author 'determines' the work's intention, as s/he is aware of the context and conventions in which s/he operates and is in total control of his/her intentions (thus addressing concerns as to unrealised intentions and unintended meanings). Levinson instead saw the author's categorical intention as influential in determining the work's meaning as it too identified the ideal audience (Livingston 2007). A strong shift in focus is towards the text as the embodiment of meaning (Levinson 2006) (T), which is why some have labelled this 'Textual intentionalism' (Livingston 2007, p.141). The ideal audience, who is historically situated to know the body of the artist's work and has access to the art-historical context of creation, would present the 'best' (i.e. the most charitable interpretation) hypothesis of the author's intentions. Authorial intention, in this conception, has a heuristic rather than deterministic role. Whilst many possible meanings may emerge, these should relate overarchingly (Levinson 2006).

Value Maximisers link the aim of interpretation and the experience of art with the appreciative experience (Stecker 2006) of seeking value (Davies 2010). As with Hypothetical Intention, the artwork is seen as bearing meaning, which cannot be equated with a personal, one-sided conversation of the Conversational Model. In a shift towards T3, importance is given to the socio-historical context of production, where the linguistic and artistic conventions and practices which generate the work's possible meanings are elevated over and above the authorial intention which may have motivated their use. As the aim of interpretation is to increase the merit of the work as art or literature, the imagined intentions of a postulate author defeats any 'inferior' intentions. Objections to this approach stem from questioning the assumed purpose of interpretation as enhanced appreciation (Stecker 2006).

Anti-intentionalist approaches

Literary criticism has focused on the divide between those who value authorial intention, as relevant to interpretation, and those who do not (Burke 1992). Continuing from objections to intentional approaches and the argument that authorial intentionality is inaccessible, indeterminate and unknowable, extreme anti-intentionalism holds that authorial intentions are irrelevant to and never decisive of a work's meaning, effectively disregarding interpretations falling within A. Whilst realist understandings strongly link the author to his/her work to claim referential surety, the anti-realist shift of separating the work from its author may be underpinned by an epistemological anxiety and a "risk-averse epistemic attitude" of readers about making claims about the external referent (Livingston 2007, p.168), shifting analysis away from eucharistic criticism (specifically A1; T1). Similar concerns around surety and indeterminacy, objectivity and subjectivity, which underpin intentionalist approaches, can be traced through the different anti-intentionalist approaches.

Replacements of authorial intent from the locus of meaning are many and varied, such as by the features of the text (formalism; New Criticism); with language (Structuralism; poststructuralism); reducing the intention-bearing author to a depersonalized 'function' (Barthes) or figure (Foucault) (Rosebury 1997); 'readings' or constructions made by readers (Kiefer 2005). In place of a closed understanding of the artist's meaning being fixed at its origin or composition, anti-intentionalist approaches look at its production (formalism; New Criticism) but also its reception (reader-response; reception theory; intertextuality), a shift to T and R, which is how I have structured the discussion below.

Formalism

Formalism is influenced by Kantian notions of aesthetic response as a product of the human mind (Adams 1996, p.16), which drew from Plato's separation and elevation of ideal beauty (experience and judgment) from nature and art (utility, origin and context), as discussed on p.31. The elevation of form created a break from other traditions of eucharistic criticism which look at representation, imitation or cognition. In this approach, any form of subjectivity, whether the focus be on the subject (author/reader) rather than the object (text/artwork), is to be opposed (Habib 2005).

Formalists to some extents see the form of the work as its achieved content. Led by formalists in art history, such as Clement Greenberg and New Critics such as Wimsatt and Beardsley,³⁹ the concept of the artwork as a self-contained object continues the notion of its autonomy. A separation is made between 'internal' and 'external' evidence for determining meaning, where the external involves 'private' idiosyncrasies and revelations seen to be irrelevant to the interpretative project. Rather the 'internal', that is the elements that are 'publically' accessible, are valued as the 'facts' of the work (Wimsatt & Beardsley 1946, pp.477–478). These include the structure of the work, in addition to its historically embedded practice, as the conventions that set normative parameters for interpretation (Nathan 2006). Thus the artwork is seen to have internal laws (autonomous) and internal aims (autotelic) (Habib 2005, p.602), to be objectively appreciated (i.e. interpreted) by competent viewers (McEvelley 1996). This approach sits mostly within objective criticism (A2; T2; R2).

I have paid particular attention to the approaches of the New Critics particular attention, because of the influence of their arguments on the interpretation-intentionality debate.

New Criticism

New Criticism arose in 1920's and was institutionalised in 1940's, dominating mainstream American critical approaches (Rabinowitz 1989), even though it has been challenged substantively since the 1950s. Underpinned by formalist philosophies, New Criticism is against common-sense biographical criticism, focusing instead on the inherent artistic features of the finished art object, with no distinction made between text/artwork (Gaut & Livingston 2003). This interpretative approach emphasizes T2, with some inclusion of A2 and R2, but within tight parameters.

³⁹ New Critics are explicitly called formalists by Gaut (1993), with many similarities of approach to interpretation running through both.

Two influential texts defined the argument of the New Critics W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy' (1946), which can be read as an attack on the author and intentionality, and 'The Affective Fallacy' (1949), which can be read as an attack on the reader.

In 'The Intentional Fallacy', the origins or composition of the work become irrelevant. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946, p.487) argued that "critical enquiries are not settled by consulting the oracle", i.e. the artist, to the extent that to attempt to determine the artist's intention for the artwork becomes "the personal heresy" (Tillyard & Lewis 1965, p.2). Important in the context of teaching and assessing artmaking, authorial intention was not seen as irrelevant to the composition of works, only when it came to reception and evaluation. For the New Critics, the exclusion of such external or private information led to reading meaning into the work (Nathan 2006). Drawing from their publicity paradox argument (p.287), they argued that, for interpretative and evaluative purposes, the artwork should be seen as a public object only.

Wimsatt and Beardsley (1949) took the notion of the text (T) being autonomous of the author's biography, history and psychology further in 'The Affective Fallacy', where the artwork is posited as autonomous from the reader too, so that its results, reception or effects are irrelevant to its meaning. They argue against interpretations which include reader-response, whether emotional or psychological, and the analyst's impressionistic or relativistic criteria. Both reader-response and affective theory, they believed, make the art object disappear into subjectivity. By disallowing any possible evolution of the art object, they effectively avoided any potential for relativity when different readers' read (Rabinowitz 1989) and the return of the author in the privileged position of critic as creator of meaning (Burke 1995).

A number of arguments have been made against the New Critics' exclusion of that which they saw as external to the work. Slippages, such as including references to the date of the work's production, indicate the value of historical context (McEvelley 1996); citation of other artwork presumes biographical information about what the artist has seen (Stecker 2006), as do references to the artist's oeuvre or reputation (McEvelley 1996). In addition, classifications such as genre, which Wimsatt and Beardsley allow, can be seen as external. Those that have critiqued the New Critics' 'publicity paradox' argue that works cannot be seen as public only but also contextual, in terms of the culture, historic embeddedness, and traditions of both artist and reader (Stecker 2006).

Especially since the 1970s, formalism's indifference to the author and reader; its rejection of intertextual possibilities; and its privileging of the status of the art object, have been ridiculed as

“intellectually naïve”, undemocratic and “methodologically useless” (Willingham 1989, pp.37–38). Formalism’s equation of the purely aesthetic as the art experience and the notion that the emotional vitality of the aesthetic object is “its intensity” (Schiralli 2002, p.57), has been critiqued for unwittingly ascribing expression of feeling to the art object itself (an Expression Theory of art). Instead of such a generalized feeling or thought, with masked anxiety at the prospect of relativism, is the argument that such responses are particular (McEvelley 1996). The isolation of the work from the circumstances of its reading and reception, is seen as artificial, impossible, and linked to a philosophically regressive idea of an atomistic world, critiqued by Hegel, Marx, Sartre, Freud and many others. Such separation of the object of study from its broader context to abstract form as absolute, is seen as ‘historical positivism’ (Habib 2005, p.609). The formalist notion of the ‘purely optical’ is specific to post-war Western culture following a sense of political helplessness, an indication of an insular disposition of social alienation and withdrawal from the world (McEvelley 1996; Habib 2005).

Relativism and plurality

Against such generalist and abstracting theories in philosophical aesthetics are relativist and pluralist approaches of interpretation.

Varying approaches to relativism dot the continuum between extreme polarities. An example on the one end is Gaut’s (1993) Patchwork Theory, perhaps more of a response to indeterminacy than ascribing to absolute relativism. Arguing against global or universal interpretation, Gaut (1993) argues for the local relationship to resolve indeterminacy between viewer construction, interpretation and evaluation. Interpretative activity includes both that which is found in the text (discovered in T2) and that which is projected by the viewer (constructed by R1+2). On the opposite end of the continuum is Margolis’ Robust Relativism (1976), which too includes properties in the text that are discoverable (‘descriptive access’) and those that are generated through the perspective of imaginative schemes or myths (‘interpretive access’). In this conception, interpretation cannot claim to draw ‘true’ conclusions but rather aim to make ‘plausible’ proposals or hypothesis (Kiefer 2005) which can be plural, non-convergent and incompatible. Many objections have been raised to relativism, particularly by realists (see Barnes 1988, p.76).

Whilst relativism suggests that there may be multiple interpretations of a work that are not necessarily compatible; critical pluralism argues that not all interpretation has the same aims (Kiefer 2005), lessening the need to insist on the force of interpretative claims.⁴⁰ The theoretical influence of Structuralism is felt here, in that the observer is seen to create rather than discover the world (Rabinowitz 1989). Both relativist and pluralist approaches view the contribution of the reader (R) as favoured over the text or the author, so that the work's meaning is partly conditional on its reading or interpretation, and as such the meaning of the work evolves beyond its origin and production, to become dependent on its context of reception (Rabinowitz 1989). Although culturally delineated norms create dominant interpretations, these are not seen as 'correct', 'true' or 'proper' because readings cannot be equated with the originating text/artwork, but rather stand as creative works in themselves (Kiefer 2005).

Reader-response and Reception Theories

Reader-response and Reception theories are concerned with the role of the reader in the overall structure of a literary, aesthetic or rhetorical situation. Whilst acting particularly against Formalism these theories are part of a long, diversified tradition since antiquity. More tolerant of the role of the audience than Plato's construction of the 'disturbing' power of art to appeal to one's lower nature (p.29), Aristotle defined the properly structured tragedy as that which inspired cathartic emotions of fear and pity (Habib 2006). Many classical and medieval theorists included literature as a branch of rhetoric, because of its persuasive intentions and its awareness of the composition and expectations of its audience. Romanticism values the powerful emotional impact of artworks; Symbolists and Impressionists value the reader's subjective response to art; branches of hermeneutics and Phenomenology are concerned with how readers engage cognitively and historically with texts (p.294); while political criticism is interested in how the art object operates within social structures, such as gender or class relations (p.301).

A focus on the context, both in terms of production and reception, in which the text is embedded, characterizes reader-response's understanding of meaning as context-dependent (Rabinowitz 1989). The main proponents of reader-response theory, such as Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, looked in particular at what they saw as the dialogical nature of textual production in the interaction

⁴⁰ Within arts-based educational research, such analytical approaches might point to how readings operate (R3) rather than concern themselves with their justification (see for instance O'Donoghue 2014).

between text (T) and reader (R) (Habib 2005). The text is positioned either as providing a set of directions for the reader to follow (Iser 1978), or as offering unlimited opportunities for free play (Barthes 1976). Thus the balance between text as autonomous object and reader as perceiving subject is often tipped.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality is one of the approaches which sits between text (T) and reader (R), in that it looks at the relations between texts and other texts, whether literary or not. This approach involves negotiated methodologies, because there is a move from the autonomous, static text to the communal nature of interpretation, including a consideration of interpretative conventions and norms, and reading strategies (Rabinowitz 1989). Included here are explicitly more political and ideological approaches, which look at how readers interpret differently due to the impact of structures such as race, gender, class, such as Marxist, feminist, post-colonialist approaches. One such political approach is that of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) 'heteroglossa', which is against univocal, totalitarian, dogmatic approaches to interpretation of extreme formalism (Habib 2005).

Due to the elevation of content over form, Bal (1999) links literary criticism's intertextuality with art history's iconography, where the latter includes both literary and visual textuality. Iconography has traditionally focused on the meaning of the subject matter of the artwork. Its most dominant proponent, Erwin Panofsky (1972), member of the Warburg Institute, divided analysis into three levels. The first 'pre-iconographic' level was concerned with the description of subject matter (T1); this was to be followed by the level where the conventions and precedent of the image was determined by identifying the discourse behind the image (T2+3); the third level was concerned with determining the meaning of the image, by looking at the context of production, the genre, artist's oeuvre and patron's influence, and external sources (A1+2) (Adams 1996). Broader than this is the project of iconology, defined by Ernst Gombrich (1996; 1968) as the science of the larger programme to which the artwork belongs, including its cultural and artistic setting (T2+3). Such traditional understandings of iconography and intertextuality are underpinned by linear, historical assumptions about cause and effect, placing the artist in a passive position of accepting the origin(al) as the precedent. A more contemporary understanding is that the 'later' artist can be more active, intervening in the material which s/he chooses to appropriate (Svetlana & Baxandall 1994).

Although visual and literary interpretative approaches are linked, it is the undecidability of the visual work which causes a shift from the ontological to the epistemological (Bal 1999). In place of the interpretative aim being to determine, classify or close meaning in an attempt to solve an embedded

message or enigma, is a dynamic process of tracing the processes of meaning production over time and differing contexts (T3). The previous reliance on historical narrative in this approach shifts to the subjective discourses of intertextuality and interdiscursivity from which arise pluralist meanings and readings, that cannot be reduced to the actual artist's intentionality (Bal 1999).

With relativism and plurality, the text shifts from an object to an experience or activity with which the reader/viewer engages (Rabinowitz 1989). The reader, though, is conceptualized in different ways, from a hypothetical abstract product of the critic's mind to 'real' in-the-flesh people; from unique individuals to constructed subjects. Iser's concept of the implied reader, for instance, posits the text as the governing structure for interpretation which involves 'decoding' or 'realising' the text. An objection is that the reader becomes a product of the text, which ultimately determines the meaning in a manner not dissimilar to formalist methods (Pratt 1981). Stanley Fish's (1980) approach to readership is to place the context of reading within communities, a notion influential to research on assessment in FASP (p.15). Each community negotiates validity by creating its own texts and standards of competence. Objections point to the political implications of this approach, with Fish accused of neglecting the reasons as to why people choose or change from one interpretative community over another, which may have to do with structures and pressures (Rabinowitz 1989). Different to such notions of the intended reader is the authorial audience which is presupposed by the text, opening up interpretation to the history, culture and ideology of the text's reception. To a certain extent, this approach is similar to intentionalist approaches of hypothetical intentionalism which look at the reader, albeit from a more contextual perspective.

Such undermining of the stability of interpretation affects the evaluation of the artwork (the cause of anxiety for realists such as the New Critics, p.289, and Absolute Intentionalists, p.284). Evaluation, to a larger degree than interpretation, depends on the ascribing of literary or aesthetic *value*. As the text becomes re-cast as partly the product of particular choices based on taste, ideological and cultural values (T3), relativist and pluralist approaches put pressure on the belief that the academic cannon represents the 'best' thought or texts (Rabinowitz 1989), and question whether connoisseurship (p.15) is the 'best' approach for evaluation and assessment, shifting the emphasis from R2 to presumptions around the more 'democratic' R1 or the more meta-level R3.

Phenomenological criticism

The context from which phenomenology arose was the aftermath of WWII, when there was a split between engagement with and retreat from the ideological conflict of the Cold War. Many retreated

from objective reality, reaching an apex with phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl (1965) and the Geneva School, and the existential hermeneutics of Heidegger.

A primary assumption of this critical approach is that experience is the ground and focus of criticism. This notion of experience is not isolated to the self, as in the approach of Romantic subjectivity and the transcendental 'I' (Peperzak 1993), but understood as a mutual implication and relation of subject and object (Magliola 1989). The task of the critic, in this conception, is to work within the confines of literary structure to analyse the intrinsic specificity of how real, necessary and possible phenomena relate to the real, necessary and possible intentions which constitute human consciousness (Peperzak 1993). Intentionality here is not conceptual but about multimodal interaction with the world, and so more about those authorial intentions realised in the work (Magliola 1989). This manifested differently to biographical conceptualisations, which to some extent separated the author's self as disembodied or external to the work. The Geneva critics asserted that the author's unique imprint is immanent in the work and accessible for analysis. Phenomenological conceptions were influential to textual intentionalists (p.287) and are mapped primarily within T2 and A1.

Semiotic criticism

Semiotics has a relational, contextual understanding of meaning, where artefacts are cultural products with no natural or given essence (Fuery & Fuery 2003). Acting against the approach of artmaking representing reality of the mimetic and inspirational traditions, there is suspicion of that which appears self-evident, given or natural. Rather 'semeiosis', as a science of signs, aims to recover the text from deeper levels of signification (Lefkowitz 1989), with analysis considering relations between culture, society and meaning, and the artefacts which result (Fuery & Fuery 2003). The study of these relations, stress that rather than looking for something underneath or behind a text, language is structured independently of the author's intentions (Parker 1999). As such, the shift is away from trying to determine what the text means, to how meaning is conveyed through signs. Semiotics underpins intertextual approaches (p.293), with the text's meaning deriving from its placement within a system of texts and textual histories (T) to form a consensus of meaning or shared understandings of those conventions by communities. Semiotics began to be applied to visual arts criticism in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries in the form of Structuralism, continuing later with post-structuralism and deconstruction.

Structuralism

Structuralism emerged during the 1950s in France, from a sense of disillusionment with Marxist ideological focus (p.302), and phenomenology and existentialism's conceptions of meaning situated within human experience (p.294). The aim of the analyst is to identify universal mental structures that motivate behaviour. Such mental structures are defined as communal (communities, kinship); larger social structures (literature, philosophy, art); and unconscious patterns (Adams 1996). The analytical task is to look at texts, works and practices which result from a relationship between those structural parts (Gooding-Brown 2000).

Acting against the eucharistic traditions' conventional correspondence theories of meaning, Saussure emphasized linguistic features or 'structures' of the text as related to deep structures underlying phenomena in his influential 'Course in general linguistics' (1983). 'Signs' are seen as the elements that unify the concept (or signified) with a sound-image (signifier), but in an arbitrary, artificial bond of meaning determined by rules, communal or collective behaviour and conventions. Language is therefore understood as a system of signs with relational meaning. 'Parole', speech, is separated from 'langue', the systems and rules of language, which he believed lend themselves to analysis.

In its quest for universals, Structuralism privileged language as an institution over individual human agency (Habib 2005; Eagleton 1983), de-emphasizing authorship (Adams 1996). The focus is on the broader and impersonal linguistic structure of the text, although it is recognized that the author participates in this structure and is enabled by it. I have tentatively placed structuralist approaches in T2 and T3.

Post-structuralism

Post-structuralism arose from the 1968 upheavals in Paris. Continuing many Structuralist interests, poststructuralism opposed Structuralist hopes of identifying universal structures by observation and analysis, and in this was informed by postmodernist suspicion of grand narratives. The text/image is posited as a construction, with the focus of interpretation being its capacity for signification (Fuery & Fuery 2003). A central assumption is the interdiscursivity of the text (p.293), in that the meaning of the work not only evolves past its production and reception, but that it relies on the reader to be fully realised (R).

Furthering structuralism's de-emphasis of authorship, post-structuralism dismisses notions of the author as the source of meaning, seeing those as rooted in 19th Century Romantic, patriarchal

(Feminist criticism) or elitist (Marxist criticism) myths. Whilst post-structuralism continues the attack on authorship, it is perhaps most aimed at closed intentionalist approaches, because of the recognition that aesthetic value includes ethics and politics.

I have focused on the approach of Roland Barthes because of his influential impact on art criticism. For him, the analytical task is concerned with *how* the image as a system of signification holds meaning in socio-cultural discourses and *why* it signifies what it does (Fuery & Fuery 2003). The aim is not the structuralist discovery of abstract final meanings but rather questioning the potential for meaning in a text, by looking at its capacity to culturally signify and embody (possess and produce) meaning in specific discourses. Arguing that the visual and literary are invested with and within cultural narrative and discourses, Barthes emphasizes both the intertextual and interdiscursive nature of texts (p.293). Interpretation involves 're-viewing' or 're-reading' the text outside of its normative framework, as a natural or unquestioned product of culture, removed from its *intended* purpose (Fuery & Fuery 2003).

In Barthes' 'The Death of the Author' (1968), the author is constructed as an echo of the repressive paternalistic god of the inspirational tradition (p.30). Conventions and methodologies of interpretation which revere the author are re-cast as products of culture and discourses. Authorial authority and determinacy is accused of being silencing to interpretation. Conceiving of readership and production as heterogeneous, interpretation is reconstructed as rebellious, subversive and potentially democratic (Fuery & Fuery 2003). The critic's role is no longer to passively translate or discover an authorially-determined meaning but has critical responsibility to go beyond the primary level of the image to understand how social discursive structure generates meaning (Barthes 1968). The death of the author is seen to signal more than the birth of the reader - a critical birth where acts of reading (R) are not only readerly but writerly, contributing to the text's meaning and being creative in itself (Fuery & Fuery 2003).

Barthes (1968) argues that this is not a renewal of Romantic subjectivity nor intentionalist notions of the ideal or intended audience, but that the reader is simply a 'someone' amongst many other readers (R1+2). Despite Barthes' claims to the contrary, many argue that the reader is indeed conceptualized within the tradition of Romantic disinterested subjectivity (Burke 1995), which the author unwittingly replaced by the reader's powers of signification and the creativity of the critic's achievements (Gaut & Livingston 2003).

Deconstruction

Emerging in the 1960s, deconstruction continued certain structuralist notions and rejected others. The deification of the author, Plato's notion of the essential ideal, and the Romantic sense of a successful artwork being that which realises the author's intentions, are all rejected. Jacques Derrida introduced even more flexibility to the relation between signified and signifier, arguing that this varies according to contexts which themselves are open to flux. For him, meaning is 'deferred' because of the intertextual nature of conferring meaning, where words are defined in relation to other words (Adams 1996). It is around this issue that deconstruction deviates from structuralist aims to construct systems so as to uncover universal orders of cultural expression. Notions of signs as having ultimate, essential meanings that are fixed within closed systems are rejected. Against such presumed internal coherence, deconstruction points to how texts can be opened to diversity and ambivalence. Constructing the aim of the analytical task as to investigate the nature and production of knowledge, criticism unravels the fabric or structures of power and authority at work in knowledge, language, meaning and interpretation (Anderson 1989; Adams 1996). With deconstruction, the dialogue between the critic (R) and the text (T) becomes a play of *differance*, where language and interpretation are pushed to their limits to show that power and authority are at work smothering difference in discourse. In this way, deconstruction can be seen as a way to surface the consequences or implications when authority represses difference to create illusions of knowledge and meaning as masterable (Anderson 1989).

Derrida's approach to authorial intention is complicated, having become a political issue for those with polemic interests (Burke 1992). For the anti-intentionalist deconstructivists dominant in the US, his work has been read as justification to reject interpretative norms in pursuit of freeplay; for those practising more orthodox criticism, his work is used to dismiss deconstruction as rootless and nihilistic. As a result, Derrida's intentionality, is ironically lost in the debate: that whilst intention is recognized, respected, and given value, it is neither ascribed deterministic nor governing meaning. Rather than an organizing *telos* or transcendental subjectivity, it is rather embedded within larger signifying processes (Burke 1995).

As a principle of method, Derrida's work indicates that it is necessary for the analyst to deconstruct intention (Burke 1992). To ascribe intentionality its limits, the critic must first be confident of it. The

text is stratified into two layers: the declarative, i.e. what the author intended to say (pragmatic intention); and the descriptive, i.e. that which escapes authorial intention (operative intention) (Burke 1992: 142).⁴¹ Firstly, an explicative phase reconstructs authorial intentions, and then a deconstructive phase accesses that which escaped intention. This gap between intention and writing, gesture and statement, gives priority to the critic over the author as a better reader of the work. In this way, the author's intentions are posited as secondary to the writing of the text, reducing authorial authority or god-like control of the text. Instead, the 'citational practice' of intertextuality (Bal 1999) sees the text as inscribed and engulfed in larger significatory structures than authorial intentions.

However, to some extents this re-entry of subjectivity into writing disrupts assurances of objectivity, where the author acts as a principle of uncertainty in the text (Burke 1992). This shifts the author away from an ideal to a disruptive figure in interpretation, moving the importance of the subject away from being the inventor, to intervening in the interpretative process. Here Derrida's (1997) notion of 'supplement' includes intention, not as a replacement of the image, but an addition to its meaning (Bal 1999). Exposing interpretation as a desire for mastery (of knowledge through language or meaning through interpretation), deconstruction aims to show that meaning and knowledge are continually deferred (Derrida 1981a; Anderson 1989).

American deconstruction, which falls within anti-phenomenological post-structuralism, takes Derrida's denial of absolute authorial intentionalism, displacement, and relocation of authorship, to mean the total absence or erasure of the author and thus a deauthorisation of the text (Burke 1995). However, Derrida can be read as not destroying but rethinking the subject outside the discourses of transcendental phenomenology, aiming rather to *situate* the subject and how it functions in context. Rather than dead, dismissed or disappeared, it is the *authority* of the author that is opposed.

The objections to deconstruction are, for the most part, aimed at American deconstructivism where the notion of the absent author is used as a license for the critic to pursue entirely textualist readings without regard or responsibility for that which s/he excludes (Burke 1992). Its exclusive focus on the textual relation to meaning, denies the possibilities for connecting texts with reality,

⁴¹ In other discourses these two layers are termed the constative and performative; manifest and latent; absence and presence; conscious and unconscious. To a certain extent, these echo the critical tradition in education's concepts of the espoused and the practiced (Argyris and Schon 1974 in Brockbank & McGill 1998).

which is problematic for Foucauldian analysis (p.306) which aims to link discourses to the realities of structures of power (Racevskis 1989). Such exclusion of context and history perpetuates formalist readings (Anderson 1989).

Psychoanalytic criticism

Psychoanalytic criticism considers the psychological dimensions and personal meanings of literature and art, spanning from the author's motivations (A) to the text's effect (T) on the reader or viewer (R), ideas which have extended from Aristotle (Ryan 1989). There are various methods and foci in psychoanalytic criticism, from an inclusion of biographical information and the motives of the author, characters, readers et cetera; to the creative process itself; to reader-response; to roles and stereotypes; to how language functions to constitute consciousness (Habib 2005). As such, different methods appear in different areas of the framework, with a privileging of the role of the analyst (in both senses) (R).

Freud created the analogy between psychoanalysis and the production of narrative, by exploring the problematic, irreducible nature of language to communicate thought and emotion. It is the interest in the 'unconscious', begun with Romanticism, Schopenhauer (p.32) and Nietzsche, which Freud made into a systematic study (Habib 2005). This notion is disruptive to mainstream Western thought which assumes humankind to be rational, connecting free choice to the intellect and morality. The ideals of self-knowledge and autonomy depend on these assumptions of the moral and political agency of humans – of their intentionality. Instead, modern psychoanalysis posits the unconscious as the ultimate source and explanation of what drives human thought and behaviour, a form of 'otherness' within ourselves (Kristeva 1991). Rather than disembodied reason, forces of the body, such as the instincts for survival and aggression, and the body's contextual size, colour, gender, sexual orientation et cetera, play a dominant part in human interaction.

Freud analysed the form and content of the text in relation to the artist's biography and psychology. The text is constructed as an expression of wish-fulfilment from desires in the artist's childhood. The creative process is given energy or impetus by unconscious drives, and is partly governed or projected by the 'ego', requiring the artist to bring into the present his/her infantile instincts (Adams 1996). As such, Freud's work questions assumptions of the author in full control, and similarly the reader in control of his/her responses. The motivations of the subtext underlying authorial intention are opened to being different to that which the author espoused.

Although there is some debate, generally psychoanalysis constructs creativity as a neurotic function (Bergquist 2009) arising from unconscious drives and as a by-product of primary processes. Freud saw parallels between creativity and pathology, suggesting that creativity stems from conflict with wish fulfilment and biological drives, in the sublimation of sexual drives from childhood. Whilst there are differing arguments as to whether this occurs in the pre- or un-conscious, in the main those who have followed Freudian understandings of creativity see it as a part of the mental functioning of the 'id', in that the individual uses creative processes to seek pleasure and avoid pain.

Jung created distinctions between psychological and visionary art. Similar to Freud's conceptions, psychological art he characterised as being generated by the 'defended subject' (Hollway & Jefferson 2000a) from primary processes, such as the relief of pain or anxiety. For such art, he thought psychological theories were most suited for interpretation, as the purposes of the analysis is ultimately diagnostic or therapeutic. Visionary art, he believed, connects the human to the collective unconscious, the psyche of the whole of humanity, in a context larger than the individual and his/her conscious understanding. Not unlike the inspirational model of creativity (p.30), this concept can be seen in notions of transcendence in artmaking, and the artist who channels larger, superhuman ideas; and transpersonal psychology, which looks at creative processes as intense encounters from altered states of consciousness.

Furthering psychoanalysis with the added perspective of semiotics (p.295), Lacan's interested is in how the subject is constructed in and through language. Whilst Freud understands the subconscious as instinctual drives towards pleasure, Lacan sees instinctual desire as arising from a perceived absence or gap, in relation to alterity (Adams 1996). Lacan (1992) defines three levels of mental functions as the Symbolic (or discursive), the Imaginary (or perceptive) and the Real (as the inner psychic reality of individuals, not objective reality). In addition to the notion of signs relating to other signs, language is seen to create meaning in the positioning it enables for the subject to understand itself and its relations (Nowell-Smith 1976). As such, Lacan can be seen to have inserted signification and operative criticism into psychoanalysis, questioning objective analytical approaches which decontextualize the subject/author.

Political, cultural or contextual criticism

Reacting against formalist notions of the autonomous text are various forms of criticism (whether called political, cultural or contextual) which expand iconography to include its larger economic or cultural context. Notions of the author as autonomous creator, transcending history and ideology, and representing in his/her texts universal truth, are questioned, extending to positivist notions of

interpretation as neutral and objective. Rather, this critical approach situates interpretation within a large political project, with the aim of intervening in current, rather than distant, debates. Focusing not only on traditional objects of study (i.e. literature, fine art) but other areas of culture (such as film, TV, fashion), such analysis is neither purely literary nor aesthetic (Ryan 1989). It is 'cultural' in that reference is made to social history, politics, and economics, and how such 'products' replicate social power through culture. Across the diverse psychoanalytic, semiotic and aesthetic realms, such criticism recognizes that there are connections between the different dimensions of power which subjugate and shape conceptions of reality. This recognition has resulted in hybrid methodologies and interpretative approaches which operate across disciplines and concerns. In this section, I focus briefly on Marxist, feminist and post-structuralist approaches to interpretation, as these are some of the most dominant interpretative approaches in contemporary criticism.

Marxist criticism

Hegel's rejection of the autonomy of identity (whether author, text or reader) for an understanding of its construction being possible only in relation to the larger context (ideology, class, economy et cetera) (p.31), was influential to the thinking of Marx and Engels who lay the foundations for Marxist criticism. Concepts previously understood as autonomous, such as objective reality, truth and language, are seen as constructions of social practices by collective human subjects who institutionalize such concepts. Marxist approaches are inclusive of, but not limited to, the operative band.

Early Marxism believed in 'totality' of interpretation, that criticism should account for all the text means in a specific context, and as such that all kinds of criticism can be used but with the addition of social meaning to literary or aesthetic meanings. Rather than autonomous methodologies, the purpose of such criticism is what defines it, that being to enable comprehension of the social and cultural world so as to contribute to its *transformation* (Ryan 1989). A central concern is ideology as the imaginary relation to real conditions of existence. Feeling and behaviour are underpinned by beliefs, attitudes and habits that are inculcated by society to reproduce its own structure.

Rejecting 19th Century notions of art for art's sake and textual autonomy (p.289), Marx's (1976) 'Introduction to the critique of political economy' forged a link between art and culture, with art seen as a cultural product of its immediate context. This resulted in a focus on the moral, social and economic factors in the production of art. With consciousness shaped by social circumstances, the author is viewed as a proletariat worker or producer caught in a system of economic relations (Burke 1995), making art to be commissioned, owned and utilised by the ruling elite class, resulting in the

artist's alienation from his/her own creative processes and creative production (Mann 2001). The interest is in the author-function (A3), with much of the specificity of the author lost in early Marxist efforts to emphasize economic determinants or the historical context. Similarly, the text was seen to collude, further or be at the service of class domination (Ryan 1989).

Later influenced by various theories, including those of Louis Althusser, Fredrick Jameson, and post-structuralism, there was a shift in focus from ideology to the mechanisms of representation and signification. Underlying this was a shift from a belief in Enlightenment and transformation leading to truth, to exploring alternate ways of representing and constructing the social world (Ryan 1989). Specifically influenced by the Frankfurt School's notions of the text's critical distance from the social and political world (Habib 2005), it was later recognized that art has the potential to "rub against the grain" of capitalism (Benjamin 1992, p.259). So whilst early Marxism positioned ideological artworks/texts as commodities or products which collude with bourgeois myths to preserve unjust social power through the indirect coercion of culture, later there was a recognition that texts are potential sites for class struggle and contestation, simultaneously ideological while being counter-ideological through their internal dissonance and indeterminacy (Ryan 1989). Current approaches look at textual particularity (T2) and extra-textual concerns, such as the reproduction of power, to comprehend the text's ideological operative functions (T3 + R3). The critic (R3) is elevated above the author, with the former exposing ideology and the latter promulgating or resisting it.

Feminist criticism

Rejecting formalist notions of the autonomy of the art object, feminist criticism too sees both artists (A3) and their texts (T3) as reflective of a cultural context (Torsney 1989). An assumption is that gender influences both the expression (T) and the interpretation (R) of history, for social and cultural, rather than biological, reasons (Adams 1996).

As gender is understood as an essential element to understand the origin, content, production, reception and evaluation of art, the politics of authorship and interpretation on which art is judged, come to the fore. Burke (1995, p.145) defines three phases of feminist negotiations of authorship. The 'sponsorial' phase, exemplified in the '60s, was concerned with asserting the rights of the female author. The 'revisionist' phase of the '70s worked against patriarchal models in order to redefine female authorship and promote a counter-canon (known as the 'gynocritical' phase in Anglo-American philosophy). And lastly, the 'theoretical' phase held that female thought should go beyond patriarchal institutions of authorship and canonicity. Within this, early feminist notions of the 'authentic' female experience were critiqued as essentialist, mythical, and outdated. The overtly

political focus shifted to a literary one, away from A to T and R. In terms of readership, Culler (1982) defines three modes within the history of feminist criticism. At first, women's experience in relation to the text was given priority as the means for interpretation (R1). Attention then shifted to exploring the possibilities of reading as a woman (R1+2). The aim then became to construct altered modes of reading, in reference to the maternal situation and experience of rationality rather than paternal referential frameworks (R3).

Various methodologies and approaches to criticism fall under the feminist umbrella. Arising within both of the third phases of authorship and readership outlined above, are the arguments of Helene Cixous, Alice Jardin and Nancy K. Miller. Influenced by psychoanalytic theory of the 1980's, Cixous (1976; 1981) questions feminist notions of gendered subjectivity and authorship. Informed by Lacanian ideas on feminist modes of signification (such as the sounds and music of words) and the masculine uses of language (as linear, rational, logical), the focus was not on the sex of the writer but the sex of writing itself (T3). Attempting to overturn common-sensical gender assumptions, the binary female/male was seen as a limiting reversal which perpetuates logocentric assumptions of patriarchal metaphysics. Instead, she offers the anti-authoritarian and elliptical 'écriture féminine' (feminine writing) to cut across biological identity. Jardin (2000) adopts 'écriture féminine' as the ground of all discourse in a sexually and textually plural heterotopia. Situated in the radical space between textualism and politics (T3), she offers the notion of 'gynesis' as 'women-in-effect', where without stable identity the author is replaced by writing as woman (R3), and the subject replaced by woman as sign (A3).

The strongest objection to this generalized notion of feminine writing is that it does not address the pressing political concerns of the ethical status of women's authorship, nor the specificity of subjectivity (Burke 1995). The subjective, political and canonical imperatives of more traditional, in particular Anglo-American, feminism seems usurped into textual idealism. Combining the political force of early feminism with the strengths of linguistic French theory, Miller (2000) responds to this by returning to the author. Against the transcendental subject of patriarchal aesthetics, she offers a 'materialisation' of female authorship by situating feminine subjectivity (Burke 1995), exploring the relationship between A, T3 and R3. A concept of authorship open to flux, difference and uncertainty becomes possible.

Postcolonial Criticism

Postcolonialism arose during and after colonial struggles for independence in Africa, Asia and Latin America to reconsider the history of colonialisation from the perspective of those colonized, and

explore its economic, political and cultural impact. The motives for colonialism and imperialism are viewed as underpinned by assumptions of Western Enlightenment which used concepts, such as civilization, progress and rationality, to mask actual oppression of that 'other' to it, positioning alterity as superstitious, barbaric, impoverished and incapable. Reconsideration of the motivations behind the history and narratives of imperialism is towards participating in political and economic liberation in the present, with a concern for equal access to material resources, contesting dominating forces, and exploring political and cultural identities.

Different methods and assumptions fall within the postcolonial criticism umbrella (Burke 1995). Early anti-imperialist and neo-colonialist thinking is for a return to literature, tradition and knowledge(s) of those indigenous to that context. Others argue there should be an adaption of Western ideals towards postcolonial ends, particularly adaptations of Marxist criticism to local contexts. Recognition that postcolonial concerns extend beyond the specificity of previous colonized lands, has led to 'internal colonisation' in minority studies in the West. In this section, I briefly explore the different approaches of Franz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, because their arguments predominantly inform current interpretative approaches which are grouped within such criticism.

Fanon (1963) is concerned with notions of culture and national consciousness, and emphasizes the text's relation to its social and political context (T3). Instead of seeing the text as the effect or product of political struggle, it is seen as instrumental in consciously articulating and shaping national identity and values (Habib 2005). Spivak (1999) constructs the project of colonialism as an instance of Foucauldian 'epistemic violence', where one set of values and beliefs are imposed upon another, and certain knowledges are subjugate as inadequate. In so doing, the colonial subject is positioned and constituted as 'Other', for the coloniser to define itself. Against such polarization of colonizer/colonized, perpetrator/victim, which unwittingly perpetuates colonial discourses, Spivak sees the colonized subaltern subject as heterogeneous (A3). Also questioning the notion of fixed identity, Bhabha (1993) emphasizes power relations in language and discourses when critiquing concepts of culture and nationalism as coherent and unified entities. Against binary oppositions, he offers 'hybridity' as opening to the inbetweenness of being between cultures, with a notion of discourse as that which produces rather than reflects its reference (T3). He is informed by the Derridian sense of how the metaphorical nature of language and discourse allows for diversity and ambivalence (p.298). As with deconstruction (p.298) and versions of feminism (p.303), objections to

Bhabha's arguments are around its abstract textual nature rather than political practicability (see Habib 2005, p.751).

Said uses Foucauldian concepts to explore how knowledge is a means of exercising domination, understanding the text as 'wordly' in that it is a product of history, culture and its context. Interested in the interplay between the text and its reception (T3 + R3), he draws a parallel between Foucault's 'discursive situation' and textual relations, to show that there is no democratic exchange as one text displaces another, but rather texts are used in the service of power to institutionalize and legitimize one culture over another (Said 1993b). As an alternative, Said offers the possibility of achieving knowledge through transgressing language, which hinges on a conception of intentionality. Instead of classical notions of authorial intention as the 'origin' (p.30), he offers the secular 'beginning' which he believes allows for dispersion, adjacency and complementarity (Said 1993a). As such, the intentional production of meaning becomes a product acting subversively to both enable and limit subsequent texts (Burke 1995). Interpretation here is an act of 'taking hold' of language against its authoritarian, not necessarily authorial, uses.

New Historicist Criticism and Cultural Studies

New Historicists and those critics who fall under Cultural Studies are concerned with retrieving lost histories and exploring the mechanisms of repression and subjugation. New Historicism's interest in government, institutions and cultures has resulted in a predominant focus on that which occurs at the top of social hierarchies (involving the upper classes, aristocracy or clergy, for instance). In Cultural Studies, the interest in class, economics and commodification has led to a focus on the lower end of the hierarchy (including the 'lower' classes, minorities and women), to comprehend the implications of past ideologies on the present (Newton 1988).

An assumption of both movements is that the recovery of authorial intention and the original meaning of the work is impossible. Rather, what is considered of more importance is the recovery of the motivating ideology. Both New Historicism and Cultural Studies are very much against eucharistic criticism's conception of artworks imitating elements of their time (p.37). The text is seen to shape, rather than simply reflect, in a dialectical relationship between history and work, producer and product, source and end, which suggests that history is not prior to the process of the work (Myers 1988). More important than the historical evolution of the text (its composition and production), is its consequences, implications and effects (reception and how it operates). Informed by Foucault's notions of knowledge as a form of diffused power that is not assignable to one particular political or ideological agency, the shift is to viewing 'history' and 'culture' themselves as

texts, constructions and interpretations produced by contradictory, unreconciled forces and interests. Rather than viewing the text as unique, it is rather constructed as a discourse within other cultural discourses which both shape and are shaped by it (T1-3) (p.293). Influenced by the Frankfurt school, some have emphasized the ability of the text to challenge social and political authority.

Against the notion of an autonomous individual, is the Foucauldian notion that people are constructed socially and linguistically to occupy certain 'subject positions' through the discourses of a given culture and time (Newton 1988). The critic occupies a privileged position as s/he is able to perceive the discursive practices invisible to the author who was subject to those times (Myers 1988). The analytical task is to problematize processes through which 'truths' are produced, disseminated and applied, by bringing out problematic aspects of systems and procedures, to reveal unstated presuppositions and assumptions, unquestioned rationalities and self-serving interests. However, against notions of the reader as a universal intellectual/judge/prophet who has authority to legitimize and delegitimize knowledge, Foucault posits the 'specific' intellectual within a certain context and specialization who has limitations. 'The Historicists dilemma' (Racevskis 1989, p.238) recognises that self-awareness becomes crucial for the critic, as reading is informed by his/her historical position, values and politics (R3).

There are many objections to both New Historicism and Cultural Studies. They emerged as disciplines quickly accepted within academia, rather than as revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. As such, they can be seen to force works to conform to a particular vision of the world or history, finding or projecting similar themes on different works, despite professing an awareness of the Historicists dilemma (Myers 1988)

Conclusion

In a sense, my analytical approach in this appendix could be mapped within operative criticism (A3 + T3 + R3), because of the framework's concern with how dominant interpretative approaches operate in terms of their significance for authorship, textuality and readership. As such, this chapter does not encompass all possible movements, nor all the different interpretations or manifestations of the approaches highlighted, and is not necessarily inclusive of the actual intentionality of the main proponents highlighted. Despite the limitations in the breadth of this study, I feel confident that the

problematics and approaches represented here underpin most past and current debates,⁴² and that the significance of the dominant receptions of such approaches, on constructions of the author, text and reader in contemporary criticism, are represented.

I end this chapter with a compelling argument made by Burke (1995), who problematizes such receptions by charting the mis-placement of authorship in literary theory. The most obvious contenders are Wimsatt and Beardsey (p.289) who argue that intentionality should not be included as a criteria for the *judgment or evaluation* of texts, yet their texts were used to fundamentally justify freedom from authorial involvement in the *interpretation* of texts. They were also careful to note that while intention may not be necessary for evaluation, the *composition* of the artwork is another affair. These subtleties are noteworthy as their conflation has obvious implications for assessment in FASP, in addition to how these purposes require differentiation for this study's analytical processes.

⁴² See Sayad (2014) for how these threads run through the 'current' crisis in film criticism.

Appendix C

List of participants (indicated through pseudonyms)

Participating staff from UKI:	Participating students from UKI	Participating staff from SAI:	Participating students from SAI:
Gill	Dave	Adam	Alison
Jane	Elsie	Faye	Betty
Julian	Eric	Helena	Chelsea
Max	Fiona	Nick	Edeen
Peter	Fran	Sophie	Grace
Russell	James		Haydey
Ryan	Joe		Jacob
Susan	Kerry		Jade
	Tammy		Lenore
	Yusuf		Laura
			Katy
			Mark
			Sindiswe
			Stanley
			Tessa
			Zosha

Appendix D

Questionnaire sent to staff

Studio Supervisors of Fine Art Studio Practice

Thank you for your openness on thursday last week. As you know, I am an academic currently researching aspects of teaching, learning and assessment in fine art studio practice. This questionnaire is one of the methods of data collection which I am employing to gather information for my PhD at Kingston University's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, from which I hope to publish journal articles. I am inviting you to participate in this questionnaire as I feel your perspective will provide important insights.

Due to the in-depth nature of the research the questionnaire is lengthy. There are 8 pages in total. Because of this I have limited the 'required' questions (indicated by a red * after the question), however I would encourage you to respond as fully as you are able to do. Please set aside at least 30-40 minutes, though depending on how involved you get, it may take longer.

Many of the questions in this document are in the 'report-and-respond' format, where I present you with ideas or research from art education research and you are put in a position to comment on their applicability (or not) to your own context. My intention with this is for you to act as a reader, contributor or critic of the research process rather than a conventional 'respondent'. In this role, you are therefore encouraged to highlight any issues/ discomfort/ problems that you have with specific questions/ words/ ideas presented within this questionnaire, and suggestions on more apt representations.

* Required

I give my consent to my responses being utilised in this research project. *

By indicating 'yes' you are giving your consent to having this data utilised for research purposes. However, your identity will remain protected, and you may choose to pull out of the research at any time, from which time no more data will be collected from you. By indicating 'no', you are signalling that you do not wish to participate in this research, and I will not contact you further.

Yes

No

Your name: *

[Continue »](#)

Your background and context

This information is important as it allows me to see how your thinking around your own artmaking, experiences as a student in the past, and the tuition you received, have had a bearing on your current approaches to teaching in the studio.

Your own thinking as an artist

Thinking of the (body of) work you have recently produced, how would you describe your artmaking process?

How would you as an artist best like your viewer to go about understanding or interpreting your work? What would you like him/her, ideally, to include/ exclude/ focus on. *

Yourself as previous artist-student

Reflecting on your own years and experiences as a student in fine art, which aspects of the environment/ teaching and learning relationships/ curriculum challenges did you find most conducive to enabling your artmaking?

What do you think informed the assessment process (what was used for reference when making decisions) of your own student artworks by your lecturers? *

In terms of your Art History/ Visual Culture studies, tick which 3 models or perspectives of interpretation you were taught, which you have found most influential to your own thinking about contemporary art. *

If these options seem far removed from what you were taught, or my logic is opaque, please simply write it as you remember it. These are the broad areas of criticism I have defined from my reading into interpretation.

- What might be termed 'eucharistic criticism' which essentially is concerned with how meaning is determined by how the artist represents his/ her subject who is external to the work. Included in such criticism are 'mimetic' approaches (where the artwork must visually approximate that which it imitates, most often nature, and so was originally about skill), and the 'inspirational' tradition (where the divine uses the artist as a conduit or shaman to convey a message).
- What might be termed 'expressive criticism' with a strongly subjective authorial ethos. Included here is the Romantic approach, with a focus on the artist's inner sensibility, psyche or emotions and is concerned with representing a feeling or mood or an expression of something inner.
- What might be termed 'objective criticism', where the artwork is only internally motivated. This band includes many of the approaches of the modernist discipline tradition, such as formalism and New Criticism, with their focus on the form of the artwork as its content, and iconography, which focused on symbols and signs in artworks. A less obvious inclusion is that of some late 20th Century literary theory where the artworks as 'texts' are seen themselves to generate meaning.
- What might be termed 'operative criticism', and here I include all notions of how the different sources (author, text, reader) function as 'figures' within larger societal concerns. This area is linked to a critical interest in authorship, textuality and readership (including interpretation) as inherently political, as well as postmodernist notions of the relationship between form and content. The emphasis is on how the artwork (and to some extents the artist) are received and function operationally in terms of their effects on the reader or audience, that is within specific societies and contexts. Rhetoric, and a positive corollary, 'pragmatic criticism', can be included here too, in that they relate to how the artist becomes aware of the ways in which to engage, please, communicate or educate the public.
- Other:

Your current thinking/ practice

In what ways do you think you have shifted from this inherited history (either in relation to what you learnt in terms of interpreting artworks from art history, or from your own studio practice lecturers), when it comes to reading contemporary art/ assessing student artworks/ your outlook to having your own work 'read'?

Conditions of learning in fine art studio practice

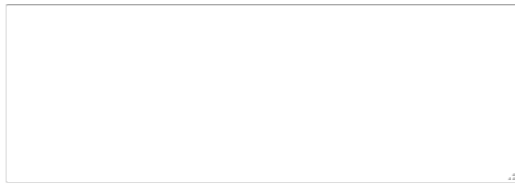
The term 'conditions' is indicative of a larger 'space' within which the triad of creative person, creative process and creative product is situated. Under this umbrella term is included the environment, both formally in terms of the curriculum and assessment, and informally in terms of relationships and roles between teacher, student and his/her peers. In the use of the word 'environment' I am alluding to the atmosphere, climate, ethos, emotional tenor, and spaces created for and by contexts of learning, which may be help or hinder creativity.

Relationships

Research has shown that students experience the studio with its problem-based experiential emphasis as the heart of the curriculum. The relationships between studio supervisor and student are central, with interactions between peers and the supervisor with the peer group playing an important part.

The intimate 'work-in-progress' nature of the supervisor-student relationship, involves student effort in adjusting to the supervisor's reactions to his/her artwork. With each 'singular emotional episode' more is learnt by the student about the supervisor and the student him/herself, and so these singular events after repeated exposure can develop into 'emotional stances', which influence the student's approach to learning. Such stances may be productive, reproductive or counter-productive depending on how power dynamics and affective concerns are managed by those involved.

Reflect on this in relation to your own teaching-learning context.



Which of the model(s) described below do you think best represents the relationship between you and your students: *

- The master-apprentice relationship: This model predates formal education, coming from the medieval workshop where an apprentice worked with a master while making the latter's art. Originally it was conceived of as focusing on the master's artwork and art practice.
- Mentor-apprentice relationship: This relationship acknowledges the process of enculturation that underpins the master-apprentice relationship, but has a softer socio-cultural emphasis on the positive learning environment for the individual to flourish within the community of practice alongside a role model.
- The atelier method, or the studio supervisor as 'coach': From the time of the early academy, the atelier method places teaching and learning within one-to-one 'studio conversations' between supervisor and student, taking place in the student's own studio and focusing on the student's work-in-progress. The espoused theory of this model involves offering constructive criticism on ideas and proposals, and helping the students realize their ideas. Rather than the master's work, the student's artwork becomes the medium for the learning process, on which the creative processes, aesthetics and critique are focused. 'Close personal relationships' are seen by some as an expected student-supervisor dynamic, due to the teacher acting as a coach or mentor while the student 'learns by doing'.
- The critical friend: The studio supervisor's role as one of critical friend, taking into consideration the twin roles of reflection-in-action within the studio and assessment twinned with reflection-outside-action in the Critiques. This would involve constructive feedback framed by negotiated feedback indicators which are partially informed by the student's intentionality. It could be argued that those lecturers with a more ipsative focus, that is concerned with the student's development over time, may be more concerned with the individual's intentionality as they hope to empower them to better achieve their aims and the perceived purpose of their work. Here teachers forego their own desires or intentions imposed or projected on the student for willingness to facilitate the student's achievement of his/her intention. This model would require an openness to a relationship of partnership by both parties, and is informed by conceptualizations of caring relationships as being mutually engaging and rewarding.
- The liminal servant: A student-centred approach is the 'liminal servant'. Here the supervisor aims to assist the student's construction of knowledge via critically reflective dialogue that involves both cognitive and social dimensions of learning, i.e. scaffolding the student's engagement with the underlying structures of the discipline. Some of the characteristics of this construction would be enthusiastic engagement by the tutor; the openness of both parties to each other's requirements; two-way challenging and task-orientated communication; a sense of empathy about the frustrations and process of artmaking; and a sense of shared management of the learning process.
- The analyst: Another possible way to understand the relationship between studio supervisor and student is to look at the similarities of its characterises to the relationship of analyst and patient. The studio as a space of creative and shared play, shares similar phenomena with therapy. Such environments may evoke previous relationships and events in the student's life which s/he may manifest as unconsciously projected roles onto the supervisor.

Use this space to elaborate or complicate the above...

How do you think your particular students would characterise the relationship? *

« Back Continue »

Assessment practices

These question focus on aspects of your and your institution's assessment practices, and as such many be aligned or in conflict with your own thinking. The questions I ask have to do with the methods, purposes and frameworks for assessment, as well as constructions of the 'assessor' role in fine art studio practice.

Which of these are typically utilised for or during summative assessments (i.e. assessments for which a final year mark or result is awarded) in your context? *

Click on which apply

	1Currently referenced	2Sometimes referred to	3I think should be referred to but isn't	4Hardly ever referred to	5Never referred to
Discussions that occurred during studio supervision	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-in-progress/ formative crits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Portfolios	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Artist's statements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Works on exhibition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sketches and preparatory work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In viva voce (ie student presents a defence of their own work in person)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervisor(s) presents student's work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negotiated assessment criteria by the student and/ or supervisor(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explicit assessment criteria (agreed upon formally by staff)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implicit assessment criteria (known by staff but more tacit in orientation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibility of student's further studies/ future plans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal attributes of the student and his/her character	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment more on the above here if you wish to....

Thinking of last week's discussions, what specific information is most typically provided to the external examiner for him/her to evaluate student work/ results awarded?

Do you think students are aware of what is referenced to make assessment decisions? Is there any value/ drawback to them knowing/ not being privy to this? *

Which of these do you think are the most important influence in terms of determining the meaning or significance of an artwork? *

Please discuss more/ problematize the choices above.

- Artist
 Artwork
 Viewer
 Other:

*

Please discuss more/ problematize the choices above.

The effect of purpose on the issue of intentionality

In what ways do you think you treat the student or his/her work differently when engaging with them for the purposes of making the work (in process) compared to assessing the work (after the fact)? *

In what ways do you think this is different or similar to your approach to interpreting contemporary artworks? *

If there are difference, I'd appreciate if you could speculate as to why.

In what ways is this different to/ congruent with how you, as an artist, would like the meaning of your work to be understood/ interpreted/ read/ experienced? *

If there are difference, I'd appreciate if you could speculate as to why.

Student intentionality


A central concern of my research is how the student develops his/her representation. Whilst "composition" in fine art may relate to a number of issues, it is the verb to do with the artist's engagement in the creative act or process of making his/her ideas tangible that relates to intentionality and artistic development. Such intentionality could be seen to be directly related to what some argue are the embodied aspects of the artworks, such as how the materials, decision-making and techniques all relate to the genre, context, discourses and meanings within the work.

How important is intentionality* for the student's own critical evaluation of the artwork? *

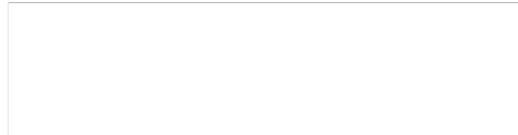
* = Please note the definition of intentionality I have provided above.



How does the current assessment practice relate to this, or develop a student's metalearning? *



How different is the issue of a student's intentionality in postgraduate versus undergraduate study, or First compared to Final year? *

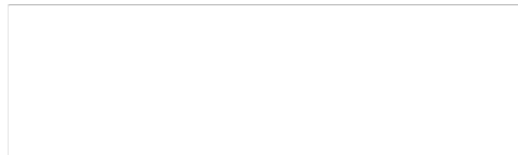


Assessment purposes

Recently debates have characterised assessment as "a necessary evil, a generally good thing or something which will tear the soul out of art" (Hickman 2007, 79). Assessment in education has various functions, such as selection, feedback, diagnosis, licensing and achievement of curriculum outcomes. Assessment involves formative (assessment for learning) and summative (assessment of learning) purposes, where there may be overlap or distinct separations in how these purposes are effected in practice, and impact on student learning.

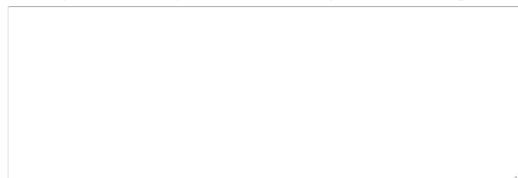
As a disciplinary norm, assessment in fine art studio practice occurs through group dialogues and marking events, where grades or marks are agreed publically. As such, some argue that the interpretivist approach to assessment in fine art is possibly the best option as it involves the negotiated judgement of a process or a product within a framework of shared understandings. This is a notion of criticism and discourse that depends on a 'stable interpretative community' (Fish 1980), i.e. a group of people within a particular context who are likely to agree amongst themselves, on such issues as taste, values and quality for instance, for a duration of time. However, others argue that this interpretivist stance it is not reflective of the reality of the postmodern art world where some of the few constants are difference, conflict and change. Because assessors act as 'representatives' of different interpretative communities critics actually operate with an 'avanescent interpretative community' (Elkins 2001). *

What is your take on this?



The question of what is being assessed in fine art raises many thorny issues, some of which you touched on in your assessment discussions last week. Such as: 1) The artwork may be assessed as a STAND-ALONE OBJECT, separate from the student who created it or the objectives of the supervisor. 2) It may also be seen as THE PRODUCT OF A LEARNING PROCESS, where the focus is on assessing the students' development as art-maker. 3) Assessing, and in turn, fostering CREATIVITY may be one of the aims of assessment in fine art studio practice. One of the questions that haunts the assessment process may be articulated as, "We may be able to judge that a work is innovative, even unique, but was it a fortunate aberration or was it the outcome of genuine creative imagination?" (Cowdroy and de Graaff 2005, 510) *

This may be a massive question but - What do you believe is being assessed in your context?



Role Conflict

Supervisors may be concerned with how assessment within the Critique adds the element of judgement and critique to the relationship, which may inhibit the intended creative, supportive nature of the supervisor-student relationship (Hickman 2007). Students too may not associate the Crit experience with supportive learning environments (Black and Wiliam 1998). Thus there is a perceived tension often from both parties between the studio supervisor's roles of support and criticism.*

What is your experience?

Concluding this questionnaire...

What issue(s) haven't I covered that you think may be important?

Please discuss here.

Is there anything about my representations in this questionnaire that you would like to comment on?

Expressing your opinions, feedback and concerns to me is most valuable for the purposes of validity. If you prefer, email me directly at dbelluiqi@ru.ac.za.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed further on these and other studio practice issues, if the need arises?*

- Yes
 No

References cited in this survey

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Appendix E

Visual narrative method

Each student was provided with a glue stick, scissors, pen and an envelope containing what appears below - the instruction sheet; the reflection sheets; and two copies of the image bank sheet.

Artist-students of fine art studio practice

Visual Narratives

Instructions

This exercise utilises imagery and your imagination. You have been given two sheets of 30 images and a separate response sheet. Cut out the 60 images provided on the separate sheets. Your task is to group these images in threes to create a personal narrative or response.

Use the response sheet to stick the triptych of images you created on the snapshot blank. It is best to take your time with each response. Complete each triptych before moving on to the next.

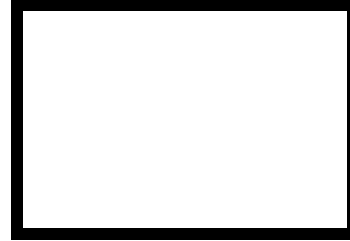
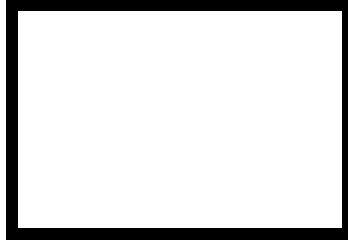
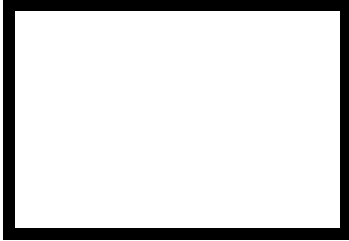
Each triptych of images may evoke a verbal response. You are invited to write “your words” in the space provided underneath each series of images. This may be one word, a sentence, or a story.

Once you have completed all four responses, place the completed response sheet in front of you and wait for your classmates to finish.

Fine Art Studio Practice Reflection 2013

Using the images available describe:

1. A project, incident or experience related to your fine art studio practice course, where you learnt the most or was challenged the ***most***.



Your words:

Using the images available describe:

2. A project, incident or experience related to your fine art studio practice course, where you felt you grew the ***least***.



Your words:

3. I would like to have insight into how you feel the assessments ('crits') have been going for you, and if the assessors interpretations of your work have made sense in terms of what you were expecting. Using the images available, describe as a story the **emotional process** of your assessments.



Your words:

Using the images available:

4. Use this space as an opportunity to express something you have not had an opportunity to 'say' about your fine art studies this far.



Your words:



Appendix F

Questionnaire emailed to participating students

I sent these questions to each participating student within a week of their submission exhibition opening to the public.

From: Dina Zoe Belluigi [mailto:d.belluigi@ru.ac.za]

Sent:

To:

Subject: Your sense of your show and your studies now

Dear

Congratulations on your show on Friday!

I have been working with all the data I've collected and would like to have your sense of things NOW, when you and your work are probably in quite a different space to when I spoke with you in X, and observed studio crits with your supervisor in X and at the mid-year assessments in X. While the show is still fresh in your mind, please consider the questions below and send me responses (brief/ long/ only in response to what you feel strongest – whatever you would feel most representative of your experience). I have found your input so valuable, I'd really appreciate it at this point in your process of artmaking.

1. How do you feel about your show?
2. What was your strategy as an artist for this body of work - what did you want the work to do/ or the viewer to see/ feel/ understand?

(essentially, this is my interest in your intentionality as we discussed it in the focus group interviews – the next question relates to interpretation)

3. Did you want the lecturers to take this into consideration for the assessment of your work? Do you think they have?

(whether at the final assessment or during studio crits or the mid-year assessment)

4. In terms of your studies here, some of the crucial aspects to create **conditions conducive for creativity** in fine art studio practice are:

- your identity as an artist;
- your ability to deal with uncertainty;
- being provided challenging contexts;
- your cognitive and emotional engagement with play;
- supportive but also critical relationships (with peers; with staff);
- your skills in evaluating your own work – evaluative/ self-assessment skills in terms of the final product/ artwork

Can you talk a little around your sense of how your time at X has constrained or enabled this?

Please know that these responses will remain confidential and your identity protected.

Thank you for your input,

Dina