



Lecture 2 | Poststructuralism

Coexistent Perspectives (ADAA7000)

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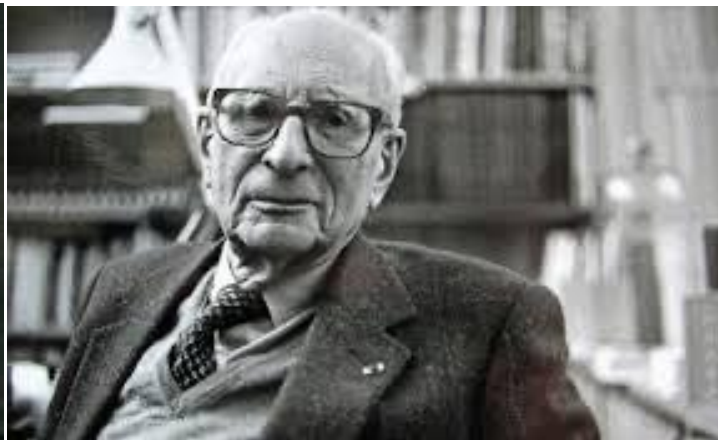
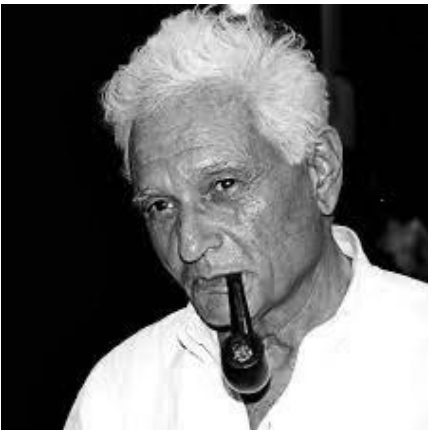
The Purpose of this lecture today will be to

- Acknowledge some of the distinctions between post structuralism and post modernism.
 - Acknowledge some of the distinctions between structuralism and post structuralism.
 - Introduce some of the key thinkers in these areas, as well as significant texts.
 - Present examples of how post structuralist method has been applied through arts practice.
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- **This should allow you to consider the various overlapping and converging theories and to develop your own perspectives through an arts practice.**

Post – Structuralism – a (very) brief Introduction

Overview

Post-structuralism is a late-twentieth-century development in philosophy and literary theory, particularly associated with the work of **Jacques Derrida** and his followers. It originated as a reaction against **structuralism**, which first emerged in **Ferdinand de Saussure's work on linguistics**. By the 1950s structuralism had been adapted in **anthropology Levi- Strauss**, **psychoanalysis Lacan** and **literary theory Barthes**, and there were hopes that it could provide the framework for rigorous accounts in all areas of the human sciences. (Gary Gutting: Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy)



Comparing Post - Structuralism & Postmodernism

- There are so many similarities between post structuralist theories and postmodernist practices that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between them. Post structuralists like Foucault, Barthes, Derrida and Lyotard can also be thought of as postmodernists.
- Postmodernism - a set of critical, strategic and rhetorical practices employing **concepts such as difference, repetition, the trace, the simulacrum, and hyperreality** to **destabilize** other concepts such as **presence, identity, historical progress, epistemic certainty, and the univocity of meaning**. (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/postmodernism/>)
- Much like Postmodernism, Post Structuralism is also marked by **intertextuality, irony, pastiche, and genre blurring**. (Owens, 1990: 57, Barker, 2004: 157). Concepts such as Intertextuality and deconstruction can be developed as part of both postmodernism and post structuralism.
- Post Structuralism works against the idea of grand narrative (which is deemed reductionist, simplistic and totalizing), in favour of '**petit récit**' or '**small or even fragmented narratives**' (Lyotard, 1984, p.60), as does postmodernism.
- Post structuralism AND post modernism have been criticised in this sense, since in establishing a theory, might that not also be thought of as a totalizing or grand narrative?

In Minor Keys, The 61st International Art Exhibition, Venice, Curated by Koyo Kouoh, 2026



tunes into 'low frequencies,' 'whispers,' and 'personal narratives'

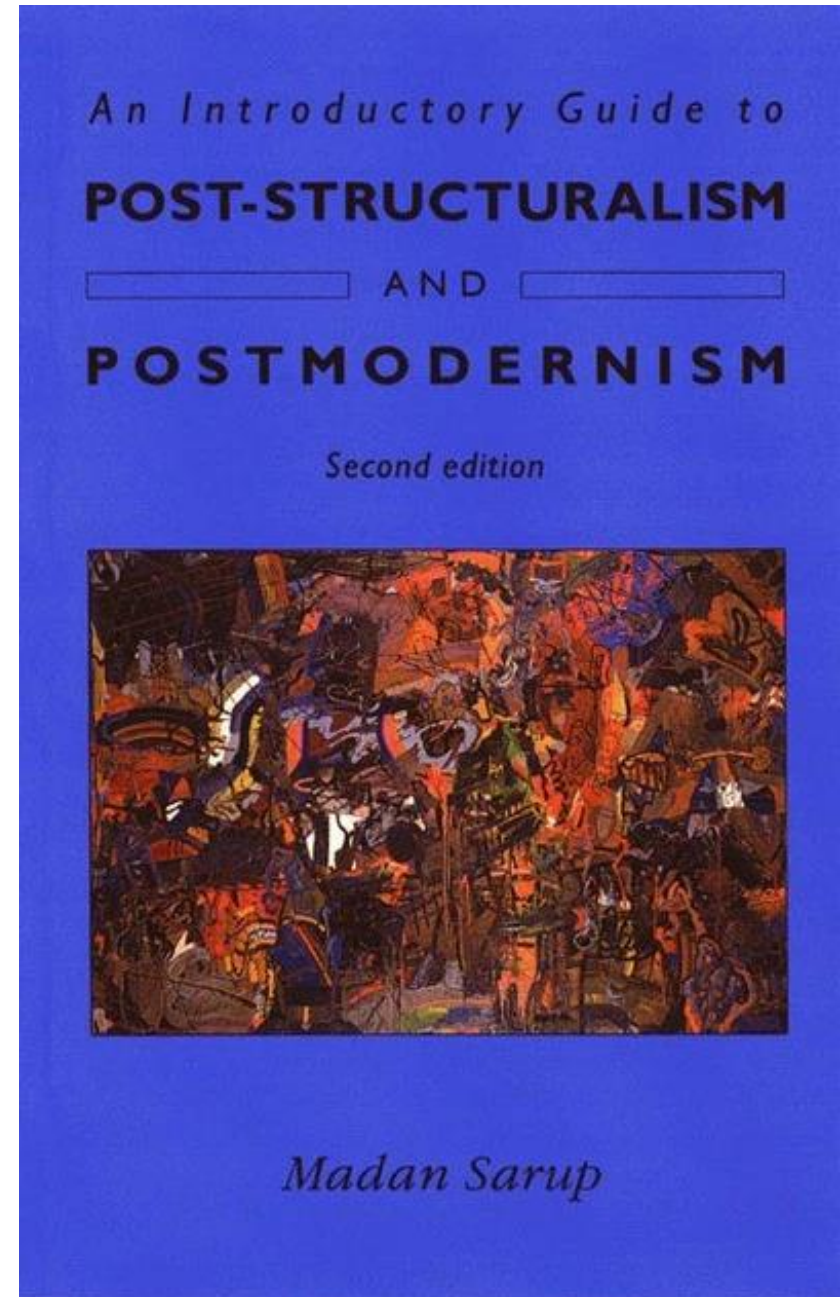
Lubaina Himid, British Pavilion

Bu Bu de la Madeleine, Central Pavilion

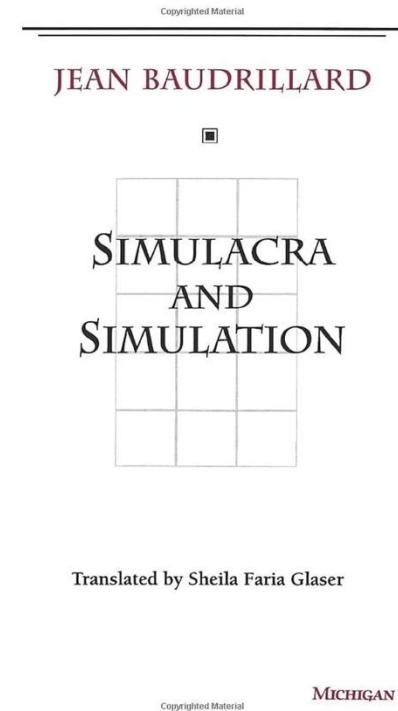
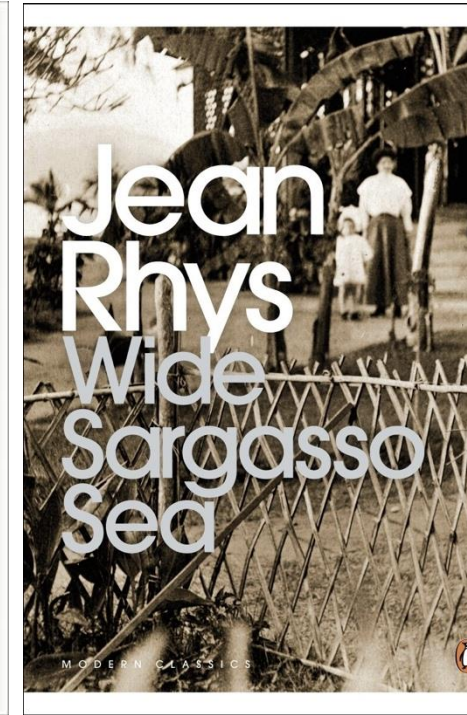
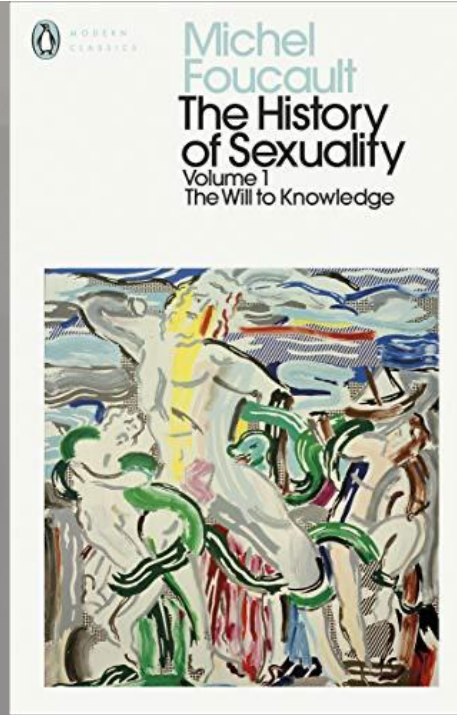
Annalee Davis, Welto and the Sacred Bush, Central Pavilion, <https://annaleedavis.com/>

There are so many similarities between post structuralist theories and postmodernist practices that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between them. Postmodernism is in part a description of a new type of society, but also, in part, a new term for Post - structuralism in the arts. (Sarup:133)

As a clear distinction Postmodernism is considered a way of life: art, architecture, and literature whereas poststructuralism is a way of thinking that **focuses on language**.



Poststructuralism is the name for a movement in philosophy that began in the 1960s. It remains an influence not only in philosophy, but also in a wider set of subjects, including literature, (Jeane Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*), politics, art, (**Joseph Kosuth's Glass Words Material Described:1965**) cultural criticisms, (Baudrillard, *Simulacra & Simulation*) history, and sociology (Foucault, *A History of Sexuality*).



Two powerful criticisms of poststructuralism are as follows:

- **first, that it is wilfully and irretrievably difficult;**
- **secondly, that it takes on positions that are marginal, inconsistent and impossible to maintain.** (Williams: 2005)
- **In this work, meaning, is constantly being 'deferred' (See Jaques Derrida for a wider critique)**
- **It does not have a single static stable identity but is always in flux**

Key Theorists include:

Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, Deleuze & Guattari, Michel Foucault, Monique Wittig, Luce Irigaray, Jean - Francois Lyotard, Bracha L Ettinger.

Key Themes:

Jacques Derrida – Deconstruction
Deleuze and Guattari – Rhizomatic/Assemblage
Roland Barthes – Death of the author
Judith Butler – Gender performativity
Donna Haraway – Cyborg Feminism
Jean-Francois Lyotard – analysis of the
Impact of Postmodernism

Key Texts:

Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology
Deleuze & Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus,
Roland Barthes – Death of the author
Judith Butler, Gender Trouble
Donna Haraway - The Cyborg Manifesto
Jean-Francois Lyotard: The Postmodern Condition

Some distinctions between structuralism and post structuralism.

Structuralist thought – **establishes and reinforces boundaries.**

These **binary** oppositions of metaphysics (branch of philosophy) include signifier/ signified.

See also Ferdinand de Saussure (Swiss linguistic, 1857- 1913: Course in General Linguistics speech/writing, speech(parole - the individual) language(langue- the collective), diachrony/synchrony, space/time, passivity/activity, male/female.

Poststructuralist thought – **open's up boundaries** for (re)interpretation.

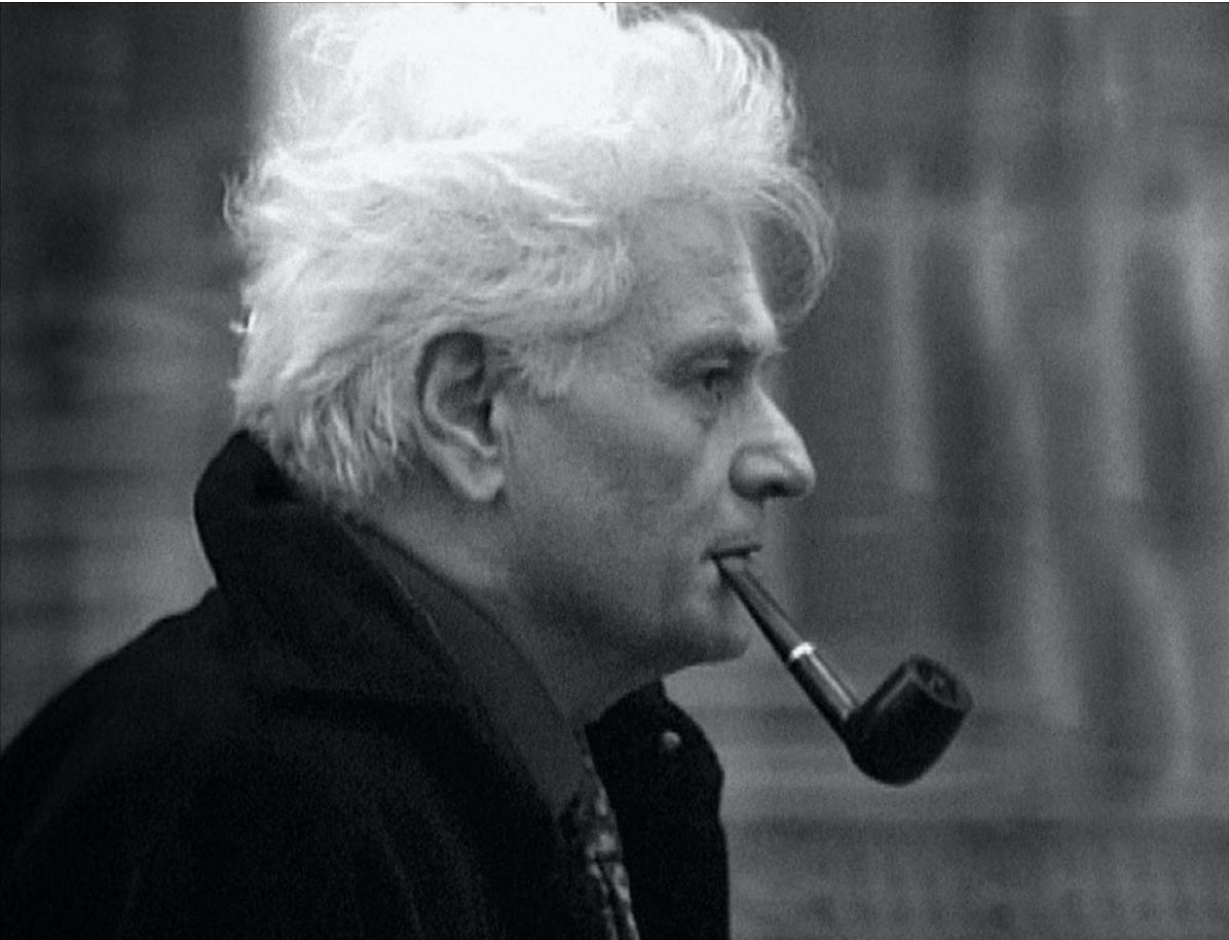
It embodies '**différance**' to draw from Derrida's terminology, Much like postmodernism, it is marked by **intertextuality, irony, pastiche, and genre blurring.** (Owens, 1990: 57, Barker, 2004: 157)

Post Structuralism works against the idea of grand narrative (which is deemed reductionist, simplistic and totalizing), in favour of '**petit récit**' or '**small narratives**' (Lyotard, 1984, p.60). However, Post structuralism/post modernism have been criticised in this sense, since in establishing a theory, might that not also be thought of as a totalizing or grand narrative?

The contrast between is **not one of outright opposition.** Post Structuralism develops the implications of Structuralist premises about meaning in order to develop a position, distinct but not entirely discarding of principals. (Intr. to continental Philosophy: 178)

Applications of Post –Structuralist ideas in literary criticism

Jacques Derrida (1930 - 2004)



Derrida criticise's the structuralists for not questioning binary oppositions. He suggests they have not been put '**under erasure**' (Sarep: 38) .This is the way language is used to shape reality and meaning.

signifier/signified (the written word and the mental idea)
sensible/intelligible
speech/writing
diachrony/synchrony (changing/ static)
space/time
passivity/activity
male/female.

Algerian born French Philosopher.(1930- 2004)

Derrida and Deconstruction

Derrida is famous for developing a procedure called **Deconstruction** and is mainly concerned with the role and function of language.

This involved reading a 'text' so closely that its criteria failed itself. It is Derrida's attempt to deconstruct the opposition between speech and writing which is important here. **Deconstruction is concerned with finding the hidden meaning.**

Philosophers before Derrida including Husserl, Rousseau, Saussure, Plato, Freud believed that **speech was more present than writing**, therefore more privileged, immediate, immanent, truthful, implying (immediacy of voice) or '**phonocentric**', **Writing remained "hopelessly mediated"** second hand, less present, an appendage.

speech/writing for these philosophers remains within a binary opposition - as
More or less (powerful)

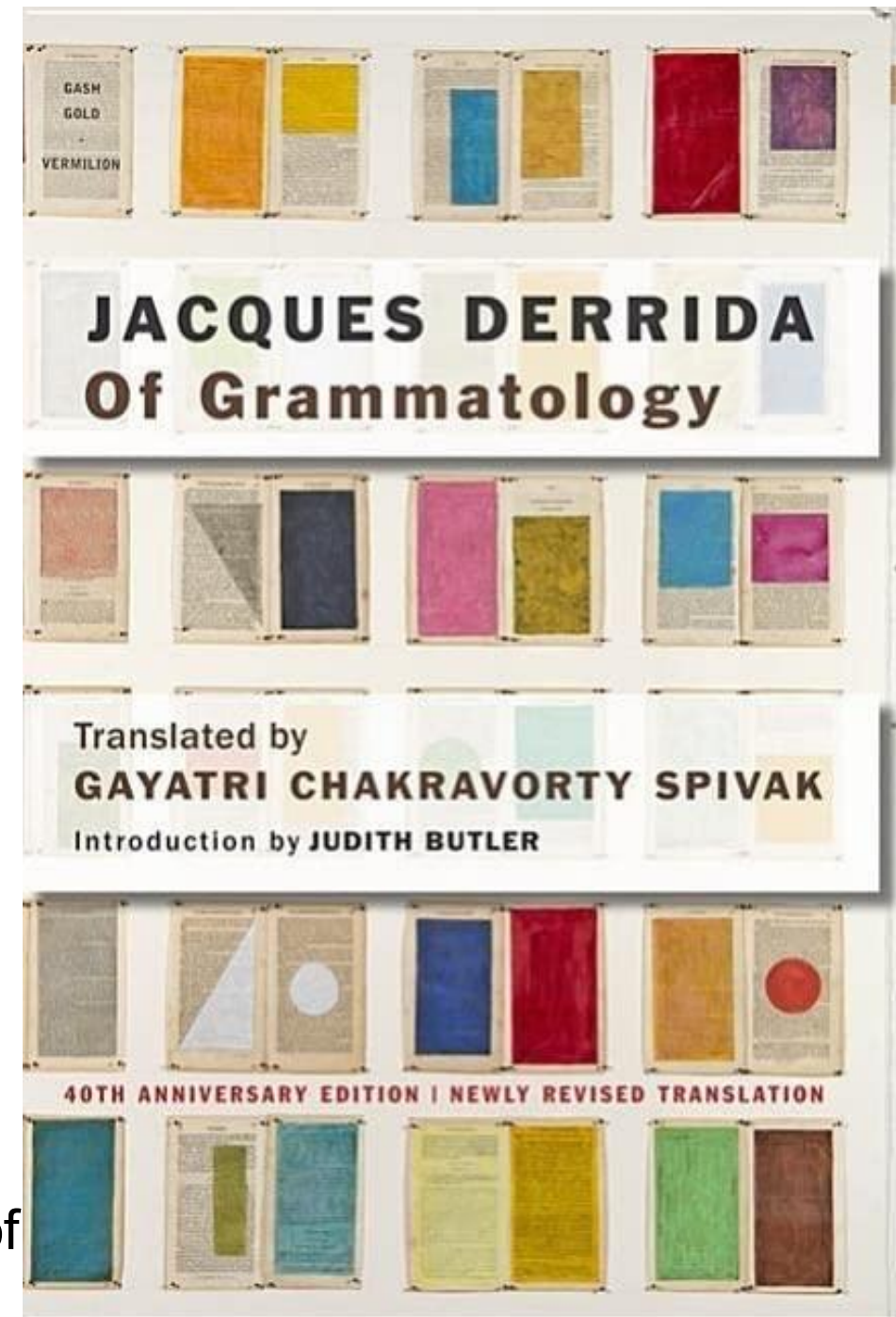
Deconstruction is a critique of/against these dominant power structures.

- It critiques the role of language and discourse in shaping reality and power relations.
- It rejects totalizing theories and the concept of grand narrative.
- It rejects essentialism and reductionism.
- It places an emphasis on **multiplicity** over singularity.

For example, this could be expressed through gender identity (see lecture on Feminism).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Translator, *Of Grammatology*: Is a post structuralist (deconstructive) feminist critic, and post colonial intellect of literary criticism.

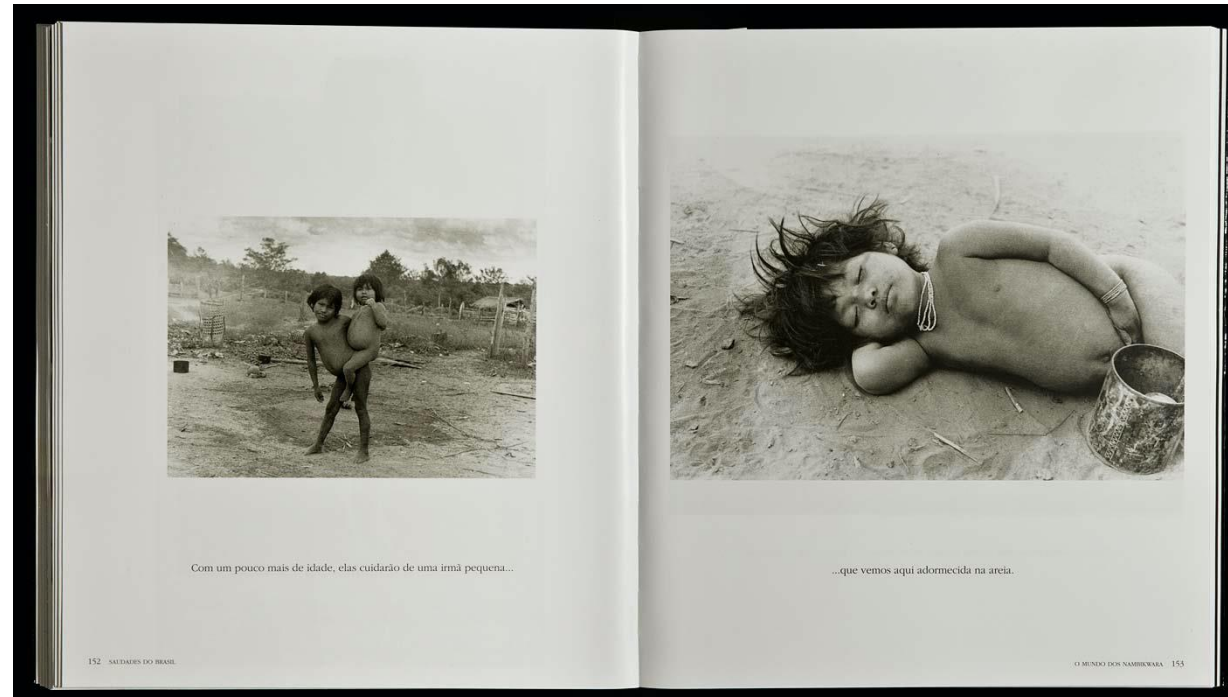
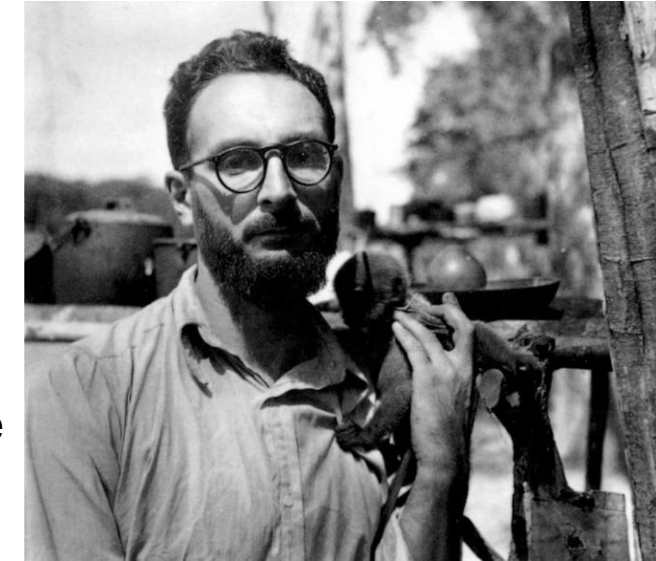
Judith Butler is a post - structuralist gender theorist (writer of Introduction, *Of Grammatology*:



Writing is the name of the structure always already inhabited by the trace. In other words, writing through deconstruction tactics reveals the text through its absence. This is referred to as a **metaphysics of presence.**



For example, Derrida suggests that when the anthropologist Claude Levi –Strauss (1908 - 2009) describes the life of the Nambikwara and their transition to civilization he takes upon himself the burden of guilt produced by this encounter between civilization and the “innocent” culture it ceaselessly exploits. In Derrida’s view there is no pure ‘authenticity’ as Levi Strauss imagines; the theme of lost innocence is a romantic illusion. (Sarup:40).



What most characterises deconstruction is its notion of textuality, a view of language as it exists not only in books but in speech, in history and in culture, especially the written language (Ellis 1989:84). For Derrida, there was 'nothing outside the text' (Derrida 1976:158)

Il n'y a pas de hors-texte (Derrida 1976:158) 'nothing outside the text' (context/ situation)

- Derrida's most famous quotation 'Il n'y a pas de hors-texte' is often misquoted as there is 'nothing outside the text'. A better translation would be **'there is no outside – text'**
- For Derrida, "text" doesn't refer solely to written documents but to any system of meaning—spoken words, visual signs, cultural codes, and even social structures—that shapes our understanding.
- reality and meaning are constructed through language and symbols; there is no "objective" reality that exists independently of these textual systems of meaning.... everything is part of a vast network of signs where meaning is always shifting, deferred, and open to interpretation.
- This refers to another aspect of a book (image/ footnote/ additional feature) which then provides a **supplement to provide clarity**. Contrary to this, Derrida says, this cannot fix the meaning, only provide further deferment from a single 'truth'. It is not a closed but open system (of signifiers).
- Once you see language as a constant movement of differences in which there is no stable resting point, you can no longer appeal to reality as a refuge independent of language.
- **Instability and ambiguity are inherent in language.**

Logocentrism

Logocentrism - a tradition which regards words and language as a fundamental expression of an external reality. (coined by Ludwig Klages in early 1900s)

Logocentrism is the pervasive tendency of Western thought to associate truth with the voice or “the word” (logos) which is conceived as the immediate expression of the self- presence of consciousness.

(Intr to continental Philosophy: 179)

I.e. In the name of the father
(a signifier that structure the symbolic order, and paternal authority)

Jacques Derrida Challenges this position.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0tnHr2dqTs>

Phonocentrism

Phonocentrism regards speech as a more transparent medium of thought or meaning than writing. The voice is closer to immediacy and self presence of consciousness. [...] in speech we are not aware of the gap between the word as sound and its meaning, between signifier and signified.

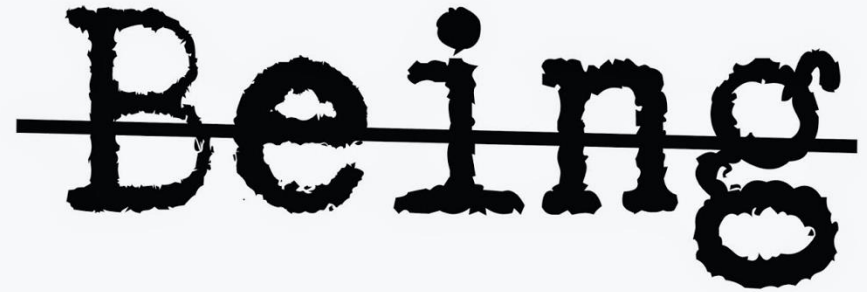
(Intr to continental Philosophy: 179)

Derrida Rejects this position too.

Note: Derrida's philosophical stance is also a feminist one

Saus rature and Différance

Though originally developed by philosopher Martin Heidegger, (1889 - 1976) Derrida went on to develop the concept of **sausage** or '**under erasure**' in his work. It is one of the most important concepts to grasp in his work.

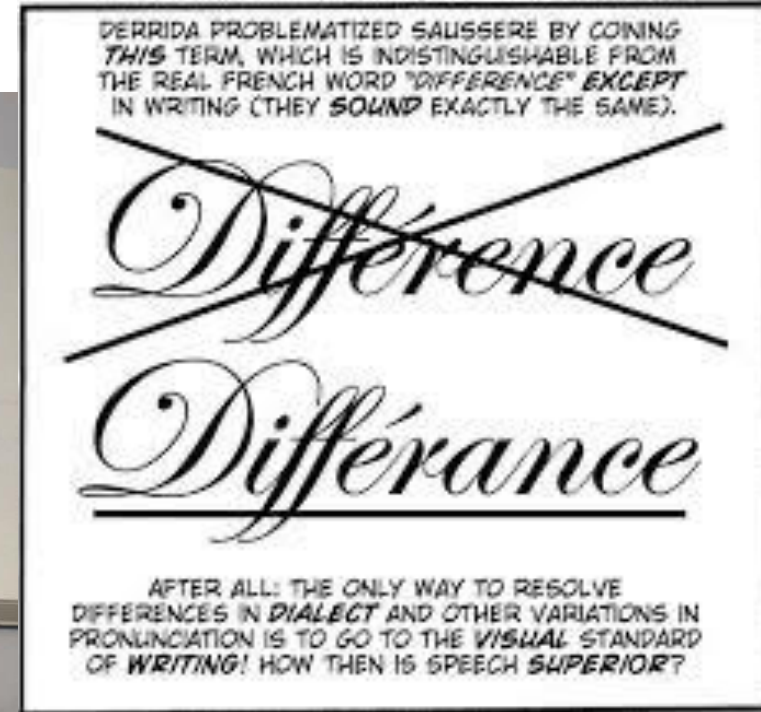
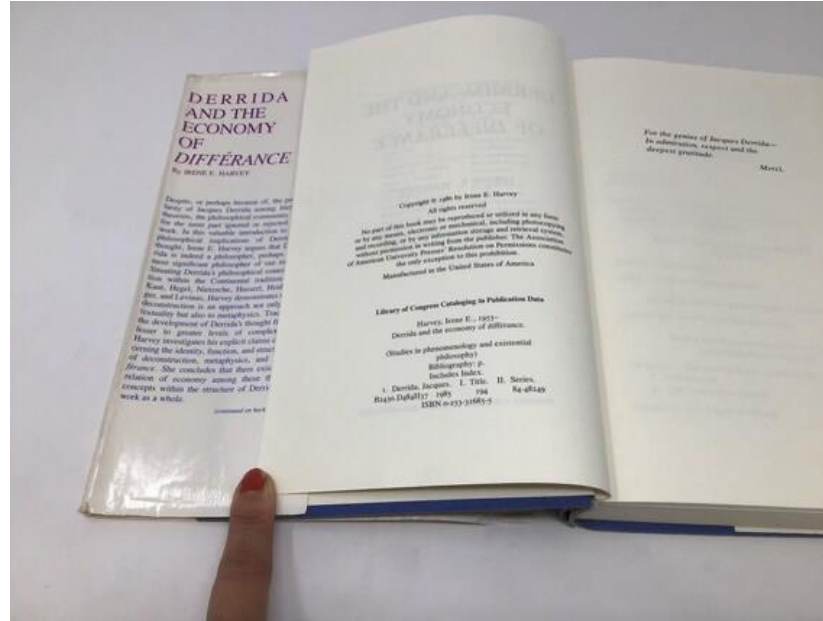
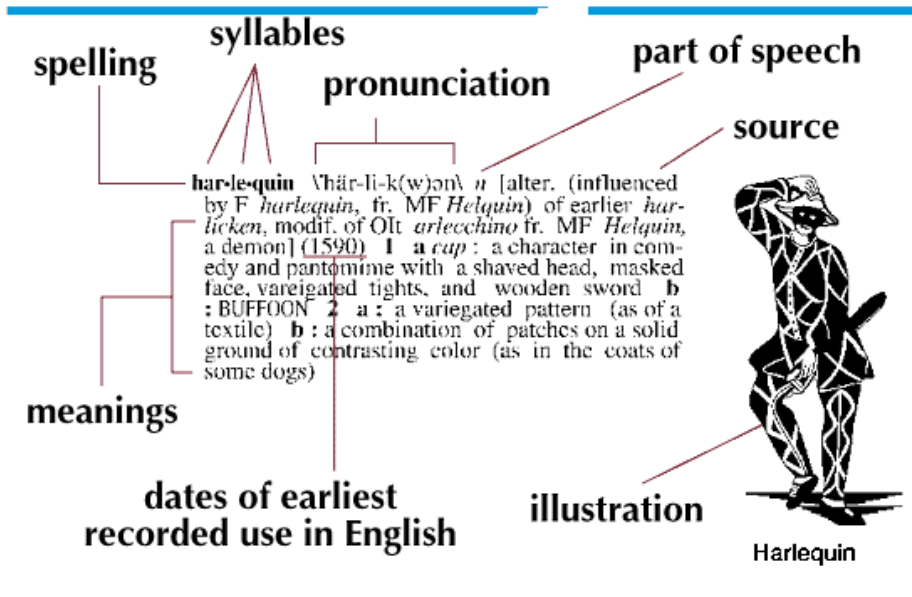


"Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it is left legible." Martin Heidegger, in a letter to Ernst Junger, 1956

Being - Becoming

Différance,

differing and deferring at once.



Jacques Derrida emphasizes the difference between the **signifier** and the **signified**, suggesting not only that the sound image (or the written word, the grapheme) is different from the concept, but that it *defers* the concept, bumps it from its place. For this uncoupling of grapheme and "original" concept Derrida coins the term **différance**, differing and deferring at once. The structures of discourse--genres, arguments, laws--serve to fix the perpetual slippage of the signified away from the signifier, arresting the "free play" of *différance*. Partly through identifying aporias (blind spots or contradictions) in texts, deconstruction aims to uncover this free play and to destabilize the authority and power to which many structured discourses lay claim. (Spivak:1993)

Signifier – Signified - Sign

Signifier - the physical form of the sign, ie the word or sound O-P-E-N

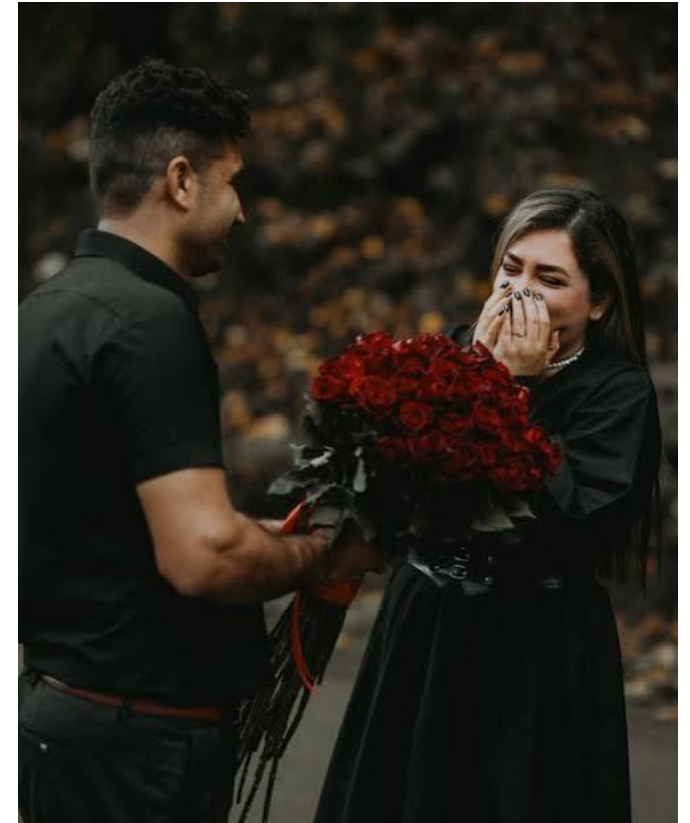
The signified – the concept or meaning, which becomes an invitation to OPEN, for example a shop door

Signifier

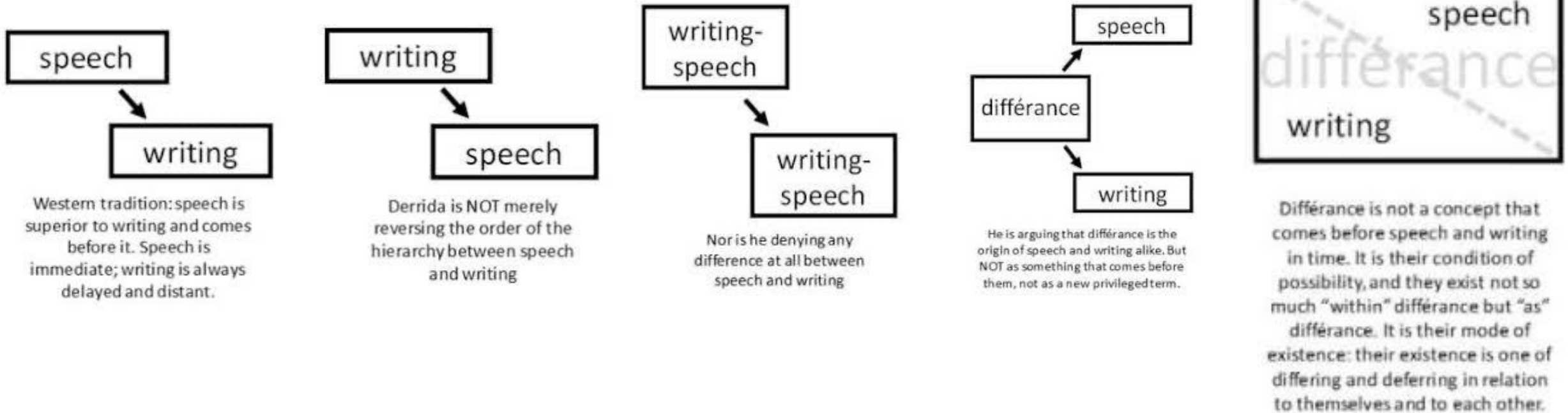


Signified – love/ romance/ Valentine's day

Sign – transmitting affection from one person to another



Différance



<https://christopherwatkin.com/2017/02/27/explaining-derrida-with-diagrams-1-difference/>

Différance, as a neologism (or new word) is a term which is subtly but significantly unlike **différence**, the normal French word for difference – written differently but pronounced identically in French, Derrida is able to disrupt the precedence for speech, its truth/ presence in this gesture.
(Introduction to Continental Philosophy: 179)

Derrida's Deconstruction tactics in the Arts.

Derrida's inquiry into the thinking of the material conditions of painting leads to questions concerning its concrete framing. These issues are especially critical when thinking of contemporary practices of painting and other art forms that seem to be becoming more conceptual and philosophical and less medium specific than before. **In Derrida's thinking, the existence of the ground assures the inimitable singularity of the painting and all its details.**

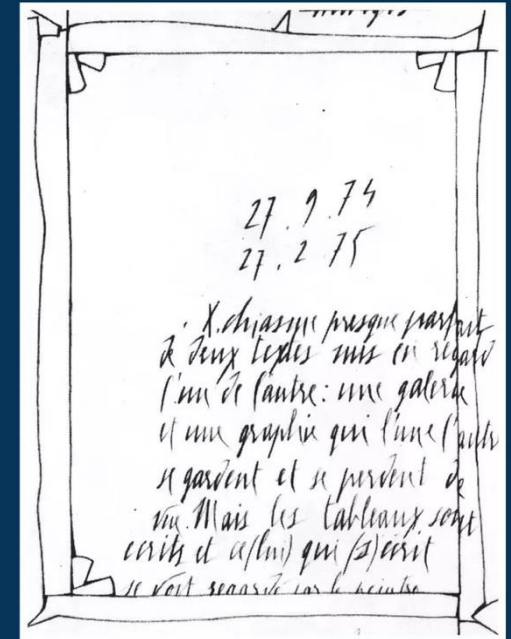
However, the question of the ground is now more complex than before, for the material conditions of painting require an examination of their material support: how to describe it, and does it have any present identity? Is there still a material basis of which the painting, or any kind of work of art, would be undetachable, in a way that would prevent it from being assimilated into language?

Nowadays, larger varieties of works are referred to as paintings than before. There may be no paint or color applied by the artist at all in them, for example in cases where the work is made of fabric or exists only in the form of digital algorithms. The support becomes the object of attention if the colored material has a shape other than a conventional flat, two-dimensional painting, like a sculptural figure or a work that is made of plastic and pieces of wood, metal, or ready-made objects.

<https://www.philosophy-world-democracy.org/book-excerpts/deconstruction-and-the-work-of-art>.

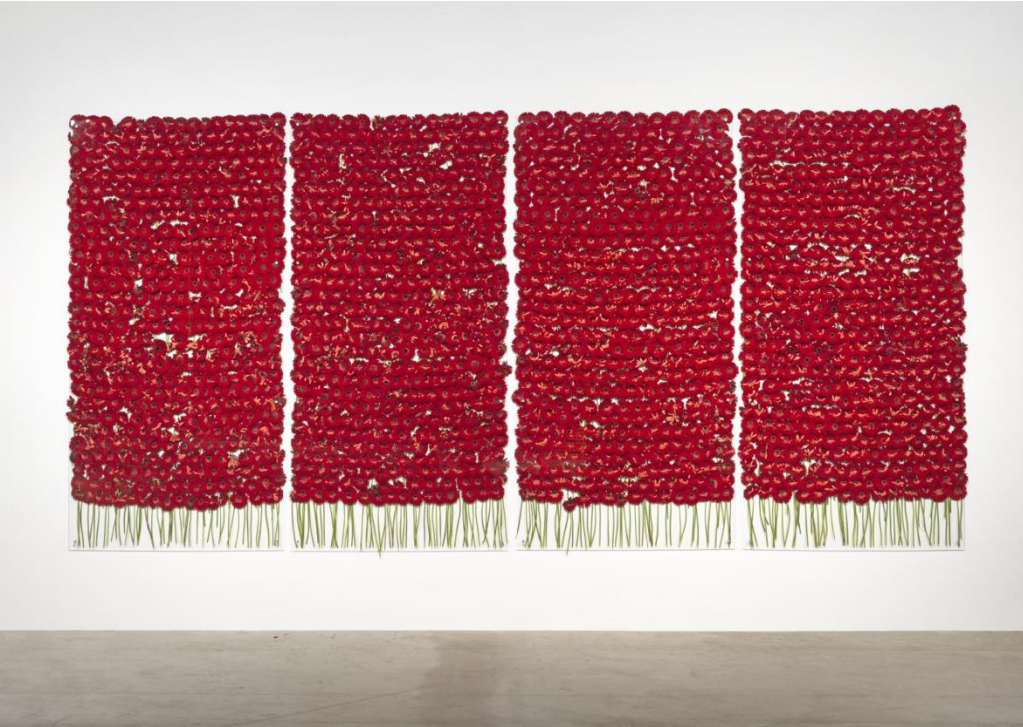
JACQUES DERRIDA

THE TRUTH IN PAINTING



Translated by
Geoff Bennington and
Ian McLeod

the post – medium condition



Even digital art requires servers, electricity, and hardware. The "cloud" is a physical place that limits and shapes the data.

Infrastructure rather than support
Temporary or transient
Eco - extractive

Texture, scale, scale-shifts, and pure colour possess a presence that can be experienced bodily but never fully translated into words.

Material Entropy - Materials decay, warp, fade, and react to their environments. This physical vulnerability is an event, not a semantic code. (See Anya Gallaccio, *Preserve Beauty*, 1991-2003).

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A comparison of Structuralism & Post Structuralism in the field of anthropology –

How characteristics within these two philosophical
movements materialise in case study example.

Claude Lévi-Strauss – Trinh T. Minh-ha

Claude Lévi-Strauss, (1908 - 2009).

Anthropological fieldwork

Heavily influenced the field of **structuralism**.

Influenced a generation of social scientists

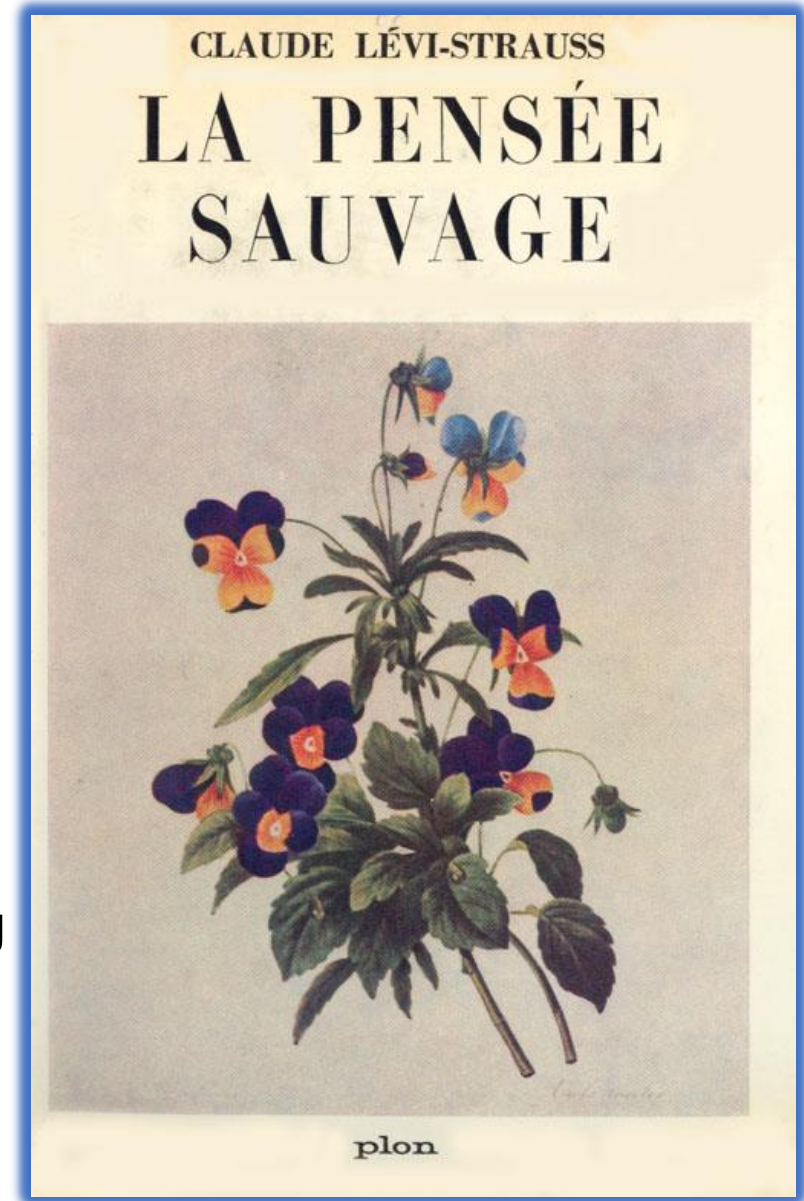
A white, French, male anthropologist, Levi – Strauss, **adopted the privileged position of observer.**

He produced work on **kinship as a universal structure** which encompass distinctive and irreducible rules of combination and transformation. The diversity of structures found in human societies and cultures can be shown to derive from a **single unifying structure.**

His field work included the study of the Nambikwara Indians.

He deemed writing an instrument of oppression, a means of **colonizing the primitive mind.**

In “The Savage Mind” he creates the distinction between the **bricoleur**, who is the “savage mind”, and the **engineer** who represents scientific thought.



The Savage Mind, 1962

Trinh T. Minh-ha, Vietnamese (1952) (anti)ethnographical fieldwork



A theorist, (of feminist and post - colonial influences), composer and feminist filmmaker.

Dedicated to **questioning totalising systems of knowledge, representations and categories of identity.**

Work is characterised by **interdisciplinarity, reflexivity and the inclusion of a multiplicity of voices.**

Work exists as '**boundary event(s)**'.

She **disrupted the male gaze**, producing filmic works **as part of**, rather than outside of lived experiences.

In this example, deconstruction as a post structuralist device has made anthropologists more aware of their role in shaping the situations they report on, and more concerned with the discipline's historical connections to colonialism.

Reassemblage, Trinh T. Minh-ha's Anti-Ethnography

A general tactic for grasping Trinh's cinema is supplied by the artist herself. The frequently quoted line from her first film, *Reassemblage* (1982), a study of women and rural life in Senegal, where she lived for three years while teaching at the National Conservatory of Music in Dakar, goes: **"I do not intend to speak about; just speak nearby"**. Trinh refers to her position as a visitor **vis-à-vis** the villagers she met and discloses her position **as an un - authoritative narrator**.

artreview.com/the-enduring-power-of-trinh-t-minh-ha-films/

If post structuralism is a critique of structuralism conducted from within, Trinh- T - minh-ha's work can be considered in relation to her anti-ethnographic approach.



The concept of Bricolage and its significance in structuralism and post structuralist practices



Bricolage

Irénée Scalbert on bricolage, Lévi-Strauss, Colin Rowe, Charles Jencks, Guiseppe Penone, Robinson Crusoe and other topics. *Architecture VIII*, Assistant Prof. Tom Emerson, 08.03.2011, HIL E4, 8-10am.



Phillida Barlow (left) Tom Sachs (right)

Structuralism and poststructuralism have been widely influential within cultural studies because both schools of thought focus on how meaning is made, and meaning-making is an essential function of culture. Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry concerned with the intersection of power and meaning in popular culture.(Barker: 2010) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781444337839.wbelctv3s010>

In cultural studies bricolage is used to mean the processes by which people acquire objects from across social divisions to create new cultural identities. Bricolage, has been identified in both a structural context in the work of Levi Strauss, between the bricoleur and the engineer who are positioned within a binary system.

In Thompson – Hardy's reframing of Bricolage, the concept can be used to activate a dynamic between research and researcher. This bears some similarity to Trinh. Minh- ha enabling subjects to come into contact, resisting the master/slave, major/minor distinction.

Exploring Concepts – Bricolage.

between structuralist and post structuralist approaches

Bricolage is the skill of using whatever is at hand and recombining them to create something new.

Levi - Strauss compares the working of the bricoleur to that of the engineer.

The bricoleur, who is the “savage mind”, works with his hands in devious ways, puts pre-existing things together in new ways, and makes do with whatever is at hand. What Levi-Strauss points out here is that signs already in existence are used for purposes that they were originally not meant for. (Doja; 2006)

<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/16575/1/16575.pdf>

As opposed to the bricoleur, the engineer, who is the “scientific mind”, is a true craftsman in that he deals with projects in entirety, taking into account the availability of materials, and creating new tools.

<https://literariness.org/2016/03/21/claude-levi-strauss-concept-of-bricolage>

In contrast, Thompson – Hardy uses ‘critical ethnography’ in a bricolage, to gain insight into films and documentaries that center on child beauty pageant culture. Rather than conducting traditional audience studies like John Fiske (1993), I want to investigate the culture and characters portrayed in these films and documentaries and to investigate the social dynamics that exist outside the films.

In contrast, Thompson – Hardy sees herself as a bricoleur, using this method to ‘balance my use of self without dominating others’ views in the research [...] so that a dialogue between research and researcher focuses **not on privileging a dominant narrative or view-point, but on breaking down the hierarchies that exist between research and researcher.** Chapter Three: Bricolage: Cultural Studies, Poststructural Feminism, and Poststructuralist Ethnography

Claude Lévi-Strauss

binaries

Speaking nearby

privileged position of observer

Feminist perspective

Re- assemblage

petit recit

Multi- perspectival

bricoleur

Deconstruction

universal structures

kinship

single unifying structure.

multiplicity

reflexivity

Positionality

Ethnography

Male gaze

Post Structuralism

structuralism

Colonising Gaze

Filmmaking

Boundary - event

Trinh T. Minh-ha

grand narrative

vis-à-vis

Speaking nearby

Anti- ethnography

Fieldwork

ESSAY QUESTION 2 - Deconstructing the Human

In what ways do contemporary artists and designers challenge and reconfigure dominant constructions of the human subject through lenses such as **post-structuralist feminist theory**, posthumanism, queer critique or psychoanalysis. How do such practices **trouble** the boundaries between self, other and machine?

Response

This essay will consider the anti-ethnographic field work of Vietnamese film maker Trinh T. Minh – Ha. It will demonstrate how this contemporary practitioner reconfigures dominant constructions of the human subject through post structuralist feminist theory. In order to do this, it will refer to the work of structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss so as to consider alternative approaches to thinking about the subject. Through an analysis of key pieces of (her) work (*Reassemblage*: 1982), it will elucidate upon Trinh T. Minh – Ha's concept of 'Speaking nearby.' this will elucidate upon her methodological approach, destabilizing the colonial gaze, through the concept of becoming.

The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes, literary theorist

Key Text: The Death of the Author (1967)



Whilst structuralism sees truth as being 'behind' or 'within' a text, post structuralism stresses the interaction of reader and text as a productivity. In other words, reading has lost its status as a passive consumption of a product to become performance.

This concept materialises in the work of French philosopher Roland **Bathes** (1915 -1980) so that "text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations,"

To expand,

For cultural criticism, literary theory, etc. this means: Authors don't have special authority over the meaning of their texts. There's no final Truth about what the texts mean, and we're just co-constructing (co-authoring!) the meaning when we read. In short, readers are co-authors.

<https://aestheticsforbirds.com/2020/04/16/afbs-terms-of-art-19-structuralism-poststructuralism/>

writer/reader
active/ passive

such binaries are therefore deconstructed

Deferral & the Author in Barthes & Derrida

Deferral

Meaning is not final and always in Flux,
Derrida demonstrates this through his text of grammataology)
Barthes demonstrates this through his text S/Z

The author

Barthes/Death of the Author

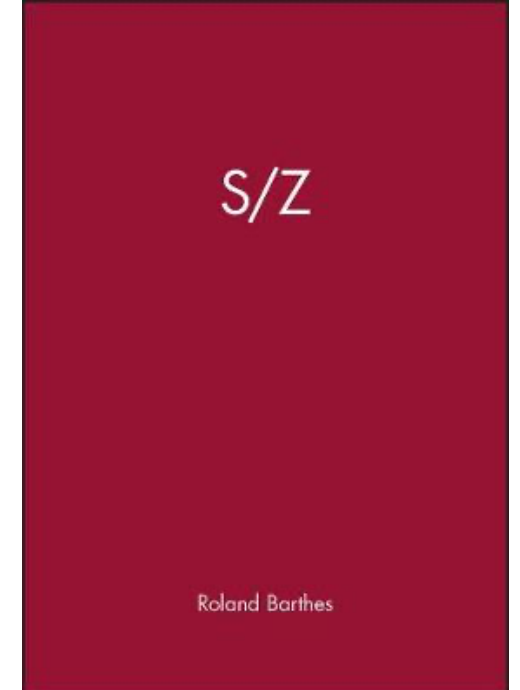
- the author's intentions and biography should not be considered when interpreting a text
- the meaning of a text is created by the reader in the act of interpretation.
- The text challenges traditional notions of authorship
- the meaning of a text is not fixed or determined by the author
- the author's presence in the text is only one of many possible meanings,
- and that it is the reader who ultimately creates the meaning of a text.

<https://studymind.co.uk/questions/what-is-the-death-of-the-author-and-why-has-it-been-so-influential-in-literarycriticism/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Death%20of%20the%20Author%E2%80%9D%20has%20been%20influential%20in%20literary>

Derrida/Logocentrism

- Derrida's logocentrism denies the author.
- It challenges the idea that the author has control over the meaning of their work.
- Challenges the privileging of speech over writing.
- https://scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2304-85572014000100010

Taken together, *The Pleasure of the Text* and *S/Z* force us to notice how much of the most interesting thought today is being carried forward in what we used to call 'literary criticism', and how important Barthes's own contribution to redefinition of the field has been (*The New York Times Book Review*)



Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) & Félix Guattari (1930-1992)



Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Skyros, Greece, ca. 1980. Photo: Karl Flinker.

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives, by François Dosse,



Gilles Deleuze

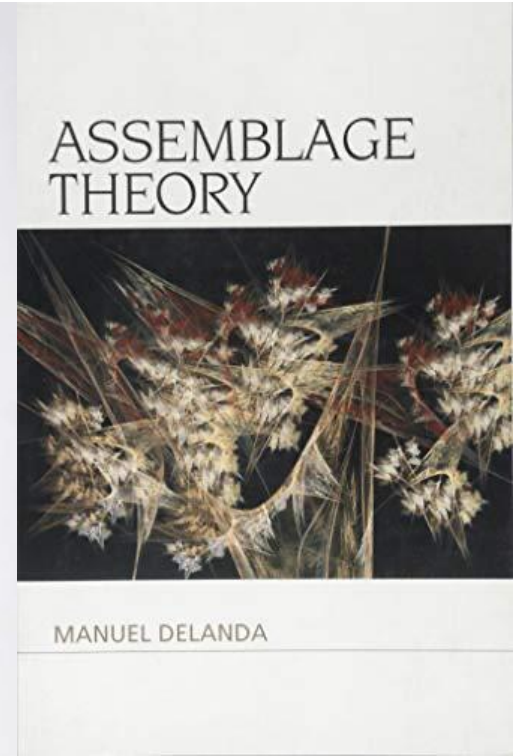
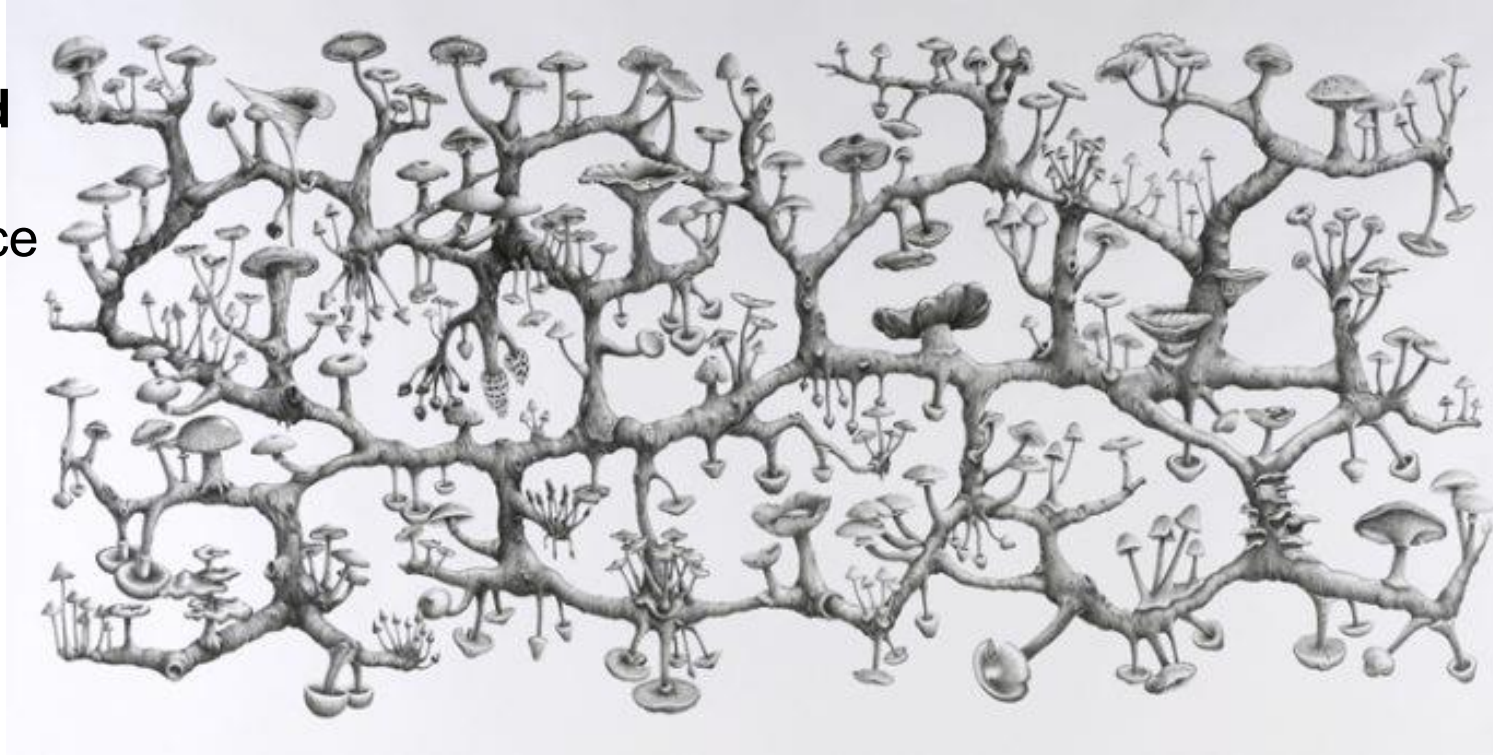
- **Grand philosophical narratives are rejected**
- All multiplicity, decentering, or dispersion is positive,
- all unity or homogeneity is suspect;
- all marginality is creative,
- all majorities and consensuses are oppressive;
- small-scale political action is to be commended,
- large-scale, state-centered projects are to be treated with thorough-going skepticism.

(Terry Eagleton: 2011)

<https://www.artforum.com/print/201104/francois-dosse-s-deleuze-guattari-27817>

Deleuze & Guattari Concepts.....

Rhizomatic
Smooth and Striated
Assemblage Theory
Repetition & Difference
Body Without Organs
The Fold
Becoming Animal
The War Machine
Concrete Rules and
Abstract machines



ASSEMBLAGE

The concept of assemblage, developed by Deleuze & Guattari, derives from the English translation of their concept in French of *agencement* (arrangement), or the processes of arranging, organising, and fitting together. **18** (Livesey: The Deleuze & Guattari dictionary)

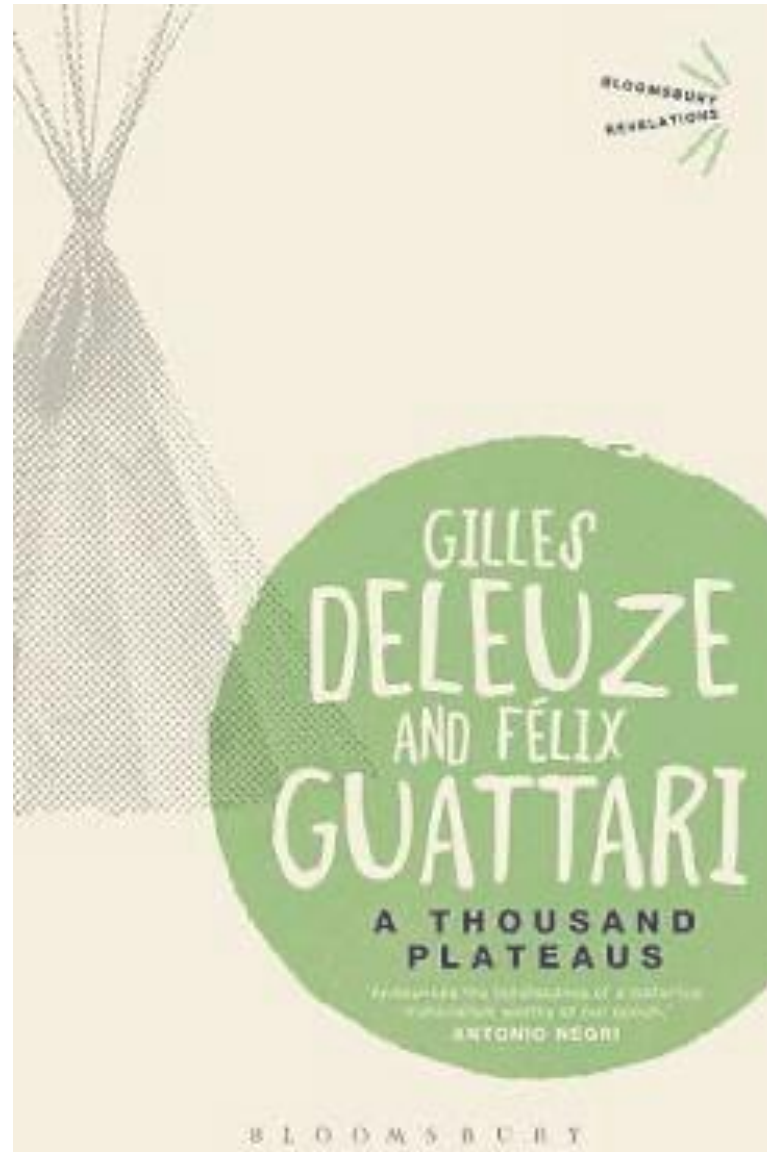
What is Smooth & Striated?

“Smooth and striated spaces are twofold binary concepts where the definition of one is so dynamic and intermingling. Smooth space is seen as continues, travels though times, infinite and unlimited in every direction” (Deleuze, 1987: 476).

“Striated space assigns breaks, closed at least on one side, limited and fixed. However, as these two terms are twofold binary concepts, smooth space is constantly reversed into a striated space and vice versa” (Deleuze, 1987).

Hence, two kinds of spaces, **Smooth** – sprawling, boundaryless, non - conforming, whilst **striated** conforming, structured, fixed, boundary. In Deleuze and Guattari’s proposition, the smooth and striated are always in - combination, interacting, intermingling.

Delueze & Guattari text,
A thousand plateaus
consists of a 'patchwork
of relations' among
concepts and plateaus,
**intentionally not
unified by a single line
of argument, authorial
voice or disciplinary
perspective** - an
intention made easier to
realize inasmuch as they
are co-authors, one a
philosopher (Delueze)
and the other a militant
anti psychiatrist and
political activist.
(Eugene Holland:11)



...the book's arguments (of which there are many) go off in all directions,
intervene in debates in all kinds of disciplines and are therefore **more like
patches added haphazardly to a patchwork quilt.** (Eugene Holland:15).

Weavething (<http://www.weavething.com/>) is Kate O'Brien + Heather MacKenzie.

In a state of transformation and becoming they enact a queer relationship with the loom, since the need to make cloth has been abandoned

Brought together by the centripetal force of craft community and a shared interest in the technical aesthetic possibilities of the loom, we are artists, minor mathematicians, educators and material philosophers. With a keen interest in the parameters of diverse weaving technologies, **we encounter the loom as a problem space where we work to expand what "textile" is.**

Although Deleuze & Guattari (1980/1987) famously describe weaving as a model of striated space, the TC2 opens woven form to more **undifferentiated and smooth spaces within the digital realm, transforming the way artists work with the loom.**



Post - structuralism differs from structuralism in being a philosophy of **Becoming** rather than of Being: it is endlessly dynamic, allowing us no escape or apparent respite from the shifting play of meanings. (Introduction to Continental Philosophy: 178)

Structural
Being
Fixed
Single



Post- Structural
Becoming
Fluid
Multiple

Thread Controller 2 (TC2)



Advertised as a “loom for creators,” this machine “reads” uncompressed black-and-white bitmaps as weaving drawdowns. This allows designers to access the loom through the graphic editor, Adobe Photoshop, or other software not specifically designed for weaving. “As weavers interested in pursuing textiles as a generative and boundless terrain, we experience a knee-jerk resistance to Deleuze & Guattari’s condemnation” of weaving as a model of striated space. (1980/1987) since the TC2 allows for more undifferentiated, smooth spaces within the digital realm.

In their collaborative philosophical tirade-turned-playscape, *One Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1987), Deleuze & Guattari famously describe woven fabric as the technological model of “striated space” (p. 552). Archetype of State control and the sterile productions of assimilationists and colonisers, striated space is not the kindly reading of woven form that contemporary fibre artists might relish. But, for Deleuze & Guattari, weaving is a decidedly statutory form. It is confined to the rigid perpendicular relations of warp and weft. The loom sets limitations on outward growth. The hierarchical relations of (a tapestry’s) smooth front and knotted back side. Citing Plato’s dictatorial leanings in *The Statesman*, which describes masterful governance through its parallels weaverly skill, Deleuze & Guattari denounce weaving to nothing more than a mode of autocracy. As the paradigmatic form of Plato’s “Royal Science”, weaving is essentially where creativity goes to die.



<https://cargocollective.com/katecobrien>

ESSAY QUESTION 2 - Deconstructing the Human

In what ways do contemporary artists and designers challenge and reconfigure dominant constructions of the human subject through lenses such as **post - structuralist feminist theory**, posthumanism, queer critique or psychoanalysis.

How do such practices **trouble** the boundaries between self, other and machine?

Response

The essay could consider **post - structuralist** theory through the lens of post structuralist thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. It will focus on their concept of 'smooth and straited' so as to consider the collaborative practice of Kate O'Brien and Heather MacKenzie (Weavething) alongside the work of.....(insert)

Here, artists Kate o/Brien and Heather MacKenzie explore textiles 'state of becoming' whilst comparatively considering their own state of becoming as a critique on queer identities. How do they queer their creative apparatus?

How do the materials - structures challenge dominant systems of thought.

Heather MacKenzie

A weaver “with deeply entangled mathematical, technical, and philosophical tendencies. I love to overcomplicate the things that I am working on, and am learning to be a better editor over time. Teaching and learning are also really important aspects of what I do and why I love working with looms – which I see as a multiplicity of tools with ever-expanding possibilities of artistic production.

I’m process and alchemy obsessed in ways beyond the textile world too – my favorite job was working as a distiller and observing the state shifts involved in making a good whisky. I love biking and part of this love is definitely in knowing how to take my bike apart and put it back together again”.

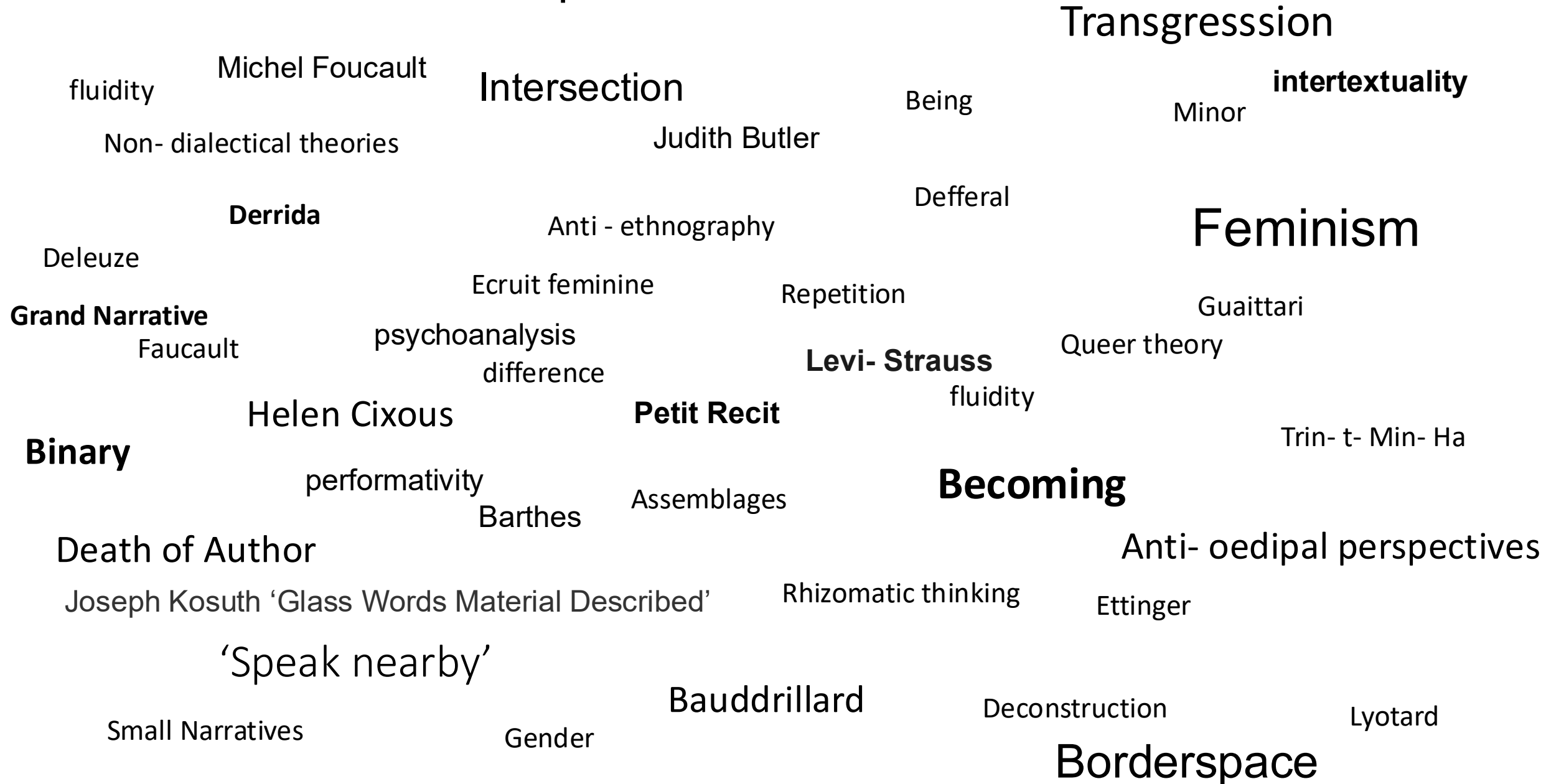
<https://lv3official.com/heather-mackenzie/>



The Expanded Field (1979 -)

Krauss (1941-) American art critic, art theorist and a professor at Columbia University in New York City, known for her scholarship in 20th-century painting, sculpture and photography. She used *October* as a way of publishing essays on **post-structuralist** art theory, and is renowned for her observations of the ‘expanded field’

Post – Structuralist concepts and theorists



Deconstructing binaries

When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one. (Butler, J., 1990, Gender Trouble, Routledge)



As part of a **post structural discourse**, this enables her to examine how binary definitions have been organized and ingrained within culture.

She explores the idea of the '**minor**', including her own position as a white, female, lesbian, American. She addresses this notion of 'woman' in **Gender Trouble**. How do/can you define/ 'woman'.

Gender performativity is a concept that Butler developed in the 1990's. It is considered revolutionary, radical and also controversial as a deconstruction of gender.

From a **Deconstructionist** perspective, the existence of non-binary people and bisexuality can argue that the sexuality binary is unstable.

END