CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION : FRAMING THE TEXTS

This project analyses the text and performance of experimental poetry in order to consider the meaning potential and subversive possibilities of the genre. The analytical model posited provides principles that can be applied to other work of this nature. This project considers the nature of experimental poetry as a multimodal and multimedial genre that draws on multiple sonic and textual devices. My aim is to provide a way of reading these texts and the texts in performance to demonstrate that, what at first appears to be nonsense, might actually provide a new way of rewriting and rethinking the dominant positions of society and culture. Therefore, while providing a method of analysis, I wish to suggest experimental poetry provides a real place for subversion of power in its use of language and sound.

The works by Australian poets to be analysed in this study are *On Second Thoughts* by Chris Mann, *≠* by Amanda Stewart, *soft* by Ania Walwicz and *Poet Without Language* by Hazel Smith. They were chosen for their diverse textual and sonic

techniques and subversive potential, as well as my personal enjoyment of each. These works have been placed under the rather broad category of 'experimental poetry', although each has its own style. Mann who is influenced by the avant-garde and linguistics calls his work Compositional Linguistics; Stewart describes herself as a poet influenced by electro-acoustic art; Ania Walwicz calls herself a poet influenced by the avant-garde and Smith calls her work Feminist Performance Linguistics. In the early chapters I discuss some of the debates about experimental poetry that have emerged in response to the breadth of semiotic resources, both sound and word, used by poets of the genre. I also discuss the subversive nature of the work using Raymond Williams' notion of the emergent (Williams, 1977: 110). My preference for a political approach to subversion is driven by a belief that these texts can subvert and undermine the dominant positions from within meaning where their challenge is mounted through language and sound. I then discuss predecessors in the field that have influenced experimental poetry in Australia. The particular method of analysis used here to analyse experimental poetry focusses on a functional approach to text and performance, engaging with the way these poets write against dominant discourses by rewriting intertextual resources with subversive grammar and sound. The relevance of functional analytical models of Systemic Functional Grammar and Multimodal Discourse theory is discussed. The second section of the project consists of application of these theories to the texts and performances. Here the experimental nature of composition operating at the interface of sound and semantics and the contribution of experimental poetry to rewriting dominant discourses is illuminated.

As the texts are informed by theory, they provide a challenge for analysis as a perspective is sought that both engages with the text while allowing a theoretical position removed from the structure and theories informing it. The aim was to seek out the philosophical position of the text and consider its relevance, while remaining distant from it and recognising the reflexive nature of the texts and the performance. My aim in this chapter is to introduce the works and the manner in which I formulated a method of enquiry.

Chris Mann is Australia's most acclaimed international performance artist, having worked in Europe and The United States since the 1960s. He has worked with and been

influenced by experimental sound artists and musicians such as Herbert Brun, Warren Burt, John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen and David Antin. Mann's work varies from the dense and lyric pieces of the mid 1960s, influenced by folk music and literature, to the obscurity of the late 1960s, to the more relaxed style of the 1970s and complex works of the 1980s and 1990s. The work *On Second Thoughts* (1994) falls among these later works which are marked by greater concern with grammar and speech. *Chris Mann and Grammar* (1990) and *The Essential Mann* (1993) are fine collections of Mann's work. He expresses the textures and gestures of Australian speech and the aural qualities of rhythm, colour, pitch, intonation and stress. Mann's belief that Australian English relies on timing for its effect is evident in his performances that resemble the humour of a stand-up comic. *On Second Thoughts* is performed in collaboration with *Machine For Making Sense*, a group dedicated to experimenting with improvised sounds and speech.

Amanda Stewart is also a popular experimental sound artist performing in Australia, Europe and The United States. Her early work sits firmly in the conventional poetic tradition. Later works such as ≠ (1993) explore new sound environments and vocal possibilities. A culmination of her evolving style is evident in her CD/book compilation *I/T: Selected Poems* (2001). Here the later works are characterised by extended vocals and experimenting with the relationship between sound and semantics. Stewart has been influenced by feminist politics and her search for a place of expression for the Other. She is a member of *Machine for Making Sense* and *Allos*.

Ania Walwicz is an avant-garde poet influenced by a diverse number of styles. These include the freeing of narrative and poetic forms of the Cubists, the automatic writing of the Surrealists, the release of unconscious imagery in Kafka and Ernst, and the notion of language as sound in the works of John Cage. Walwicz's main works include *Boat* from which *soft* (1989) is drawn and *Red Roses* (1992). She also has work published in numerous anthologies. Her work is marked by the marginalised female experience. She began writing from an autobiographical perspective in diaries, then moved into poetry and followed this with painting, always exploring the fragmented self and giving voice to repressed desires.

Hazel Smith has extensive experience in composing, performing and critiquing in the field of experimental performance or feminist performance linguistics. She has

published in numerous international poetry journals, as well as books and CDs. Works such as *Poet Without Language* (1991) explore the relationship between sound and word. Smith's concern with creating new listening experiences by combining voice and technology has dominated her work. She has been interested in and influenced by the work of Frank O'Hara, David Antin, Gertrude Stein, the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets and John Cage. Most of her inspiration comes from the possibilities of technology and collaboration with other artists such as Roger Dean, combined with her background as a musician.

Formulating a method of enquiry

My initial approach to the texts was through critical theory but this merely provided me with a means of discussing the genre and identifying that the works were multi-vocal, rather than revealing the possibilities for meaning. The exploration of the new forms characteristic of these works meant a grammar was required to unravel the complex linguistic systems operating within the texts. I use the model of Systemic Functional Grammar devised by Michael Halliday (Halliday, 1978: 12ff) and in particular its appropriation by feminist socio-linguistic theorist Terry Threadgold (Threadgold, 1999: 100ff) to analyse the texts. As an approach, Systemic Functional Grammar reveals a dialogue of enunciative positions in the experimental texts under study which are marked by intertextual references that critique philosophical and social practices and beliefs. Systemic Functional Grammar, as a probabilistic theory of language as choice is most useful for mapping the patterns that have meaning potential contained in the text.

A linguistic theory such as Systemic Functional Grammar is most efficacious in analysing experimental texts that have hitherto been discussed according to impressions based on expected outcomes of the genre and on the gender of the poet, rather than through specific close analysis. This loose kind of approach has led to many commentaries on experimental poetry being repetitive, and while claiming that a poet has produced something new and exciting, the critic merely reiterates the insights of approaches such as feminism and post-modernism as a way of discussing the manner in which experimental poets disrupt our traditional sense of form (see Wallace, 1995: 145;

Fitzgerald, 1987: 7-8). This study aims to go much further than reiteration of theoretical frames to actually demonstrate the value of experimental poetry as an alternative voice to the dominant forms of meaning making. To do so it must begin with close reading of the language.

Application of Systemic Functional Grammar realises beyond the rather unsatisfactory idea that no meaning can be gained from such challenging works. These works actually produce meaning, and meaning that is shared among those who engage with it. Without a linguistic theory to expose possible semantic groupings in the text, one is left with speculation and re-statement of critical theory. For example, the application of feminist theory to texts that discuss feminist theory forms an inescapable reflexive loop and does not reveal the arguments within the texts in any real detail. Through close analysis of the language, I was able to tease out possible meanings within the semiotic web of the texts to reveal comments about social theory.

The method of enquiry used creates a process of analysis which both seeks out meaning potential in the works and reveals the subversive nature of experimental poetry while also promoting the methodology of Systemic Functional Grammar and its ability to seek out those meanings in the text. Application of Systemic Functional Grammar is established as a methodology capable of realising the mark of the poet, revealing the importance of such a methodology and its contribution to knowledge. Systemic Functional Grammar and the poets both have the same purpose in showing how meaning can be made differently; the poet by subverting dominant discourses through text and sound and the functional linguist by interpreting this subversion. Systemic Functional Grammar also enables some distance from a text-imminent analysis by standing outside the text. It enables the exploration of intertextual resources within the texts. Borrowed elements, direct quotation and references to theory also generate the text's meaning and here the analysis steps out of the text to reveal its relations within the social semiotic. By using this method, naturally the analyst retains some exclusive privileges of interpretation. Therefore the analysis proceeds with awareness of the text's status as a system and of its relation to a larger semiotic system. The concern is with the relationship between the various levels of meaning; with the multiplicity which the text, as a system, enjoys.

The decision to separate the text or performance score from the oral event and analyse its semantic potential was driven by an interest in the aims of the poets and the challenge of the linguistic puzzles created by them. Considering the text separately, as one main element of the whole, produces interesting results. It allows one to see how choices were made and patterns formed in the text. It is also necessary for contrast as the text becomes transformed in performance and the sonic elements illuminated. This demonstrates a different semantic potential with the same text and highlights the semiotics of sound. The written text is just as much experimental poetry as it is in the transformed performed state. It could be argued that all poetry must be performed or read or spoken aloud to be fully realised but that should not stop our interpretation of the word on the page. I suggest that the differences resulting from performance become all the more interesting. The poetic work is not necessarily 'incomplete' without the performance. It is a different entity. The text is poetry in the modern sense, read in the mind's ear from the page; the performance is an oral form. The result of analysing both text and then text in performance reveals the subversive possibilities of text and sound by discovering the multifunctionality of the components of each system.

Favouring text as an element to discuss in detail might seem to reveal my own prejudices in seeing more significance in the text. By separating the text for study I seem to be privileging its status. Indeed, in the performance analyses I discuss the way text and sound are partners in creating meaning potential. Despite the ability of sound to signify (and the specific way in which this is achieved is discussed in the performance chapters of this study), it was my experience that the text became an intriguing aspect of the performance that engaged listeners. On surveying the listeners, their overwhelming interest in attempting to make meaning from the text made it an important element to discuss (see results of Appendix 1). Their general sense of inadequacy in this role also drew me to the challenge of deciphering the way complex texts make meaning. Because of the complexity and richness of the texts and the manner in which they came to reflect on their own form and position as subversive voices, I chose to analyse the text and then the text within the performance, in that order.

Even though the performance depends on attention to sonic elements, the listeners of all live performances were keen to see the text so they could read through words and

absorb them. Mann, who provided the score, did not disappoint them but other poets did not oblige. Stewart is approaching this idea. With her CD collection (Stewart, 1999) she included a book of the performance scores. Smith has always encouraged analysis of her texts, as has Walwicz. So while the text may be realised in performance, its analysis illuminates many details important for understanding the works as a whole. A final reason for analysing the text apart from the performance is that these artists publish such texts in anthologies where they are going to be read from the page. If this study is going to contribute to poetry analysis then the tools for such analyses must be considered.

My approach to the performances and their sonic elements has been driven by training in musicological research which uses a descriptive formalistic approach to sound, determining semiotic potential according to the relationships between sonic elements. It is a structuralist method used by musicologists to separate the elements of a work in order to analyse and then see how these elements are repeated throughout. Sonic analysis is very much about structure, as much of our satisfaction in listening is based on repetition. The structural approach taken by musicology is another unavoidable aspect of listening. By itself I found the formalistic method to be unsatisfactory for such experimental poetry performances where there is an obvious need to consider how such works refer outside these structural relationships. Threadgold's account of Systemic Functional Grammar needed to be enhanced by the insights of Kress and Van Leeuwen. I therefore adopted the Systemic Functional Grammar appropriated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 46) for multimodal discourses which enables consideration of both the internal relationships and how these semiotic resources refer to the outside world. This enables an understanding of how such performances can rewrite the dominant discourses through both text and sound and how performance can create a new place for meaning potential.

I will now outline the main arguments of each chapter.

Chapter 2 Subversive Voices

In this chapter I consider the nature of experimental poetry and the complication caused by its multimodal and multimedial constitution. I explain where I position myself in the debates surrounding the genre and consider the use of terms such as sound, poetry, performance poetry and why I settled on the descriptor 'experimental poetry'. I outline my position on the subversive nature of such works by using Raymond Williams' notion of the emergent. Williams' optimistic notion of subversion as an emergent where groups express outside or against the dominant discourse is most appropriate for conceptualising the contribution of experimental poetry to contemporary art and discourse. I then explain how subversive voices have evolved over the last one hundred years. The language and sound techniques developed by Futurists, Dadaists, Ultralettristes, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets and others have influenced the Australian community of poets and composers working in the field. Such development of expressive forms has assisted in the rewriting and renewing of experience, challenging established modes of meaning.

Suitable methods to realise the meaning potential of such works have not developed. I outline what I believe are weaknesses in a variety of critiques of the poets under study and the value of this study which uses functional models to consider text and sound.

Chapter 3 Formulating a Theoretical position

In this chapter I outline my theoretical position which uses the functional models of Systemic Functional Grammar formulated by M. A. K Halliday (Halliday, 1978: 1985) and developed by Terry Threadgold (Threadgold, 1999). I begin with a discussion of Julia Kristeva's theory of 'the semiotic' as it has been commonly used to conceptualise such works as a place of subversion. I outline why I believe this to be an unsatisfactory model, including its foundation that subversion occurs by escaping language and its lack of linguistic tools which are necessary to realise the potential rewritings of dominant discourses occurring in experimental poetry. A more effective analytic approach to the

subversive use of language is found in Systemic Functional Grammar which enables close analysis of language as a system of choice where grammar forms a theory of human experience and celebrates this evolutionary process. I explain the way Systemic Functional Grammar has been used by Halliday to analyse William Golding's experimental text *The Inheritors* (Halliday, 1971: 330-365) and by Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1988: 216-43; Kress, 1985: 225; Van Leeuwen, 1987: 2001) to analyse visuals, sound and performance. Systemic Functional Grammar seeks out the motivation of speakers by considering their grammatical choices and analyses using such a model can show the existence of generic features of texts. This preliminary discussion of Systemic Functional Grammar leads me to the particular use of the model by Terry Threadgold and its importance to this study.

Threadgold refashions Systemic Functional Grammar demonstrating how its notion of register can be used to realise new meanings in texts. I adopt Threadgold's method of applying Systemic Functional Grammar to realise the intertextual sources in texts and how they can be traced using Halliday's semiotic construct of register which engages three functions of language: the ideational/experiential, interpersonal and textual functions. Halliday's notion of register has become understood as dialogism as developments by Threadgold and others have worked on the interpersonal functions and their potential to realise the position of enunciation of the speaker. Threadgold favours the interpersonal and textual levels as places where the position of enunciation of the author can be realised. This position can be mapped in experimental texts that use complex grammars to express a subversive position. Halliday conceived of intertextuality as both the cohesive patterns of the grammar in a text and as reference back and forth in the co-texts from a point in the text, the mapping of the connections within a text and the presumed knowledge of other texts, genres and language systems. Thus the use of Systemic Functional Grammar enables discovery of where the words have been before in a Bakhtinian (Bakhtin, 1988: 428) dialogic sense and the dialogic exchanges between texts and readers and writers which constitute new realities. Threadgold demonstrates the way dialogism of intertextuality can be mapped in Thomas Keneally's *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* to show the author was influenced by intertextual resources embedded with racism (Threadgold, 1999: 182). I discuss how I engage Systemic Functional

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Grammar to map the way intertextual sources are rewritten by these experimental poets to write against dominant discourses. I consider experimental poetry as a process, poiesis or genre that consantly refashions intertexual resources. In the text analyses of chapters 5, 7, 9 and 11, I show how the grammar functions in the particular works chosen to create new subject positions where the hegemonic structures of ruling class, gender and ethnic constructs might be rewritten.

Chapter 4 Performance: A Complete Process

In this chapter I explain my approach to the performances of these works and the ways in which Multimodal Discourse theory developed by Theo Van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress (2001), offers a method for realising the meaning potential of experimental poetry in performance. Multimodal Discourse theory uses a functional model to realise possible functions of visual, textual and sonic semiotic resources for both their internal structural relations and external reference. Realisation of these functions is aided by close attention to prosody and indexicality.

I begin this chapter by explaining the advantages of Multimodal theory over formalistic and hermeneutic approaches. I then discuss the role of the performer, performance and listening audience in turn. I include discussion of traditional musicological analysis and the methods of Tarasti (1978) and Nattiez (1976, 1990), pointing to their limitations when analysing experimental sound and its ability to refer beyond the internal structure of the work. I also consider the limitations of 'new musicology' that relies too heavily on hermeneutics at the expense of the valuable structural features of the work. The problem with both of these approaches, I propose, is resolved in a functional model such as Multimodal Theory which takes account of both the internal structure and how this relates to an outside context. I consider first my method of approaching the performances as live and recorded events. I discuss the manner in which I informally surveyed audiences in order to find a method that would address their interests and discover the way people listen. The shared experiences of most listeners justified my decision to proceed in the privileged analyst's role.

Multimodal theory accounts for new assemblages, providing a semiotic practice able to realise the multiple articulations operating in such works. I use the theory to consider how the discourses of text and sound are rewritten within the genre of experimental poetry. Kress and Van Leeuwen point to the ability of Halliday's three levels of language to explain the function of performance elements. For example, the textual function realises the internal structure; the interpersonal level realises dialogism, modality and gender; and the experiential level realises indexical representation. I discuss the importance of gender and visual mode when speaking of the poet. While discussing the performance I consider how sound semiotics are developed in the experimental poetry genre then how indexicality realises the meaning potential of sound and how prosody might map the intonational meaning in delivery of the text. Consideration of these elements is combined with a traditional reading of rhythm, dynamics and texture. The result of dialogic voices is also considered, as both voices and instruments create a polyphony of textures with communicative potential.

Listening to these performances is extremely active as the audience engages on many levels. Theories of listening from musicology are relevant. Notions of memory and listening for unity, the emotive and culturally learnt response of the listener, as well as the spatial and temporal immediacy of performance are considered. These performances are unique. They not only invoke a sense of emotion and empathy with the performer but also actually force the listener to experience these emotions by immersing them in demonstrations of the theories posited. These premises will frame the performance analyses that follow in chapters 6, 8, 10 and 12.

Chapter 5 *On Second Thoughts*: Rewriting Contemporary Culture

I begin my analyses of experimental poetry with Chris Mann and his work *On Second Thoughts*. Mann has been contributing to experimental poetry in Australia since the 1960s. Both music and literary critics have embraced his work and he has been referred to as both a poet and composer. His diverse experiments in language and sound and association with composers such as Stockhausen and Cage have led to such categorisations. Mann himself says he 'failed to make a distinction between music and

language' (Burt, 1985: 12), recognising the sonic potential of language and the communicative powers of sound.

The work *On Second Thoughts* consists of a complex grammatical structure of parenthetical embedding engaged in the rewriting of dominant discourses in popular form. Mann takes philosophical theory as an intertextual resource for his work and rewrites it in Australian vernacular. Using Systemic Functional Grammar I analyse the variety of theories discussed by Mann and the way they are refashioned in the experimental poetry genre to forge a new construction of reality that is sceptical of universal truths. Reading the grammar allows me to demonstrate Mann's resonating subversive voice.

Chapter 6 Performing *On Second Thoughts*

In this chapter Mann's own distinct sonic resonance is considered along with the other performers from *Machine for Making Sense* who complete the realisation of *On Second Thoughts*. Mann's delivery of the text, in culmination with other instruments and technicians, serves to emphasise the sonic and intonational elements of speech. The focus of my analysis will be on Chris Mann's speech and its sonorous qualities, the contribution of Amanda Stewart and her vocal line as a counter-subject and the contribution of other instrumentalists in *Machine for Making Sense*. The analysis applies the principles of multimodal theory to realise the meaning potential of the work. This involves identifying the formal structural properties of the semiotic resources, discovering how they relate to each other in a coherent meaningful way and how they relate to the external world. It also shows how the ready-made intertextual sources of philosophical theory might be rewritten and recontextualised through text and sound to create new ways of perceiving our world. Such works constitute subversive resonances that make small but relevant marks on the dominant power structures.

Chris Mann's sonority and exaggerated Australian accent is analysed using prosody as he relies on an acute sense of intonation and timing to relay his philosophies. His colloquialisms and allusions to popular culture and their impact on the listener who

struggles to find markers and cues to meaning are also considered for their impact. Mann's voice, in dialogue with other performers, creates a site for interesting sign systems and improvisation as many of the instrumental sounds add meaning to his text. The piece creates what I call a 'sonic narrative' through 'sonic dialogism' as interaction between the performers creates identifiable scenarios. The diverse 'sonic vocabulary' of the other performers is considered as they construct a 'sonic narrative', relying for effect on culturally learnt interpretations from the listener.

Chapter 7 Dialogic Voices: Amanda Stewart and ≠

In this chapter I introduce Amanda Stewart and her work ≠, considering her play with sound and semantics to enact a dialogue between the self and other. This chapter demonstrates how Systemic Functional Grammar can be used to reveal how Stewart rewrites intertextual resources borrowed from linguistic and cultural theory. ≠ is constructed as a dialogue as Stewart positions herself as subject and object, exchanging statements of ideology between her two parallel texts. Like Mann, Stewart uses the form to reflect her message, challenging truth and patriarchy to find a place for the female voice – the equality under erasure in the title of the piece. She is a feminist semiotician participating in the re-working of established patriarchal conceptions of female experience to transform their implicit misogyny and create a potential position for women as speaking subjects. Her work critiques established views of subjectivity and by doing so reclaims a positive space for women's expression. Stewart subverts the dominant epistemological positions by recognising the ever-changing nature of selves. She acknowledges that gender and feminist concerns cannot be separated from class and race and that every stage of this construction of difference, experience, and the ability to articulate it, is marked by language. She acknowledges the power of language but also the ability to create and write new experiences with language. Her work is an emerging subversive voice that explores, in its structure and content, the dialogic construction of subjectivity.

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Chapter 8 Performing ≠

The application of a multimodal theory of communication to ≠ concentrates on the way semiotic resources are used by the poet and rewritten in text and sound. Multimodal theory as a functional theory is able to realise relationships that are formed between voices. It is therefore able to explain the new assemblages of the experimental poetry genre. It takes into consideration the way sonic and textual elements of the work operate internally to create unity and how they might refer to outside contexts. Stewart's concern is with gender difference and the constructionist paradigm that social realities and bodies/subjects are constituted in discourse. In performance she deconstructs the way intertextuality, genre, discourse and corporeality work and rewrites them to reproduce new experiences. A functional model realises the meaning potential of text and sound as a way of reconstituting subjects and rewriting intertextual resources. Understanding the interface between sound and word is crucial to the enunciative position and corporeal discourse developed by Stewart. Prosodic notation is able to map the pitch and intonation to show how the sounds of her performed words have a function within the work and reference to emotive expressions. At the textual function, certain sounds or text sounds are forefronted in performance to create unity. They also often have a representational function.

Stewart's vocal technique is used to perform a new genre that engages feminist and psychoanalytic theory in a dialogical sonic rewriting of patriarchal discourse. The new context of her new performed genre enables the speaker to play with her enunciative position. There is great meaning potential in Stewart's speaking position at the interpersonal function which is marked by corporeal traces of her attitudes to patriarchal discourses. Her enunciative position is also marked by intonation of the voice and the dialogic relationship between the speaker and the intertextual resources she draws upon, between the subject and the object parts and between the speaker and listener. Vocal gestures representing hysterical speech are indexically entailed with meaning, stunning the listener as dynamic outbursts. The result is a poiesis or process that deconstructs patriarchal discourse and establishes a place from which women might speak. This is a

place where voices are multiplied, layered and overlapped simultaneously. It is where female bodies might be rewritten.

Chapter 9 Voices of Desire: Ania Walwicz and *soft*

In *soft*, Ania Walwicz uses the language of a migrant or a non-standard English which is marked by child-like regression. This creates an interface between the subject persona as woman and migrant, both marginalised positions characterised by repression, displacement and desire. The use of Systemic Functional Grammar reveals the subject's marginal position as a migrant woman. Through the consideration of pivot words and collocation of the textual fields, the dialogic relationships at the interpersonal level and metonymic chains at the experiential level, the enunciative position is realised. The subject revealed is displaced by language and culture in her adopted home. Reading the grammar of her text reveals the unconscious desires that mark her position of enunciation embedded in a non-Standard English that creates further obscurity. The grammar also reveals the simultaneous existence of various subject positions of female, child, lover and migrant. Through these subject positions Walwicz imitates the thought processes. Her work offers a new way of seeing the relationship between language and power as she subverts the dominant discourse of English by constructing a subject position for the migrant woman outside of hegemony. This is an emergent voice that subverts by appropriating the language that constructs her in her new colonial culture and discourse, transforming a non-standard English dialect into an expressive form.

Chapter 10 Performing *soft*

The non-standard English and position of language acquisition are sonically represented in Walwicz's accent and baby-talk. Her position of enunciation reveals her character as the movement of thoughts is captured in the immediacy of the delivery. The semantic markers of grammatical subject-object relations and segmentation are now greatly enhanced by a variety of phonological markers such as the prosodic cues of intonation,

disjuncture and key as well as pronunciation of phonemes and indexical entailment of Walwicz's accent or child-speak and clarity of syllables. A functional approach to the performance enables the sonic qualities of the words and prosodic function of the delivery to reveal the subject positions and how they overlap to create a multifunctioning sonic discourse. Through these semantic, phonological markers, the subject positions emerge to reveal a multi-vocal dialogue from mature woman to childish woman, mother, child, foreigner and lover.

Chapter 11 Marginal Voices: Hazel Smith and *Poet Without Language*

In this chapter I explore Hazel Smith's creation of a new place of expression for 'the other' through language and sound in *Poet Without Language*. Like Stewart, she uses two voices by structuring the work dialogically. This creates multiplicity beyond the confines of phallocentric grammatical syntax. She uses a diverse range of techniques such as phonological conflation, dialogism, stream of consciousness writing, sound patterning, interrogation and collocative word-play to find a place for marginalised others such as women, poets and minorities to speak from. Subversive grammars are used here to re-position the marginalised subjects. Like the other works, it reflects, in its structure and text, a subversive place from which Others might speak. Threadgold's reworking of Systemic Functional Grammar at the interpersonal and textual levels of the clause are applied here as Smith plays with linguistic techniques to exploit words for both their sonic and semantic qualities.

Smith uses experimental poetry to challenge the structure and prevailing models of knowledges, effectively rupturing these socially dominant knowledges and rewriting them for the marginalised. Her work does not just react against male knowledges but it creates a positive way of writing female or marginalised experience. Her dialogic structure of collocative word chains and interrogatives challenges the underlying structure which regulates, organises and positions gender, ethnicity and artists. She subverts the legitimation of patriarchy and colonialism, refusing to represent female

experience in masculine terms. Those usually marginalised by universalising discourses are transformed from the object of knowledge to the subject of knowledge.

Chapter 12 Performing *Poet Without Language*

In the performance of *Poet Without Language*, Hazel Smith collaborates with Roger Dean to explore a new language outside the confines of oppressive grammatical structures. She combines musical and linguistic elements, dislocating language and re-synthesising it through sound. Her work uses musical elements, including a diverse range of acoustic and electronic sounds. These include sound sampling, the precise setting of words to rhythm, sonic dialogue, acoustic instruments and words associating freely by sound and sense. Verbal allusions and statements are accompanied by culturally presented sounds which create new associations and explore a place for the other beyond phallocentric grammatical syntax. A multimodal theory of performance is most relevant to *Poet Without Language* that is inscribed with indexically entailed music and corporeal functions of vocal accent at the interpersonal level and cohering repetition and sound at the textual function. These elements of sound, word and text-sound have potential meaning as structural relationships within the work and beyond to cultural contexts. Multimodal theory is therefore able to account for the way sounds and words are used by Smith to formulate an enunciative position verbalising the experience of the marginalised to write against hegemonic discourses. Multimodal discourse theory, informed by functionalism, is also able to account for the dialogic possibilities operating between the vocal and instrumental parts as they refer to each other within the work and beyond to each other as both structural units of sound and contextual reference. All elements of the performance are important in discovering meaning potential.

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Chapter 13 Conclusion: *Interpreting Subversive Voices*

In this chapter I summarise the main findings of my study and suggest further implications for the methods of analysis used.

CHAPTER 2

SUBVERSIVE VOICES

This project develops a language to speak about speech, music and sound through a suitable combination of linguistic and musicological theories and a way of reconciling text, performance and listener roles in the realisation of experimental poetry. It also seeks to position the genre of experimental poetry in a social context and consider how the use of a variety of sonic and linguistic semiotic resources might enable the rewriting of ready-made products of theory and therefore challenge dominant discourses. In this chapter I consider the nature of the experimental poetry genre and the complication caused by its multimodal and multimedial constitution. I explain where I position myself in the debates surrounding the genre and I outline my position on the subversive nature of such works by using Raymond Williams' notion of the emergent. I then explain how subversive voices have evolved over the last one hundred years or so and influenced the Australian community of composers and poets working in the field, particularly the four under close study.

Experimental poetry operates on many levels of meaning, between various modes (written text, speech, music, aural art and visual gesture) and mediums (voice, electronic tape manipulation, acoustic and electronic instrumentation). Because of the various evolutionary forces influencing the work, such as the aims and philosophical position of the poets and the incorporation of a variety of semiotic resources, experimental poetry is a complex genre to discuss and categorise. There are constant debates among poets and critics as to the aims of such work, how it should be performed, where the poetry should be performed, in which anthologies of poetry it should appear and in which poetry festivals the poets should appear. There are also other questions about whether it is music, poetry or sound art.

> Such distinctions may, in effect, be too arbitrary as Jas. H. Duke argues:

> There exists an art-form that (like an elephant) is instantly recognisable but (again like an elephant) is difficult to define. This is where a human voice, a remarkably versatile device, is modulated to produce loud sounds, soft sounds, high sounds, low sounds, fast sounds, slow sounds and all sorts of sounds in between. Ever since the dawn of time people have made sounds come from their mouth and nose. Some of these sounds get put in the box marked 'speech' while others get put in the box marked 'music'. Some don't seem to be either and can't find an appropriately labelled box. But when looked at closely our 'speech' and 'music' boxes can be seen to have elastic sides and to have a lust to couple with each other (Duke: 1984, 7).

Under the umbrella term 'sound poetry', Roberto Barilli similarly questions the efficacy of labels in his study *Futura: Poesia Sonora*:

> One hears of poetry to be listened to, oral poetry, sound poetry, phonic poetry, spoken poetry, acoustical poetry, audio-poems, sound texts, etc. But the name does not matter for the terms are equivalent. Endowed with the faculty of colouring the world of words with the timbres and rhythms of the voice, sound poetry frees itself from the limitations of mental reading in favour of the radio, gramophone records, magnetic tapes and, even more important, direct contact with the public in the form of declamations which may also become improvisations (Barilli: 1989, 23).

Barilli and Duke accept the multimodal nature of the work and also focus on the interest created from the innovation. This inclusive approach seems to be generally accepted now and is compatible with the position I am taking, although as Larry Wendt points out, the debates over techniques have led to the abandonment of the well-used term 'sound poetry'. When speaking of the 12th and final year of the International Festival of Sound Poetry held in New York in 1980 he says: 'Those individuals with the

resources and the initiative to sanction such gatherings could no longer agree with other members of the sound poetry community upon what should be included or excluded' (Wendt: 1993, 65). Such conflicts of definition rose from use of electronically manipulated material and live performance phonetic works, solo declamatory style and group style. From here conflicts emerged over whether what was being performed should actually be classified as music. This was not surprising because well-known music composers such as Reich and Lansky had been experimenting with word sounds and phonetics since the 1970s. Wendt goes on to describe this art-form as the 'impossible-to-classify vocal arts' (Wendt: 1993, 66). The tendency towards narrowing the field during the 1980s is also evident in Richard Kostelenetz's anthology *Text-sound Texts* (1980) which includes his definition of Text-sound as 'language unspecific in pitch, which coheres in terms of sound, rather than syntax or semantics' (Kostelanetz, 1980: i). The anthology includes work from John Cage, Warren Burt and Kenneth Gaburo (all influences on Mann and Stewart), Allen Ginsburg, Jack Kerouac and Gertrude Stein. He insists that the work of this diverse range of poets 'must be sounded and thus heard to be 'read' in contrast to those that must be printed and thus be seen' (Kostelenetz, 1980: 16). Kostelenetz excludes word sequences that have pitch by considering them song. His position is that syntactically standard text should be classed as oral poetry. Text-sound operates somewhere in between in the 'non-melodic structures of language or verbal sounds poetically charged with meanings or resonances...' (Kostelenetz, 1980: 16). Text-sound text, therefore, might be a subset of experimental poetry, but Kostelenetz's definition is arguably too narrowly defined. I do not draw a distinction between sung or spoken words, as the prosodic key of the voice in speaking words provides as much variety as those sung and measured in terms of pitch. The pitch of the vocal delivery has significant semantic function.[1] Kostelenetz also limits his collection to texts that cohere in terms of sound rather than syntax where my broader definition enables discovery of

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[1] Studies into the function of pitch include the following: Henton, C. 'Fact and Fiction in the Description of Female and Male Pitch,' *Language and Communication*, 9, 4, (1989): 299-311
Menn, Lise; Boyce, Suzanne. 'Fundamental Frequency and Discourse Structure,' *Language and Speech*, 25, 4, (1982): 341-383
Reissland, Nadja; et al. 'The Pitch of Maternal Voice: A Comparison of Mothers Suffering from Depressed Mood and Non-Depressed Mothers Reading Books to Their Infants,' *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 44, 2 (2003): 255-261

how syntax and sound might dialogue with each other. His belief is that 'once musical pitches are introduced, or musical instruments are added and once words are tailored to pre-existing melody or rhythm the results are music and are experienced as such' (Kostelenetz, 1980: 17). He does not account for the way text and sound and text-sound might create a new place of meaning where the semiotic resources of music and sound conflate at the interface between the two. It would seem his narrowing of the field does not allow for the vast array of multimodal works that use text, sound, syntax, melody and instruments. The term *experimental poetry* allows for multimodality while indicating that voice and word are the primary focus.

There are a number of other descriptive terms used for such works, including music, poetry, sound art, performance art, avant-garde, text-sound text and a further narrowing of these into compositional linguistics and feminist linguistics. The difficulty in categorising the work arises because these poets enjoy their position on the boundary of text and sound, enabling their work to move freely between a number of descriptors. Naturally this is their intention as they attempt to escape definition. By their very nature they subvert the traditional poetic form and even, some would say, return it to its roots in orality by overturning and upsetting the form and our expectations. It seems that the very nature of being an experimental poet is to expand the boundaries of linguistic artifices beyond their breaking point and to become unclassifiable in the process. I have used the term 'experimental poetry', which is essentially a broad descriptor, to label such work. I use the term to describe a genre of innovative work which may have developed from the avant-garde in respect to the influence of techniques and philosophical aims or adopted technology. Being multimodal and multimedial, it forges new relationships between word and sound and its result, through such rewritings, will be subversive (a term I will discuss below). The experimental poet has much to offer linguistic and cultural theory and by using language to disrupt conventional lexico-grammar in order to prove it is overdetermined usually takes up a position in opposition to imperialism, commercialism and hegemony. Therefore both the process of writing and performing tend to reflect a subversive position.

I now turn from the debate over the terms that have been used to discuss experimental poetry to debates over the social impact of such works. Such debates have

impacted on whether experimental poetry can be called subversive or not. There are varying views on the role of experimentation. These range from Frederic Jameson's belief that the avant-garde is dead, to Marjorie Perloff's focus on the indeterminacy that results from such innovation. I wish to elaborate on these views here.

Postmodern critic Frederic Jameson is of the belief that the avant-garde and formal innovation, especially that using electronic technology, cannot sustain any contribution to culture. Jameson argues that postmodern works lack subversive potential because they are not great modernist creations. He argues that 'in dealing with Postmodernism, one can isolate people who made pioneering contributions but aesthetic questions about how great these are – questions that can legitimately be posed when you're dealing with Modernism – make little sense'. He does not believe the postmodern object is 'a work of art, a 'masterwork' like the modernist monument was' (Jameson, 1986/87: 72). He implies the futility of ever offering serious critical attention to postmodern texts saying 'to talk about any single of these postmodern texts is to reify, to turn it into a work of art it no longer is, to endow it with permanence and monumentality that is its vocation to dispel' (Jameson, 1986/87: 72). It seems that Jameson makes incredible assumptions about the incompatibility of electronic arts and 'permanence and monumentality'. In fact my study celebrates both the meaning and social value of experimental genres and far from trying to 'dispel' past values, I would argue, experimental art operates in a relationship where negotiations with technological practices, the past, present and future act as a continuum. I operate in a more positive position that views experimental poetry as a way of seeing and understanding in a new way, allowing reassessment of one's sense of the known and unknown. Experimental poetry is not to be dismissed. Its ability to reward multiple listenings and interpretations should be celebrated.

In contrast to Jameson, Marjorie Perloff, champion of experimental poetry, has been revising her opinions with each new book she writes on the genre. Perloff argues in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Perloff, 1981:24) that indeterminate meaning is one of the features that marks the more interesting poetry of the last few decades. Her particular notion of indeterminacy refers to how these artists refuse to write coherently and therefore refuse to organise the world for their audiences, either

conceptually or linguistically. Perloff insists that experimental poetry is marked by indeterminacy but as I consider here, there is also much meaning potential bound in word and sound within experimentation and it is more interesting to consider the tension created from the positions created from the relationship between semiotic resources. In *Radical Artifice: Writing poetry in the Age of Media* (1991), Perloff shifts slightly from her emphasis on indeterminacy to an emphasis on experimental poetry's social role. Perloff defines experimental poetry as a return to 'radical artifice', a term she adapted from Richard A. Lanham. She argues that experimental poetry emphasises the artificial, organised and constructed nature of the artwork but never falls back on set formulas for versification (Perloff: 1991: 27). The process and content of the work simultaneously explores issues of language and culture. Her position is that although experimental works have not been absorbed into the mainstream (Perloff, 1991: 19), they remain a subversive resonance in culture. Perloff traces historically 'radical' texts to show how the forms of experimental poetry of today have emerged in reaction to forms of media. The rise of technology is certainly one element allowing new forms to emerge while responses of poets to their environment will always be a complex relationship between influences of past forms and the potential (if they wish to use it) of new technology. This notion of evolving forms is crucial to my position of subversiveness.

Subversive Voices

That experimental poetry is a subversive art-form seems an assumption at this point. I will come to demonstrate proof of this claim as the analysis proceeds. I use the term 'subversive' to describe the genre of experimental poetry because it acts to undermine the dominant systems from within language. I am therefore reading these texts through a political model of subversion. The relationship between power and language (and here I add the subversive powers of sound) and the ability of experimental poetry to subvert the dominant 'truths' of social systems is important to this study. I identify these works as subversive in the way they undermine power structures by rewriting the dominant discourses and offering new ways of seeing the relationship between language and

power. The notion of subversion used here is an optimistic one compatible with the possibilities of change put forward by Raymond Williams.

Williams builds on Gramsci to argue that we cannot reduce consciousness to a singular discourse. The hegemonic connections between domination and subordination are 'in effect a saturation of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political and cultural system seem to most of us the pressure and limits of simple experience and common sense' (Williams, 1977: 110). In his theory the operations of power are to be found in 'life-as-lived' rather than an overtly marked coercive domination. Williams offers a dialectic assessment of hegemony that holds to no static objects or interpretations; rather there always exists the exchange between parts and the whole, the concrete and abstract. His view is that hegemony 'can never be singular' and 'it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has to be renewed, recreated, defended; and modified' (Williams, 1977: 110). It therefore leads to the possibility of transformation. The dialectic model means social and cultural conceptions always possess the potential for emergent interactions capable of change.

Williams makes a distinction between the dominant ideology and various possible co-existing alternatives. Such alternative ideologies, created and supported by their own cultural symbols, may be either residual (formed in the past, but still remembered and, to some extent, still part of the cultural process) or emergent (the expression of new groups outside the dominant group). They may also be either oppositional (challenging the dominant ideology) or alternative (co-existing with it) (Williams, 1977: 86). I would classify the voices in experimental poetry as emergent and oppositional.

Experimental poetry can subvert the dominant forms and ideologies by its new approach to language and sound. It only exists by virtue of social agency and valuation that leaves it open to analysis and criticism. I propose here that it is not necessary to escape grammar to be subversive. Rewritings can occur within grammar and within language. Experimental poetry also engages in an anticipatory structure that positions it on the margins of intelligibility. This state depends on an emergent social configuration that belatedly lends a practical intelligibility to the poet's experimentation. Williams' notion of emergent social formations is helpful here as the poet creates inarticulable

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'structures of feeling' that anticipate social practices. Such a historically anticipatory structure of feeling is defined by Williams as a 'formation which, because it is at the edge of semantic availability, has many of the characteristics of a pre-formation, until specific articulation and new semantic figures are discovered in material practice' (Williams, 1977: 134). 'Structures of feeling' precede clearly identifiable social forms and can be part of the development toward a social form. A 'structure of feeling' is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period of time, and needing always to be returned, interactively, to such evidence (Williams, 1977: 132-133). By articulating these changes, the experimental poet participates in the creation of social relations as others see and read their works.

Experimental poets perceive social attitudes and changes related to culture in the relations between, for example, genders, classes, races and philosophical positions. Such observation and expression of small changes in attitudes and practices are articulations of structures of feeling, where the poet participates in the constitution of new forms of consciousness. Experimental poetry is subversive in the way it writes against the hegemony, which Williams believes must be constantly renewed for the dominant class to make its interests normalised. It embodies an anticipatory half-meaning which an emergent historical community might adopt. It is a process. Williams' idea that 'structures of feeling' (Williams, 1977: 128-135) might be articulated and predict a new social constitution means experimental poetry can, through its rewriting of truths, predict a future social understanding while subverting the present order. Utterance as a moment in the continuous process of verbal communication is dependent on shared codes of the social collective. This makes it difficult for poets to assume an oppositional stance towards current social formations and be understood by them. The use of Systemic Functional Grammar enables the reading of the grammar in the texts so their subversion of hegemony might be realised.

Experimental poets mark their texts by inscribing their past into the text while also maintaining a constant dialogue with their present. They can work within language to dialogue intertextually with various philosophical positions. Williams describes this process with: 'This very process of development [of a creative process] can be grasped as

a complex of active relations, within which the emergence of an individual project, and the real history of other contemporary projects and the social forms of the developing forms and structure are continuously and substantially interactive' (Williams, 1977: 196). Experimental poetry then, through its play with word and form, continues to contribute to a process of human cultural activity rather than conceiving of it as a finished product. In contrast to the 'fixed and explicit' social, Williams maintains that 'all that is present and moving, all that escapes from the fixed and explicit and the known, is grasped and defined as the personal: this, here, now, alive, active, subjective' (Williams, 1977: 128). Williams argued that: 'The strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished product...relationships, institutions and formations in which we are formed wholes rather than forming and formative process' (Williams, 1977:128). Because art works are 'all the time lived' (Williams, 1977:128) they come to play a part in our lives. He goes on: 'Yet the actual alternative to the received and produced fixed forms is not silence: not the absence, the unconscious, which bourgeois culture has mythicised. It is a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined in exchange' (Williams, 1977: 132). If, as Williams argues, culture consists of dominant, residual and emergent forms, live systems cannot be understood in a deterministic way or as the result of complex interaction between groups of individuals. Meaning belongs to the system (or social group) rather than the individual. Looked at this way, the activity, particularly that which draws our attention, produces reverberations throughout the system. Such complex social systems are dialectic models reflected in the linguistic system. Experimental poetry is dominating an emergent subversive voice that writes against hegemony that dictates the structures of gender, race and class. It is an art-from that continues to live as a poiesis as its multimodal constitution means it rewards multiple listenings.

Emergent Subversive Voices

Having discussed the social role of experimental poetry and its nature as a subversive art-form, I will now turn to those influences and evolving forms that have contributed, through their innovative use of techniques, to present forms. They have all operated as emergent subversive voices against the dominant culture of their time. Experimental poets have constantly developed new linguistic and sonic techniques to assist in the rewriting and renewing of experience.

The tradition of experimental poetry can be traced back to Hebraic Kabbalah, but for the purposes of providing a brief history of the predecessors and influences on the current Australian tradition, I will consider more recent poets from the tradition with similar philosophies or techniques to those studied here. The experimental poetry of the Modernists in the early 1900s began as a process of subversion, being inspired by rebellion against the establishment and bourgeoisie. Meetings and performances were similar to that of a political party where like-minded people would discuss policy and produce manifestos, recruit new members and disregard those who lost faith. In many ways not a lot has changed as this art-form still exists on the fringe of poetry, music and performance.

The most obvious place to begin a survey of predecessors to the work studied here is in Europe with the Italian Futurists who used the sonic qualities of language and a variety of instruments to represent noise. Their subversiveness, in the form of politically aggressive nationalism, eventually paved the way for Fascism. Michael Kirkby suggests that their association with Fascism has been detrimental to an appreciation of their contribution to the innovative use of sound (Kirkby, 1986: 4). Futurist musician, Luigi Russulo in writing *The Art of Noise* in 1913 declared that all sound was possible material for music. He noted that traditional instruments can only approximate many qualities and types of sounds and have limited use in their intended form. He saw the need for new instrumentation and new ways in which to use those existing instruments, forging the evolution towards what he describes in his manifesto as 'noise-sound' (Kirby: 1986, 167). Russulo's philosophy is compatible with that of the instrumentalists in *Machine for Making Sense* where performers experiment with new ways of playing their instruments.

Russolo made available all the sounds of everyday life for musical composition. His now pioneering work with *intonarumori* or noise-intoners prepared the way for *musique concrete* and electronic music.

Russulo, in *The Art of Noise*, describes the work of fellow Futurist Filippo Marinetti. *Zang-Tumb-Tumb* of 1914 is an account of the battle of Adrianopolos in 1912. The work is an attempt to translate into literature the sights, sounds, smells and special relationships provided by the modern world by making use of neologisms, compressed stream-of-consciousness structure and onomatopoeic spelling. Russulo describes it as *parole on liberta* or free words. Especially when read aloud, such writing had an intense musical flow and rhythm (Kirby, 1986: 35). The line 'flic flak zing zing sciaaack hilarious whinnies iiiiiii... pattering tinkling # Bulgarian battalion marching croooc-craaac...' demonstrates this musicality of words. Marinetti's obsession with war and the reproducing of sounds are evident in this work. The objective of such composition, as Russulo expresses it, was 'to score and regulate harmonically and rhythmically these extremely varied noises. In scoring the noises, we shall not subtract all the movements and irregular vibrations of tempo and intensity from them, but, on the contrary, we shall give a position and tone to the most dominant and strongest of these vibrations' (Kirby, 1986: 170). It is such discoveries in the value of sound and the scoring of it that is still felt in experimental poetry today. The works of Smith and Stewart, studied here, subscribe to such ideas in their intricate scoring of sound.

Marinetti and Russulo created a subversive voice by inscribing their political obsessions within their work. In such work, the semiotic exchange between word and sound exists in a dialogical relationship where the imitation of noise becomes rewritten into a revolutionary position. While Futurism was founded on obsessions with war, militarism and patriotism, the motivation of contemporary poets seems quite the contrary as they try to diminish the power structures. Futurist contribution to the possibilities of vocal sound as a semiotic resource is, however, still felt today.

While the use of word and machine noise was an important innovation of the Italian Futurists, in Russia Alexei Kruchenykh contributed the invention of *zaum* to Futurism. It embraced the private language of schizophrenics, folk incantations, baby talk, glossolalia, random onomatopoeic verse and futurist neologisms. Zaum, a

combination of 'za'-'beyond' and 'um'-'mind', originated in the natural dissociation between thought and speech in the brain. Kruchenykh believed that when in an inspired state, the poet must express his emotions in novel pronouncements and rhythms (Gordon, 1992: 212). Such play with words and sounds established interesting precedents for subsequent poets where the privileging of process over product became a popular aspect of composition. Much of this irrational or transrational speech sound (a term used by Kruchenykh in his *Declaration of Transrational Language* (1921)) occurs in glossolalia where an attempt is made in the realm of pure sound and seeks a total disjunction of signifier and signified. Relation between sound and meaning breaks down through glossolalic utterance where language is at the threshold of nonsense. As with the poets under study here the inspiration driving the desire to find a place beyond the symbolic cannot be underestimated. An enactment of madness, hysteria or pre-linguistic infant babble has become an intertextual source for many experimental poets.

Also at this time Gertrude Stein, working in America, developed a method of written description from her observations of what people revealed in the repetitions of everyday speech. The cohering qualities of rhythmic unity contribute to the semiotic exchange between the words as sounds. Continuing influence of these experiments can be seen in the work of Ania Walwicz, in which the natural rhythms of human speech are explored. The dialogic relationship between the subject and her past is rewritten through repetitive structures and sounds. Stein deliberately chose simple words and phrases that people speak in everyday conversation, but also words which would gain complexity from context and usage. In *Tender Buttons* (1914), Stein presents a series of still lives, characterising them by unexpected phrases that integrate sound and semantics for effect. Stein also captured a person by what she says and hears in continuous present tense, a technique also employed by Walwicz as a means of capturing a moment in time. Walwicz emphasises this in performance where the process of realising context and connotation is compounded when the performer acts out the motion of hearing and saying in a dialogic relationship. Hazel Smith also draws on the rhythms of repetition and their musical qualities. The subversiveness of transforming word into sound forges a new way of heightening the emotive dialogic elements of language. Stein's style has been developed by contemporary poets to assist their rewriting of experience.

Dada of the 1920s was another important movement driven by the enactment of psychotic states where the poets, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters and Hugo Ball ruptured language and grammar. Tzara hoped to rid the world of corrupt values, believing that one could not purify a world without first cauterising the language which gives it birth. Tzara's poetry was an attempt to free up words and even give letters a life of their own. The intention was that the marks or sounds would function as autonomous signs and become a part of a creative process where each new sound would attract new references, new meaning and new significance. The word 'Dada' itself reflects the irrationality of the techniques used. Dada is meant to sound like an infant babbling and hence to represent the rejection of the so-called rational adult 'real' World. This is devised to free the beholder from conditioned responses and allow a new aesthetic.

In Kurt Schwitters' *Ur sonata* (1924), words are abandoned in an attempt to reach beyond language to create a new, vital and pure means of communication. Together with Hausmann he developed an operation of electrolysis or the division of the linguistic chain into phonemic components where the material of expression, freed of semantic adhesives, is pronounced letter by letter (Barilli, 1989: 9). Tzara and Schwitters are described as 'sound poets'. The original idea of sound poetry was to allow the audience the chance to appreciate the sounds in themselves, as phonemes without the constraints of words, as fundamental objects of pure unfettered sound, freed from the shackles of grammar, syntax and meaning. Sound poetry was an attempt to liberate phonemes from the abuse they suffer when they are imprisoned in words. From these early Modernists, particularly Schwitters and Ball, thus developed the principle of the isolation of the single phonemic components. It is likely that the abundance of critical work focussing on the indeterminate nature of experimental poetry derives from the self-stated intention of many early modernists to escape meaning. My study, however, recognises the use of chance and imitation of psychotic states as inspiration for such works but will focus on how these act as sources for the rewriting of human states of expression.

The development to go beyond where a sound is not only a phoneme but a mouth sound, throat sound or groan is attributed to the French group known as the *Ultralettristes* which emerged in the 1950s. They proclaimed the advent of pre-linguistic poetry, using breathing, shouting and inarticulate trumpeting noises. They also embraced technology as

a means of expanding the semiotic resources available and therefore the meaning potential. This group includes Henri Chopin and Francois Dufrêne. These poets have heavily influenced Amanda Stewart. Chopin's *extrême tension* of 1974 is an analysis of the word 'aria'. The letter 'a' is pronounced with the mouth closed and the microphone in the mouth. At the same time the external sound is recorded on a second tape. The first recording is treated with electronic filters and reverberations and the final result is the word 'air' decomposed and recorded under these conditions. Chopin's 'le corpsbis & co' anthology includes explorations of the voice, vocal texture, vibrations of the larynx and effective use of the tape-recorded and electronics. He has also written extensively on French Sound Poetry, in particular *Poesie Sonora Internationale* (1979).

In the 1950s Bob Cobbing, one of the first explorers in sound poetry in England, further experimented with breaking up syllables and then realigning them in every possible combination. The result was multiple sound effects with the minimum of original source. He later abandoned tape manipulations to pursue what he thought were the more resonant sonic aspects of acoustic sound (Barilli, 1989; 183). His work is founded on the idea that the world is alive with messages so anything might act as a score. His group *Koncrete Canticle* saw great experimentation with a choir of voices.

In The United States, Jackson Mac Low uses verbal invention to provoke the imagination. He employs aleatory effects and sees his work as 'perceiver-oriented', that is the role of the audience is to appreciate the interacting layers of the work. Another source of aleatory effect is improvisation, as in David Antin's poetry. Antin improvises his texts and records them on paper after the performance. He believes everything is poetry, even talk. His intention is to defy all expectations of a poetry reading by not reading but improvising. Poet as bricoleur is also an aspect of the work of Charles Bernstein, another well-known experimental artist who contributes much to the discourse of experimental poetry. Work such as 'Today's Not Opposite Day' combines a bricolage of sources and reveals a surplus of meanings. Bernstein co-founded the journal L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, in the 1970s and edited the book *Legend* in 1984. His contribution to experimental poetry criticism has been very important for continuing debate about experimental poetry and its role. In L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E he explores non-conventional forms used by experimental poets and their poly-referential nature.

It is obvious from this survey of important poets that words have gradually been dismantled to focus on their sonic meaning potential. These voices have operated as subversive challenges to language and its claims on power and control. A similar tradition has emerged among musicians and composers who have also used the word for its sonic potential. Developments in experimental poetry have influenced electronic musicians such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, who dismantles words into sounds. His compositions and use of technology has in turn influenced poets. Stockhausen's composition *Gesang der Junglinge*, written in 1955-56 was the most radical and influential tape composition of its day. His aim was to unify vocal sounds with electronically produced sounds. This enabled him to use pitch intervals, tempo and variations of timbre that were outside the range of any one singer. The aim of including combined speech sounds is to give the idea that the transition between electronic sound and vocal sound can be just as fluid as the transition between verbal meaning and musical meaning. Stockhausen says 'the intention, then is to let speech emerge from the composition, through the choice of particular steps in a sound-word-continuum. It is not true that verbal comprehensibility always occurs as a sudden change from meaninglessness sound to speech – one only has to think of 'indistinct speech', 'half listening', 'not quite catching' (Stockhausen, 1992: 138). His idea is that 'the more a symbol structure is dominated by its sound-timbre aspect, the more musical it is; the more it is dominated by its word-motivic aspect (sounds having defined meanings) the more speech-like it is. The transition is a fluid one: speech can be nearly music, and music can be nearly speech, to the point where boundaries between sound and meaning are dissolved' (Stockhausen, 1992:138).

The poets studied here embrace the tradition of continuity between music and words, with regard to meaning, and the tradition of discontinuity and breakdown with regard to structure. This is what makes the works so challenging for the listener. While one might imagine a sound-word continuum where boundaries are dissolved between speech and music, the desire for audiences to establish referencing systems while listening is difficult to counteract.

Other composers such as Berio and Cage have adopted experimental texts and used them intertextually by combining them with technologically produced sounds to

play with the semiotic exchange of word and sound. Lucio Berio's *sinfonia* (1968-69) operates at the interface between word and sound. It begins with a bricolage of Levi-Strauss' texts articulated over bursts of orchestral sound. It also uses a self-reflexive monologue from Beckett's 'The Unnameable', punctuated by orchestral gestures offering counterpoint to the fragmented text. The work sets a precedent for Chris Mann and *Machine for Making Sense* with its tapestry of language fragments, snippets of German, solfege, songs, slogans, gobbles and grunts which are punctuated by orchestral gestures. The multimodal features relate to each other in an internal structure and the intertextuality is used as a semiotic resource for the rewriting of popular discourse. It also has the same mocking self-awareness similar to the work of Mann. It is interesting that Berio finds Beckett's writing, already characterised by linguistic experimentation, a wealthy semiotic resource. Beckett's work has a fragmented subverted grammar which is rhythmic and self-propelling. Berio also used the 'Sirens' chapter from Joyce's *Ulysses* for his work *Thema* (1958) where the reading of the text is subjected to amplification and distortion until it becomes unrecognisable. Echoes, stutterings, tape speed and splicing are applied to fragment the text. John Cage has also used Joyce's work for its textual ambiguity and rhythmic qualities. In *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegan's Wake* (1979), he includes 1210 sound events including vocal sounds of laughing, crying, singing and shouting; natural sounds such as birds, water and thunder and noise. These are inserted to accompany Cage's reading of Joyce's text. Cage dismantles Joyce's grammar while maintaining the punning, onomatopoeia of the language.

The use of computers to manipulate text and sound has become increasingly sophisticated. Paul Lansky uses computer processing to create works from human conversation. He builds on the earlier work of Cage and Reich to increase the use of computers as a source of sound manipulation. He tries to capture the spirit, emotion and music behind and within our patterns of conversation (Lansky, 1990). His 'Six Fantasies on a Poem by Thomas Campion' is a study of poetry and speech and 'Idle Chatter' (1985) makes music from the incoherent babble of synthesised speech. In 'Small Talk' he captures the intonation of conversation while in 'Conversation Pieces' he furthers this by taking the contours of conversation, quantizing them by breaking up a fluid analogue[2]

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[2] Analogue refers to the original information recoded without manipulation.

input into discrete parts and mapping it onto a grid. This then forms rhythms so the stresses occur at subdivisions of the beat. He also quantizes his natural pitch range by stretching it over a wider range. He then adds surface timbre and dynamics. This vocal distortion is perhaps moving beyond the work of the four poets studied here but is nevertheless akin to the type of experimental work occurring in music composition and where experimental poetry could head. Hazel Smith has embraced the potential of computer technology in her recent work and use of hypertext.

Performance art is another area that integrates sound and text. Laurie Anderson's experimentation with syntactical material has been popularised in public forums since the 1970s. Anderson, as a performance artist, experiments with text and sound by improvising dialogues with string arrangements for violin and electronics. By filtering and processing the sounds of the violin, Anderson makes music from harmonics and overtones that are generally beyond the human range of hearing. A single melodic line will expand to fill the space. Her live performances include experimental sound-making devices such as her famous tape-bow violin and body drum suit. Her recent work, 'Happiness' (2002) returns to more instrumental lines and improvisation rather than her usual multi-media installations. She also experiments with talk-singing to experiment with voice. Anderson's popularity has made way for Diamanda Galas and Karen Findlay to find a wider audience. Although their style is quite different, it is doubtful they would have gained public recognition without the popularity of Anderson. Much of Anderson's visual effect goes beyond the genre of experimental poetry discussed here. The genre of experimental poetry which I analyse is also quite separate to performance art where text might be combined with sculpture, fine art, dance and overhead projections. Therefore Anderson and others such as Robert Longo and Robert Morris, while employing some of the features of experimental poetry in their work, are forging a new art-form that could be said to encompass experimental poetry. As I discuss later, the model I use for discussing multimodal performance will be valuable for revealing the semiotic potential of all performance art.

Obviously I have been selective in my survey of subversive voices as the experimental poetry movement is diverse. Those poets briefly described here are pioneers in the forging of experimentation. They have been influenced by the varying social and

political forces of their time and the philosophies of innovation and exploration. The techniques they have employed and their historical development constitute the context for the poets under study.

Experimental Poetry in Australia

The European and American predecessors discussed above have influenced the experimental poetry movement in Australia. Before the 1980s there was very little recorded avant-garde poetry to speak of. It did, however, exist in a thriving small magazine industry. By the 1960s, poetry was moving out of the hands of academics such as A.D.Hope and James McAuley and into the hands of the oral poets who had previously not received recognition of their work. Magazines such as *Mok*, *Crosscurrents, Mindscape, Parachute* and *Fitzrot* became popular, mostly among other disgruntled poets who opposed the establishment. The editors of these magazines held readings around the suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, also mostly attended by the poet society. By the 1970s, experimentation was taking over from concrete poetry or visual poetry and women's poetry was appearing in magazines such as *Fallopian Tube*, *Luna* and *Hecate*. *Foundation magazine*, edited by Robert Hughes, contained the declaration in 1974 that 'during the final years of this century and the early years of the next, the most powerful poets in the English language will be Australian' (cited in ΠO, 1985: 195). Such was the attraction to the oral poet that ΠO and Eric Beach began touring around Australia and organised readings with Jas H. Duke and Peter Murphy. By 1977 the Poet's Union was formed. ΠO, a colleague of those studied here, suggests in the opening to his compilation of experimental poetry *Off the Record*, that openness, play and experimentation are more important than an elegant metaphor. He says 'Take what you can (whenever you can) and make it yours – explode it! The poem must be true to its form as well as its content. A poem must always be put into a context. Poetry is a public, not a private act, although the why/how/when of it can take place anywhere' (ΠO, 1985: 196). ΠO describes the manner in which the general Australian public became aware of experimental poetry. He recalls an event of 1978 at the Adelaide Arts Festival, the most prestigious arts festival at the time:

David Malouf was giving his paper on Contemporary Australian Poetry
when the fully paid-up members of the Poets' Union ($2 per annum
and recruiting steadily) began howling him down. They were pointing out
that his survey was out of touch with a large slice of Australian poetry
and that it was predominantly Sydney based...After the smoke had cleared,
two words had been coined: oral and performance...Within weeks
there were performance poets and performance poetry.' (ΠΟ: 1985, i)

This was a spontaneous assault on official culture at a time when a number of debates over the direction of Australian poetry were emerging. From here a tradition of experimentation has developed.

With such a diverse range of influences and employment of such a diverse range of techniques, it is not surprising that critics have categorised these works in numerous ways. John Jenkins includes Chris Mann in his *22 Contemporary Australian Composers*. Jas H. Duke, a well-known poet in Australia before his death in 1992, describes Mann and Stewart's work as sound poetry and regrets their absence from *The Penguin Book of Modern Australian Poetry* (Tranter & Mead, 1991). The 'L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry' edition of *Meanjin* attempts to frame Australian experimental writing within a particular American tradition. It includes works by Lyn Hejinian, Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein and Ron Silliman. Nicholas Zurbrugg in *The Parameters of Postmodernism* makes similar cross-continental connections where he discusses Mann in the same chapter as American poet Robert Lax. He describes them both as having 'synthesised the structural thematic and performative potential of post-modern writing in highly original, highly amusing and highly referential formal experiments' (Zurbrugg, 1993: 77-81).

Experimental poets have always had their own debates. In Australia, *Meanjin* and *Southerly*, two mainstream literary journals, have published work and interviews with Walwicz and Smith, (see Liddelow, 1994 & Gillet 1991). *Heat* and *Five Bells* have published work and debated the issues concerning performance and text. Because of the diverse multimedia of such works, they are equally represented in Music publications such as *Sounds Australian* (see Stewart, 1995 & Mann, 1992, 1995).

The state of experimental poetry at present encompasses language and music, speech, sound and instrumentation, computation, tape manipulation, hypertext, live and recorded instruments, drawing on influences from composers in one's primary field and beyond. Experimental poetry is still primarily found in Art houses and music department

installations. Amanda Stewart and Hazel Smith's group AustraLYSIS frequently use The Sydney Opera House and The Performance Space while Arts' Councils and Government grants still heavily fund special symposiums.

Where experimental poetry was previously not studied in Australian English departments, it is now found in undergraduate courses, but it still does not hold the well-established place experimentation has had in Music departments for many years. Perhaps the reason for this is that musicologists are better equipped to consider the performance and aural aspects of such work. This might also be explained by the tendency of music courses to concentrate on the technological advancement of sound. There is also bias towards the canon still evident in the courses of English departments.[3] Protocols for 'reading' or understanding experimental poetry are not widely addressed in universities and therefore the tools for analysis have not been developed. Therefore the potential for subversion has not been realised.

Experimental poetry, in Australia and elsewhere, has not had the attention it deserves in terms of realising its potential as an innovative use of language and sound able to subvert the dominant codes of meaning by rewriting them. Criticism on the works has focussed on the innovative use of techniques, pointing to the aims of the poets or biographical details to conclude the work has been successful. Other critiques cosider the texts as places of escape in the Kristevan semiotic sense. It is my position that neither of these approaches is entirely successful in actually realising the potential of the work or indeed providing adequate proof of the claims made. Very little has been offered by literary critics in the way of musicological analysis which I believe is most important to understanding the sonic elements of the work in performance. I would like to pause here and consider some of the commentaries on these works before I proceed.

The work of experimental poets plays with traditional grammatical forms and this feature has been noted in most commentaries. It has not, however, been adequately analysed beyond recognition of surface features of repetition, word streams and truncated grammatical forms. Walwicz, for example, uses such techniques but the fields operating

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[3] The study of multimodal texts is a compulsory component of the new Stage 4 and 5 NSW English syllabus (years 7-10). The extension 2 syllabus, the highest level of English for the Higher School Certificate in New South Wales, also lists Experimental poetry as an option for a major creative project. Hopefully as exposure to experimental poetry begins in these early years of schooling, there will be greater interest in the art-form in universities.

within her texts have not been adequately mapped. Liddelow (Liddelow, 1998: 63) reads Walwicz's work according to autobiographical details as a migrant poet and how this has influenced her sense of marginalisation. She also notes that Walwicz uses avant-garde techniques akin to the surrealists (Liddelow, 1998: 63). McCreddon (McCreddon, 1996: 237) also focusses on Walwicz's lack of punctuation as stream of consciousness and through this technique, the fragmented self. Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald, 1988: 3) and Digby (Digby, 1992: 823) in interviews with Walwicz, focussed on her avant-garde influences. Her work has also been read as a regression and as an escape from the symbolic in the Kristevan sense (Jacobson, 1990: 148). I will discuss the limitations of this position in the next chapter. Gillet (Gillet, 1991: 239) points to her as a migrant poet and reads her work inside a frame concerned with marginalisation. While all of these readings have great validity, I suggest that there is little proof of these claims without an analysis of the grammar in the texts. Very few critics have considered the sonic elements of the work, with the exception of Hazel Smith (Smith, 1990: 226) who considers the way words operate as sounds to create meaning.

Hazel Smith's own work has also been spoken of in terms of word games and seeking a place for the 'other' (Wallace, 1995: 28). While this is her self-confessed purpose (Smith, 1986: 132), and she speaks about her intention to create a new mode of communication between language and music relevant to women, there has been little attention to how this language might operate. Smith has taken to writing about her own work in her efforts to have the genre discussed (Smith, 1995: 28). She discusses the semantic possibilities for sound and language in a general way that also needs further consideration. Again I hope to reconcile these matters with my particular use of linguistics drawn from Halliday and Threadgold and musicological theories of indexicality and prosody incorporated in multimodal theory.

Chris Mann's work has been considered according to its dialogic qualities (Chopin, 1994: 126) and the way a relationship is built with the audience. Gallacher has considered his work as an exploration of words as technology (Gallacher, 1994: 183), paying attention to aims rather than responses. Attention has been drawn to his Australian talk and imitation of speech sounds (Thomas, 1989: 89-90). His work is well known, yet despite attention to his interest in modelling systems (Cole, 1992: 2), no work has

considered the modelling systems he creates with language. Amanda Stewart's work has also not been analysed according to the actual workings of its structure. Focus on her use of collage and babble (Smith, 1990: 230) are common but there has been little attention to how the text and sound, and text-sounds, work to create anything beyond fleeting moments of meaning.

While there is a general lack of criticism concerning these works, the criticism that exists seems to me too dependent on general expectations of what experimentation might achieve. Therefore the innovation is repeatedly pointed to without attention to whether there is evidence in the text for the claims made. The sonic potential is rarely considered. One reason for this might be that literary critics maintain their separation from musicologists and vice versa. Musicology alone does not have the resources to analyse such work without the assistance of linguistic theory and nor will literary criticism be able to realise the full potential of these works without an understanding of sound. I hope to address these matters in this study.

There is also a place for considering how the poet might also be a theorist of language and how their poetry contributes to the broader critique of social and political formations. The experimental poetry genre draws on insights about the constitution of subjectivity and forces us to read anew by forging the power of the materiality of language in text and sound. The experimental poets studied here use innovative linguistic devices and structures to reconstruct subjectivity in ways subversive to the dominant discourses. These poets write against universalising discourses such as the bourgeoisie, patriarchy and white settler colonialism to forge a position that expresses and enunciates the marginalised voice. I will use Systemic Functional Grammar to reveal such positions.

It is evident from this survey of the field that there are as many debates about the status of this poetry as there are historical and inter-media influences. Naturally experimental work means that, as has always been the case, this is an art-form on the fringes which wins little interest from mainstream audiences. It is, however, establishing a place for subversion of the centre but unless the establishment allows it a voice, there is little chance of it gaining mainstream recognition. I will discuss the ramifications of this on my analysis of the performances of these works in chapter 4. The following chapter outlines the particular theoretical position I have used to approach such texts.

CHAPTER 3

FORMULATING A THEORETICAL POSITION

In chapter 2, I discussed how experimentation in literature and music has always leaned towards challenging dominant positions by multiplying meaning potential through exploration of new forms. The poets studied here follow this tradition of exploration by creating a new position of enunciation that overturns dominant positions. As the genre of experimental poetry is characterised by truncated and dislocated syntax, it is not immediately obvious that these poets are saying anything at all. But these texts are not nonsense, as to position themselves in such a state would be firstly impossible and secondly, fruitless, if the poets wish to pose an alternative to the dominant discourses. In this chapter, I outline my particular use of Systemic Functional Grammar to realise meaning potential in the poetry under study. Before explaining the pertinence of Systemic Functional Grammar to this study, I will begin with a discussion of the limitations of the semiotic in Kristeva's terms as it is commonly used by critics of experimental poetry.

Julia Kristeva and *Revolution in Poetic Language*

The position I am taking to analyse experimental poetry as a genre that uses language (and sound) to subvert dominant philosophical positions by offering multiple positions is not common. As discussed in the previous chapter, experimental poetry is mostly discussed as a form that might escape meaning, becoming what French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva calls the 'semiotic'. Her use of the semiotic to explain avant-garde practices has set a valuable precedent for conceptualising poetic language. I wish to begin the discussion of my theoretical position with an exploration of this as a suitable approach.

Experimental poetry, through its use of original linguistic and sound devices in the form of truncated grammar, embedding and linguistic distortions, creates a place that seems, on the surface, to defy meaning by creating a place of chaos. Therefore the poetry might be considered to be working towards escaping referentiality. In my experience such a place, identified by Kristeva as the semiotic, may be attempted and may inspire the poets but is impossible to reach.

Kristeva has offered a theory for considering both experimental text and its sonic elements or the 'musicalisation' of its performance. The theory of the semiotic developed in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), describes the place where avant-garde texts operate. Her work on the symbolist poets Lautréamont and Mallarmé established a precedent for considering poetic language as the uncensored process of the unconscious (Kristeva, 1984: 17). In this early work Kristeva was concerned with the linguistic constitution of the work of the modernist Mallarmé. She uses Mallarme's 'Igitur' (Kristeva, 1984: 228) to prove the polysemic qualities of poetic language. She notes that the notion of true or false does not arise in poetic language as the sounds became primary (Kristeva, 1984: 229). Her analysis of Mallarmé's work does not try to isolate the true meaning nor analyse the syntactic structures for their own sake, as to do so for her would be to remain tied to the symbolic and not consider the unconscious. She is interested 'in the process of the subject which may be glimpsed in the semiotic process of condensation and transposition' (Kristeva, 1984: 226). She says such works as Mallarme's evoke the period of language acquisition and by doing so break loose from the symbolic. By

highlighting the timbre of language such poetry, according to Kristeva, highlights the semiotic 'chora' (Kristeva, 1984: 225).

The chora, literally meaning 'receptacle', indicates what Kristeva calls 'the semiotic body' as:

> an emptiness or mould within which its opposite, signification, shapes itself as a child within the mother. Reference to the maternal function is an important aspect of this formulation; indeed, the chora first manifests itself in that period of infancy, prior to the mirror phase, when there is no perceived distinction between child and mother (Kristeva, 1980, 145).

This pleasure is intimately associated with the post-mirror stage retrieval or blissful state of non-differentiation. As language and society are constituted at the cost of repressing instinctual drives and continuous relation to the mother, the achievement of jouissance through poetic language is difficult. Kristeva says these drives are subliminally repressed within the symbolic and finally liberated by poetic language.

Kristeva's work in psycholinguistics has provided approaches to the work of Samuel Beckett and she has presented Joyce as one of the creators of the polyphonic novel. She identifies Joyce with feminine writing (Kristeva, 1984) and *From One Identity to Another* links his work to that of Artaud and Céline.[4] Kristeva argues that these writers are 'inventors of rhythms and sentence structures which reactivate the repressed, instinctive maternal element by which language constitutes itself as a symbolic function, and which produce a discordance, unsettling the conventional subject and generating in its place a modern subject-in-process' (Kristeva, 1980:124-47). Kristeva points to the heterogeneity of meaning and signification in poetic language as a threat to signifying function:

> This heterogenousness detected genetically in the first echolalias of infants as rhythm and intonations anterior to the first phonemes, morphemes, lexemes and sentences, this heterogeneousness, which is later reactivated as rhythms, intonations, glossolalias in psychotic discourse, serving as ultimate support of the speaking subject threatened by the collapse of the signifying function; this heterogeneousness to signification operates through, despite, and in excess of it and produces in poetic language 'musical' but also nonsense effects that destroy not only accepted beliefs and significations, but, in radical experiments, syntax itself, that guarantee of thetic consciousness (of the signified object and ego) – for example, carnivalesque discourse, Artaud, a number of texts by Mallarmé and certain Dadaist and Surrealist experiments (Kristeva, 1984: 133).

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[4] Jacques Derrida also identifies Anton Artaud's work as subversive (Derrida, 1978: 232-250).

For Kristeva, experimental language works in a rhythmic and acoustic register directly based on the drives. Kristeva proclaims that:

> When poetic language – especially modern poetic language – transgresses grammatical rules, the positing of the symbolic...finds itself subverted, not only in its possibilities of Bedeutung (semiosis) or denotation...but also as a possessor of meaning...poetic language puts the subject in process/on trial through a network of marks and semiotic formulations. The moment it stops being mere instinctual glossolalia and becomes part of the linguistic order, poetry meets up with denotation and enunciation, verisimilitude and the subject and, through them, the social (Kristeva, 1984: 57-58).

While Kristeva stated here that transgression of grammatical rules can escape the linguistic, such an impossible state to realise is better thought of in terms of how seeking such a place might inspire experimentation and perhaps how the use of linguistic devices expands the possibilities for meaning.

Kristeva's model is useful as a topology of experimental writing but becomes problematic in its application to broader ideological concerns. A full realisation of this model of revolution in language is fundamentally impossible because any transgression of the symbolic order must rely on some form of symbolic system for there to be the possibility of representation at all. Australian feminist philosopher, Elizabeth Grosz thus advances the following redefinition:

> Avant-garde practices can lead to a transgression of the symbolic, that is, to the limits of signification, but they do not obliterate them. They are displaced and repositioned elsewhere. Representational ruptures cannot destroy socio-symbolic unities, for, on understanding, this amounts to a dissolution of sociality itself. Radical subversion is essentially reformist: as the order of language, the symbolic, can only accommodate so much change at any given time (Grosz, 1989: 60).

Kristeva herself makes clear that even the most radical forms of poetic language cannot afford to break completely with the symbolic field as it is their only source of organised precisions (Kristeva, 1980:133). For her, language cannot fully harness the musical rhythms so central to avant-garde poetics without ceasing to be language, becoming either music itself or psychotic babble. Even here, I would suggest, sonic elements have reference and Kristeva has ignored the potential of multimodality evident in much of the avant-garde. Thus, for Kristeva, poetic language must posit 'its own process as an undecidable process between sense and nonsense, between language and

rhythm...between the symbolic and semiotic' (Kristeva, 1990: 134). Poetic language is therefore caught between that which it disrupts and that which she says it can never attain. Kristeva has not provided a fundamental structural principle which can preserve poetic language from being reincorporated within that which it opposes. As the processes that give language its identity and power lack a material base, no form of language can actually embody the chora as a true return of the repressed. This is the closest Kristeva comes to positing a source that opposes signification.

Kristeva's theory of the semiotic is not a sustainable form of subversion as it does not operate within the symbolic. The very nature of psychoanalytic theory means the semiotic is always relegated to the position of subverting a dominant paternal law. Also the semiotic is a state prior to language, a site of cultural subversion that cannot be sustained in language without leading to psychosis or cultural breakdown. Her theory therefore creates anxiety about meaning and language by insisting language is repressive and excludes the feminine. Terry Threadgold, who has much to offer this study and will be discussed in this chapter, argues that instead of viewing the symbolic as threatening to female identity, one might look to the grammar as a place where traces of feminine bodies can be found, and to new genres as places where new meanings might be made. It is through considering the grammar in Threadgold's terms that I reveal the subversive possibilities of experimental poetry. (Threadgold, 1999: 174). Kristeva's theory is also refuted by Judith Butler who says her attitude to the feminine 'precludes an analysis of its cultural construction and variability' (Butler, 1990: 80).

Rather than escaping referentiality in the semiotic, experimental poets identify the disruptive elements already present in language, such as linguistic ambiguity, and amplify them. The poet's language can be captured in a linguistic model but this model encourages alternatives and multiplicity as it reacts against the dominating hegemonic forces of social construction that inhibit the voicing of expression and knowledges of the marginalised. I also suggest that the use of sound and word by experimental poets does not escape meaning but multiplies the potential for meaning by conflating the codes of text and sound.

Kristeva's theory of the avant-garde revolution is problematic not only because, as she admits, the avant-garde cannot reach the semiotic (and I have argued such

employment of linguistic devices actually multiplies referentiality), but it remains dutiful to psychoanalysis in considering the semiotic as a feminine and maternally structured space, removed from women in its bisexuality with no particular relevance to women. Both Kristeva and Irigaray suggest there is a dormant polyvocity or uncontrolled textual force but Irigaray considers this space as occupied by only one sex. Kristeva suggests only men can be producers of the avant-garde. She says women are 'estranged from language, women are visionaries, dancers who suffer as they speak' (Kristeva, 1981: 166). Kristeva adheres to women's castrated and secondary status and accepts that only a phallic subject can represent the subversive underside of the chora and the semiotic. Her theory is therefore not adequate to explain the subversive acts of women. For her, only men perform subversive acts because they are guaranteed a unified position within the symbolic order (Kristeva, 1980: 242), which is a consequence of the decisive repression of their oedipal desires. Kristeva asserts that it is only from a speaking position within the symbolic that it can be ruptured. According to Kristeva, women are not positioned as speaking subjects but as spoken-for-objects and from this situation they cannot transgress the limits of the order. She regards women's writing as the forging of hysterical subjects that remain unspoken.

Kristeva's surrendering to phallocentricity does not offer the linguistic tools necessary to fully realise the potential rewritings of dominant discourses forged by experimental poets and does not account for the semantic function that results from the conflation of musical and linguistic codes in multimodal discourses. The insistence of many scholars to rely on Kristeva's semiotic to explain experimental poetry has inhibited a thorough realisation of subversive potential of this art-form.

M.A.K. Halliday and Language as Social Semiotic

Kristeva offers some possible ways of conceptualising experimental poetry, but to develop an effective analytic approach to the subversive use of language in the focus texts there is a need for a more powerful grammar. Such a grammar must be able to realise the systems operating within the texts by realising the internal meaning structure

and how it refers beyond the work in the given context. Systemic Functional Grammar, developed by Michael Halliday, met this challenge. Application of a functional frame to the focus texts of this project enables a definition of the dialogic relationships between the speaker and audience, and speaker and their material. This then discloses the position of enunciation and the critiques posited in the intertextual references of the text. Halliday himself offers an early model for linguistic analysis of experimental text, employing Systemic Functional Grammar in his well-known essay on the language of William Golding's *The Inheritors* (Halliday, 1971: 330-365).

The key argument of Systemic Functional Grammar is that in order to understand linguistic meaning, one has to understand the function of items in its structure (Halliday, 1994: xiv). A grammatical description is functional when it is organised around the tasks language fulfils in human interaction and when the categories of description themselves are arrived at on the basis of the semantic consequences of each element of a clause or sentence. Such a functional description is one attempt to map the meaning potential of a particular group or society. The question about all meta-linguistics is whether these descriptions are useful as tools for developing and resolving issues about human interaction, cultural practices, educational policy and cognitive modelling. Systemic Functional Grammar addresses different meanings of function by proposing that there is function in the sense of a relationship between language and human interactive goals, that is, how language connects with and constructs the outside or non-linguistic environment. For Halliday, language stands in a reciprocal relationship with non-linguistic human affairs; it is motivated by socio-cultural pressures but at the same time the socio-cultural patterns are themselves constructed by the patterns by which one can make sense (Halliday, 1994). This is the outside function of language. Another idea of function is in relation to the intra-linguistic justification of grammatical categories, which is how the categories of description are established by interpreting the values of elements in a formal pattern. This comes from within language. Therefore it is a semantic view of function based on the formal relations by which the speakers construe meaning.

Systemic Functional Grammar contrasts to other linguistic approaches such as the generative grammar of Chomsky (Chomsky, 1975: 36). Functional concepts of complexity, indeterminacy, open systems and randomness are far more useful than

confining thought and analysis to ideas such as innateness and universality. The problem with a formal system is that such a grammar hinges on a collection of rigid presumptions about the uses of grammar as distinct from Halliday's theory that there could be different theories for different consumer needs.

The efficacy of Systemic Functional Grammar resides in how the theory constructs and interprets linguistic behaviour. This includes establishing the value of the meta-linguistic theory for the investigation of the semiotic issues or sign systems beyond the immediate statements of description. Systemic Functional Grammar is effective with experimental texts because it complements the basic intention of experimentation and the need for such texts to be studied within their discourse environments. Systemic Functional Grammar considers language as a resource, not just a set of rules. Considering the fragments of experimental texts and labelling them only provides us with a confusing and vague idea of what a text means, whereas Systemic Functional Grammar offers a way of looking at language that allows one to see patterns and predictability in the most complex of texts.

The modelling of systems and relationships within those systems is a popular phenomenon in science and economics, as these disciplines endeavour to make sense of the world. Similarly, in linguistics, a move towards modelling systems has enabled recognition of meanings in complex texts such as experimental poetry. Indeed the poetry of Chris Mann is about the modelling of systems of language. Systemic Functional Grammar is most suitable for experimental texts because it allows for more than one kind of meaning. It also enables both the text and the performance to be considered for the function of their elements. In Systemic Functional Grammar, atomism has been replaced by function, structure and pattern which are considered in the context of a system (model). Systemic Functional Grammar adopts the Saussurean legacy in which a set of concepts human language can proceed without the analysis putting at risk the essential character of language as a system (Butt, 1986: 13). This involves a shift away from the notion of constituent entities or items and towards the idea that a semiotic system is totally based on relationships.

David Butt recognises Saussure's role in establishing the era of the model because his theory is based on relationships of contrast or opposition (Butt, 1986:15). Saussure's

concepts enable analysis to capture the character of language as a system. Ruquaiya Hasan elaborates on the notion of structure in relation to the meaningful patterns a writer constructs. For her, the manner in which work is articulated can be recognised in the way the meanings of the text create patterns of consistency or semantic drift. The important concept in considering language as a system is relationality, and thus the function of each item of the system in relation to the others (Hasan, 1985: 14). Halliday's theory enables one to identify contrasts and consistencies of semantic orientation in different contexts. Systemic Functional Grammar is Saussurean in the sense that the sign in his model is always semantic and defined by relations, as meanings are the product of the delimitation of signifies and signifieds and the entire system is built around the notion of choice amongst a range of possible meanings, or values. The notion of context, in the Hallidayan sense of a situation type, which is a semiotic construct (Halliday, 1978: 125), and the choices made within this context that form relationships and patterns are most important in realising the meaning of these experimental texts. Halliday based Systemic Functional Grammar on the Firthian understanding of a system's relations to choices within that system. Language is a social activity developed both in the functions it serves and in the structures which express these functions, in response to the demands made by society and as reflection of these demands. Halliday's grammar differs from Saussure's in that it allows for multiplicity in the dialogic sense. That is, the dialogic voices found in texts operate both internally between voices and externally with the reader. Without the ability to describe these functions, experimental works might not realise their potential to explore traditional forms of meaning-making and to challenge dominant meaning-making positions.

Systemic Functional Grammar is a stratified linguistic system considering semantics and lexicogrammar and is therefore able to consider all aspects of language. The stratal pattern of organisation, with an entirely substance-free stratum of grammar at its core, makes it possible to construct complex open-ended networks of semantic potential in which meanings are defined in relation to one another. Halliday recognises that meanings are brought into being in contexts of function (Halliday, 1996:17). These functional contexts of language fall into two major types and the constitutive function that grammar performs differs between the two types. Language constitutes both human

experience and social processes and the social order. The grammar enables the flow of information to coincide with and interact with the flow of events, functioning simultaneously as a mode of knowing or transforming experience into meaning as a mode of doing. Grammar forms a theory, according to Halliday, of human experience and as such it is evolving (Halliday, 1996: 8). The work of experimental poets plays with the evolution of language and subject positions to subvert those familiar or dominant meanings and modes of expression. Systemic Functional Grammar realises the potential of these emerging voices.

The notion of a paradigmatic system underlies all functional description. Systemic Functional Grammar is conceptualised as a network of options; a network of environments within which specific choices are available. These environments are the coming together of a grammatical unit from the rank scale of clause, phrase, word and morpheme and the meta-functional division of the description of choices relating to experiential, interpersonal or textual meanings (Halliday, 1994: 106). The experiential is the function concerned with representation and ideational aspects of meaning construction. Interpersonal meanings are constructed through choices of mood and modality, involving speech function and grading of commitment identified in dialogic formations. The textual meta-function integrates the other two strands, identifying the cohesive factors and the context of the situation. These three levels treat text as a functional polyphony with three patterns of choice combined into one line of linguistic form. I use these three functional levels of language to reveal meaning potential in the experimental poetry under study.

In his essay on Golding's *The Inheritors* (Halliday, 1971: 330-365), Halliday clarifies his idea of 'meaning potential', demonstrating that functional analysis means considering the dynamics between the semantic strategies that are available to a speaker. He says: 'If we represent the language system ... as a network of interrelated options which define, as a whole, the resources for what the speaker wants to say, we find empirically that these options fall into a small number of fairly distinct sets' (Halliday, 1971: 338) and 'At every point the speaker is selecting among a range of possibilities that differ in meaning. All options are embedded in the language system: the system is a network of options, deriving from all the various functions of language' (Halliday, 1971:

338). Halliday shows that the foregrounding of certain language functions is motivated by the speaker and relates to the meaning of the text as a whole and 'when that function is relevant to our interpretation of the work, the prominence will appear as motivated' (Halliday, 1971: 340). He sees the function of syntax as weaving into a single fabric the different threads of meaning that derive from the variety of linguistic functions. Considered from this perspective, syntax is not a totalising domineering form-creating tool; but the product of a complex network of interlocking systems and functions. It is this approach that I wish to adopt in the analysis of these works where the reading of subversive positions of complex experimental texts depends on a detailed analysis of linguistic function.

Halliday considers that syntactic prominence of certain grammatical features in *The Inheritors* shows how grammar conveys levels of meaning, relating it closely to the linguistic function. The establishment of syntactic norms is one way of expressing levels of meaning of a work. In this example, Halliday demonstrates how syntactic foregrounding through a predominance of intransitives, reflects the limitations of the people's actions. A particular pattern constitutes a norm. To evoke a Neanderthal tribe's point of view, Golding uses clause patterns whose subjects are not people but parts of the body or inanimate objects. The effect is an atmosphere of ineffectual activity and helplessness and a reluctance to envisage the whole man participating in a process. When Lok, the Neanderthal watches a person from a more advanced tribe shooting an arrow at him, the event is expressed as a series of natural processes performed by a 'stick' and a 'twig':

> the bushes twitched again...The man turned sideways in the bushes and looked at Lok along his shoulder. A stick rose upright and there was a lump of bone in the middle... the stick began to grow shorter at both ends. Then it shot out to full length again. The dead tree by Lok's ear acquired a voice. 'Clop!' his ear twitched and he turned to the tree. By his face there had grown a twig (Halliday, 1971: 135).

These choices deliberately ignore the connection between 'stick' and 'twig' in a single weapon of 'bow' and 'arrow' and the cause and effect involved. The character, Lok's notion of a 'dead tree' suddenly 'growing a twig' symbolises the Neanderthals' archaic and mystified world-view, leaving them to a destruction they can neither understand nor resist, at the hands of a more evolved people. Halliday shows how

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transitivity is foregrounded as *The Inheritors* is about the Neanderthal's interpretation of his experience of the world and his understanding of its processes. Golding's use of syntactic prominence shows how the Neanderthal's relation to the environment has altered and his perception of it changed.

Halliday considered the dialect and register of speakers and the link, by context and class to intersections between social structure and language as an institution. This led him to formulate the view that language is a social semiotic in the sense that its functional organisation as system (as the potential for language use in social interaction) is a symbol of the structure of human interaction in society. Its function as institution (language shaped and formed in and through social institutions) symbolises social structure (including class structure) and the structure of human knowledge.

> So language while it represents reality referentially, through its words and structures, also represents reality 'metaphorically' through its own internal and external form. (i)The functional organization of the semantics symbolises the structure of human interaction (the semiotics of social contexts...) (ii) dialogical and 'diatypic' (register) variation symbolises respectively the structure of society and the structure of human knowledge. But as language becomes a metaphor of reality, so by the same process reality becomes a metaphor for language. Since reality is a social construct, it can be constructed only through an exchange of meanings. Hence meanings are seen as constitutive of reality (Halliday, 1978: 191).

Many scholars in Australia have further developed Halliday's linguistic theories, especially in order to address a perceived absence of an effective informing social theory. The most important of such scholars in relation to my own work is Terry Threadgold. In 'Towards a Social Theory of Genre' (Kress & Threadgold, 1988: 216-43), Threadgold worked with Gunther Kress to demonstrate the usefulness of functional grammar but pointed to its lack of social theory. Kress's studies have tried to address this apparent lack of social theory with work on Foucault and Bakhtin (Kress, 1985, 215) and for Threadgold this has been an ongoing project. Her book *Feminist Poetic: Poiesis, Performance, Histories* (Threadgold, 1999) appropriates Systemic Functional Grammar to a feminist poiesis which includes detailed analysis demonstrating how the theory might be applied to show the mark of the corporeal in texts (Threadgold, 1999: 102). This has implications for my study which I will turn to in the next section of this chapter. Threadgold positions Halliday's understanding of language, as an interpretant or metaphor for the social, as an obstacle to understanding the social in its relationship to

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language. She points to the usefulness of his theory of language and text and to the way that lexicogrammar might be related, through social interaction, to social context and the multiple layers that result from his three functions of language (Threadgold, 1997: 94). Other critics have used Systemic Functional Grammar for their own use. Cate Poynton has discussed the need for an adequate theory of the relation between language and gender to support the grammatical theory of Systemic Functional Grammar (Poynton, 1990: 250). She considers the interpersonal level of meaning, arguing that the expressive or emotive dimensions of language are little understood as semiotic resources for producing meaning (Poynton, 1990: 252). I also wish to consider the interpersonal level as a means to discovering the dialogic voices in the texts.

Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen have adopted Halliday's linguistic theory for the study of image, sound and multimodal discourse (Kress, 1985; Kress & Van Leeuwen 1990; Van Leeuwen, 1987, 2001). Their studies encompass all manner of advertising, technology and distribution. Van Leeuwen's work on 'Generic Strategies in Press Journalism' analysed the way a news story has many different, partly contradictory, partly overt and partly covert social purposes which are translated into generic structures (Van Leeuwen, 1987: 199). Based on vocal and linguistic analysis, he concluded there was no evidence for a single generic schema of obligatory stages which could explain the genre of texts. He saw the structure of the texts as better explained in terms of a network of generic choices of strategies which realise the social purposes of journalism in a specific context. Kress and Van Leeuwen have also used Systemic Functional Grammar to develop a theory of multimodal discourse which I will address in the following chapter as it applies to the performances of the works under study.

Criticism of Halliday's theory and its lack of a social theory are therefore being elucidated. The notion that genres of texts, through their typical performances in contexts, should be related to relations of power and rule, social difference, sexuality, race, ethnicity and class, means they are processes, not products and therefore subject to negotiated constraint and change. The implications of these developments for my study are present in the complex status of experimental poetry as a genre, in the process of rewriting dominant discourses through a dialogue of voices at the interpersonal level of language.

Systemic Functional Grammar is helpful in revealing potential meaning in the complex, subversive, fragmented text. The messages of these texts are critiques of the political and social order and the theories used to explain that order. Systemic Functional Grammar allows these voices to be heard. Any suggestion that applying structure to such texts only undermines their purpose is refuted by Terry Threadgold's particular use of the theory to which I now turn.

Terry Threadgold and the Feminist Poetic

I have already discussed how Systemic Functional Grammar is valuable for recognising possible meaning in text through its theory of choice and probability. I now turn to the particular use of Systemic Functional Grammar developed by linguist Terry Threadgold. Threadgold, in *Feminist Poetic: Poiesis, Performance, Histories* (1999) argues that aspects of linguistics and structuralism can be made functional for interrogative feminist practices (Threadgold, 1999: 2). I suggest here that Systemic Functional Grammar might then be valid for all subversive texts and particularly useful for experimental poetry. Far from being sceptical of the notion that language oppresses and excludes all voices outside those dominating society and culture, a functional approach to language can allow those voices to speak. Threadgold uses Halliday's theory of register to rewrite the notion of metalanguage in ways that bring it much closer to poststructuralist and feminist understandings of poiesis and performativity. She elevates the disreputed term 'system' arguing that it is 'impossible to simply read linguistics and linguists' understandings of systems as patriarchal if one takes into account the complexities and multiple levels and networks at which, and within which, that particular apparatus can and does work' (Threadgold, 1999: 12). Threadgold refashions Halliday's functional grammar as a way of producing new meanings able to be appropriated by feminist poetics and in doing so constructs a model which is further applicable to, for example, the works of Chris Mann and other subversive poets. The multiple layered functions of the language, including experiential, textual and interpersonal functions, she argues, rebuts any claims that linguistics is always a patriarchal means of imposing systems on language. Halliday

argued that context skewed probabilities and Threadgold extends this to include both text and context as essentially process and transitory categories. She argues that decisions about context cannot be made in advance or made once and for all, for all texts. They have to be made 'again every time in every case, if we are in fact able to imagine spaces of otherness' (Threadgold, 1999:111).

Subsequent development of Halliday's theories have made much of his identification of levels of understanding, especially the interpersonal and textual functions. Threadgold argues that the textual function is especially pertinent for feminist poetics, as it is here that the corporeality of reading and writing may be located. Threadgold describes Halliday's vision of a 'social semiotic' as 'a probabilistic, never entirely predictable system for making meanings which at once constructs and changes, and is constructed and changed by, social processes and social realities' (Threadgold, 1999: 90-91). While it is important to recognise all levels of functionality of language, the interpersonal and textual levels have been particularly helpful in exploring the rewritings of experimental poets. The three functions of language were constructed as realising or producing in a process of mutual action the three elements of the immediate context in which language is used. The particular configuration of these three functions is realised in the register. Halliday's register involved another three elements that are mapped across the wordings. These include the *tenor* or the role of relationships; *field* or the ongoing activity or subject matter being exchanged; and *mode* or the means of production. These three functions operating simultaneously have implications for subversion. The combination of field, tenor and mode was what Halliday called the 'semiotic construct' which was intended to be the actual material, corporeal, spatial and temporal content of the utterance. The patterns in register include traces of other text and contexts or intertextuality.

The textual function allows specifically for metaphoric and metonymic exchanges with the semiotic networks of other texts and other contexts. The textual function therefore realises 'the corporeality of those who read and write, those who make and remake texts, and they must leave corporeal traces in the texts they make and mark the readers and writers who make them' (Threadgold, 1999:13). Threadgold argues that the interpersonal and textual functions of meaning making enable the intertextual function of

text where such texts can be reshaped and recontextualised. The position of enunciation of the speaker reflects the generic strategy adopted, leaving corporeal traces in the grammar of the texts (Threadgold, 1999: 169). These are the traces of iterability, of intertextuality, of the places where the language and the body has been before. This method might be used to ask whether poets create a real subversive position or an alternative to the dominant or an other, or just perpetuate the dominant position through their use of patriarchal structure of language. It will be argued here and found through the analysis of the texts that experimental poetry is structured in such a way that subversive positions are created that therefore breakdown any sense of a dominant position.

Halliday acknowledged the polyphony of texts. He defined register as the total set of patterns of linguistic choice in a text or patterns which located it in a specific, usually institutional context. Gradually the potential for text to realise simultaneously the multifunctionality of Halliday's clause grammar began to be recognised. Halliday's work, developed by Poynton (Poynton, 1985: 234) and Yell, (in Threadgold, 1990) works on the interpersonal function, and this has moved the focus from Halliday's idea of the interpersonal as an exchange of meanings or goods and services to foreground the position of enunciation or voice that prioritise the personal or emotional aspects of language over the representational and the textual, insisting on the productive meaning-making aspects of interaction (Threadgold, 1999: 95). Halliday used the term intertextuality himself in 1985 (Halliday, 1985: 47) to mean the way he framed the relations between texts and contexts. This influenced Threadgold's work in tracing intertextual resources through the lexicogrammar (Kress & Threadgold, 1988). The term intertextuality, as used by Halliday, is a developed form of the dialogism used by Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 1981: 426-9) where there is constant interaction between meanings and they may recontextualise and resignify others, and the intertextuality of Kristeva (Kristeva, 1984: 60) where the transposition of sign systems results in different denotative and enunciative positionality. Thus the use of Systemic Functional Grammar in seeking out the positions of the speaker enables discovery of, not only where the words have been in the dialogic Bakhtinian sense (Bakhtin, 1982: 428), but the dialogic exchanges between texts and readers and writers which constitute constructions of new realities. Halliday conceived intertextuality as both the cohesive patterns of the grammar in a text and as

reference back and forth in the co-texts from a point in the text, the mapping of the connections within a text and the presumed knowledge of other texts, genres and language systems. For Threadgold, intertextuality is constituted by such categories as narrative, genres and discourses which are realised linguistically in texts. These categories constitute the larger orders of discourse on which texts draw just as much as they draw on the resources of the linguistic system.

Threadgold argues that 'while the interpersonal function of language marks the overt presence of the body in the text, it is the textual function of language which most clearly marks the corporeal trace' (Threadgold, 1999: 95). Her position has implications for subversive texts and the position of enunciation. Halliday's textual function is based on coherence with intertextual features. It achieves this in two ways. The first is through cohesion which involves lexical collocation and enables the probabilistic making of text, where patterns which make up the whole text's structures are internally coherent, and cohesive and comprehensible in context. The ability to connect patterns to contexts, via an implicit reader who recognises patterns which move between text and context, implies that writers with similar resources will produce texts in a similar fashion. As a concept, cohesion has the potential to explain in detail some of the complex ways in which speakers and writers make text and are positioned by it in social interaction. Intertextual patterns create a code which speakers will be able to access from their embodied experience of text in other contextual configurations. All of this has implications for subversive texts attempting to undermine authority as the probabilistic layers of patternings always exceed the limits of the immediate contexts of utterance.

Another feature of text identified by Threadgold is the clause message or theme and rheme relationship where specific genres create patterns. These patterns relate to the interpersonal negotiations of the text. She argues that the performance of systems, through the regularity of the patternings that performance produces in a text, consistently and simultaneously positions the writer (for a reader) and allows the writer to construct generic positions for a reader. Together, the reader and writer make the text in a constant process of movement back and forth within the co-text, in and out of the text to other texts and practices. Those involved bring different corporealities to the task of writing/reading so probabilistic aspects become a site of multiple reading and rewriting

(Threadgold, 1999: 103). Anticipating a reader and dialogically responding to an absent interlocuter involves building the listener or reader into the text, and a reader is mapped onto the narrative position. The starting point of the speaker is also the starting point for the reader and the speaker's conclusion in each clause is also where the reader is left, positioned to work with, rather than against, the text. For Threadgold, this is the process through which corporeality is folded into the text (Threadgold, 1999: 182). By analysing Thomas Keneally's novel *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, she argues that reading the grammar in the text can reveal the way the position of enunciation (author) is folded into the enounced. Her analysis of Keneally's text reveals an embedded racism typical of the intertextual resources used by the author where the author wished to achieve the opposite. Threadgold showed here how powerful racist texts remained in their resistance to be rewritten in non-racist ways. This suggests that not all genres are capable of creating subversive positions.

Using the work of Van Leeuwen on genres (1987), Threadgold puts forward the notion that genres are 'constantly reconstituted as they 're-fashion' the ready-made stuff of intertextuality' (Threadgold, 1999: 97). She identifies genres as fluid processes that are determined by their context. Exposing the intertextuality of experimental poetry is therefore a way of showing how the poets under study rewrite cultural products. Genres can therefore be viewed as sets of strategies or processes which shape the meaning of text, but also in turn remake the discourse of intertextual resources as these are reactivated in a particular generic encounter. Experimental poetry can be considered a genre, as it specifies a position of enunciation and typical modes of address, such as dialogue. The interactions of experimental poetry between the complexities of its dialogue with an audience and the intertextual resources of its content mean that it is constantly reconstructed according to the manner in which it refashions its intertextual sources. Experimental poetry is therefore a process, or poiesis (Threadgold, 1999: 97). The poets to be studied closely here use complex linguistic devices to reveal flaws in dominant discourses and create new subject positions where the hegemonic structures of ruling class, gender and ethnic construction might be rewritten. Reading the grammar illuminates these enunciative positions. For example, at the grammatical level of experimental poetry, Chris Mann uses the genre and its context to shape his text.

Consideration of the interpersonal level according to Systemic Functional Grammar can show his attitude towards dominant discourses. It also reveals how he remakes the discourse of intertextual resources as his play with the Token-value system gives Saussure's theory a new context. Analysis of Smith's text reveals a dialogue of intertextual references to the other as poet, woman and ethnic that are woven in a series of collocating word chains, all inspiring a number of interpretations. Intertextual references are being constantly reshaped and through this, as is each work as a whole and our attitudes to dominant discourses. Systemic Functional Grammar is then a way of realising such dialogues, based on intertextuality but without constraining them.

Conclusion

This thesis employs a functional model of linguistics to analyse the language of these experimental texts because it enables the realisation of the meaning potential in the texts. It offers a way into the seemingly nonsense fragmentation and embedded syntax that characterise these works to reveal positions that challenge the dominant codes of meaning. It is particularly useful for experimental texts informed by theory as it escapes the reflexive loop that occurs when applying literary or cultural models to texts that also critique these theories. I engage Threadgold's use of Systemic Functional Grammar, as she offers not only a way of considering the polyphonic results of considering language according to a three-tiered functional organisation, but a means to identify positions of enunciation that allow the voice of the poet to mark the text. I now turn to the performance, and explore the ways that Systemic Functional Grammar might also provide further understanding of multimodality.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMANCE: A COMPLETE PROCESS

In chapter 3, I outlined the ways in which I will proceed to analyse the texts using Threadgold's development of Systemic Functional Grammar. In this chapter I explain my approach to the performances of these works and the ways in which multimodal discourse theory, developed by Theo Van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress, offers a method for realising the meaning potential of experimental poetry in performance. Multimodal theory uses a functional model to realise the possible meaning of visual, textual and sonic semiotic resources for both their internal structural relations and cultural reference. Realisation of these functions is aided by close attention to prosody and indexicality.

I was able to attend one live performance of each work. *On Second Thoughts* by Chris Mann and *Machine for Making Sense* was performed at the *Surrealists* exhibition at the Australian National Gallery in Canberra in 1993. Amanda Stewart and Ania Walwicz performed their works at the *Sydney Palimpsest Festival* in 1996 and Hazel Smith and Roger Dean performed *Poet Without Language* at Sydney's *Performance Space* in 1991.

The primary object of the performance analyses is the live event, although I have relied on the recordings for detailed analysis. Analysing from a CD is typical practice for musicologists and ethnomusicologists (see Nattiez, 1990 and Tarasti, 1994) who will record a live performance, taking notes down during the event and then fill in the detail from the recording. This practice enables closer listening which is necessary for apprehending all of the elements that make up the work. This practice could be seen to conflict with the nature of performance but the two entities of live and recorded performance, although incorporating different semiotic systems, should in no way be exclusive. The development of recordings proceeded in order to replay, reinterpret and enable the listening of more or different details. Therefore a recording should not be excluded, but rather added to the analyst's tools. In the performance analysis of these works, I isolate the sonic elements and discuss how they contribute to the whole. The impact of visual elements is another necessary consideration of the overall communication of the multimodal work. I make reference to gestures and spatial considerations of the performances and their importance to the effect and creation of the performance and its interpretation. I was also guided in my analysis by a survey of twenty listeners who responded to recordings of the works. The results of my survey[5] demonstrated most listeners to be, 'codally competent' (Tagg, 1997: 16), in Tagg's terms as they were able to make some cultural connections to determine meaning potential in the works. The survey also demonstrated a need for engagement with a multimodal theory that could better realise the multifunctioning semiotic systems of the works.

This chapter proceeds by explaining the advantages of multimodal theory over formalistic or hermeneutic approaches. I then discuss the role of the performer, performance and listening audience in turn.

An approach to experimental poetry in performance

Systemic Functional Grammar is not only an efficacious method for seeking out meaning in experimental texts, but a functional approach also enables the use of common semiotic principles across different modes. Therefore the foundation of multimodal theory is most

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[5] The results of my informal survey of listeners of these works are summarised in Appendix 1.

appropriate for contemporary semiotic practices. Approaches to the meaning potential of aural art-forms have driven semiotic studies of musicology for many years and these approaches therefore deserve some discussion before I explain the advantages of multimodal discourse theory.

Experimental works are driven by the innovation and subversive philosophies of the time in which they are produced. The meaning of the sounds is therefore related to events outside the work and cannot be treated as a self-contained system of sound combinations. The weakness of taking a traditional musicological analytical method (and here I include Tarasti, 1978: 78ff), is that such theories are unable to cope with experimentation that operates outside the traditional musical conventions of tonality and harmony. Other models such as those linguistically inspired approaches of Nattiez (Nattiez, 1990: 17-28), usually treat music as an abstract system of tonal and temporal relations that relate internally. The adoption of a linguistic method has proven difficult for musicology where Nattiez merely translates musical structure into linguistic terms (Nattiez, 1976: 50, 148). The adoption of a formalist approach to music is very useful for recognising relationships within a work's structure but unable to realise the relations between musical structures and the larger set of sociocultural contexts in which those sounds are made.

Nattiez and Tarasti have tended to avoid conceptualising music or sound as a referential system whose structures can be considered as references to interpretants, reflections and re-constructions of experiences, all of which are not necessarily intrinsically musical. Tarasti (Tarasti, 1978: 79) has shown little interest in relating sonic structures to a discussion of any possible levels of meaning. Nattiez's theory is also problematic. Although Nattiez is now famous for stating that 'music by itself signifies nothing' (Nattiez, 1971: 8), his use of Jean Molino's sign system or tripartite structure is helpful in understanding the role of performer, performance and receiver. Nattiez calls this tripartite system a 'total musical fact' (Nattiez, 1990: 12). It consists of the neutral level, immanent structure of a musical text; the poetic level, referring to acts of musical composition and the reception of composition, in terms of their perception and the active construction of meanings by the listener. Nattiez believes the value of this approach is 'how the three dimensions can be brought together in analysis of a single piece' (Nattiez,

1990: 81). His insistence on the formal analysis of immanent structure is also important but it seems, after having claimed the necessity of the tripartite structure, he tends to favour this immanent level of analysis, reducing the communicative capacity of sounds to secondary status (Nattiez, 1990: 81). He insists that the perceiver does not receive the sound's message but rather must reconstruct it. Nattiez's notion that the sign in the process of production (poiesis) may be entirely independent of the chain of interpretations evolved through the process of reception (esthesis) does not seem to hold true in most experiences of music and sound. Therefore this model of formalism does not enable a proper realisation and understanding of the social function of sound.

Experimental poetry cannot be analysed using the traditional tools of musicology developed in relation to European art music because it is an art-form that operates at the interface of text and sound and it does not exist entirely in a written form. A fixation on notation hampers the development of nuanced multi-level elements of sonic meaning. It also suggests that the written text might constitute the 'ideal performance', in Nattiez's terms (Nattiez, 1976: 54-55, 239-396), when in fact it is only one aspect of the overall performance. In experimental poetry, the text is transformed in performance and a method of analysis is required to account for this. I contend that a purely formalist study should not create scepticism about the degree of symbolism inherent at the intentional level of sound but should take into consideration the dialogic relationships occurring.

By contrast, the so called 'new musicology' of McClary, (McClary, 1993: 326) who adopts a totally hermeneutic approach in her anti-formalism, can be accused of guesswork and reading between the lines. Ellen Rosand describes New Musicology as 'new approaches to music, most of them developed in other fields which result in a conglomeration of critical activities' (Rosand, 1998: 10). So while new music achieves its aim of liberating musicology from formalism, it would be more fruitful to embrace what technical structure has to offer as a means to an end - that is, to seek, in this structure, elements which make important cultural responses. McClary presses narratives into conventional tonality in Brahms' Third Symphony but she does not use enough detailed analysis of those elements to support the claims that the work contains gendered narrative discourse (McClary, 1993: 327). This then presents the danger that new musicology is trying to 'read into' sound objects in order to push a particular agenda. The credibility of

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such readings can be counteracted by more detailed analysis of the sound resources within the object as a means to providing more support for a reading. This might take into consideration the performer's intention, context and the audience's response. All of these aspects can be considered from a functional stance.

The difficulties associated with analysis of sound and text has led me to a functional approach that might take account of both the internal structure and how this relates to an outside cultural context. A functional approach takes account of both a detailed textual analysis and then how this might be interpreted. It forms a mediated reading between the extremes of formalism and hermeneutic readings. What is needed for experimental poetry is an approach that considers the relations between resources of sonic code and their respective fields of referential association as well as attention to relations between these parts as crucial elements of the internal structure. Such interdisciplinary material is answered by a functional approach.

Multimodal performance

The multimodal performance contrasts to past forms where poets and composers remained within mono-modal forms. It is marked by the poet's choice of an array of textual and sonic devices operating at the interface of text and sound. This notion of choice and intention impacts on the interpretation. The degree to which the intention and interpretation agree will depend upon the context and the commonly shared experience of both performer and audience. The perception of the listener and the conception of the composer, performers and sound engineer are equally important sources of information because their relation to each other, with the sound object and the socio-cultural field of experimental poetry, are all vital to the semiotic systems operating. Such new assemblages call for a new semiotic practice that accounts for the multiple articulations operating. Kress and Van Leeuwen identify four domains in which meanings are made. These include *discourse, design, production* and *distribution.* My focus will be on the *design* and its *production* (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 5-6). In other words, the object of communication, text or score and the realisation of discourses within the experimental poetry genre and the manner in which the work is given expression. I also consider the

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discourses rewritten in the design and consider the different meaning potential resulting from distribution as live event or recording. I have drawn on the appropriation of functional grammar used by Kress and Van Leeuwen for my analysis of multimodal experimental performance. Kress and Van Leeuwen speak of the way certain modes are more suitable for certain communicational practices (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 30-31). The multimodal nature of experimental poetry is most suitable for analysis of subversive works as it enables the rewriting of dominant discourses at the interface of spoken text, sound and visual effect.

The expressive element of a performance adds much to the original text. The text on the page does not always have the same meaning as when it is performed. The mode of production and expressive intonational functions create this situation. Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to the provenance or attaching of a discourse to a signifier that will entail it with meaning and connotation (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 73). They also draw on Lakoff (Lakoff, 1987: 164) to explain the experiential meaning potential that involves the way qualities of timbre, for example, behave metaphorically to connote the same sensation or feeling across different media. They use the example of the descriptor 'soft' to describe a touch, dynamic and timbre. The voice, the most obvious semiotic resource in the works studied here, can make meaning on the basis of provenance and experiential meaning potential, the accent and marker of persona and its timbre and material qualities. Sound has not developed formal grammars to describe it, so its meaning is constructed on the basis of either experiential meaning potential, or grounded in the materiality of the medium and in our bodily experience of that materiality and/or provenance, that is grounded in intertextuality (Van Leeuwen, 1999:192). These two possibilities are flexible, fluid unformalised systems that are difficult to capture in the same way as language. The functional approach raises the status of sound from a medium or form of communication to a mode where its levels of abstraction and functional structure are considered in relation to its use in context or within the compositional processes. Van Leeuwen raises the point that an analysis which systematises music and sound and describes their use in context will 'contribute to reconnecting the concrete and the abstract, the representational and the interactional, the cognitive and the emotive...' (Van Leeuwen, 1999: 192). The major implication of multimodal theory for the performance of

experimental poetry is the realisation of the way sound, text and visual elements interact to create new discourses. These new discourses are created when codes are overlapped and comment on each other.

Multimodal Discourse Theory

A multimodal theory of communication concentrates on the semiotic resources and the communicative practices in which these resources are used. It identifies the multifunctioning of the context and discourses from where the texts come, the elements of the texts and music, the mode of expressing the text and the improvisatory elements involved. While identifying these elements of the multimodal performance, the theory requires a grammar to discuss these elements. As discussed in the previous chapter, Systemic Functional Grammar provides important methodology concerning the realisation of the texts. It also provides a way of conceptualising the performance. Van Leeuwen has employed it in the study of sound and music (Van Leeuwen, 1999: 12). He suggests that musical systems of melody, harmony, rhythm and timbre do have independent meaning potential and can be actualised within specific social contexts. Systemic Functional Grammar enables a theorising of the relation between social contexts on the one hand and semiotic systems that serve to realise certain domains of meaning on the other (Van Leeuwen, 1998: 26). In contrast to musicologists who believe sound only has internal structural meaning, my study will explore the sound systems (including timbre, rhythm, intonation, melody) that do have meaning potential beyond the internal structure of the work. Systemic Functional Grammar lends itself to analysis that does not need to answer whether music systems are structured like language but rather, which systems of language and music/sound realise which kinds of meaning.

Systemic Functional Grammar has now been employed to consider the kinds of meaning in various mediums. Van Leeuwen and Kress have used it to discuss advertising and images (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 1996) and identified its potential in realising the meaning potential of multimodal texts. The sound systems operating in the works studied here are functional and designed to allow the expression of certain meanings. While I consider the texts according to the message revealed by applying Systemic

Functional Grammar, for the performance I divide the analysis according to the devices used. By doing this I appear to be privileging the structural formal elements of the works in the tradition of musicology. It is, however, my intention to show that despite the ability of sound to make meaning in its given context, that is, the experimental poem, this meaning potential is realised in the work through recurring structural patterns. The three metafunctions identified by Halliday - ideational, interpersonal and textual - tend to overlap when applied to sound and music. The use of high pitch, for example, might represent meaning in terms of a structural feature, (or the textual function in Halliday's terms), as well as indicate the relations between people or voices at the interpersonal function. Therefore the material aspects of sound, rather than its communicative function, are a better entry point. Halliday's metafunctions roughly translate in performance to the experiential meaning potential, by considering the indexical entailment of sounds; the interpersonal level by considering the dialogic and intonational qualities and the textual function through the cohesive patterns that hold the work together. These functions overlap and relate to each other.

A functional approach to the performance of experimental poetry also considers both sign producer and sign interpreter in the same activity of making meaning. The semiotic resources available to the performer and audience will therefore determine meaning. Kress argues that the poet and listener (in this case) choose the semiotic resources according to their interest at the moment of sign production or interpretation (Kress, 1993: 172). These 'moments' will be constrained by cultural context and the learnt conventions of sound sources. Sound sources can also be open to new meanings or enable the rewriting of old forms. Van Leeuwen describes the interpretation of sound as neither objective nor subjective, but 'inter-subjective'. He believes it offers 'ways of sharing subjectively experienced meanings and means for dialogue, even if the experience itself remains subjective' (Van Leeuwen, 1999:194-195). He compares the interpretation of sound to jazz improvisation where one might 'take ideas from everywhere and then do something new with it, something uniquely their own, yet shared in dialogue with fellow musicians and audiences' (Van Leeuwen, 1999: 195). Thus multimodal theory provides the tools for realising these meanings. Sonic art-forms such as experimental poetry are appropriate places to rewrite and subvert dominant meanings

because they are participatory experiences dependent on memory and immersion rather than scrutiny and control. Unlike the reading of text or the visual modes, Ong explained that 'sound comes to us from all sides. It envelops us and places us in the centre of a world, and it establishes us at a kind of core of sensation and existence' (Ong, 1986: 72).

I will now proceed to consider the role of the performer, the performance and the receiver within the experimental performance. I have drawn on the model of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) and divided what they call *production* (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 45) into performer, performance and listening audience. I discuss the performer's role and how they are inscribed in the performance. I also discuss performance as an entity, the semiotic systems operating within it and possible approaches to realisations of meaning potential. I also add a section on the listener's role and actual ways in which we listen, not to be confused with the interpretation of the performance. My divisions have evolved specifically for consideration of the performance of experimental poetry.

The Performer: A Sonic Artist

I have already outlined why the performer and his or her role, intention, background and purpose is important to the overall meaning of the performance. To reiterate, these elements provide much of the context needed to understand the works. They form the basis of information shared between the performer and audience members. The performer represents the interface between the composer's aural world, the performer's body limitations and the listener's subjectivity and perception of the event. The performers studied here combine improvisation with recitation to explore aspects of sound and semantics. They embark on their own journey, while inviting the audience's engagement.

The performers are positioned in a dialogical relationship to other performers where these relationships and the indexical entailment of sounds can be mapped and their cultural reference and meaning potential realised. The performance of experimental poetry is characterised by this dialogic exchange between words and sounds. Within these exchanges the performer's presence is obvious through their intonational and timbral vocal qualities. These performers will adopt certain techniques that make their

work a creative exploration. All of the choices made can be realised for their meaning potential, both sonically, textually and at the interface between the two. In Walwicz's performance, for example, the rising intonational patterns indicate a weakness towards the dominant lover/coloniser while the repetition of the word 'soft' represents her desires. In Stewart's work, hysterical outbursts of linguistic distortions represent her frustration and need to express outside of patriarchal discourse. In Chris Mann's performance, terminal rising intonation and dipthongs exaggerate the Australian dialect.

Gender

The most obvious mark of the performing poet comes through the voice which contains the distinctive timbre of the performer's gender. The voice is bound to gender and it is therefore an excellent medium for re-writing and re-presenting because it occurs between body and language. Through performance, the sound of the text brings forth the lived body and intertwines it with the environment and with the other in the interpersonal world. This occurs through the breath, voice and spatial position of the body. A functional approach to the performance reveals meaning potential in these live performed bodies. As discussed in the previous chapter, my use of Terry Threadgold's (Threadgold, 1999: 169) concern for the mark of the corporeal trace in the text, the poiesis or process of evolving bodies, is most relevant to the performance.

Performers mark their delivery with the corporeal trace of the body that includes where it has been before and the influences of the whole social system on it. The markings of the gendered body discovered at the interpersonal level of the linguistic system are now discovered in the intonation of the voice and dialogic relationship formed between the performer and audience, the vocal performer and instrumentalists and the internal dialogues that exist in the individual performer's delivery and their material. Attention to the interpersonal level is also most appropriate for performed delivery of gender, as the sonic patterns can be read in the same way as the grammar of the text to confirm the position of enunciation. The position of enunciation of experimental poets emphasises the sonic qualities of words to rewrite patriarchal discourses.

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While the position of enunciation can be mapped in the delivery of these performers, the use of technology also has an important place in its ability to undermine these patterns. In the work of Smith and the sampling of Rik Rue in *Machine for Making Sense*, sound sampling or the recording of sounds which can then be manipulated with respect to timbre, pitch or rhythm means a word can be chopped up, played backwards, or repeated in a loop. A sample of a word may be spliced or transformed into another word. The use of sound sampling is a means of erasing gender. This is achieved by playing the sample at another rhythm or pitch which will distort the gender and timbre of the performer's voice. Smith calls this 'sonic cross-dressing' (Smith, 1999: 129) and employs the technique of voice manipulation in *Poet Without Language*. The electronic manipulation also creates multiple layers within which the 'live' voice is lost as the audience creates meaning from the sound and text attacking their senses. By manipulating the voice, these female artists are able to play with gender. In the case of Smith and Stewart, this occurs through distorting the voice to a genderless sound. This act is akin to what Judith Butler means when she argues that gender is performative.

By adopting Butler's notion that the subject is an illusion produced by the performances negotiated with particular discourses, including those of gender, experimental poetry might be the place where gender roles can be subverted. In *Gender Trouble* (1999), Butler argued that categories of gender, sex and sexuality were not categories of identity but might be best thought of as performances (Butler, 1990: 6). If gender is a performance which has no origin in expression of self but from accumulation of multiple gestures, acts or performances that respond to and negotiate with received meanings, then repetition will change the field of intelligible performances over time (Butler, 1999: 141). Therefore gender norms are like oral tradition requiring performance to remain living parts of a culture's norms. The action of gender requires a performance that is repeated and this repetition will create gender norms (Butler, 1999: 140). By subverting these gender norms through electronic manipulation of the voice, experimental poetry subverts the 'constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place' (Butler, 1990: 148). Butler's theory has been criticised by Threadgold who contends that it cannot be applied to real women and situations (Threadgold, 1999: 107) but it has relevance for artistic performances that oppose norms on a small scale. The

performances of these experimental poets subvert the power of dominant meanings. The approach to gender in these performances can be mapped in the voiced bodies of the texts and considered according to how they challenge the social norms. The subversion of the performer's own gender is one part of this rewriting. By playing with positions of enunciation, the feminist poets challenge hegemony. Stewart, for example, in performing linguistic outbursts, plays with the possibilities of hysterical speech and the traditional female expression. Butler's notion that sexuality is not a function of nature but possible through discursive production and iteration means 'woman' is an ongoing discursive practice open to intervention and resignification (Butler, 1990: 32). There are obvious difficulties in knowing what might constitute an affirmative resignification. I am suggesting in my study of these works that experimental poetry performance might provide a place for rewriting or resignifying the feminine. Tracing functional features of multimodal discourse shows how this place of resignification operates. Through their play with form, however, these performers might subvert their gender to explore new ways of rewriting and marking their performance. This creates tension and challenges the listener's expectations.

The visual mode

The poets of experimental poetry are able to use visual effects to emphasise the immediacy of their performance and the self-consciousness with which they treat their material. In the performance analyses I will consider visual aspects such as body movements, facial gesture and spatial considerations such as stage layout and proxemics where they are important.

For all performers, the visual mode allows them to make choices that will impact on the overall communication of the work. Visual impact adds another dimension to the production that listeners of the CD will not be able to appreciate. I have endeavoured therefore, to describe the impact of visual features in each performance. For example, the glance between the performers of *Machine for Making Sense* can add much to an appreciation of the dialogue operating between Chris Mann and the other

instrumentalists. Visual effect can also contribute to the development of a stage persona. Chris Mann's hand movements and facial gestures suggest he is in conversation and Ania Walwicz's seductive body movements and eye contact with the audience suggest her self-consciousness. The body and head movements of Amanda Stewart, as she darts between microphones, create a frantic, desperate presence adding to the urgency of her work.

Performance: An Aural Event

The performance exists as an entity created by performers but immediately separate from them, as it comes into being through the interpretation of the listener. This raises issues about a useful approach to such performances. As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, a functional approach is most useful in realising the meaning potential of sounds. It is a way of explaining the indexical properties of sound and the intonational properties of dialogue and relationships between vocal and instrumental parts. It also enables the formal features of the performance to be considered. I will consider musical sound and its indexical properties particularly in the improvised aspects of the works. Linguistic sound properties will be considered through prosodic analysis. In many ways speech is used to resemble musical sound through its resonances which are described here but not measured with electro-processing equipment. I use indexicality and prosody to describe the sonic functions of text and sound, adding specific tools to the theory of multimodality.

These works are characterised by their location at the interface between music and language. This is a scene of confrontation between different signifying systems. It is here that the text might come to signify as sound and sound might form, through intonation, a dialogue or narrative, through indexical entailment. It is important to consider how the semiotic systems of text and sound relate to each other and how they might simultaneously refer to each other. The method of analysis must therefore realise the way the voice might dialogue with an instrument in Mann's *On Second Thoughts* or the way delivery of the text might be appreciated for its sonic qualities in Smith's collocating word chains. The transposition of text sounds onto the critical discourses of the texts in

the work of Mann, Stewart and Smith also creates a new way of 'reading', 'understanding' and 'hearing'. It is here where the poet's modalities and their relationship with other voices and discourses are realised. A new discourse existing between word and sound contrariety emerges. The interacting of semiotic systems is also the place where realisation of experimental poetry's contribution to the rewriting of dominant social and political discourses occurs.

Sound Semiotics

In these performances, particularly the works of Chris Mann and Hazel Smith, listeners recognise how, by combining word and sound in diverse ways and through the sheer immediacy and speed of delivery, the semantic qualities of words become sound. When words and sounds exist in this equal relationship, the possibilities for semiotic exchange between language and music expand. Semiotic exchange occurs because of the differences in these systems. Juxtaposing the two systems allows for different types of meaning to merge. Placing musical elements alongside words increases linguistic abstraction while the presence of words increases the semantic potential of music, as some sounds will appear to have specific connotations.

Semiotic exchange between words and music takes place through the creation of complex networks of verbal and musical associations. Such networks are evident in Mann's performance where philosophical and linguistic theory is met with the sonic contour of Australian 'talk' and in Smith's performance where African rhythms meet snippets of linguistic theory. Smith calls these 'new metonymies' (Burnell, 1995:71) as verbal allusions and statements are accompanied by culturally prescribed sounds which create new associations. The shifting and re-joining of these semiotic systems results in unsettled relationships, previously non-existent relationships and complex superimposition of different subjective spaces. In the case of Mann, the delivery of theory via Australian dialect emphasises the poet's interrogation of truths and his claiming of all thought for popular culture. In the case of Smith's work, superimposition of indexically

inscribed African rhythm over notions of colonialism in the text undermines the coloniser's language of 'truth'.

As an interface of different communication systems exists, the many new discourses generated by the work can be examined. For example, in the work of these experimental poets, new discourses emerge from fragments of philosophy, critical theory, noise and instrumental music and the ways these might interact. Tensions are constantly arising between word and sound. In work like that of Chris Mann and *Machine for Making Sense*, the contrasting discourses exist at the textual level, where critical theory and popular culture blend and at the experiential level of the instrumental music where samples of noise blend with acoustic sounds. The creation of truly unique intertextual discourses like these operate at the interface between existing discourses. Interdisciplinary discourse is a collective discourse and the interdisciplinary work of art creates a strata of discourses, each of which successively alters and reshapes the other.

Another way of approaching semiotic exchange is through the application of musical techniques to poetry. An individual word may relate to another word through assonance, to another through syntactical equivalence, to another through morphological parallelism. Each sign is therefore part of several different systems. Poets such as Walwicz, Smith and Stewart use the parameters of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and timbre in such a way that the text becomes part of the music. The signifier and signified interact continuously and modify each other.

Intersections between systems emphasise how all sign systems, to some degree, point inwards to themselves and to some extent point outwards towards the world. In addition, musical extracts, when taken from one context to another, refer in part to the different contexts from which they have been torn. The particular nuances, sound devices, vocal timbres, intonations and use of sound space will affect the various performances of a particular work. The experimental performers under study here have taken the nuances of speech and vocal inflection and used them to express varying degrees of modality. Such vocal inflection can either work with or against the meanings of words as a way of sustaining ambiguity or reducing it. Mann uses rising inflection to reveal his scepticism of the theories he posits even while using positive finite verbs in his grammar. Vocal enunciation might also connote emotional states that are either only

implicit or concealed in the text. Walwicz's delivery reveals her desires as well as the impact of a selfish coloniser/lover on her. Attention to positions of enunciation through intonation reveals the continuous subversive practices of these poets.

Indexicality

Cultures identify themselves with sound indexically like a dialect. Indexical representation involves the direct association of a musical event with some extra musical object or event, so that emotions previously associated with extra-musical objects come to be associated with the music. The theory of indexicality is adopted from Peirce's trichotonomy of signs which includes the index, symbol and icon (Peirce, 1931: 243-265). The index is a sign, which requires an association or causal relationship between the sign and its object. It is distinguishable from the symbol of which each token or instance is connected to its object only by an underlying or immanent general rule; or an icon which is connected to its object by similarity of sign autonomous properties. Jaroslav Jiranek argues that sound prefers the index to the symbol because the indexical representation of reality can affect the listener's emotions (Jiranek, 1995: 159). Both sound and word use processive signs taking place in time. While poetry works with words, sound consists of artificial sound signs created from the need for indexical relationships in the given context.

The indexicality of sound can be explained using a functional approach where the sounds will have referential meaning shared between the audience and performer. Indexical entailment operating at the experiential function suggests meaning in the music and sounds of these works. In the performances of *Machine for Making Sense* and Smith, ethnic music is used to contrast marginalised cultures with the themes of power in the text. Different types of music, such as oriental bells or carnival music, are an index to different kinds of social contexts. We recognise their different cultural contexts and attach meaning accordingly. Similarly the oral gestures performed by Stewart are indexically entailed representation of hysteria and references to psychoanalysis. The equivalent sense of communication in speech can be determined through prosodic

notation, which will be discussed in the next section. Therefore indexicality might be realised as a communicative function both experientially and interpersonally.

Prosody

Prosody, revealing the culturally learnt nuances of speech, equates to the indexical entailment in music. Both rely on culturally identified signs. The prosodic variation of intonation tends to operate at the interpersonal function where communicable nuances are determined by the dialogic qualities of the performance as voices and instruments interact. Therefore it is most appropriate for improvised spoken texts.

The performers react to and against other performers and texts in a dialogue. In turn, a relationship is built with the audience. Prosodic sound patterns of speech and sound create a dialogue between the performer and the performance, the performer and the audience and the performer and other voices or instrumental forces in the performance.

Prosodic analysis of the words will be used as a way of representing and then examining what occurs at the interface of sound and word. I draw on Allan's prosodic notation to assist in my analysis. Prosody has traditionally been viewed as one of the most fundamental characteristics shared by music and language (Stanger, 1992: 201). It is concerned with the structures involved in the rhythmic or dynamic aspect of speech. It measures the intensity, duration, variation of pitch and phenomena of interruption and transition between sounds in linguistic systems by variation and distribution of sonority and massing or grouping of sounds, to produce meanings and to discriminate among them. Speech rhythms determined by bodily movements, including those of the specialised vocal organs and the ordering of the physical motion or vibration that constitutes the sound, are the basis of rhythm in speech.

Prosodic notation is one way of representing the nuances of the voice on the page. Naturally this is not exact and fails to capture the resonance of the voice which I will be describing formalistically in the performance analyses of the works. The prominent prosodic features of pitch, stress and intonation will be considered. Rhythm is another feature where disjunctures reveal necessary climaxes and suspense points. Prosodic

analysis facilitates discussion of the words in sonic terms and the ability to relate this discussion to the meaning of the words. In the performances analysed here, the rhythmic line and sonic contours of the words are important, especially when the words themselves are incomprehensible. This sonic emphasis of certain words brings forth meanings.

In practice, a performance represents an abstraction of norms from a text. A prosodic analysis may therefore be a description in terms of such an abstraction of norms, representing perhaps more than one possible performance. The use of prosodic analysis on such speech driven works draws out both typical and unusual uses of certain prosodic features. The intonational contour is composed of two categories of phenomena: pitch levels or keys and pitch movements within keys or intonation. Three keys: high, middle and low will be discussed in these works. The mid key range words appear on the same line as the disjuncture symbol, high key appears above and low below. The high key draws attention to important words while low key views information as less important or necessary, even parenthetical. Key may change at the onset syllable but also at or after a 1- stressed syllable within the tone group (Allan, 1986:1).

As well as the key there is the pitch movement within words. I will apply the following symbols taken from Allan to indicate the pitch direction of the stressed syllable:

rise /

rise-fall ∧

fall-rise ∨

level tone _

fall \

On each word an intonational feature gives meaning to the speech. Falls are speaker-centred in the sense that the speaker will typically be expressing what he has to say with certainty and finality. Rise will indicate a required response from the listener. It may be used where the speaker is not speaking with certainty and finality. Rise-fall generally indicates the speaker's wish to have the hearer concur with him and may sound paternalistic (or maternalistic) by issuing demands. It is used when giving advice or making requests. Fall-rise marks the speaker's concurrence with the hearer. It is a mark of solidarity or common ground with the hearer. Level tone often sounds disinterested

and maintains the contours of mid key. Terminal level tones are not final. They indicate something relevant is to follow. The utterance final level tones are used when the speaker is delivering an anticipated or half-unexpected message and wishes to indicate that she could say more but will not do so, instead leaving it to the hearer to work out what she would have said (Allan, 1986: 39). Terminal rise tones that are not on the final utterance indicate that the speaker has something more to say. Level tone indicates the expectancy of a repeated instruction. In the performance of these experimental poem, the poets play with our expectations of rise and fall to subvert their material.

The intonation contour is bound by disjunctures because the disjunctures in a planned text are sense group boundaries. High rise terminal declaratives make the speaker sound hesitant, uncertain of herself, lacking in confidence, deferential or of low social status. In Australian dialect it is used to seek verification of the hearer's comprehension (Allan, 1986: 49). Interestingly, prosodic notation also reveals Chris Mann's use of Australian speech to position himself as the common man at the experiential function.

Stress and intonation cannot be defined using acoustic measurements but the hearer's auditory perception of them is based on the analysis-by-synthesis of the speaker's prosody using acoustic cues and a knowledge of the conventional production procedures for prosody. Stress affects meaning and, as listeners, we perceive the stress that other people are making in order to deduce the motor activity we would use to produce those same stresses (Allan,1986: 2). Stresses are numbered primary 1, secondary 2 and tertiary 3. There is no change in meaning unless the primary stress is shifted. Only the location of primary stress is semantically significant, reassigning lower levels of stress is phonologically but not semantically significant. Stress is assigned according to the speaker's decision.

Disjunctures are used differently in spontaneous speech from the way they are used in the competent delivery in planned texts. In delivery of planned texts, disjunctures mark sense group boundaries and the greater the temporal boundaries of prosodic disjuncture, the more severe the semantic disjuncture between the sense-groups it separates. In spontaneous speech, disjunctures occur at the boundaries between one planned section of discourse and the next. They are used to mark both semantic

disjunctures and to indicate whether the speaker is relinquishing or retaining the floor. If the former, a disjuncture will fall at the end of a clause or some other sense group. If the latter, the disjuncture will fall after a minor category transition element. This is a constituent in the syntactic structure immediately following the disjuncture and in the sense group co-extensive with that syntactic structure.

Breath also creates disjuncture, and in turn has a communicative function. A breath group consists of one or more sense groups and is therefore a kind of sense group (Allan, 1986: 25). The length of prosodic disjuncture correlates with the relative severity of the semantic disjuncture in the delivery of planned texts, but not in spontaneous speech. Prosodic disjuncture marks semantic disjuncture (Allan, 1986: 29). The performer holds the floor through prosodic cues like the nature of the terminal contour of the intonation unit and the location of disjuncture. Often there is no pause at the end of the syntactic unit but the speaker hurries into the next unit, then breathes before a major lexical item. Through incomplete syntax and incomplete intonation patterns, the speaker makes it clear they have not finished. Disjunctures can act as finals to the utterance such as topic pauses marking a termination and change to a new topic. They can form a boundary between two clauses to mark continuity and suspense or operate as a planning pause (Allan, 1986: 30). All the poets studied here make us of disjunctures to indicate the dialogic movement of the text.

Along with prosodic features of intonation and disjuncture, I consider speech sounds and mark them by phonemic symbols where appropriate. Where consonants are heard within a word, the placements and effect of the particular syllables, the onset, nucleus and coda are discussed.

While indexicality explains the cultural reference of the sounds, prosody explains the intonational features of the text and sound. Together they realise meaning potential in the multimodal semiotic resources of these performances.

The Listening Audience: An Aural Feast

In the previous sections I discussed ways into the analysis of the performance while combining aspects of performer and performance. Here I will consider the impact of performance on listeners.

Listeners have a major role in the interpretation of the work. Their role is determined by memory and prediction or the ability to attach emotional meaning to sound and the desire to make sense of what they hear. In order to gain a better understanding of the meaning potential of experimental poetry and the extent to which it can be appreciated, I conducted a survey (see appendix 1) of twenty people and their response to the works on CD. Those surveyed from listening to the CD provided evidence, albeit brief and anecdotal, that listeners make meaning from the words' internal structure and referential semantic function. My study of listeners shows how a combination of factors occurs within the complete listening experience. This experience is dependent on the ability of listeners to locate the text, make meaning from the sounds or appreciate the text as sound.

Philip Tagg (Tagg, 1997: 11) outlines the main features and obstacles of listening. His theory of listening has guided the method adopted here. Tagg believes 'codal incompetence' arises when the transmitter and receiver do not share the same vocabulary of musical symbols. This might result in differing interpretations. Tagg uses the term 'codal interference' to refer to situations where the transmitter and receiver share the same basic store of sonic symbols but totally different sociocultural norms and expectations. This means that the intended sounds are generally understood but an adequate response is obstructed by other factors such as a general like or dislike of the style and what they think it represents (Tagg, 1997, 12). A listener may be codally competent enough to know that experimental text will be unusual, perhaps unlike anything they have heard and challenging to understand, but may be prejudiced in some way towards anything new and spend more attention claiming the work is 'pointless' and invalid when they could be investing energy into understanding it. In the audiences I have encountered, codal interference is not an issue. I did however meet with some opposition when giving a postgraduate seminar on Amanda Stewart's work. While most of the

students were interested and pleased to ask interesting questions about the structure and features of the work, one member did not like the use of theory as subject matter for poetry. While all comments are relevant, the contempt with which the comment was made led me believe the student was suffering from codal interference which would not allow him to appreciate the work.

The audience attending live performances of experimental poetry usually consists of 25-50 year old artists, academics or musicians, mostly familiar with sonic experimentation. This characteristic audience means it would be fruitless to survey another group of random listeners for their response as the situation would be artificial and unrepresentative of typical listeners. My purpose in holding a survey was to test my own opinion against other representative listeners. It was found to be an advantage to have prior knowledge of the genre and those trained in music had a particular advantage in being able to identify sonic features of the works. This structural manner of analysing aural art-forms seems embedded in the trained listener's practice. Those audience members familiar with such work and trained to listen, did find themselves creating meaning in new ways from the treatment of text and sound and at times also found themselves codally incompetent.

Most empirical studies into musical perception (or reception) have been conducted with art music as stimulus. I include here the studies of Francès (1958). Karbušicky (1973; 1986: 26). Iberty (1976) and Rosing (1983) who have drawn conclusions about the relationship between hearing certain chordal patterns and the mood attached to these. Other studies into the referentiality of sound supporting my own project have elicited common responses from participants who were able to describe relationships between scenarios, personality types and patterns of movement, and connect them to emotional states. Tagg, using *The Dream of Olwen* by Charles Williams notes this consistency (Tagg, 1987: 292). The indexical entailment of such sounds is a significant feature of such results. Reception tests are promising ways of validating meaning potential in experimental poetry but the actual sound object is the place where sound semiotics requires consideration.

The sonic material of the works studied here evokes memory within the work or of the other works, having bearing on the meaning potential. Tagg (Tagg, 1987: 292)

identifies such items of the sonic code as interobjective. An interobjective approach is one which establishes consistency of structure between different pieces. Intersubjectivity allows general responses about a piece while interobjectivity relates a particular piece to other pieces (Tagg, 1999:35). Considerations of interobjective and intersubjective features of sound coupled with the intertextual features of words can be framed by a functional model that looks inward to how the systems relate to each other and outward to their context. Such considerations are necessary because it is important to look to the socio-cultural field of study of which the parts, their poetry and their audience are just small elements, in order to discover what is being referred to, discussed, interpreted and consequently ideologically recreated and communicated. The emphasis is therefore on understanding sonic references and their interpretation of experiences caused by phenomena in a larger sociocultural context. Intersubjectivity depends on the degrees to which different subjects relate similarly to the same phenomenon. If they agree on their response then an equivalent degree of intersubjective consistency occurs. Tagg points out that this is a reliable method of gathering information from respondents and is particularly useful for identifying different uses of the same sounds by different individuals in different contexts. (Tagg, 1999: 33). Intersubjective responses allowed me to establish consistency of response to the same performance played to different listeners where structures of sound act as signifiers. My survey was also interesting in revealing intersubjective and interobjective responses. Quantification relies on many individuals finding the same sorts of meanings in the same sorts of sonic structures. Where I needed the audience to relate their observations about musical reception to structural elements, considerable familiarity with the sonic object was required. It is in this context that an intersubjective approach is necessary in helping discover particular sonic patterns according to particular responses. It is not possible to use such an approach with a general audience unfamiliar with such experimental genres. Interobjective responses also allowed me to confirm certain generic features of experimental poetry noted by the listeners such as dialogic voicing, linguistic play and intertextuality.

It must always be considered that educated listeners are indeed 'taught' to listen and this will always impact on such results. But to take an entirely untrained listener would not be representative of the typical audience and their failure to appreciate the

work merely proves that work such as this must be 'read' within its context as progressive, experimental, innovative and exploratory.

Having outlined my method of collecting opinion about these performances, I now turn to the way we listen.

Memory

I explained at the beginning of this chapter that I will consider these performances using both formalist structural analysis and according to external references. The formal structural analysis has much to offer the listener as it accounts for the internal relationships between elements of sound and text. This has much relevance to the way memory is engaged by the listener and in turn how these relationships between sound and text might refer outside of this structure. Austerlitz proposes that musical text dictates reference to the future in that it challenges the listeners to predict the shape of the musical substance perceived at a given moment (Austerlitz, 1984: 4). He sees this notion of memory as a means to musical appreciation for the listener. Listeners hear, store and predict the shape to come and they will be either gratified or not, depending on the accuracy of their prediction. He sees musical time as waves of opacity and translucency. As one moment dissolves it may be strongly suggestive of a substance to come. The listener's aesthetic experience results from their gratification in predicting correctly. This principle of prediction and appreciation applies to the works studied here. In Stewart's work, the sense of surprise is more likely, although certain motifs return which the listener will recognise. This creates unity and meaning in the work. In the works of Smith, Walwicz and Mann, repetition is constant enough to engage the listener's memory.

Tarasti develops the notion of memory further as he notes that the memory enlarges continuously until the end of the work (Tarasti, 1994: 63). The essential comparison occurs very quickly and unconsciously between the sounds of the chain and preceding elements. According to the principle of contiguity and indexicality, the comparison is always made between the nearest preceding musical elements. Memory

might start to diminish but as new sounds are introduced, new significations are introduced and the process continues (Tarasti, 1994: 63). This process is complicated because memory is not only repetitive but also creative. The semiotic resources of sound therefore exist after they have been performed in the consciousness of the receiver as an intonation or impression. These intonations consist of a store of collective musical memories of given style, tradition and musical community. Intonation also affects the process of listening and is greatly determined by elements of prosody such as rise, fall and pause which provide the listener with listening cues. Listening to experimental poetry extends the vocabulary and memory of sounds for listeners. Meyer argues that we have in our minds a learnt concept of form so that when we listen, we compare the progress of the sonic event unfolding with that expected. Our concept of a form is constantly modified by new experiences of that form (Meyer, 1968: 58).

Any sound can be listened *to*, but not every sound can be listened *for*. For the latter to be possible, something in the antecedent sounds or situation must suggest what might come next. Sounds listened for must be recognisable when they come, but not predictable (Alperson, 1987: 56). In the performances studied here, the listener begins to listen for repetitive patterns that relate internally to other structural features and the cultural reference entailed there, but the pace of much of these performances makes this challenging. The listener might be pleasantly surprised when they recognise a familiar sound as their sonic vocabulary increases.

The listener perceives a new language from these experimental works. This language is created by combining the art-forms of language, to which one usually attributes meaning, and the creative sounding of that text. The musicality of language stretches words beyond their semantic limits and foregrounds their materiality (Smith, 1996: 131). Listeners determine meaning by either grappling with aspects that they hear as words, trying to attach meaning to these words, making some sense out of certain juxtapositions and patternings or allowing themselves to transgress textual meaning and be carried away in a wash of innovative sonic experience.

Most sound relies on memory and prediction and socially learned reactions for its meaning. In experimental sounds, certain intertextuality creates meaning out of the text and the reaction to and against that text by the instrumental forces. Listeners try to

process acoustic signals and make sense of what we hear, actively segmenting speech in clauses as it passes. They use syntactic and semantic cues to anticipate the end of a clause and exert special mental effort to finalise each clause as it comes to an end (Slobin, 1979: 37). Listeners have little need for storing exact wording once a clause has been decoded and therefore will not remember the surface structure. Once the underlying meaning has been retrieved, the surface form is no longer necessary and can be cast off from memory.

The listener attends to grammatical or prosodic markers to segment utterances into a hierarchy of constituents, assigning meaning to those units on the basis of both verbal and situational factors. When listening to speech, the listener makes sense of it in terms of what they know about the speaker and the situation and the world in which they live. What remains in memory is an abbreviated and schematised version of what the listener has heard with details deleted or added and interpretation which may be plausible to the listener but not stated explicitly in the original message (Slobin, 1979: 56). We remember the inferences of what we hear rather than the exact original information, so literal comprehension may be the same for all listeners but inference may differ. In these performances we often only take with us the inferences of identity, oppression and linguistic ambiguity rather than the surface structure. It is too complex for memory. There is however, a certain musicality within the intonation that remains in the memory.

Emotion and Cultural Referentiality

One difficulty of interpreting a performance is that, like a textual analysis, the response is individual. Also like a textual analysis, listeners have certain cultural and technological knowledge to bring to the work. In this study, I consider the relationship between index and culturally learnt identification of emotions as well as the way in which works of an experimental nature might actually force the listener to experience an emotion.

Measuring musical responses has led to some concerns, such as whether the emotion is expressed by the music, or actually experienced by the listener. That is, whether listeners are feeling the emotion or just recognising that one could associate a certain feeling with a certain sound. It is easier to agree on the emotion music expresses than on the feelings it evokes. Meyer asserted that emotional responses to music require

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familiarity with the music of the culture from which the music is produced (Meyer, 1956: 17). That is, indexical entailment must be recognised by the listener. Therefore in these performances the use of atonal disharmony and noise in the sound of *Machine for Making Sense* can express the chaos felt by the performers, as can the tension felt by large jumps in range heard in Stewart and Mann who express the liberation of the fragmented self. Similarly the soothing softness of whispering heard in Walwicz's text and Smith's melancholy violin melody are also learnt emotions which do not permanently impact on our state of mind but rather provide a momentary experience with which we can identify.

The audience recognises the emotions suggested by the sounds. This, according to McClary, gives the listener a deeper understanding of their own subjectivities as they acknowledge the cultural work performed by music in consolidating shared notions of self (McClary, 1992: 102). The works studied here immerse the listener through reflexive demonstrations of subversive language in the performance. This not only enables listeners to identify the emotion but to actually experience the frustration of unstable and changing meaning. It also enables listeners to experience, through intertextuality, the rewriting of old forms and they can engage in the creation of emerging discourses. This is where listeners appreciate multiple positions that allow for alternatives to the dominant discourses. This art-form therefore goes further than non-reflexive performances. This is only possible because the works operate at the interface of word and sound where the words speak of the multiplicity and the performance demonstrates it.

Conclusion

In my consideration of the performances I address the role of performer, performance and audience according to the methods outlined above. Performance is an enormous area of study. The method I am using to realise meaning potential in the performances has direct relevance to their experimental and largely improvised nature. The performers use a number of techniques, combining word and sound to create unique experiences and challenges for the listener. The functional approach applied to the meaning potential of semiotic resources in multimodal discourses developed by Theo Van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress provides an important methodology for analysing the performances of

experimental poetry. The principles of multimodal discourse theory focus on the function of elements of performance, conceiving of these elements as constructing discourses or socially constructed knowledges. It is therefore a relevant theory for seeking out the ways experimental poetry performs a subversive act. My particular use of Halliday's metafunctions will focus on the experiential function where indexical entailment of sounds will be traced and the interpersonal function, where the position of enunciation and mark of the corporeal will be mapped through prosodic notation The dialogic relations between the voice and instruments will also be realised as will the modality of voice and sound. The textual function will focus on the cohering qualities of structural unity.

I will now proceed with text and performance analyses of each work.