THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST'S UNCONSCIOUS WITH REGARD TO THE CREATIVE PROCESSES IN FINE ARTS

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I, the author, hereby certify that all the material in this research study, unless otherwise stated, is my own work and has not been submitted for qualification purposes at any other institution.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A great many individuals who have asked themselves the question, *"What is the making, characteristic of the artist, which is not an illustration?"* have found an answer in something like the following: *"This nontechnical making is plainly not an accident making, for works of art could not be produced by accident"* (Tomas, 1964:5). If it is not the artist's skill, proposes Collingwood (Tomas, 1964:5), then it cannot be his reason, will or consciousness and must be something else. In this regard, Collingwood makes the following proposal:

"It must be either his body, in which case the production of a work of art is at bottom a physiological activity, or else it is something mental but unconscious, in which case the productive force is the artist's unconscious mind" (Tomas, 1964:5).

Although the creative process is not a form of condition or a sort of unconscious functioning, created artistic products have definite unconscious consequences and appeal. Rothenberg (1979:351) proposes that

"work's of art represent and incorporate unconscious material and they resonate with the unconscious level of the viewer or audience".

Paul Torrance defines creativity as

"almost infinite. It involves every sense-sight, smell, hearing, feeling, taste, and even perhaps the extrasensory. Much of it is unseen, non-verbal, and unconscious" (Sternberg, 1988:43).

1.2 The problem and its setting

1.2.1 The statement of the problem

Many famous mathematicians, scientists and artists have been particularly interested in the role of the unconscious in the creative process, as numerous solutions to their problems were seemingly solved without an act of thought. The question is therefore whether the artist creates his own symbols by using his unconscious as the basis of his creativity to allow him to react to forms and images around him and whether the creative process requires the testing of the unconscious before presenting the idea to the conscious mind. Theories, case studies, experiments and self-reports by creative individuals concerning the unconscious will be investigated so as to determine the involvement of unconscious processes in creativity. This research study will investigate various art movements in order to establish the unconscious origins which was used as visual sources and incentives to the creative process of an art work. The analysis of the researcher's creative process in her own work will determine the compatibility of the research findings indicated by the theories, case studies, experiments and self-reports observed in this research field. The researcher's own creative process as well as the visual material generated by means of this process will be compared with the contemporary art movements

discussed in this study to determine the role of the unconscious in fine art.

1.2.2 The subproblems

The first subproblem will be to analyse different contemporary theories about the creative process to determine the role played by the unconscious in creativity.

The second subproblem will be to analyse the mental processes which are involved in creativity to ascertain their important role in the creative process.

The third subproblem will be to determine how unconscious processes are visually manifested and to analyse various approaches employed in specific contemporary art movements.

The fourth subproblem will be to analyse the extent to which the unconscious plays a role in the researcher's creative process.

1.3 The Hypothesis

1.3.1 **The hypothesis of the first subproblem** is that various theories regarding the creative process will indicate that unconscious processes do take place in creativity and that these processes participate at various stages in the creative process.

1.3.2 **The hypothesis of the second subproblem** is that conscious and unconscious processes play a role in the creative process. The hypothesis will be developed to show that unconscious processes have

a substantial influence on the self-reports, case studies and psychobiographies of the creative individuals which will be investigated. Theories regarding the unconscious will reveal that the nature of this mental state features noticeably in the creative process. Conscious processes, however, will also be shown to play a role in the creative process as the artist's critical control in terms of corrections and evaluations of the completion of an art work is of equal consequence.

1.3.3 **The hypothesis of the third subproblem** is that modern contemporary art movements, namely Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism, will manifest various similarities in the creative procedures and processes involving the unconscious. Similar technical approaches involving chance, accident and automatic methods will reveal that the unconscious was an underlying element of influence. The exposure of the unconscious through visual imagery will portray a dream-like interpretation by the artist as an active participant in his or her mental processes during the creation of an art work. It is hypothesised that these factors allowed modern art movements to connect absurdity and irrationality with the unconscious thereby presenting these movements with new creative methods such as action painting, automatism, abstraction and so on.

1.3.4 **The hypothesis of the fourth subproblem** is that examples of unconscious creative processes are evident in an analysis of the researcher's practical work. The hypothesis is extended to show that both conscious and unconscious processes are apparent in the researcher's practical works and that these processes correspond to great extent with the self-reports, case-studies and psychobiographies of prominent creative individuals. Various techniques established in Surrealism and Abstract Expression involving the unconscious as an

underlying element of influence will show a relation to the researcher's practical work. It will also be possible to relate to automatic techniques involving elements of chance and accident applied by the researcher, to the various techniques applied by these modern movements. It is hypothesized that various techniques applied by certain Surrealist artists to exploit the rich imagery of the unconscious, will be identifiable in various works of the researcher.

1.4 Definition of terms

Unconscious: This is part of the mind containing thoughts or memories of which an artist is not consciously aware of during the creative process. In attempts to attain a direct outpouring of unconscious material, artists endeavour to recognise these unconscious wishes, thoughts or feelings through personally directed free association, drugs, dreams and so forth.

Creative process: This may be defined as a process of original problem solving, that is, a process by means of which original products are generated. A product could be a response, an idea, a solution, or an actual product. *"Original"* means *"unusual"* (i.e. statistically infrequent) and of high quality (i.e. productive, valuable, worthwhile).

Fine Arts: This is a term applied to the *"higher"* non utilitarian arts, as opposed to applied or decorative arts. In its most common usage the term is taken to include painting, sculpture, and architecture (even though architecture is obviously a *"useful"* art), but it is often extended to incorporate poetry and music too.

1.5 Delimitations

This study will focus predominantly on the part played by the artist's unconscious in the creative process in Fine Arts. Although sporadic references will be made to other domains of creative activity, these references will only be employed to explain specific concepts in connection with unconscious thought processes in general, which are also applicable to the domain of the Fine Arts.

1.6 Importance of Study

As Rudolf Arnheim (1962:1-2) points out: *"Artists, in particular, have learned to tread cautiously when it comes to reporting the internal events that produce their work. They watch with suspicion all attempts to invade the inner worship and to systemize its secrets surely ..."* . The creative process has remained a mystery as, *"Almost never does the creative artist know very much about the product he will eventually create. Not only are the details lacking at the start, but some of the most crucial elements .. will be discovered during the course of the process of creating"* (Rothenberg, 1979:129).

This study hopes to draw an awareness of the various aspects of creativity and the degree of influence these aspects have on creating a work of art. It is therefore important to analyse the involvement of the unconscious in the creative process since these processes *"are not the only ones to rely upon impulses from outside the realm of awareness, but they are unique in that their results give the impression of being beyond and above what can be accounted for by the familiar mental mechanisms. To the artist himself, his accomplishment is often a cause*

of surprise and admiration , a gift from somewhere rather than the traceable outcome of his effortless" (Arnheim, 1962:1-2).

As we have seen in the preceding quotations, the use of unconscious processes is a characteristic that has been attributed to creative thinkers. Because of the fact that art is based on human feelings and emotions expressed in symbolic form, it is important to discuss the origins from which creativity is released. Known things do not, as a rule, need symbolic expressions: these are reserved for revealing the unconscious mind. It is therefore important to analyse the involvement of the unconscious in art as creativity cannot exist alone without allowing the inner mysteries of the unconscious to be expressed visually.

1.7 Reference system

The Harvard method is used as the reference sysem for this research study and it entails the following information:

1. The author of the book as well as the date of publication, for example (Weisberg, 1986 ...)
2. The page number of the book, for example (... , 36).

According to this method, the information is furnished in brackets throughout the text and is mentioned in detail in the Bibliography. The Bibliography is alphabetically arranged according to the author's sur-name and is placed at the end of the research study.

1.8 Visual material

All photographs are placed separately from the text in an annexure at the end of chapter five, for example, photograph number 8 will be found in figure 8 (fig 8). The researcher made use of visual material obtained in Library books and magazines pertaining to the field of study. Illustrations of the work of contemporary artists and visual material featuring the researcher's practical work will be available for the purpose of analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 2
THEORIES REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN CREATIVITY

The mystery surrounding of the role of the unconscious in creativity is certainly not a new phenomenon. The belief expressed by the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians that shameful memories are censored and condemned to an unconscious part of to the psyche was clearly noted by Dante (Weisberg, 1986:1).

After completing their best works, many artists cannot explain why their images have taken on a particular form or quality. They regard themselves merely as instruments in the creative process. Such experiences have played an important role in the development of theories regarding creativity that emphasise the question of whether or not the unconscious is present in creative processes. This question is the main subject of discussion in this chapter. It investigates the theories of various individuals on the topic of the unconscious. The aim is to introduce the idea that these individuals were aware that in artistic productions, control and reason have become less important, leaving dreams and imagination to be used consciously as the gateway to an unconscious world.

2.1 Graham Wallas's theory

According to Graham Wallas (1926), there are four stages in all creative acts. The first stage, ***preparation***, involves a long period of intense conscious work, without success. This is the stage in which potentially useful ideas are considered (Weisberg, 1986:19-20).

After this period of preparation, the problem is put aside and not thought about consciously. During this time, according to Poincaré (1952), Wallas (1926), Armbruster (1989) and Sinnot (1970), the second stage called ***incubation*** occurs, as the potentially useful ideas from the preparation stage are unconsciously combined in new ways. It is in this stage that processes unique to the creative process are so important.

If the incubation stage is successful, in the next stage, the person has a sudden experience of ***illumination***, a sudden insight into the solution of the problem. The illumination stage is often related to the so-called *"aha"* experience of the creative artist (Russ, 1993:3). During this stage the creative plan of the artist starts to develop. This stage is generally regarded as the critical incident of creative thinking. The illumination stage produces only a hint of the solution, however, with ***verification or revision***, Wallas's final stage, being worked out later through analysis and evaluation.

According to Wallas (Russ, 1993:3) this final stage is usually controlled by the consciousness as the artist then ***associates*** and links the unconscious reasoning of the creative idea to his conscious thought. The hypothesis must be tested; the painter must stand back and evaluate and rework the painting. Critical and logical thinking must be dominant in this stage.

Of Wallas's four stages, the incubation stage is directly concerned with unconscious thinking. The term incubation is sometimes used to refer simply to a period of time spent away from the problem, whether or not it ends with illumination (Weisberg, 1986:20). In terms of this

interpretation, incubation occurs simply if the person performs better with a break than without it. Wallas dit not use the term in this sense - by his definition, incubation involves active unconscious processing and the time spent away from the problem that is new and unrelated to what came before it.

2.1.1 Interpretations and analysis of Wallas's theory

Bailin (1988:77) believes that it is not really possible to separate Wallas's stages in actual acts of creation and that the process of creating must, therefore be viewed as a whole. In terms of empirical investigations, there is very little evidence of a distinctive phase of incubation involving unconscious processes to do their work.

W. Edgar Vinacke (Arieti, 1976:18) is particularly critical of theories that assume that the creative process is divided into a given sequence of stages. He reminds us that in some creative works, especially in Fine Art, there is a series of Illuminations which begins in the first draft or sketch and ends with the completion of the work. Incubation, according to Vinacke (Arieti, 1976:18), does not occur at a particular stage, but preferably operates to varying degrees throughout the creative process. Vinacke concludes that creative works do not emerge suddenly or completely, but are gradually developed through the process of many incubations and illuminations.

Silvano Arieti (1976:18) argues that Wallas's third stage (illumination), is the basis for the creative process and that the other three (preparation, incubation and verification) are not. Of Wallas's four stages, the first (preparation - requiring study of the subjects, collection of data, and so forth) and the last (verification, through other examples, models,

mathematical proofs, and so forth) are in the sphere of consciousness and easy to understand. According to Arieti (1976:18), it is concerning the stages of incubation and especially illumination that our knowledge and understanding leave much to be desired.

As Gruber (Russ, 1993:4) correctly points out, Wallas's stage model is incomplete. It does not include the early stage of problem finding or the final stage of expansive application of the creative product. However, Wallas' basic stages remain theoretically useful.

Spiro and Myers (Glover, 1989:178) suggested that individuals might accomplish a flexible representation of knowledge during the preparation stage by encoding (representing in memory) a lot of information; by encoding the same information in many different ways; and by using different modes or styles of thought (eg. verbal and visual-perceptual) in encoding information. In sum, the analysis of Spiro and his colleagues suggests that, in the preparation stage, creative individuals construct very rich, interconnected flexible cognitive structures that are the raw materials for restructuring in the art of creation to follow.

2.2 Sigmund Freud's Theory

Freud was the first to suggest clearly a dynamic theory of the relation of unconscious thought processes to creativity. Creativity was seen as the result of unconscious conflicts between drives and needs sublimated through the ego's effort into results useful to the creator as well as society. Creativity was also seen as a substitute for achieving satisfaction and avoiding the hardships of reality. The creative process

thus originated within and not outside the person, and the creation mirrors unconscious imagery after it has been accepted by the ego.

According to Freud (1947:27), the creative person accepts the freely rising ideas, the noncreative person does not. It is when these unconsious forces become *"ego-syntonic"* (i.e. conformity with the ego) that, in Freud's words, the occasion exists, *for "achievement of special perfection",* that is , creativity. Freud distinguished between two basic kinds of thought: **primary process thought** and **secondary process thought.**

2.2.1 Primary-process thinking

According to Freud (Nossel, 1984:43) primary process thinking can be understood as the mental functioning typical of early childhood, before reality orientation, language and the ability to hold back direct satisfaction have developed. The small child lives in a world of unreality, a world not yet formed according to the reality principle. The child's instinctual drives strive to be fulfilled immediately even though he or she are not yet aware of possible realistic consequences. Nor are children aware of the realistic limitations of his/her own abilities as everything is thought of as possible, even though it is impossible. Logical contradictions do not yet exist. An important characteristic of primary process is its striving for complete release of tension without delay. The form of thinking in primary process is that of nonverbal imagery.

The satisfaction of unfulfilled needs and wishes are, according to Freud (Ochse, 1990:14) controlled by primary-process thought assuming symbolic forms. In bringing this about, the ordinary laws of logic and

reason are avoided. This thought process is unconscious and is controlled by die mind's instinctive primitive energies which as suggested by Freud, are the source of creative inspiration. One of the main differences between creative people and others, reasons Freud, is that they have the ability to allow fantasies stirred-up by the unconscious to break through the repressive barrier into consciousness, but also to keep the fantasies under the control of the ego.

In dreams, for example, which according to Freud (Rothenberg, 1979:36), depend on primary-process thought, one person can symbolise both a beloved and a hated person. Freud made some experimental connections between the dream processes he had discovered and the creative process in art. Daydreams as well as fantasies are decidedly egoistic and therefore socially unacceptable. In art, according to Freud (Ochse, 1990:15), the artist softens these wishes through the disguises and changes produced by formal aesthetic devices.

2.2.2 Secondary-process thinking

Slowly, as the child learns more about the world around him, secondary-process thinking develops, according to Freud (Nossel, 1984:44). This form of thinking occurs in words, in sentences - in language rather than imagery, pictures and symbols. Primary-process thinking still continues when secondary-process thinking has developed. Both continue to interact.

Secondary-process thought falls under the control of the ego. it is conscious, rational, follows the rules of logic and is tied to experience, Freud (Weisberg, 1986:22-23) explains that the thought of food may

lead to the thought of one's kitchen because these two phenomena are related in experience. Primary-process thought is thus *"freer"* than secondary-process thinking, although it does follow its own logic. Therefore, two thoughts that would ordinarily seem unrelated (to the conscious thinker, at least) can be joined in primary-process thinking.

2.2.3 Interpretations and analysis of Freud's theory

Colin Martindale (Glover, 1989:217-218) has recently argued that all nonlogical thinking, such as *"associational"* thinking, is primary-process thinking. That is, if presentation of some situation causes the recall of some other situation because the two are associated, Martindale would call this primary-process thinking. Martindale's theory is a very broad interpretation of primary-process which, as he notes, turns much ordinary thinking into primary process thinking. In looking at the creative individual, Martindale (1981:329) insists that:

> *"creative people must have an above average ability to shift form unfocused attention or primary process to focused attention or secondary process thought."*

Weisberg (1993:31) argues that primary process also, depends on the hidden emotional content of thought and on mechanisms such as transformation, condensation and displacement, which Martindale's distinction ignores. Weisberg will therefore make a distinction between *"ordinary"* associational and analogical thinking, which involves conscious thought and associative connection of which the thinker is aware; and primary-process thinking, which, even when it serves

secondary-process thought, uses mechanisms and associations not available to ordinary thinking.

Neo-Freudeans like Rothenberg (1979), Kris (1952) and Suler (1980) toned down Freud's emphasis on the primary-process by stressing the fact that creative thought occurs under conscious control, and so cannot involve purely primary-process thought. However, for the emotional aspects of creative work, the chief emphasis - especially in the arts - is still placed on the primary process. The Neo-Freudeans also adapted the concepts of primary-process and secondary-process thinking, resulting in more overlap between them. For example, one argument (Weisberg, 1993:31) is that the primary-process mechanisms of condensation, displacement, and so forth, develop to serve secondary-process thought, making the distinction between the two types of thought less sharp than it was in Freud's original formulation. The emotionally laden, unconscious associations based on unsatisfied childhood needs are still assumed to be limited to primary-process thinking.

Pinchas Noy (Rothenberg, 1979:43) argued that primary process thinking undergoes progressive development throughout life and functions side by side with secondary process rational thought in adult waking life. Primary and secondary process thought are therefore only distinguished because of having different functions.

Weisberg (1993:34) states that although the Freudian perspective and it's offspring are often fascinating and provocative, they are sometimes of limited use in understanding creative thinking. One difficulty, according to Weisberg, with any Freudian analysis, is that the Freudians usually do not conduct experiments or in any other way try to provide

independent evidence to support or contradict their analysis, so that the issue becomes whether or not one finds the analysis making sense and compelling.

There is a current growth in evidence favouring speculation that primary-process thinking is a function of the right hemisphere of the brain whereas secondary-process thinking involves the left hemisphere (Nossel, 1984:45). Joseph (1992:201-203) has indicated that the left cerebral hemisphere specialises in discreet focal information processes underlying logic and that the right hemisphere is more diffusely organised involving the creative faculties.

2.3 Arthur Koestler's Theory

The idea that creativity is a faculty characteristic of a certain type person rests on the claim that there is a definite process which characterises creativity. There have been many attempts to describe the nature of such a *"supposed"* process. Arthur Koestler (1964) offers a description of the creative process, which has been quite influential.

Koestler's (1964) theory of creativity combines Poincaré's (1952) view with a more intricate examination of the unconscious that is based on Freud's theory. Koestler's basic assumption about problem solving is the same as Poincaré's: solving a problem involves combining thoughts, and creative problem-solving involves linking strange combinations.

To use Koestler's own metaphor, *"The history of science can be seen as many marriages of ideas previously thought to be strangers or*

incompatible, and the matchmaker in these marriages is the unconscious" (Weisberg, 1986:21). Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press is an example of such a marriage namely **bisociative thinking**. Gutenberg's invention came about when he realised that a wine press could provide a principle to be used to print letters on a page. Combining these two previously unrelated associations or items of knowledge - one revolving around printing letters on a page, and the other around pressing grapes to make wine - resulted in a new stream of thought and a revolutionary invention.

According to Koestler (Weisberg, 1993:43), Gutenberg's insight was helped along by the wine that he drank; alcohol presumably works to lower conscious restraints, and can thereby help primary-process thought. Koestler chose the term *"bisociation"* for the process whereby two, previously unrelated ideas are brought together and combined. According to Koestler, every creative act involves such a connection or bisociation which only occurs if the artist has been thoroughly immersed in the problem for a long time.

2.3.1 Interpretations and analysis of Koestler's theory

Silvano Arieti's (1976:20) comment on Koestler's theory is particularly critical: *"this author has gone far beyond the reach of common sense".* Arieti argues that Koestler is correct in declaring strongly that in many innovations we find a mental construct that usually appears in two habitually incompatible contexts. But the explanation of how such two habitually incompatible contexts are united in the creative work is not explained by Koestler. Arieti reasons that he does not seem to recognize that some contexts use forms and mechanisms that belong to the primary process.

An interesting controversy emerged in this area. Perkins (Glover, 1989:345) argued that Koestler's description tried to point to extra-ordinary thinking process; he tried to supplement ordinary reasoning with something more powerful. Perkins contradicted this idea with the claim that most creative acts can be explained reasonably by means of a model in which a person uses certain ordinary thinking processes more intensively, or with special goals in mind. In his view, the difference between a creative and an uncreative person is a difference of degree and purpose, not a difference of kind. Perkins describes Koestler as contributing mainly to the description of the products of creative thinking: a remaining problem is how to specify the processes of creative thinking in more detail.

2.4 Ernst Kris's Theory

Ernst Kris (1952:60) explains his theory of *"regression in the service of the ego"* which in his words is the capacity to gain easy access to unconscious material without being overwhelmed by it.

This mental process is a description of the creative person's access to primary process modes of thought. Kris dealt with the preconscious system discussed by Freud (1917:296-297) which can best be conceived as a process intervening between conscious and unconscious activity.

Kris's (1952:60) concept emphasises the daring free play in creative thinking and claims to explain the striking leaps of imagination, the intensity and the emotional profundity in completed works of art. Like many previous psychoanalysts exploring art before him, Kris was struck

by the way art seemed to reveal unconscious material more promptly than ordinary waking thought, and appeared like dreams, reveal such material in the form of symbols, images and ambiguities that carried intense emotional charge.

Regarding Freud's (1938) theory of dream formation, there is indications that these kinds of effects in dreams were accomplished by primary-process thinking and Kris, like his predecessors in psychoanalysis, took for granted that primary-process thinking was responsible for the same effects in art. He proposed that, similar to the ordinary condition in dreaming, the creator's attention was withdrawn from real objects in reality. Kris (1952:60) maintained that the creator temporarily returned to primary-process thinking; that is, the creator adapted the developmentally primitive modes of thought characteristic of dreaming but controlled this regressed faculty of knowing by the functioning of the ego.

Kris distinguished creation as a condition, *"in which the ego controls the primary process and puts into it's service ... the psychotic condition in which the ego is overwhelmed by the primary process (1952:60)."*

Kris's formulation and the analyses of art by psychoanalysts before him, (Arieti, 1976; Bush, 1969; Giovacchini, 1960; Suler, 1980) clearly assume and emphasise a similarity between dreams and works of art. Kris (1952:60) therefore suggests that the ego may voluntarily gain access to primary-process thought by way of the preconscious and that many creative products from wit to art come from acts of *"regression in the service of the ego"*.

2.4.1 Interpretations and analysis of Kris's theory

In Arieti's (1976:24) opinion, the use of the primary process is not necessarily to be viewed as regression being clearly revealed, but as an emerging accessibility or availability, which is only occasionally connected with regression. However, according to Arieti, this difference between Arieti's view and that of Kris (1952) may be secondary and semantic in nature, based on a difference in their use of the word regression.

Arieti's main difficulty in accepting Kris's formulations concerns the way he tries to explain how this *"service of the ego"* takes place. To Arieti (1976:24) it is not enough to say that mechanisms such as displacement and condensation occur or are made suitable with ego function; we must understand how this suitability is carried out. Kris, according to Arieti (1976:24) remains to a large extent in the energetic-libidinal framework of Freudian theory. Kris gives creative importance to the system's preconscious rather than the unconscious, that is, to what is not present in consciousness but may more or less easily become conscious. He states that the preconscious process becomes subject to free or mobile energy that comes from the id (the mind's instinctive energies) and is drawn into the primary process. Arieti states that on the other hand:

> *"the reverse (unconscious material becomes preconscious)occurs when id derivations are cathected [that is, invested] with ego energy and become part of preconscious mental processes ..."* (1976:24).

The preconscious, according to Kris (Nossel, 1984:48) is that group of mental processes or functions which are not subject to restraint, but may

pass into consciousness without difficulty under given conditions. The basic assumption is still that the ego returns to deeper levels of primitive experience and motivation not only in sleep, intoxication and psychoses, but also in many creative processes. It can control its own degree of regression, and by this means regain improved control later, when the regression is reversed.

According to Joseph (1992:19-20), Freud explains that the preconscious contains information and memories that exist below the surface of the consciousness and in this respect, it is part of the unconscious. Initially, thoughts, feelings and desires exists as unconscious impulses that try to release themselves into consciousness. To reach the conscious mind, however, these unconscious impulses must first pass through the preconscious. The preconscious mind serves in some respects as a psychic corridor that links, yet separates, two mental fields of interest.

2.5 Evaluation of different views regarding the role of the unconscious in creativity

2.5.1 Wallas

It is acceptable to believe that the creative process involves not only conscious evaluation but unconscious interpretation as well. Bailin's (1988:77) statement on the creative process seems acceptable. The creative process is to be regarded as a whole in which the conscious and unconscious mental processes are used together to solve the creative problem.

2.5.2 Freud

According to the Neo-Freudeans (Kris, 1952; Suler, 1980), the creative process involves an overlapping between the primary and secondary process thinking. As Weisberg (1993:36) has stated, there is not enough evidence to substantiate that Freud's two mental processes have different distinguishable functions. It is therefore acceptable to agree with the Neo-Freudeans that overlapping between these processes may occur and that the creative process involves a combination of conscious and unconscious mechanisms. Pinchas Noy's (Rothenberg, 1979:43) argument that the primary and secondary-processes function side by side in the creative process, is convincing as both mental states play an important role in creativity.

2.5.3 Koestler

Arieti's (1976:20) remark on Koestler's theory is relevant to an extent as he agrees with Koestler's theory about bisociative thinking. All the same, Arieti's notion that Koestler's theory is irrelevant to creative thinking is disagreeable as the creative process requires unrelated associations to allow the artists' mental processes to find new solutions and create new ideas in their own work. Perkins (Glover, 1989:345) on the other hand, associates ordinary thinking with the creative process. It is the researcher's opinion that the creative process involves certain degrees of thinking, depending in what state of mind the artist requires to be. *"Ordinary thinking"* may be viewed as a combination of conscious and unconscious thought processes which are the main factors contributing contributing factors to the creative process. Perkins and Koestler are therefore merely describing mental processes in the creative process that vary in levels of consciousness.

2.5.4 Kris

Arieti's (1976:24) criticism of Kris's theory on the preconscious is irrelevant on the subject of creativity since he states that Kris is forgetting the unconscious role in creativity, and this preconscious mental state involves conscious processes as well. Freud (Joseph, 1992:19-20) interpreted the preconscious as being a psychic corridor through which conscious and unconscious processes pass freely under given conditions involving creativity. Thus it seems feasible to agree that the preconscious state is relevant to the subject of creativity because it involves conscious and unconscious processes both of which are elements playing responsible roles in the creative process.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES CONCERNING THE ROLE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Theories emphasising the importance of unconscious factors in scientific creation and other fields of creativity have been influenced largely by the numerous descriptions of these sudden, mysterious, subjective leaps of thought. Such theories have proposed what seem to be equally mysterious explanations involving the idea of unconscious "work" going on in the mind of creative artists, work that somehow sifts out the unnecessary aspects of their thinking and focuses them on the correct answer.

There are many examples of such leaps of thought available and a number of these reports were found to be of questionable accuracy. The choice has been made to discuss the selected reports in this chapter, partly because they are connected to very important, far-reaching discoveries and partly because they are examples connected with rather varied subjective states of consciousness.

3.1 Mary Gedo's psychobiography on Picasso's work

In recent years a number of highly acclaimed psychobiographies have appeared that provide rousing analyses of the creative process. Weisberg (1993:28) explains the term *"psychobiography"* as a survey involving psychoanalytic case studies of the past of several great individuals. These studies in turn promote general beliefs concerning the processes that emphasise creative production. For example, in Maynard Solomon's (Weisberg, 1993:31) psychobiography of Beethoven, he argues that the several radical shifts in Beethoven's

music could have been caused by important life incidents, which were clearly revealed in this composer's music by the influence of his unconscious.

Mary Gedo (1994:170) similarly argued that through analysis of his earlier experiences much in Picasso's works could be understood more easily to be a result of what these experiences left in his unconscious. As an example, Gedo refers to a preliminary sketch (fig. 2) made for the great painting *"Guernica"* in which Picasso painted a woman wearing a kerchief on her head, holding a dead baby. Gedo (1994:70) argues that the woman was painted with a kerchief because the incident which stimulated the painting, the bombing of the Spanish city of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War, unconsciously reminded Picasso of a childhood incident. In 1894, in his home city of Malága, Spain when Picasso was three, an earthquake struck this city and during this terrifying incident, Picasso's mother uncharacteristically wore a kerchief as she led the family to safety (Gedo, 1994:70).

The bombing of Guernica, however did not consciously affect Picasso as he only read newspaper accounts and saw photographs of the event. Picasso (Gedo, 1994:170) also reported that the earthquake caused a feeling of excitement rather than fear, raising a basic problem for Gedo's attempt to rouse the bombing of Guernica and its emotional effect on him to a common standard.

Gedo also argues that Picasso's participation in the development of Cubism can be traced back to the feelings that overwhelmed Picasso each day when, as a young child, he was taken from home to school. According to Gedo (Weisberg, 1993:35), the fragmented feelings that

young Picasso felt were expressed in the fragmentation of objects in Cubist painting.

Weisberg (1993:34) argues that even if the newspaper accounts were enough to prompt Picasso to remember his early experience, this would be a straightforward case of one event being recalled by another, as happens to all of us when something is triggered by an event occurring today. Picasso commented that the reason why the memory of the earthquake was so unique was because his mother had worn a kerchief. This comment, according to Weisberg (1993:34-35) indicated that Picasso was consciously able to recall the earthquake. Therefore, Weisberg (1993:351) reasons that to ascribe its recovery to the bombing is an entirely needless call on unconscious thinking, even given the fact that Picasso was three when the earthquake occurred, one could claim that he was remembering directly.

Weisberg (1993:35) comments on Gedo's psychobiographical analysis of Picasso's share in the development of Cubism and argues that Picasso was not alone in that enterprise: he worked in close collaboration with the French artist, George Braque, and at the genesis of their collaboration, Braque even led the way. Evidently, Braque's childhood was not filled with the feelings of fragmentation which, according to Weisberg (1993:35) leaves Gedo's analysis with no explanation for Braque's leading role in the development of Cubism.

Weisberg (1993:35) also questions Gedo's equation of Picasso's childhood feelings with the conscious attempt of two mature artists showing objects and space in a specific way. The term *"fragmentation"* is used by Gedo to describe a child's feelings, and the use of this term, according to Weisberg (1993:35) cannot be comparable at all to its use

in describing the aims of the Cubists, which were based on deep intellectual examination of the works of other distinguished artists especially Paul Cézanne, and on endless discussion.

3.2 Freud's psychobiography of Leonardo da Vinci's work

Freud's psychobiography of Leonardo da Vinci concludes that Da Vinci painted the striking smile on the Mona Lisa because of earlier experiences arising from unsatisfied needs and unconscious conflicts. Freud maintains that being orphaned at an early age left Leonardo searching for a woman to fill the role never filled by his mother. The woman who posed for the Mona Lisa affected Leonardo because her enigmatic smile aroused Leonardo's emotions about his unknown mother (Finke, Ward & Smith, 1992:9).

Weisberg (1993:35-36) raised questions regarding the accuracy of Freud's case studies. Weisberg (1993:36) indicated that all the women in Leonardo's earlier works possess the same enigmatic smile and that Freud may have been incorrect in his emphasis on the model for the Mona Lisa as a stimulus to Leonardo's unconscious.

Bailin (1988:30) questions unconscious factors such as those attributed by Freud to Leonardo in terms of whether they wouldl function in cases of creativity or would lessen the creative artist as active intentional agent in the creation of a picture. Bailin argues that it would not do so because psychoanalytic theory points out that there are motives for one's actions over and above those which are consciously recognised. According to Bailin (1988:30) Leonardo may have been obsessed with women's faces and certain facial expressions, but this, does not however, change the fact that he was a remarkable artist who made

choices relating to subject matter and execution in his art. Bailin (1988:30) reasons that other individuals may have similarly repressed emotions and obsessions, but they are not necessarily artists. Bailin (1988:30) believes that Leonardo planned to paint, to create a work of art, and succeeded in describing an image or vision and, whether his image or vision was a product of infantile desires and immature repression makes no difference.

3.3 Self-Reports by artists / creative individuals

3.3.1 Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834)

Another example of how unconscious processes play a role in creativity is Samuel Taylor Coleridge's creation of the poem *"Kubla-Khan"*. Coleridge reported that he had been in ill health and living alone in a remote farmhouse. Because of a *"slight indisposition"*, he took two grams of opium and fell asleep while reading *"Purchase's Pilgrimage"* which was a book of tales of exotic places. Coleridge reports that during this sleep a poem came to him with no effort on his part. (In the following passage, Coleridge calls himself *"The Author"*):

"The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he had the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the concurrent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this

moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and was detained by him about an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that enough he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but alas! without the after restoration of the latter! (Ghiselen, 1952:84-85)

This report by Coleridge is important because it is an example of creativity occurring during a changed state of consciousness. Coleridge's report of his dream of Kubla Khan induced by opium has interested poetry critics immenseley.

3.3.1.1 Interpretation and analysis of Coleridge's self-report

Elizabeth Schneider's (1953:17) analysis of Kubla Khan reports that Coleridge's report is probably untrue. According to Schneider the creation of the poem was not induced by a dream and did not suddenly appear in its full form, and opium had nothing to do with its creation.

Schneider (1953:17) also raises an interesting hypothesis as to why Coleridge might have produced such a detailed invention concerning Kubla Khan's. The poem is not complete and according to Schneider, Coleridge might have tried and been unable to complete it, so he was essentially left with an unpublished small portion. If, however, the fragment is all that remains of a complete poem that appeared in a supernatural dream, then it processes great value. Whether or not one accepts

Schneider's (1953:18) speculations concerning Coleridge's motives, her analysis indicates that unconscious processes did not contribute to the creation of this poem.

Schneider (Sternberg, 1988:171) proposed that Coleridge invented the account of the composition of *"Kubla Kahn"* in order to make what was in reality only an incomplete part of the poem more interesting to his public. If Coleridge could not complete the poem, argues Schneider, then changing the essentially useless small portion into all that remained of an interrupted burst of creative influence would make it something valuable. Whether or not Schneider's speculations are correct, there is no doubt that Coleridge's report is of little value to students of creative thinking (Sternberg, 1988:171).

According to Weisberg (1993:46) anecdotes and self-reports, although fascinating reading, are of questionable value in the study of creativity, because of their potential unreliability. In many cases, the "evidence" concerning the creative process is based solely on one person's report and even if the individual in question is the one who produced the creative work, we should be very careful about accepting anecdotes and self-reports. According to Weisberg (Ibid:46) a slightly different version of the poem was discovered from the final version in ways that suggest it was written earlier. If so, then Coleridge apparently did some editorial work on the poem, indicating that it was not perfect when it *"appeared"* to him.

Weisberg (Sternberg, 1988:171) found it difficult to believe that a poet in the process of writing down a miraculously given poem

would allow himself to be interrupted for an hour by a visitor on some *"business"* errand. Sternberg argues that Coleridge would surely have asked the man to wait until he was finished transcribing the two to three hundred lines that had come to him.

Lowes (Patrick, 1935:240-241) assumed that the poem came to Coleridge in a dream, as he reported a series of visual images accompanied by words. Lowes analyzed the images that would have been produced originally by Coleridge's readings, and also explained how these images might have been connected during his dream to form new images that serve as the basis for the poem. Lowes spends some time discussing the issue of how, if Coleridge conceived the poem in a dream, the meter and other aspects of the poetic structure, were worked out. If, however, there was more than dreamwork involved in Kubla Khan, including conscious revision, then there may be less unconscious working-out of structure. Novel ideas might come about as Lowes (Patrick, 1935:241) hypothesises, through associative links that are activated as the poet thinks about the topic, but these associations may produce only fragments that must then be worked on further before true poetry is produced. Lowe's analysis points out the importance of external sources as the basis for new ideas, even though the source may be disguised in the final poem.

This report by Coleridge and from other reports have certainly caused an interest int he fact that there are various phenomena that are thought to coincide with creativity. Coleridge produced a complete poem without any experimental steps. Though *"Purchase's Pilgrimage"* may have been a stimulus, the gap between it and what Coleridge produced is large enough to

guarantee some intervening steps. It seems reasonable to assume that unconscious thought is involved when the thought process *"jumps a gap"* (Weisberg, 1986:19) and no external aid to help the gap is apparent. If a series of steps is involved in jumping this gap, then they must have been carried out unconsciously.

3.3.2 Henri Poincaré (1854 - 1912)

One remaining aspect of the unconscious thought view is the claim that the solution to a problem can spontaneously spring to mind without any environmental event or earlier conscious thought to procede it. Much of the current emphasis on the unconscious in creativity may be traced directly to the French mathematician, Henri Poincaré, who introduced a formal detailed report of how he carried out his mathematical work, and who also developed a theory of creativity emphasising unconscious processes.

The critical section of Poincaré's (1952) work involved his attempt to prove that a certain sort of mathematical function, which he called Fuchsian functions, could not exist. Poincaré worked without success for fifteen days trying to prove that Fuchsian functions could not exist. He worked for several hours at a time and tried to make various kinds of proofs. One night, after an unsuccessful day, he drank black coffee and could not sleep. As he lay awake, *"ideas rose in crowds; I felt them collide until pairs interlocked so to speak, making a stable combination"* (Ghiselin, 1952:36).

After this sleepless night of thinking, Poincaré realised that his original idea was incorrect - one example of a Fuchsian function could be proved

to exist. Poincaré was obviously conscious when these ideas arose, but Poincaré found this way of thinking extraordinary since it occurred during sleeplessness caused by the coffee. He concluded that he was observing the workings of his own unconscious since he regarded himself as an inactive participant (Ghiselin, 1952:36).

Poincaré made another discovery while boarding an omnibus while on vacation. He suddenly realised that the fuchsian functions were identical to a set of functions already existing in mathematics, the character of non-Euclidean geometry (Ghiselin, 1952:37).

3.3.2.1 Interpretation and analysis of Poincaré's self-report

Weisberg (1986:19) proposes that one must be wary of reports such as Poincaré's as most of the reports made by creators are made relatively long after the event (e.g. Poincaré and Coleridge). According to Weisberg, there are a number of reasons why one must be wary of such reports. First is the potential problem of the author's memory. Obviously if an incident is reported long after it occured, there is a chance that the person would have forgotten some important aspects of the event in the meantime. Furthermore, there is a risk of distorted recall of an earlier event. In other words, not only will important parts of the event be forgotten, but new information might be recalled, that was never part of the original event at all. Furthermore it is seldom possible to tell if the subjective report is accurate. How would one know whether or not Poincaré actually had that insight while stepping onto the omnibus? How do we know there was no cue in the environment to stimulate his thought, that he later forgot?

Even though one cannot measure the accuracy of unconscious processes taking place in Poincaré's creative problem, it seems acceptable to believe that, in creativity unconscious processes do combine with conscious processes. Poincaré stated that the solving of his problem was due to long unconscious work and, as a result of external stimulants, the problem was solved after conscious evaluation.

3.3.3 WA Mozart (1756 - 1791)

The composer WA Mozart's methods were perhaps even more striking than those of Poincarés. Before going on vacation, Poincaré began with fifteen days of hard work while Mozart reported that his melodies came without any earlier work at all - for example, he did not try to compose a melody, give up in disgust, and then suddenly have a melody came to mind. Mozart's melodies seemingly came to him without any conscious preparation on his part at all. An often quoted letter written by Mozart has been taken as evidence for the importance of unconscious processes in creativity. In it he states:

"When I feel well and in a good humour, or when I am taking a drive or walking after a good meal, or in the night when I cannot sleep, thoughts crowd into my mind as easily as you could wish. Whence and how do they come? I do not know and I have nothing to do with it. Those which please me, I keep in my head and hum them; at least others have told me that I do so. Once I have my theme, another melody comes, linking itself to the first one, in accordance to the needs of the composition as a whole" (Ghiselin, 1952:44-45).

Mozart's report could be even more remarkable than that of Coleridge, because Mozart seems to have required no help from stimulants or other external sources to have creative products come to him.

3.3.3.1 Interpretation and analysis of Mozart's self-report

According to Deutsch (1964:120-123) there is strong evidence that *"Mozart's letter"* was not authentic. Also, and more important, recent analysis of Mozart's original manuscripts do not indicate that he simply committed to paper already complete works (Sloboda, 1984:112-114). Mozart's most *"effortless"* composing is contained in the many manuscripts which are without corrections which look as if they had been copied, perhaps from a score already mentally worked out. Nevertheless, Erich Hertzmann (Weisberg, 1993:224) suggests that maybe these perfectly written works were literally copied from sketches that were then rejected. After Mozart's death, his widow kept his manuscripts, but in 1799 she noted in a letter that she threw away *"unusable autographs"* before selling the rest. This may have been a reference to Mozart's working sketches which no one else could use.

The few Mozart sketches that do exist indicate that he typically wrote the melody and bass line as he composed, and filled in the other parts later, which contradicts the naive view that Mozart simply had the composition mentally available. Some of Mozart's sketches even provide evidence that he experienced difficulties in composition (Weisberg, 1993:224).

Hertzmann (Weisberg, 1993:224) analysed Mozart's letter in which he allegedly hears the *"parts"* of his compositions all at once and the *"tout ensemble"* all together. Ignoring the issue of the authenticity of the letter, it is interesting that - on at least two independent occasions - this passage has been interpreted as meaning that Mozart heard the beginning, middle, and end of his composition all at once, using some extraordinary musical imagination.

3.3.4 Ben Shahn (1898 - 1969)

Ben Shahn's inspiration for his painting *"Allegory"* was caused by past experiences awakened by unconscious processes. As a result of many astonishing pieces of analysis of his painting, *"Allegory"* (fig. 1), Shahn undertook a review of this work to evaluate what things were needed to make up a painting. Shahn was fully aware of the immediate sources, but he wondered to what extent he could trace the deeper origins, and the less conscious motivations which played a role in the creation of his paintings (Tomas, 1964:13).

Shahn was asked to make a painting based on a story about a coloured man who had lost his four children in a fire. According to Shahn, (Tomas, 1964:17) the story of the fire had aroused in him a chain of personal memories pertaining to two great fires in his childhood, the first one being colourful and the other disastrous and unforgettable. In this painting, Shahn painted a number of heads and bodies of beasts and other symbolic, semi-classic shapes and figures. One image, a lion-like head, but still not a lion, symbolises the inner figure of primitive terror which Shahn was seeking to capture.

Shahn (Tomas, 1964:17) stated that this lion-like beast was a symbolic element in this painting to emphasise his feeling about a fire. Shahn realised that the children he was painting resembled his own brothers and sisters. He reasoned that the sources of a few of the images could be traced to his unconscious as a basis and inspiration for this painting. However he argued that the unconscious cannot shape one's art but is certainly an important factor used for invigorative elements in Fine Art.

3.4 Experiments involving to the role of the unconscious

3.4.1 Robert Olton

In an interesting and important series of studies, Olton (1979:16-17) and his associates tried to duplicate the important factors involved in a problem-solving situation such as that described by Poincaré (1952). By observing expert chess players, they hoped to find *"evidence"* of incubation. As discussed in chapter one, Wallas (1926) proposed an *"incubation stage"* in which potentially useful ideas are combined unconsciously without the use of conscious thought. In this situation, the domain was thoroughly familiar, and the problem was the type that the subjects would ordinarily meet on their own, which roughly corresponds to Poincaré's work on a mathematical problem. The chess players were divided into two groups. Each had several hours to work on the problem, but one group was given a break while the other worked continuously. The group given the break was asked not to work on the problem during the break in order to give unconscious incubation a chance to work.

All things considered, this experiment makes a good attempt to study the important aspects of incubation situations into the laboratory, yet it revealed no evidence for unconscious incubation, much to Olton's surprise. The group given a break performed no better on the whole than the group without a break. This experiment, and negative findings from several earlier ones, led Olton (1979:17) to question whether incubation actually occurs, despite his belief in its existence.

A supporter of incubation could of course raise several questions about Olton's studies. For example, Olton's chess players were not as motivated as was Poincaré, since he was working on problems which were central to his professional career. Also, Olton's subjects did not work on their problems for as long as Poincaré did before they took their break, and the break was not as long as Poincaré's. However, given that the designs of Olton's studies are among the best in the literature, and that there is no forced evidence from other laboratory work to support the occurrence of incubation, the most reasonable conclusion is that incubation is, at best, very difficult to demonstrate in controlled situations.

3.4.2 Catherine Patrick

In addition to anecdotes and self-reports, laboratory studies have been directed to provide more objective evidence for incubation, but with little success. In her early work much of which proved to support the notion of incubation, Catherine Patrick (Bailin, 1988:76) studied creative thinking in artists and poets, by questioning subjects about their working methods. Most of the artists and poets reported that Wallas's four stages of creative thinking - preparation, incubation, illumination and verification (chapter one), described their work. They reported that an

idea for a painting or a poem was not immediately worked on, but was first *"carried out"* for a period of time. Patrick, however, also found that the idea was occasionally thought about during the incubation period, so that it was needless to take for granted that unconscious thought occurred.

Patrick (Beardsley, 1982:243) also tried to apply Wallas's (1926) postulated four stages of creativity directly in experiments. In one study, poets were given a picture of a mountainous landscape and asked to write a poem in response to it. Artists were given a poem as a stimulus for a painting. The typical sequence of production began with general impressions and remembering of relevant memories in answer to the stimulus, but no actual work was done. This was followed by a few lines of poetry or the blocking out of a picture; these products were later revised and elaborated upon. Such behaviours seem to correspond reasonably well to Wallas's (1926) stages of preparation, illumination, and verification (in this case, verification is revision, when an early idea is toned down or elaborated). However, these poets and artists did not take a break from the problem; thus, by the definition, incubation could not have occurred. Incubation is defined as a process in which a period of time is spent away from the problem thus allowing the unconscious mental processes to take place. Furthermore, the stages were not completely isolated and overlapped in time.

3.4.3 Jan Eindhoven and Edgar Vinacke

Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:158-164) did a similar experiment to that Patrick in which artists and non-artists were given the task of producing a publishable illustration for a poem. From their results, it appeared that there was a puzzling sequence of activities and these were not sharply

differentiated form one another. Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:161) stated that there is an interweaving of all the aspects incorporated in the successive stages. Their view of creativity (1952:161), is that of one whole process consisting of all the different aspects occuring at the same time.

Thus, the *"stages"*, according to Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:161), are not stages at all, but processes which occur during creation. *"They blend together and go along coincidentally."* It is therefore more meaningful to regard these alleged *"stages"* of creativity as an expression, or as processes of the complete energetic pattern into which they are interwoven. We therefore conclude that an artificial and incomplete idea of creative activity arises from the view that it is separated into four successive stages. Thus Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:164) believe that creativity is a dynamic whole in which the processes which have been labelled *"stages"* are interwoven into an intricate and continuous fashion.

3.5 The implications of the experiments of Fine Art

As discussed in chapter one, Wallas proposed four stages according to which the creative process takes place, namely preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Both Patrick (Beardsley, 1982:243) and Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:139-165) experimented with the creative process under conditions submitted to be as natural as possible. In the first place, they found that the creative process in painting a picture has certain general characteristics, whether the subject is an artist or a non-artist. It appeared to be characteristic for creation to require a somewhat long period of time during which there is a rather slow evolution of the finished product.

Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:159) indicated that the process of painting a picture is marked by typically qualitative features. According to this process, the motif appears at a very early stage, whereas subject matter, composition, size, and other aspects undergo many changes. Eindhoven and Vinacke's (1952:161) results proved that the *"illumination"* stage is very difficult to define in their series of observations, even though there was direct evidence in a few of their observations on subjects. On the other hand, if illumination is believed to be, not a stage in itself, but a process leading to some marked out idea or choice of object or reorganisation of previous ideas, then it can readily be seen to occur throughout the creative process. Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:161) reasoned that preparation could similarly be seen as a process rather than a self-contained stage. Incubation, itself, might be defined as thought about the problem, whether unconscious or not, and this would establish a view of creation which continued throughout the experiment.

Thus, the *"stages"* in the experiments conducted by Patrick (Beardsley, 1982:243) as well as Eindhoven and Vinacke's (1952:161) were not seen as stages at all, but processes which occurred during creation. In the thought (preparation before the sketch), thought proceeding the sketch (illumination) may long have been either complete or developing. Each sketch in a sequence is the understanding of *"subliminal uprushes"* into consciousness (Illumination). Verification, besides consisting of unconscious tensions and conscious thoughts (incubation), streams coincidentally with internalization (preparation) in deciding the inadequacies of a sketch held for observation and criticism prior to being reworked.

Thus, Patrick (Beardsley, 1982:243) as well as Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952:162) agree with the fact that it is far more meaningful to regard these alleged *"stages"* of creativity as aspects, or processes, of the complete dynamic pattern into which they are interwoven. Further studies might do well to continue the kind of experiments made here, namely those of observing and analysing the activities which occur, rather than basing analysis upon an inflexible idea of four stages.

3.6 Conclusion

Mary Gedo's (1994) psychobiographical analysis of Picasso's work indicated that it may be reasonable to believe that experiences in the past can have an affect on the artist. However, it seems attractive to join Weisberg's (1993:35) argument that Picasso's discovery of Cubism was not the result of fragmented childhood feelings as postulated by Gedo. Gedo could see the result of the fragmented imagery in Cubism. Repressed childhood memories may have been the basic ingredient of stimulus for Picasso in his creation of the painting *"Guenica"*, but the fact still remains that conscious mechanisms were deployed to construct and plan the compositional elements involved.

Referring to Freud's psychobiography of Leonardo da Vinci's portrayal of women, Bailin (1988:30) argued that it makes no difference whether the subject matter came from infantile desires or not. What really matters is that these unconscious processes are consciously brought forward by the artist to create a work of art.

The creative process should be perceived as a whole in which conscious and unconscious processes are allowed to participate freely. As Patrick (1937) and Eindhoven and Vinacke (1952) noted in experi-

ments with individuals in controlled situations, the creative process did not take place in stages (as proposed by Wallas discussed in chapter two) but was interwoven into a dynamic whole.

The self-reports discussed by certain individuals clearly reveal that conscious as well as unconscious processes featured prominently in solving a creative problem. Each individual discussed in this chapter witnessed unconscious processes taking place at some stage while solving a creative problem. Solving a problem prompted by the artist's unconscious, however, required conscious evaluation in order to provide a balance in work out the creative problem.

In conclusion, the evidence gathered from psychobiographies, experiments, and self-reports regarding the place of the unconscious in creativity, would seem to indicate that unconscious processes are at work in solving creative problems, and that these processes are assisted by conscious mechanisms.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS OF MODERN ART MOVEMENTS

The purpose ofdding this chapter, is to familiarise the reader with the use of unconscious processes in creativity and to place the use of these processes in the context of specific modern art movements such as Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Gestural Expressionism, and so on.

Surrealism will be discussed in an attempt to direct the reader to, familiarise him/her with the origins of the use of the unconscious as a visual source in creativity. Individuals such as Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Francis Bacon will be discussed as examples of artists in whose works the nature of unconscious processes may be investigated. Following the theories of Freud, Surrealism turned to the irrational and worked towards a systematic exploration of the unconscious and thereby displaying the hidden depths of the mind. It is therefore important to discuss Surrealism, as this movement was less interested in the creation of works than in concentrating on the generating of documents of psychological significance. Before we discuss Surrealism, it would be suitable to begin by introducing the influential individuals who opened the gateway to unconscious processes such as De Chirico (1888-1978), Chagall (1887-1985) and Ensor (1860-1949).

4.1 The establishment of the artistic interest in the creative unconscious: early modern pioneers

The purpose of discussing the early influences of Surrealism is to trace back the initial quest for a reality perceived outside the senses. Their use of imagery potraying enigmas, metaphysical interiors and the

tracing of a dream caused the Surrealists to use these influences as instruments in their quest to capture the bizarre and irrational.

4.1.1 Giorgio de Chirico (1888 - 1978)

De Chirico was an Italian painter who originated metaphysical painting. He created this style which evoked a dreamworld. This was achieved by convincing realistically painted objects which could not normally *"work together"* by using strange conventions such as tailor dummies instead of human figures. Metaphysical painting, was however short - lived but was a major influence on Surrealism.

De Chirico discusses his application of *"metaphysical painting"* as folllows:

"To be truly immortal, a work of art must stand completely outside human limitations, logic and common sense are detrimental to it. Thus it approximates dream and infantile mentality ... One of the strongest sensations left to us by prehistory is that of presage. It will always be with us. It is as it were an eternal proof of the non-sense of the universe" (Osborne, 1991:713).

Although, De Chirico had read Schopenhauer and Nietszche, the obscurity lies in the actual metaphysics of the movement which involves using objects as signs, placing them on unusual combinations and strange architectural perspectives, which creates an atmosphere of mystery and hallucination. These factors however allowed the Surrealists to link absurdity and irrationality with unconscious processes and introduced new creative methods to art movements, such as action painting, automatism, abstraction, and so on.

4.1.2 Marc Chagall (1887 - 1985)

Chagall was another artist who had a marked influence on Surrealism. This Russian-born painter was regarded as one of the leading avant-garde figurative painters of his day. His work was derived from two sources of imagery: memories of the Jewish life and folklore of his early life in Russia, and the Bible. His odd spatial effects derived from Cubism, created a dream-like atmosphere. His remarkable sense of fairy-tale fantasy in his work caused the Surrealists to claim him as the one who indicated the approach of their movement, but Chagall said that however fantastic his pictures seemed, he painted only direct memories of his early years (De la Croix, Tansey & Kirkpatrick, 1987:988). His art is his intimate autobiography.

Psychobiographies of artists such as Pablo Picasso and Ben Shahn (chapter three) clearly revealed that previous experiences had a direct influence on the creation of certain works. Chagall's work reveals the pleasures and pains of his Jewish childhood in Vitebsk, admits the pleasure he found in marriage, confesses the gentleness of his feelings for domestic animals and expresses his sorrow, obsessions and worries.

4.1.3 James Ensor (1860 - 1949)

This Belgian painter, was one of the formative influences on the Expressionists and was claimed by the Surrealists as a forerunner. His work characterises fantastic and shocking imagery, often satirical in intent, involving social or religious criticism. He made much use of carnival masks, grotesque figures, and skeletons, with a gruesome and

ironic humour recalling the past of his great predecessors, Bosch and Brueghel.

4.2 Experiments in *"automatic writing"* and how it involved the unconscious in Fine Art

Surrealism was born in Paris, with poets as its sponsors. A mistrust of rationalism and formal conventions (which were worshipped at that time by the representatives of the avant-garde) prompted the young men into exploring the realm of the unconscious and the dream. They were seeking what might be called "the language of the soul" from which the process called "automatic writing" came into being. In the Surrealist manifesto of 1924 André Breton interpreted pure automatic writing as:

"the dictation of thought without any rational control, and free of all aesthetic or moral considerations" (De la Croix *et al.*, 1987:982).

This was advice better directed to writers than painters, as it is easier to put down on paper the thoughts that pour into one's head than it is to execute onto canvas the images that spring into mind. Unconscious processes were used by this mechanism obtain thoughts untouched by the conscious mind and present them on paper in a different creative technique which relied on chance and accident.

A number of artists, however, who were in agreement with the poets, associated themselves with the Surrealist movement and attempted to put its various methods of expression into practice. Stimulated by the poet André Breton's discovery of automatism, they resorted to the imaginary, to dreams, to the unconscious and to chance.

In the beginning, André Breton hoped for nothing less than the combining of all the sources of human creativity - the dream, the unconscious, the conscious and the irrational - into a higher form of reality that may change the very shape of the world as well as people's understanding of that world.

Deeply influenced by the heoriess of Freud, Breton saw the great new change occurring simultaneously on two fronts - the one political and external, the other exploring the deepest hidden places of the human mind and unfolding its truths in the work of art. Surrealism's first methods for visualising unconscious mental processes - automatic writing and drawing and the telling of dreams - became the means of bypassing reason and bringing to light the profound connections that Breton believed existed in individual consciousness.

Breton became more interested in the curious phrases that suddenly presented themselves to the conscious mind before sleep, and he decided to use this unusual process in his poetry. When it then triggered a whole series of automatic phrases similar in nature, he no longer doubted that he stumbled on the key to true lyricism.

According to Breton, the voice arising in automatic speech is:

"the very language of the unconscious ... and was formed in the zone of psychic activity whence artists instinctive impulses, primordial images, dreams - which implies that the unconscious manifests itself spontaneously as language: that it is a linguistic structure, a potential language that can be realised as soon as the closures imprisoning it are suppressed" (Brechnon, 1971:34).

Increasingly, Breton came to feel that automatism might have served its purpose. He even admitted that his history of automatic writing had been *"a constant misfortune"* (Jean, 1960:126). Breton (1955:75) saw the fault as lying with the practitioners themselves, who had given in unresistingly to the flow of words without observing the mental operations in progress, and who had even consciously assembled automatic texts with an eye to their aesthetic value. To correct these errors, he strongly reaffirmed the scientific aims of Surrealism which visualised the systematic operation of the unconscious.

According to Bigsby (1972:67), Surrealist painting was closely related to Surrealist writing. The automatic technique was deployed though, from the beginning, with a degree of conscious manipulation which was not present in the early written form. As Miró explained:

"Rather than setting out to paint something ... I begin painting and as I paint the picture begins to assert itself, or suggest itself under my brush. The form becomes a sign for a woman or a bird as I work ... The first stage is free, unconscious ... but after that the picture is controlled throughout, in keeping with that desire for disciplined work I have felt from the beginning" (Chipp, 1968:435).

One of the Zurich Dadaists, Jean Arp (1887 - 1966), specialised in automatic drawings made in a two-step process that he started by allowing his pencil to wander over a sheet of paper with as little intellectual control as possible. He then closely examined the patterns made for shapes that seemed to have significance to him and filled those contours with ink to create a final design. Arp was also a leader in the use of chance in the making of art. He took sheets of paper, tore them into roughly shaped squares, carelessly dropped them to a sheet

of paper on the floor, and glued them into the arrangement that resulted (De la Croix *et al.*, 1987:977). *"Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance"* (fig 3) is such an art work. The rectilinearity of the shapes assured a somewhat normal design, but chance introduced a special mysterious vitality to his work that he wanted to preserve. The practice of *"chance"* was for the Dadaists a critical part of this improvisation. As Hans Richter, a Zurich Dadaist stated:

"For us chance was the unconscious mind that Freud had discovered in 1900 ... Adoption of chance had another purpose, a secret one. This was to restore to the work of art its primeval magic power and to find way back to the immediacy it had lost through contact with ... Classicism" (De la Croix *et al.*, 1987:977-978).

The Surrealists used automatism as a method of producing paintings or drawings in which the artist suppresses conscious control over the movements of the hand, allowing the unconscious mind to take over. This technique was carried further by Joan Miró, André Masson and later artists such as Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, and the like.

4.3 The importance of dreams and imaginations in the interpretation of creativity in Surrealism, using the unconscious as a basis of this movement

The Surrealists departed from Freud's (1938) theory of dreams because Breton (1947:19) suggested that the weakness of Freud's *"Interpretation of Dreams"* (1938) lay in the fact that it did not allow the possibility of the prophetic dream. But the prophetic dream, like the Surrealist object, depended upon the power of the unconscious to directly bring about and

change the shape of the natural world. Freud's method was kept within bounds by explaining humanity. Surrealism on the other hand, looked for an explanation for the world which would not depend on logic, and myth provided the means to bridge the gap between human beings and the natural world. For the Surrealists the universalising of the structure and content of dreams took place in myth.

Breton (1947:19) claimed Surrealism as the point at which the real and the imaginary, dream and wakefulness, the past and the present, the conscious and the unconscious would cease to be observed as mutually rejected. According to Breton, the imagination would be used as a means of gaining this state. However, this point was unfortunately beyond the range of knowledge of the surrealists themselves; only mythical beings could symbolically carry the accomplishment of true *"surreallite"*. Surrealism viewed the role of the imagination to be of fundamental importance. The Surrealists were quick to recognise that both myth and fantasy had a number of points in common. Myth, in Surrealism, also represented a conscious process of organisation and construction. The German philosopher Cassirer, has noted that the simple equating of dream and myth does not fully explain the origin and function of myth:

"The whole life and activity of many primitive people even down to trifling details, is determined and governed by their dreams ... the animistic theory which attempts to derive the whole content of myth from this one source, which explains myth primarily as a confusion and mixture of dream experience and waking experiences is unbalanced and inadequate in this form (1955:36).

The Surrealists, instead attempted to include the understanding of the psychic mechanism of dreaming into the making of myth. Automatism and the dream were seen by the mid 1930s, as a means toward a more conscious exploration of the unconscious.

Marcel Jean left a fitting epitaph to some twenty years of Surrealist experimentation:

"The greatness of Surrealist painting lies in its passion for discovery, in its appeal to the marvellous, in its exact, legible, mysterious content. The labyrinth builds itself from the inside, but it can become as limitless as our need of liberty" (1960:361).

According to Breton (1955:13-15) dreams are the real voice of the human unconscious and as such deserve serious attention; though unclear, they are charged with meaning, and can be explained through the technique of Freudian dream analysis. *"Surrealism"*, Breton (1969:26) had declared strongly in the First Manifesto, was dictation *"by thought, in the absence of any aesthetic or moral concern"*. The insufficiency of this point of view on a moral plane was manifested in the rapid move towards political commitment; an aesthetic plane by the emergency of Surrealist art. Looking back, it seems obvious that painting established a perfect medium for the manifestation of the unconscious but it was equally clear that it could scarcely rid itself entirely of aesthetic purpose.

The following definition of the Surrealist movement given in the first manifesto by Breton lists several techniques and their finality:

"Surrealism, namely Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern" (Chenieux-Gendron, 1990:115).

According to Chadwick (1980:14), the images of Surrealist painting and poetry, produced from the imagination and the unconscious, arise in that part of the human mind that also controls the making of dream and myth. Ancient myth and Surrealist painting both consist of fantastic figures - men and animals, that continually undergo a process of metamorphosis, magical happenings and natural phenomena furnished with supernatural powers in a world controlled by a sense of mystery and the unforeseen. The centre of the Surrealist intuition, insists that the bridges have been rebuilt between dream and reality, subject and object, imagination and nature. As the poet, Paul Eluard writes,

"there is no dualism between imagination and reality ... everything the mind of man can conceive and create comes from the same source, is the same matter as his flesh, his blood, and the world surrounding him" (1952:516).

According to Breton and Crevel (Chenieux-Gendron, 1990:177) it is the question of energy that plays a full part in the Surrealist idea of the imaginary. As Breton said:

Once again, the question here is the whole problem of the transformation of energy. To distrust, as people do out of all proportion, the practical virtue of imagination is to be willing to deprive oneself at any cost of the help of electricity, in the hope of bringing hydroelectric power back to its absurd waterfall consciousness. The imaginary is what tends to become real (Chenieux-Gendron, 1990:177).

Imagination, certainly plays an important role in Surrealism and through energetic stimulations induced by the unconscious, these ideas are allowed to be brought forward to the conscious mind. Crevel (Chenieux-Gendron, 1990:177) believes that due to the idea that violence is situated to force and explode the discoveries of the imagination, this will pick up the images:

"To use a movement is to capture it. Violence is the source of energy. It is the only thing that can be. The twentieth century - that electrician - has picked up the torrent sung by the nineteenth and pocketed it ... The imagination is a great dowser" (Chenieux-Gendron, 1990:177).

In Breton's essay entitled *Surrealism and Painting* (1928:4), he declared the necessity of total submission to a *"purely internal model"*. These concepts accompanied with the Surrealist interest in the unconscious have led to the crooked view that the movement, deliberately denied all relationship to everyday reality. Reference to the external world is therefore an integral, critical aspect of Surrealism. Surrealism aimed to change life by encouraging a broader understanding of reality, one that embraced such realms as dreams, the marvellous, and the unconscious.

4.4 Surrealist experiments with automatism and dream imagery

Surrealism was a movement characterised by a fascination with the bizarre, the incongruous, and the irrational. It was a many-sided movement, but its aim was to try and set free the creative powers of the unconscious mind by getting the better of reason: Breton explained the purpose of Surrealism as follows:

"to resolve the previously contradictory conditions of dreams and reality into an absolute reality, a super-reality" (Osborne: 1991:1115).

Many of the Surrealists drew liberally on Freud's theories concerning the unconscious and its relations to dreams by using various techniques of automatism to overcome the power of reason and order. Their verdicts on these theories varied greatly. Dali and other artists painted in a detailed style to give a hallucinatory sense of reality to scenes that make no rational sense, while Max Ernst, Joan Miró and André Masson experimented with relinquishing conscious control altogether by using automatism as a point of departure in their work.

4.4.1 Salvador Dali (1904 - 1989)

Like De Chirico and Chagall, Dali was haunted by the mystery of time, and his *"Persistence of Memory"* (fig 4) suggests images of evolutionary, geological, archaeological as well as dream time. In his description of his *"paranoiac-critical method"*, he expressed his aim in painting as the following:

"... to materialise the images of concrete irrationality with the most imperialist fury of precision ... in order that the world of imagination and of concrete irrationality may be as objectively evident ... as that of the exterior world of phenomenal reality" (Rubin, 1968:111).

All these expressions of Dali's style can be seen in one of his most famous works, *"The Persistence of Memory"*. Here he creates a haunting allegory of empty space in which time is at an end. The barren landscape consists of an amorphous creature sleeping in the foreground. The landscape is without a horizon, drifting to infinity, lit by

some eerie, never-setting sun. Dali has draped his creature with a limp pocket watch. Another watch hangs half over the edge of the rectangular form, beside a small timepiece resting dial-down on the block's surface. Ants swarm mysteriously over the small watch, while a fly walks along the face of its large neighbour, almost as if this group of watches were decaying, organic, soft, thick and sticky. Dali presented every detail of this dreamscape with precise control, trying to make his painting as convincingly real as if it were a landscape based on an actual scene from nature. Dali's *"paranoiac-critical method"* served as a major stimulus toward finding a surrealist means of exploiting the rich imagery of the unconscious. This method gave a systematic encouragement to the mind's power to look at one thing and to see another.

Surrealism used dream imagery as a substitute for the external reality - a reality that Dali refused to portray in his works. His *"paranoiac-critical method"* however contained a combination of the unconscious as well as the conscious. The unconscious was certainly the basic stimulus that triggered the creation of Dali's work but it would be improper to believe that his works contained only that factor. Kris's (1952) theory on the preconscious seems relevant to believing that the balancing bridge between the conscious and the unconscious is the preconscious triggered by dreams and imaginations used in Dali's work, to visualise the images hidden in the unconscious.

4.4.2 Joan Miró (1893 - 1983)

This Spanish artist was a master of automatism and used this technique as a point of departure in his work. He relied on chance to exclude conscious control ofis work in order to allow the inventions of his

unconscious mind to be visualised on his canvas. His aim was to generate images that brought together *"distant realities"* into a *"marvellous unity"* (Green, 1993:56). In water colours he would roughen the texture of the paper by rubbing it. Painting over this textured surface produced curious chance shapes thus allowing conscious action to be replaced by uncontrolled mechanisms stimulated by the unconscious.

The well-known art critic Cristian Zervos gives the following description on Miró's *rythmic automatism*:

"Miró no longer prepares his paintings; he gives them not the slightest thought in the world before taking brush or pencil in hand .. The forms install themselves on the canvas without a preconceived idea. He begins them by spilling a little colour on the surface and then circulates a dipped brush around the canvas. As his hand moves the obscure vision becomes more precise" (Short, 1980:107).

The Surrealists, however, did not deceive themselves into believing that artists as accomplished as Miró painted completely at the dictates of their unconscious. Surrealism recognised its own type of painting which, rather than developing gradually from the unconscious process itself, consciously and realistically recorded a earlier experience from the unconscious.

By experimenting with hypnotic suggestion and psychic automatism in which he allowed his hand to move spontaneously and at random over the canvas, Miro gave his drawings the casual quality of doodles or the impulsiveness of improvisations. His mastery of line was so complete, however, that his work should never be confused with carelessness. Joan Miró attempted an art of pure imagination existing outside logic or

reason. While much of Surrealism is preoccupied with the morbid and the abnormal, Miró lightens his fantasies with whimsy.

In his work *Dutch Interior* (fig 5) Miró began this painting by making a scattered collage composition with assembled fragments cut from a catalogue for machinery. The shapes in the collage become the dominating theme which the artist freely reshaped to create biomorphic black silhouettes - solid or in outline. Miró described the creative process he used as switching back and forth between conscious and unconscious image making. This type of painting, according to Miró (De la Croix, *et al.*, 1987:985), is in its truest sense, spontaneous and intuitive expression of the unknown, submerged, unconscious part of life.

4.4.3 Max Ernst (1891 - 1976)

Ernst's use of automatism resulted in his frottage experiment which is a process that combines patterns achieved by rubbing a crayon or other medium across a sheet of paper placed over a surface with a strong and evocative textured pattern. Ernst describes his awakening to the possibilities of the collage principle in terms which are very reminiscent of Breton's account in the first manifesto of his own dream call to automatism:

"One rainy day in 1891, finding myself in a village on the Rhine, I was struck by the obsessions which held under my gaze the pages of an illustrated catalogue showing objects designed from anthropologic microscopic, psychologic, mineralogic and paleontologic demonstration. There I found brought together elements of figuration so remote that the sheer absurdity of that collection provoked a sudden intensification of

the visionary faculties in me and brought forth an illusive succession of contradictory images, double, triple and multiple images, piling up on each other with the persistence and rapidity which are peculiar to love memories and visions of half-asleep (Short, 1980:76).

Ernst's discovery of the *"frottage method"* occurred when he became obsessed with the texture of a well scrubbed-wooden floor which at first caused him to remember a childhood experience when, ill and feverish, he experienced a number of hallucinations while staring at a false mahogany panel. He associated this method with automatic writing.

In his work *Two children are threatened by a Nightingale* (fig 6) Ernst displays a private dream. In this work, the landscape, the distant city, and the tiny flying bird are traditionally painted. The three sketchily represented figures, however, clearly belong to a world of dreams, and the three-dimensional miniature gate, the old buttonknob, and the strange, closed building break the space of the bulky frame.

In *the Bewildered planet* (fig 7), Ernst combined the frottage method with automatism by allowing paint to drip from a hole in the bottom of a tin can swung over the canvas - a precursor of the dripping method carried out by Jackson Pollock. This automatic technique was the point of departure for a spontaneous approach which Ernst strove for.

In reality, it is arguable that a great deal of conscious choice was needed, from the choice of the object, to the size and colour of the frottage itself. Nevertheless, the unconscious, was used as the basis for incorporating the dream element (specifically used in Surrealism) as well as other mental elements which can be visually used in art. Many Surrealists were reproducing a state of easily understood images which

had already been registered by the conscious mind, and relied on their unconscious processes. Painters such as Dali, Magritte and Delvaux applied a particular realistic technique to fantastic subject matter or familiar objects which they placed in surroundings so unusual that they became disorientated.

4.5 The unconscious process used in Surrealism as a point of departure for future movements

4.5.1 Abstract Expressionism

Surrealism affected the abstract expressionists because of its discovery of psychic automatism. The spontaneous and random quality that the Surrealists strove for in their work, appealed greatly to the expressionists. Movements following Surrealism turned against the use of reason and tried to broaden their artistic processes by using their creative minds as open channels through which the forces of the unconscious could make themselves visible. These artists exploited the irrational and elements of chance and accident and used automatism as their point of departure in the structure of a radical, new, two-dimensional abstract imagery. Automatism made it possible for artists such as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline to surpass representational subject matter and investigate both their inner vision and the fundamental forces lying beneath the surface of perceived reality.

Once psychic automatism had released a free flow of creativity, the artist could realise from the doodling, some designs of controlled sort. Psychic Automatism gave precedence to process over the logically worked out conceptions of form. In effect, it went against the previous

notions of abstract art, which were based on intellectually preconceived ideas before starting a work. Once the abstract expressionists had accepted automatism as a basis for the creative enterprise, they converted it from the surrealist process of generating images to the act of painting itself. In so doing, they found a way of preserving freshness, of cultivating accidental dribbles and splashes from the evidence of spontenaiety and creative vigour they offered.

Surrealism also influenced the abstract expressionists to discover, in the unconscious, the long buried memory fragments of the innocent and primitive in modern men and women, the source of the free, the instinctual, and the fantastic in the human imagination. Surrealism indicated a technique whereby the abstract expressionist could set free the trapped images in the unconscious, thus making them available to the conscious mind of the artist to be used as vehicles in the artist's expressive intent.

4.5.1.1 Jackson Pollock (1912 - 1956)

Pollock's technique of action painting was influenced by the Surrealist symbolism of Miró. Pollock brought to his paintings his memories of the vast open spaces of the South Western United States, where he grew up, and of the sand painting techniques he had seen there, executed by the Native American medicine men (De la Croix *et al.*, 1987:1032).

Like Miró, Pollock alternated between periods of voluntary improvisation and careful close examination of his developing composition. He put to his own use the Surrealist theories of automatism, carrying to the extreme unconventional techniques

such as dripping paint onto huge canvases placed flat on the ground (Vallier, 1970:252-253).

His explosive canvases uncovered a teeming vitality, frenetic energy, and creative invention that heralded a new era in painting. He made his unconscious energies visible, a kind of trance-like pictorial choreography in which the spectator is invited to join in the dance. The viewer is irresistibly drawn into a web of nervous rhythms pulsating with dynamic energy in which he or she views the unconscious of the artist at work.

In *Autumn Rhythm* (fig 8) Pollock describes his method of painting:

"On the floor (Pollock now worked with the canvas spread on the floor of the studio rather than placed on an easel) I am more at ease. I feel nearer, more a part of the painting, since this way I can walk round it, work from the four sides and literally be in the painting ... When I am in my painting, I am not aware of what I am doing. It is only after a sort of "get acquainted" period that I can see what I have been about. I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image etc. because the painting has a life of its own" (Lucie-Smith, 1977:58).

This work reveals microscopic and telescopic vision-glimpses of some galactic or atomic explosion, or in more terrestrial terms, the dominating forces of nature's elements, air, fire and water (Lucie-Smith, 1977:58). The random fall and scatter of the paint in *Lucifer* (fig 9) emphasises the liquid nature of the medium itself, but the actions of the artist have transformed the paint into loose

skeins of colour that spring back and forth across the canvas, thickening in some places and falling in almost straight lines in others. There are no easily identifiable shapes that can help the viewer to establish the familiar depth of a normal figure-ground relationship: instead, the rhythmic layer of lines seems to extend far beyond its edges.

4.5.1.2 Franz Kline (1910 - 1962), Willem de Kooning (1904 -): Gestural Abstract Expressionism

The term gestural abstract expressionism is associated with action painting. This technique was carried out by artists like Franz Kline (1910 - 1962) and Willem de Kooning (1904 -). These artists believed that not only were their actions recorded on the canvas in the process of painting, but also their emotions and personality. The term *gestural* is particularly applied to painting in which the visible sweep and application of the pigment has been deliberately emphasised (Waldman, 1988:48).

Most of Kline's work is carried out in black and white. Some of his collages, for example, *Figure Eight* (fig 10) betray the expressionist origin of this kind of painting. The impulse of his gesture yields to the expressionist, which causes form to escape from traditional control resulting in a painting reminiscent of action painting. Kline sometimes forces his gesture so much that it loses its initial intensity: the form gets out of breath and looses strength at the first opportunity. Then its all-powerful liberty, instead of being intensified (which is the point of action painting), becomes as inadequacy of expression (Vallier, 1970:257).

De Kooning was influenced by Pollock's action painting in his application of broad brushmarks. Most of his works consisted of female figures which he believed came from his unconscious mind. His work is dynamic and forceful because of the automatic methods he used to ignore the rational control of his consciousness.

Woman I (fig 11) shows his inspiration by female models which suggest fertility and a satirical inversion of the traditional image of Venus, goddess of love. The figure is defined with manic excitement, seemingly slashed out at full speed with a brush held at arm's length. Shapes and colours are interwoven with no definable order. As with other action painting, the image seems to be changeless, coming into being before the eyes of the viewer, but the tension between flat design and lines in space, between image and process, is emphasised by the noticeable figure whose violent strength demands recognition.

4.5.2 Expressionist figuration: Francis Bacon (1909 -)

The drive for expression was an essential element of Bacon's work as he expressed the great mental and physical pain of our times. The people he paints are not grotesque; but are beings subjected to the pressure of an unbreathable atmosphere which disfigures them physically. The drive for unconscious expression is assisted by a pictorial quality so exceptional that it is almost miraculous. Bacon described his method of work in a television interview with David Sylvester:

"I think that you can make, very much as in abstract painting, involuntary marks on the canvas which may suggest much deeper ways by which

you can trap the facts you are obsessed by. If anything ever does work in my case it works from that moment when consciously I didn't know what I was doing" (Lucie-Smith, 1984:66).

At first, his pictures contrast the violence of the figures with the geometrically cold framework of the space. He uses loud, uniform, saturated colours in wide areas so that the figures appear to be submerged in the most profound solitude. In *Study after Velasquez's Potrait of Pope Innocent X* (fig 12) the individual who once posed self-confidently for the seventeenth-century Spanish painter has been transferred into a twentieth-century space-cage and endures unbearable fear of unseen horrors. His mouth is violently twisted open in an agonised scream. The figure loses its identity with the dark rays foreboding surrounding it, imprisoned as if tied to an electric chair, and overcome by suffering so harsh that it is almost unbearable to look at the image. To Bacon, existence involves change and a sense that reality is eternally elusive. His style is skilfully adapted to express this:

"I would like my pictures to look as if a human being had passed between them, like a snail, leaving a trail of human presence and memory trace of past events, as the snail leaves its slime" (De la Croix *et al.*, 1987:1052).

The blurred images suggest the shifting uncertainty of hidden unconscious desires and fears of human existence compressed into segments of time, and emotion into single images.

4.6 Conclusion

Automatism used in Surrealism and other movements discussed in this chapter allowed artists to use their unconscious to be visualised through images associated with dreams, memories and hallucinations. Dream-imagery was used by Salvador Dali as a conscious attempt at visualising his unconscious processes at work. Freud's discussion of dreams in chapter two reveals that dreams controlled by primary-process thinking, take on symbolic form avoiding logic and reason. The use of Dali's *paranoiac-critical method*, may be regarded as a conscious attempt at intensifying the concept of the irrational in his work.

Joan Miró's use of automatism in his work was defined as a pictorial illustration of his unconscious processes at work. The use of line was Miró's conscious attempt at portraying these unconscious processes at work. It therefore seems acceptable to believe that Miró's work relied on both mental processes.

Max Ernst's discovery of the frottage method was stimulated by childhood memories causing a different approach to automatism.

Case studies and psychobio-graphies featuring Mozart, Poincaré, Picasso and Ben Shahn clearly reveal that previous experiences are aroused through circumstances and are necessary for the creative process to take place.

This frottage method a spontaneous approach in Ernst's work but relied equally on conscious processes for final evaluation as well. The Abstract Expressionists applied the automatic method in different techniques, resulting in methods such as Action Painting, Gestural and

Figurative Expressionism. These various methods relied on the unconscious as a basic ingredient of the technique but nevertheless needed conscious evaluation as well. Miró and Pollock both alternated between periods of involuntary improvisation and conscious evaluation of developing their compositions. These movements may have interpreted automatism, dream imagery and imagination in different ways, but the one factor that they share in common is that their creative process involves both conscious and unconscious processes.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF PRACTICAL RESEARCH: ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION

The researcher's work reflects a creation of emotional components which are visually portrayed in her paintings. Essentially, these components are childhood memories, experiences as a young adult and the reaction towards these aspects which the unconscious as a seemingly active participant in the genesis of such an experience. The compositions are busy in order to emphasise feelings of hysteria, paranoia and frustration as they reflect hidden personal feelings experienced by the researcher. The need to fill the composition is a form of consolidation in that the researcher has to be confronted with these fears and to portray them in different symbolic ways in each of her paintings. There is an attempt at the Surrealistic idea of placing unrelated objects together in a composition in order to create a dream-like imagery. The addition of static figures or objects establishes a balance between the elements of hysteria. In exercising this method, the researcher visually portrays a dream-like existence in which the imagination, as claimed by Breton (1947:19) gains access to the dream, the past and present as well as to the conscious and unconscious.

5.1 The nature of unconscious processes in the investigated works of the researcher

As it has been discussed in chapter one, the creative process, may be viewed in stages or a process involving an interwoven network of stages functioning as a whole. Graham Wallas's (1926) preparation, incubation, illumination and verification stages are noticeable in the

creativity of the examined paintings: the elements are interwoven or woven together into a creative whole. These stages occurred at rondom intervals in the creative process of the researcher's paintings and may actually be seen as a process rather than an undertaken stage. The ***preparation stage*** was evident in the construction of each painting since basic planning of a composition needed to be done before the practical application took place. This stage, however, tended to be regarded as a process because as the idea progressed, the researcher experienced new problems in the paintings, and these needed ***verification*** - Wallas's final stage as well as ***preparation*** once again. The ***incubation*** stage occurred in the researcher's creative process from which the potentially useful ideas from the preparation stage were combined in new ways - unconsciously. This is where the ideas from the preparation stage caused the researcher to relate present notions to previous experiences of childhood and adulthood - previous experiences triggered by ideas consciously prepared for use in new combinations. The ***illumination*** stage could be observed in the researcher's creative process as a method of solution to an aesthetical problem often experienced in the process of ***preparation*** throughout her creative process. This stage however was accompanied by the incubation stage, together with the verification stage, so as to evaluate and analyse various notions generated by the unconscious as possible visual imagery and solutions for the problems put forward in the ***preparation*** stage.

The use of unconscious processes in the works of artists such as Salvador Dali, Joan Miro and Willem de Kooning may be observed as an underlying element of influence in the researcher's work. Her own wordk shows evidence of various methods and techniques drawn from automatism as a visual manifestation of unconscious prosesses at work.

As discussed in chapter four, automatism entails the application of unconscious processes to produce thoughts free from any rational control, by relying on chance and accident . This may be seen in the researcher's later work, namely *"Dancers of the veld" (fig 16)* and *"Birth of Venus" (fig 20)*. The expressive quality of brushmark applied by Willem De Kooning portrays an element of chance and accident in order to attain a similar loose quality of brushmark. The researcher's later work relies on this element of chance and accident through the use of brushmark as an underlying thread of influence from De Kooning's work. Salvador Dali's *"paranoiac-critical method"* is another influence in the researcher's earlier work (*"22nd Joust starring Kilmany-Jo"* and *"The field of African Existance"*) since, like Dali, she attempts to find a surrealistic means of exploiting the rich imagery of the unconscious. In doing so, the researcher tries to visually convince the viewer that what is being observed (dream-imagery as a substitute for the real world) actually exists in the world of human existence.

Joan Miro who, like De Kooning, used the automatic approach, relied on chance and accident, but instead of using brushmark, used line. By attempting the automatic approach of line and brushmark, like Miró and De Kooning, tried to portray a vibrant display of line and brushmark to initiate movement. Conscious evaluation, however, was important in the researcher's work since it is necessary to investigate the various automatic approaches applied in each painting in order to meet the basic compositional requirements expected from a completed work of art.

5.2 Discussion of individual art works

5.2.1 Novella (Fig 13)

As discussed in Chapter three, authors like Mary Gedo and Freud believed that previous experiences were used as contributory elements in creating certain works. The title of this painting mains a short story underlined with satire. The use of imagery in this painting was chosen so as to interpret and explain the researchers visual understanding of the title. Salvador Dali was haunted by the mystery of time and expressed this fear through dream imagery to visually peceive his unconscious hidden fears in a powerful way. Dali's fear for time can be correlated to the researchers fear for unfulfilled wishes to be satisfied in which a dream-like imagery was created to intensify these elements. Similar to Miró and Pollock who alternated between cycles of spontaneous improvisation and periods of intense examination of their developing composition. Both conscious control and unconscious processes played an important role in this painting. A feeling of captured movement is emphasised by the static figures on the right half of the painting so as to contradict and strengthen the compositional elements in the left-hand side of the painting. The figures on the right hand side are painted in a lifeless colour so as to emphasise the unnatural setting of dream imagery depicted in Surrealist works as opposed to realistic imagery portrayed in the still-life. The still life consists of a figure in a crouched position with an apple in his mouth, and surrounded by exotic foods. The exotic foods symbolises a sense of longing for unfulfilled or unsatisfied wishes. This recalls Freud's suggestion in chapter three of his psychobiography of Da Vinci, in which he mentions that the enigmatic smiles of the women portrayed in Da Vinci's work represent an infantile longing for his mother.

The screaming bird echoes the emotions of the crouching figure - emotions which are emphasised by the hysterical madness reflected in the bird's eye. The screaming bird depicts the researcher's frustration and anger at enduring and learning the elements required at gaining wisdom, faith and patience in leading a Christian life at the age of twenty one. The disinterested attitude of the dancing figures contradicts the emotional mood expressed by the bird and this creates an unreal atmosphere in a work (the table) composed of stable elements portrayed as the cutlery in the still life. The apatheticism of humanity as portrayed in the dispirited dancers depicted in the painting was investigated by a personal event experienced by the researcher as a young adult. The researcher suffered a broken relationship after five years of intense companionship. Her feelings of loneliness and remorse left the researcher seeking for human support and understanding, but in return experienced an indifferent interest by friends and family leaving her isolated and angry. The researcher in turn, experienced religious struggles involving the acceptance of her destiny caused by God. Her anger towards God, caused the researcher to find it very difficult to accept elements of faith, hope and patience to be of spiritual healing in her time of emotional distress. The title depicting satire can be compared to the researchers bitter attitude towards humanity and God, regarding her circumstances involving the termination of her friendship with her friend.

5.2.2 Abakwetha 22 (Fig 14)

The choice of the title of this painting represents the traditional dance of sexual maturity performed by Xhosa adolescents (African tribe). The particular choice of adding the number *"22"* after *"Abakwetha"* again

strems from a personal event experienced by the researcher. At the time constructing this painting, it was the month of her twenty-second birthday. During this time, the researcher experienced emotions from her adolescent life, which in turn stimulated the notion of portraying the dance of adolescents customary among the Xhosa's. The researcher sees the adolescent as an individual isolated from society at a stage when he or she is learning the lessons of life. Personal accounts by certain creative individuals mentioned in this research study, including Ben Shahn and Picasso, may be correlated with the personal emotions experienced by the researcher as an adolescent, exposed to aspects of sexuality and maturity that cause confusion.

The ritual dance of the figures represents the rhythmic beat of life placed in a dream-like landscape. The idea of a dream-like landscape, which the Surrealists frequently used, emphasises the sense of isolation experienced by an adolescent in an enigmatic world exposed to contradictory forces involving the rational and irrational. The movement of the figures is captured and isolated by a single beat of the dance of adolescence that reflects an inner fear and paranoia of human existence and the unknown experienced by the researcher. Salvador Dali and Francis Bacon used elements in their paintings to portray paranoia and fear for the unknown. Francis Bacon, for example, concentrated on the human figure to confront viewers with their deepest feelings, for example, in *'Study after Velasquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X'* (fig 12), Bacon portrayed the figure enduring unbearable fear for unknown horrors. The human figures portrayed in this painting, like Bacon's figures were used as symbols of human existence - bearers of emotions and fears. The birds in the foreground are depicted wandering aimlessly, unaware of the vibrant and powerful ritual dance performed

by the dancers in the background. These birds symbolise the cold reality of unsympathetic human existence.

Catherine Patrick (Bailin, 1988:76) maintained that she observed the creative process as a whole and not in stages as proposed by Graham Wallas. In planning this painting, certain stages of Wallas's theory were more prominent than others. Because the initial idea needed conscious preparation, this stage was evident in order to meet the basic aesthetic requirements of the creative process. The incubation stage featured prominently, since time spent away from the idea made allowance for active, unconscious processing. This deliberate separation from the idea allowed the researcher to find a visual connection with the adolescent emotions she experienced on her twenty-second birthday, a time when she was isolated from the work. The initial notion was the tribal dance of the figures portrayed in this painting but a contradictory element was needed to intensify the harshness of human existence. After verification, wild animals were added to the painting. This caused change and restructuring of the initial composition. These animals were used as the visual solution to the problem of humanity as a vessel of instinctive apathy and lack of sympathy.

5.3.3 "22nd" Joust starring Kilmany-Jo (Fig 15)

The choice in the size of this work plays an important role in the theme of the painting. The figure, being a self-portrait is life-size so that theviewer is intimidated by the presence of the figure. The arrangement of the composition required intense conscious planning - hence the fact that the painting is divided into three sections. The reason for dividing the painting into separate sections was to isolate certain visual elements

such as the self-portrait in the right panel, the zebra in the middle panel and the procession of birds in the left panel.

The title of the painting portrays emotional traumas experienced by the researcher at the age of twenty-two. These traumas involved personal struggles with aspects of religion, sexuality and the hardship of adulthood. The word *"joust"* means an encounter between two mounted knights using lances (Collins English Dictionary 1988, page 265). This encounter is appropriate to the researcher's personal struggles with two fundamental aspects of life - religion and transgression of the moral law. The figure is mounted onto a table bearing various symbolic objects describing these personal battles. The globe symbolises the researcher's earthly existence. The over-sized King and Queen chess pieces portray the importance of these personal struggles, interpreted by the researcher as a game in which right and wrong are in equal competition with each other. The African clay pot holding the arrangement of flowers symbolises the African nationality of the researcher as the bearer of pure and patriotic concerns regarding religion and personal moral values. Spotlights shine on the figure to intensify the personal struggles experienced by the figure which forms the integral subject of this painting. Birds wander around aimlessly, staring directly at the viewer in the unreal dream-like landscape that represents the cold, unsympathetic and cruel realities of humanity. The combination of realistic objects placed in a dream-like landscape offers a visual portrayal of conscious and unconscious elements. Salvador Dali's *"paranoiac-critical method"* which he used to exploit the rich imagery of the unconscious was employed to assist the creative process in this painting.

The initial aim of this painting involving Dali's method was to convince the viewer that the imagery of imagination and irrationality is real and existent. The umbrellas were used as symbols of spiritual shelter from God above. The umbrella's symbolise the physical body of God as a protective shell from the manipulative downpour of human temptation and immorality.

5.2.4 Dancers of the veld (Fig 16)

The technique applied in this work was influenced by Surrealist artist, Joan Miró in which he used automatism as a point of departure. The practical approach in this painting relied on the act of chance which excludes conscious control in order to portray movement through the loose application of brushmark, colour and line. Miró describes this approach as follows:

"Shapes are at the same time motionless and mobile in my paintings. They are motionless because the canvas is a motionless support. They are motionless because of the distinctness of their contours and of the kind of framing in which they are sometimes located. But precisely because they are motionless, they suggest movement" (Green, 1993:424).

The loose brushmarks are a visual portrayal of the pulsating movement of the black dancers. These dancers represent the ritualistic surpassing and destruction of time in the same manner as Dali used ants on watches as a symbol of the destruction of time in *'Persistence of Memory'* (fig 3). The figures are clothed in tribal dress in order to identify human existence as a ritual practised by every living human being. The motionless, statuesque figure is rendered strongly visual by

the contradictory elements manifested to make this area the required focal point. The figure is treated as a statue, both visually and technically. The thick application of physical texture on the figure is a visual display of a combination of three-dimensional elements on a two-dimensional surface. The monumental figure symbolises fear of the unknown and the interruption of time in contrast to the rhythmic pulsating ritual of demolished time portrayed by the dancers.

Jackson Pollock's canvases possessed a dynamic energy accompanied by a trance-like depiction of a dance in which the viewer is invited to join. This concept is identifiable in this painting since it possesses a trance-like pictorial choreography in which the viewer recognizes the unconscious of the artist at work.

5.2.5 Walk of life (Fig 17)

This painting depicts the researchers view on the endurance of acceptance involved regarding unfulfilled wishes and needs. It depicts a procession of images on an arranged and definite path. This way of track symbolises the path of life that is strategically placed by God as the intended destination. The figure in the foreground is placed facing backwards to invite the viewer to be an active participant in the procession. The figures display emotions of fear of the unknown and pain at accepting the task of experience. The bird represents the pain of endurance experienced when God places obstacles in the path of destiny. The red and white poles of warning symbolise that one cannot return, but may only go forward. This event portrayed in this painting was chosen because the researcher was experiencing fear for the unknown and did not want to proceed further along her path of destiny.

The sundial depicts the essence of time and portrays two contradictive elements (the humming bird and eagle) of the duration of time. The hummingbird symbolises the birth and growth of time as opposed to the eagle who represents the destruction of time. The landscape consists of animals grazing unaware of the event taking place. These animals symbolise the lack of sympathy on the part of humanity and God regarding the hardship of life. The nature of the researcher's unfulfilled wishes and needs are visually expressed in the fearful and isolated figures in the composition. The need for immediate patience, understanding and acceptance from God during a time of unsatisfied needs and wishes left the researcher filled with feelings of hopelessness, anger and fear.

Them monuments along the path symbolise various memories regarding the hardship of endurance experienced in the researchers path of destiny. The figures portrayed in this path visually express these memories through gestures displaying sorrow, loneliness, hopelessness and fear for the unknown. The landscape is depicted with a never-setting sun emphasising the never-ending procession through life which appears to the researchers judgements, to be one existing only with elements involving pain, sorrow, fear, anger and isolation.

5.2.6 The field of African Existence (Fig 18)

This painting depicts the search for self-identity. The images portrayed symbolise the researcher's opinion on various stages of her life that involved growth of character. The large bird in the right panel is identified with the researcher wearing the symbol of African existence. Even though the researcher has identified herself as an inhabitant of Africa, the impossible quest at establishing her self-identification is

depicted in the crying bird. The fighting pheasants mounted on the African drum depicts the researcher's opinion about sexual maturity symbolically portrayed by the pomegranate. The struggle for moral values regarding sexual maturity is emphasised by the physical combat between the two birds. In die left panel, the vase with the protea placed on a sundial symbolises the researcher's sexual maturity as a female and the sundial represents the process of time required for maturation.

The turkey symbolises the motherly figure as a proud and honourable figure who is unable, however, to provide the researcher with fruitful knowledge to allay her confusion certain aspects of maturation. The background is the researcher's attempt to create haunting environment of empty space in which time is at an end. Like Dali, in his *"Persistence of Memory"* (fig 3) the detail of this dream scape is painted with precise control in order to make it as convincingly real as if it was an actual event that took place (paranoiac-critical method). Like Freud's psychobiography on Da Vinci's work, the researcher experienced similar unsatisfied needs and unconscious conflicts form earlier events that took place in her childhood resulting in a search for the fulfilment of these needs.

5.2.7 Me, and Myself (Fig 19)

When planning this painting, the researcher was left with many compositional problems. The initial idea was to express an environment of chaos and claustrophobia. The reason for expressing this idea, was because at this stage the researcher experiencing intense stages of anxiety. The initial compositional planning required intense detail and left an overall sense of being too busy and overcrowded. Time spent away from the problem (during the incubation stage) allowed the

researcher to find a solution to the problem, thus causing an alteration to the previous compositional plan of the painting. A larger object was needed, hence the inclusion of the screaming bird perched on a pole. What was initially expressed throughout the composition was singularly captured and expressed in the screaming bird which emphasised the fears and confusion of the researcher regarding adulthood.

The researcher's fears are visually manifested in the images portrayed in this painting. Figures struggle in pain and are portrayed as the bearers of sin engaged in an anxious search for reconciliation and inner peace. The screaming bird is perched on a pole depicted in the colours that portray caution so as to intensify the vulnerability and fear for feelings of distress. The crying beast depicted in the right-hand corner echoes the cries of the bird but represents the instinctive qualities of humanity which result in the downfall and destruction of moral values symbolically depicted in the death of the beast resulting in decay and condemnation.

The activity of the foreground portrays the present experiences of the researcher in contrast with the background that resembles the unknown. Conscious evaluation (during the verification stage) was needed for the final stages so as to observe whether or not most of the compositional problems were solved.

5.3.8 The Birth of Venus (Fig 20)

The division of this painting into three sections was initially planned because the researcher wanted to depict three prominent opinions regarding sexual maturity. The theme of the painting is directly borrowed from Botticelli's *"Birth of Venus"* and is personally interpreted

by the researcher, using the classical mythology. The lovely figure of the goddess of Venus, wafts up from a cockleshell. She symbolises the intellectual or spiritual embodiment of beauty and personifies the human soul. Botticelli's *'Birth of Venus'* is an allegory of the original innocence and truth of the soul, before its birth into total matter, and its fall into lesser being. The soul-naked as truth - is blown upon by the winds of passion but is shortly to be clothed in robe by reason. The pagan myth of the goddess of Venus is combined with the Neo-Platonic account of the journey - of the soul of God through the reflection of beauty.

The personal interpretation of this pagan myth caused the researcher to relate to various personal experiences during her sexual maturity as a female. The painting is a self-portrait of the researcher as the modern Venus attempting to confirm the birth of her existence. The cockleshell symbolises the security and protection offered by her parents as a child. The modern Venus is clothed in a dress bearing the Biblical emblem of temptation - the apple, symbolising womanhood. She stares upward towards the heavens with an expectant expression in search for purity and innocence as opposed to the classical Venus who represents truth and the beauty and purity of the naked soul. The modern Venus is reminded by the down-ward painted arrow on her dress that the reason for her downfall is that she is born into a world of sin and temptation. The handmade halo, lit by artificial light, portrays humanity's insincere dedication to the moral law of Christianity.

In this painting the classical Venus is portrayed to emphasise the modern disregard for purity of the soul. The physical beauty of the Venus is hidden by a leaf as a result of guilt and fear of condemnation from God. Each panel depicts various interpretations of halos as well as their influence on the images. The classical Venus is potrayed with a

classical halo radiating the gentleness and purity of God. The third panel portrays *"reason"* as a figure of mockery. This figure represents the researcher's defensive attitude towards self-identification. The castle depicted behind the figure of mockery is based on the line from a nursery rhyme - *'I'm the king of the castle and you're the dirty rascal'* which intensifies the researcher's defensiveness. The crown on the figure's head is a symbolic halo placed there to counterbalance the floating nature of the other halos. The fact that the halo is being worn, signifies the essential qualities of reason which destroy any spiritual endeavour because it - rather than spiritual power - controls humanity.

In the initial stages of this painting, each panel consisted of a single image which isolated the panel instead of bringing the panels together. A compositional problem was evident and needed conscious planning to find suitable elements that would solve this problem. The rocking-horse was added to the composition so as to combine the first two panels by means of a structured element. After verification and evaluation, the two wild dogs were added in the first and third panel to combine all three panels together to function as a whole.

The rocking horse not only provided a solution to a compositional problem, but conveyed a symbolic element portraying the destruction of time. The rocking motion of this play horse depicts the passing of time, resulting in the destruction and decay of humanity. The wild dogs stare at the passing time with fear so as to emphasise the powerful force this element has on living creatures.

The painterly technique applied in this painting altered at various stages throughout the process of this project. On account of the size, the beginning stages were approached by relying on chance and accident of

brushmark and colour. Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline's technique at deliberately emphasising the sweep and application of the pigment can be brought into reciprocal relation to the researcher's method of application. Conscious evaluation of these acts of chance and accidents required considerable attention to detail in order establish the focus area of the composition.

5.3 Conclusion

The evaluation of the researcher's practical projects has clearly revealed that a gradual process, involving conscious and unconscious states, is required to complete the creative process. Past experiences, unfulfilled wishes and needs experienced by the researcher required stimulation of the unconscious in order to present these experiences visually. In *"Abakwetha 22"* (fig 14), existing experiences caused an upsurge of hidden unconscious feelings to be remembered and expressed visually. Similar events appeared in specific paintings discussed in this chapter established an understanding that unconscious processes do play a role in the creative process.

Various techniques applied, relying on chance, accident and Salvador Dali's *'paranoiac-critical method'* allowed the researcher to portray various experiments involving conscious and unconscious processes in her practical research. The interwoven stages of Graham Wallas's (1926) proposed theory of creativity were clearly evident in the researcher's creative process and these involved both conscious and unconscious mental states. Conscious evaluation of the existing compositional elements of a painting was necessary at various stages throughout the creative process so as to maintain an ongoing balance between the two mental processes. Mental aspects involved in the

practical works of the researcher, pertaining to this field of study, allow one to conclude that the creative process consists of a network of conscious and unconscious processes which support each other throughout the creation of an art work.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1

Ben Shahn

Allegory

1957

oil on canvas

84½" x 48"

Fig 2

Pablo Picasso

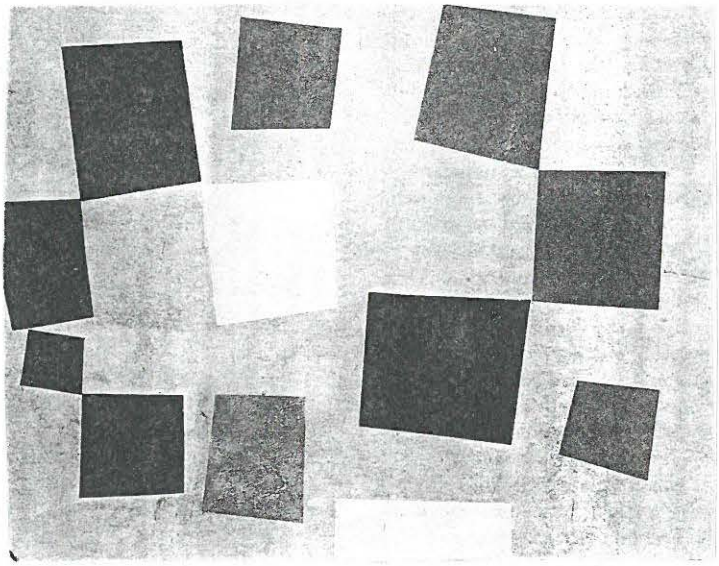
Guernica

1937

mixed media

349,3 cm x 776,6 cm

Fig 3



Jean Arp

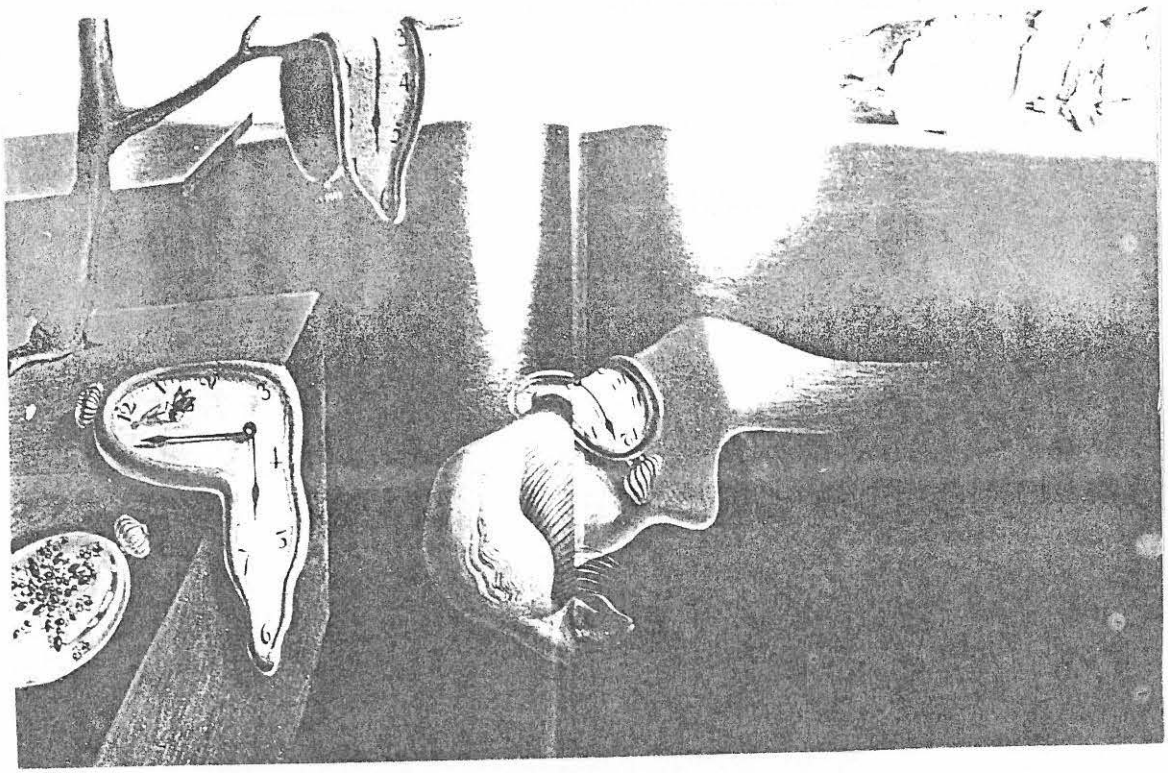
Squares arranged according to the laws of chance.

1917

cut and pasted papers, ink and bronze paint

13 1/8 " x 10 ¼ "

Fig 4



Salvador Dali

Persistence of memory

1931

oil on canvas

24 cm x 33 cm

Fig 5

Joan Miro

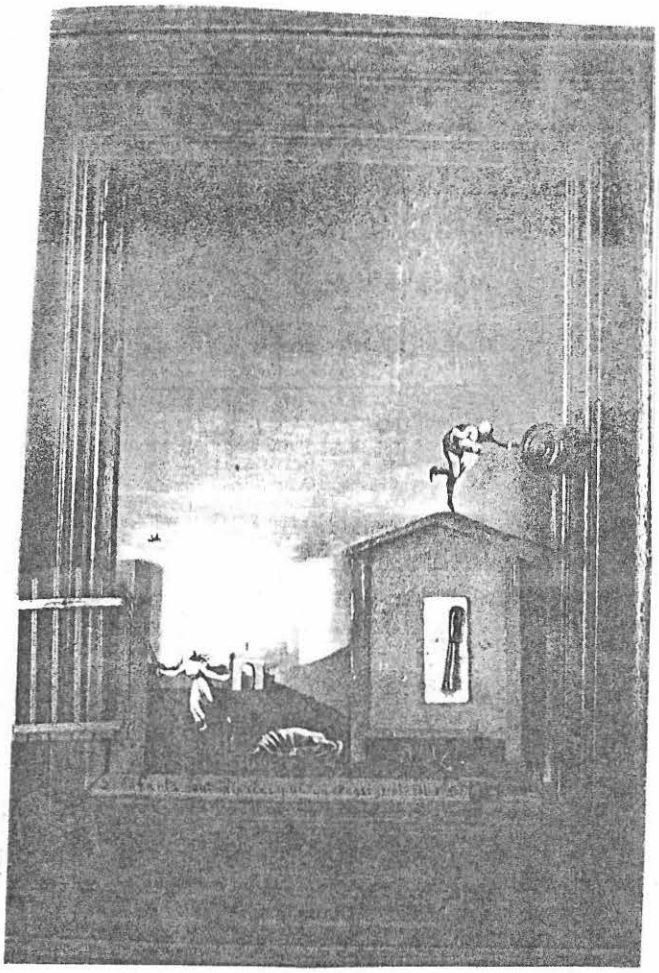
Dutch Interior

1928

oil on canvas

91,8 cm x 73 cm

Fig 6



Max Ernst

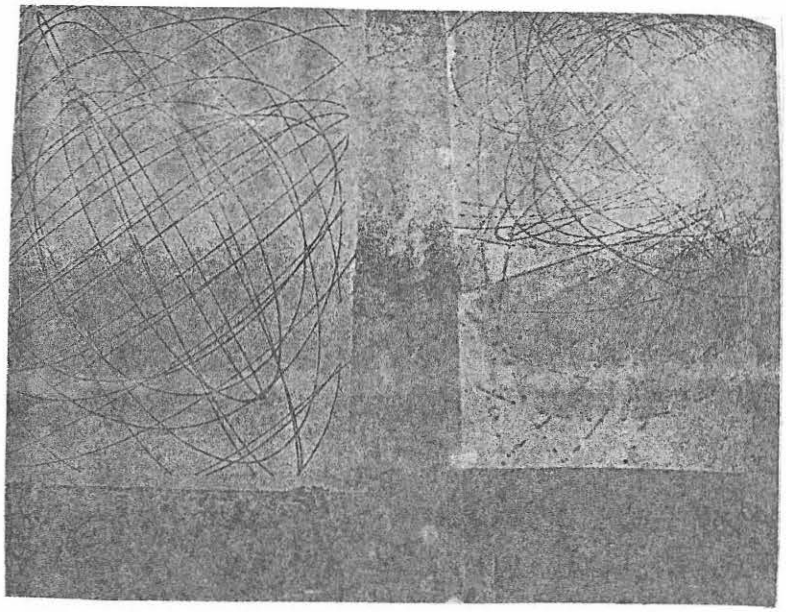
The children are threatened by a Nightingale

1924

oil on wood with wood construction

46 cm x 33 cm

Fig 7



Max Ernst

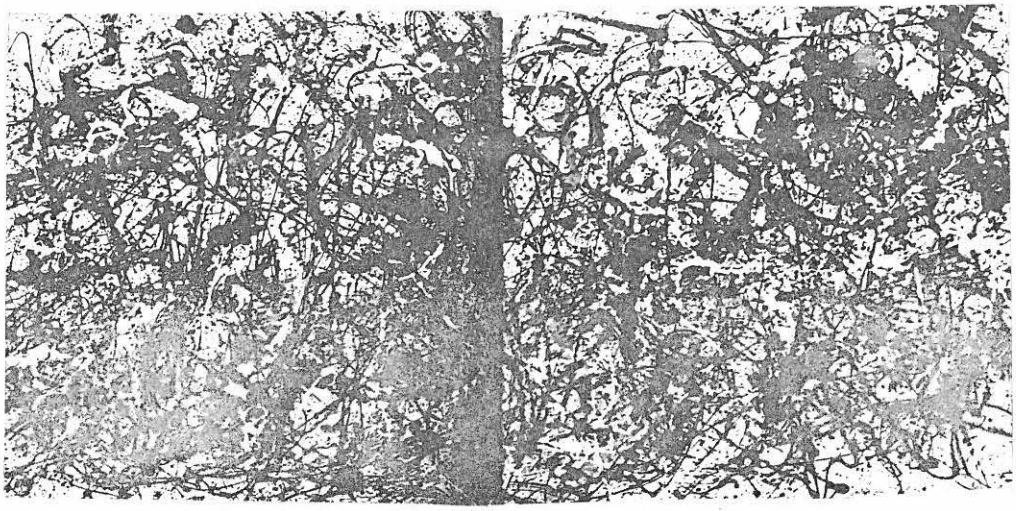
The Bewildered Planet

1942

oil on canvas

110 cm x 140 cm

Fig 8



Jackson Pollock

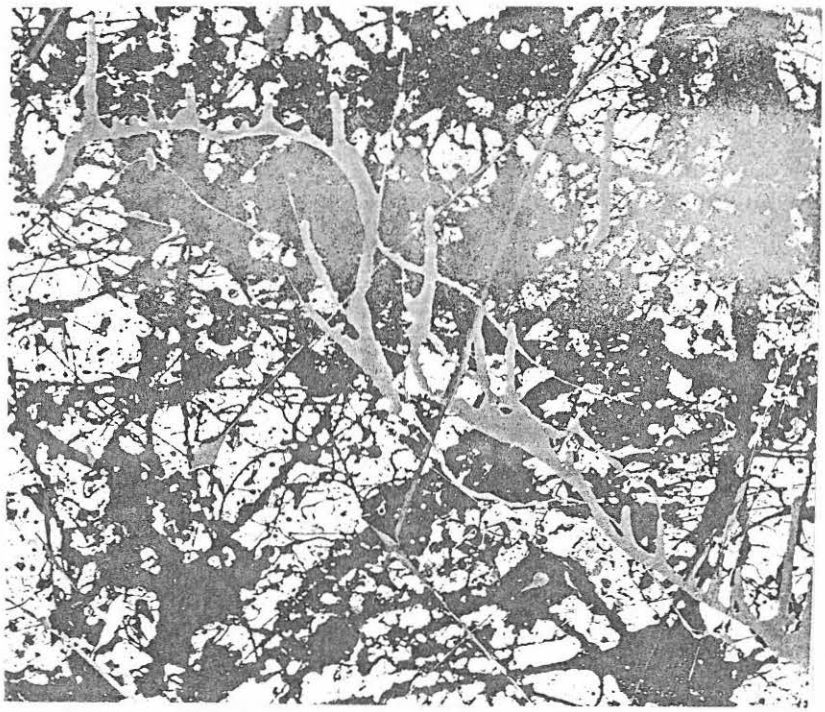
Automn Rythm

1950

mixed media

266,7 cm x 525,8 cm

Fig 9



Jackson Pollock

Lucifer (detail)

1947

oil, aluminium, paint and enamel on canvas

104,1 cm x 268 cm

Fig 10

Franz Kline

Figure Eight

1952

mixed media

204,5 cm x 161,3 cm

Fig 11

Willem de Kooning

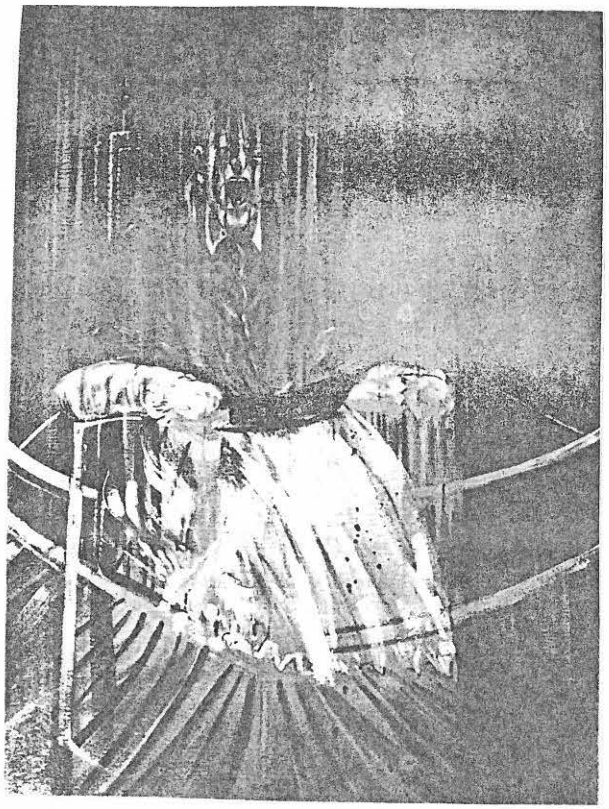
Woman I

1950 - 1952

mixed media

75 cm x 57 cm

Fig 12



Francis Bacon

Study after Velasquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X

1953

mixed media

5' ¼" x 3' 8 ¼"

ILLUSTRATIONS: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Fig 1 Tomas, V. 1964. *Creativity in the Arts*: New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc. p. 15.19

Fig 2 Copplestone, T. 1985. *Modern Art*. London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group. p. 148-149.

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Fig 7 Spies, W. 1991. *Max Ernst*: Munich: Prestel - Verlag. p. 246.

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Fig 10 Ashton, D. 1982. *American Art since 1945.* New York, Oxford University Press. p. 47

Fig 11 Barr. A.M. Jr. 1955. *Masters of Modern Art.* New York: Simon and Schuster. p. 177

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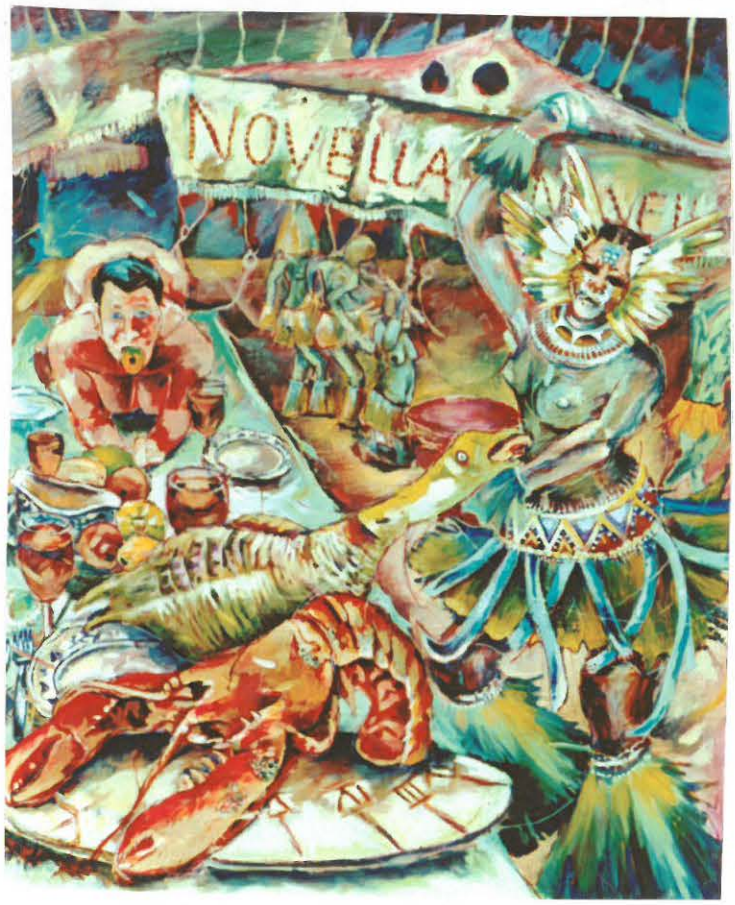
Fig 13



Kilmany-Jo Hunt

Novella

1995

oil on canvas

150 cm x 130 cm

Fig 14

Kilmany-Jo Hunt

Abakwetha 22

1995

oil on canvas

200 cm x 150 cm

Fig 15

Kilmany-Jo Hunt

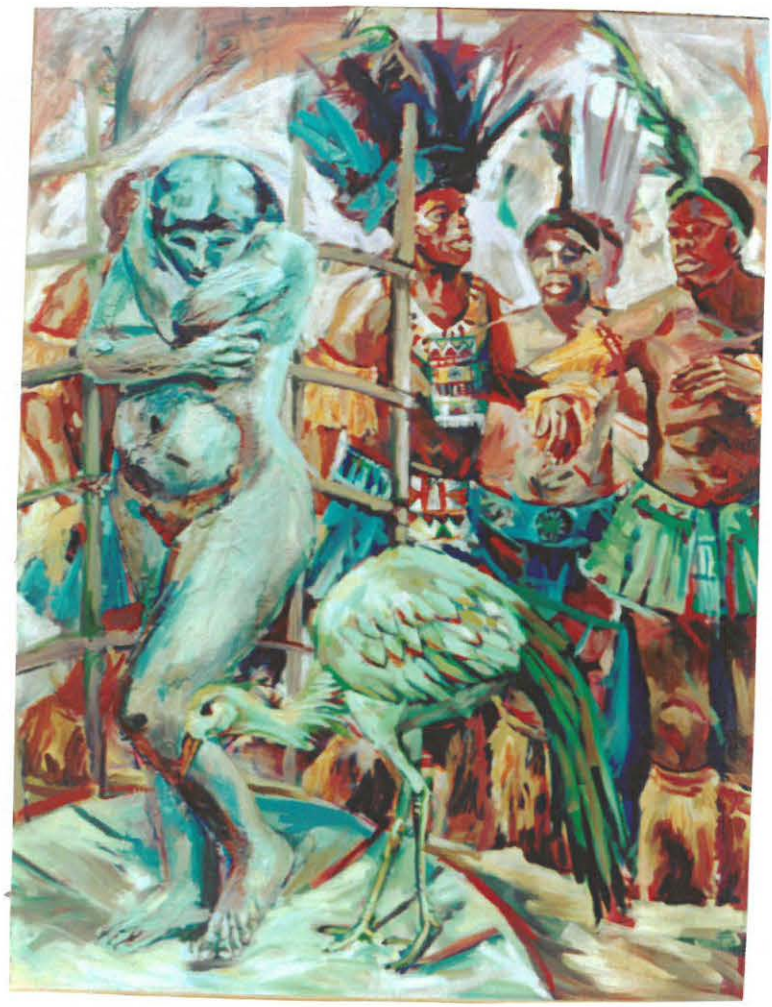
"22nd" Joust starring Kilmany-Jo

1996

oil on canvas

352 cm x 200 cm

Fig 16



Kilmany-Jo Hunt

Dancers of the veld

1996

mixed media

200 cm x 150 cm

Fig 17

Kilmany-Jo Hunt

Walk of life

1995

oil on canvas

200 cm x 150 cm

Fig 18

Kilmany-Jo Hunt

The field of African Existence

1995

oil on canvas

200 cm x 150 cm

Fig 19

Kilmany-Jo Hunt

Me, and myself

1995

oil on canvas

119 cm x 99,5 cm

Fig 20

Kilmany-Jo Hunt

The Birth of Venus

1996

oil on canvas

228 cm x 200 cm