THE EMPOWERED BODY:
CREATIVE EXPRESSION AS A FORCE FOR PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

The release of creative expression through the role of the unconscious and the conscious is discussed. The defining of a relationship between the unconscious and the conscious is addressed, with reference to the theories of Jung and Freud. The primary process, as well as the mechanisms of condensation and displacement, is referred to as supporting the transference of the unconscious in creative expression. Pictorial imagery and material content pertain to unconscious employment, in which repressed emotional and psychological issues are released.

The capacity for psychic growth through art renders creative expression as a transformational agent. The interaction of the conscious and the unconscious is essential to the concept of psychic growth. The processes of integration and introspection are discussed with reference to the resolution of repressed issues and inner conflicts. The notion of psychic harmony is referred to in correlation to this resolution.

The inner and outer states of creative expression are discussed with reference to the artwork as a product of the mental processes involved within its expression. The artwork as a mode of expression is discussed with reference to Wollheim (1973). The assimilation of the external world in the process of creativity is discussed with reference to bodily activity, the act of object-solution and the structuring of these external objects.

The establishing of a relationship with the external world in creative expression is discussed as a force for healing. A correlation between creativity and child play, and creativity and ritual, are referred to. Creative expression is understood as a means for psychic wholeness. Interaction with the unconscious by the conscious mind, and the expression of a unitary reality, is discussed with reference to the concept of psychic wholeness. The healing aspect of this unitary reality is discussed with reference to the act of transferring mental processes into an artwork, as well as the processes of interaction, introspection and individuation.
Symbolism and healing is discussed with reference to the concept of symbolisation as a means of unconscious, emotional expression. Non-conceptual symbolism is referred to within this context. The capacity of the symbol as a means of identification, contributes to the healing process. The role of symbolism in establishing a relationship with the external world in creative expression is addressed. Symbolic functioning of consciously employed elements in my work is discussed.

The principles governing my creative methodology are discussed according to conscious and unconscious employment. The application and selection of media is discussed as symbolic activity in my painting. Texture, distortion and placement of figurative form, as well as surrounding space, are unconsciously employed. Inserted objects and natural elements are referred to as pertaining to conscious employment. The paintings are discussed individually according to the series in which they apply. The sub-titles regulating this discussion are indications of the psychic transformation involved within the creative process. The creative process is an expression of personal transformation.
INTRODUCTION

Each of us comes into this life as a pristine, pure, flawless diamond. And, through the trials of growing up and life’s pains, our innate brilliance becomes hidden (Bays 1999:4).

It is from this ‘hidden’ state, that the concept of the ‘transgressed body’ is derived. Psychic wholeness is achieved through the transformation of the psyche within the production of art. This transformation is expressed throughout the creative process.

Transformation may be understood as the ordering, reordering, integration and transcendence of conflicts by the human brain in undergoing a paradigm shift (Ferguson 1981: 76). Psychic transformation is discussed with reference to the mental processes involved with transformation in the act of creativity.

The creative process uses the image of the body to assist in the act of transformation. The body is seen in transit. The figurative form in the paintings is transformed, rendering a parallel to the transformation of the psyche. The concept of ‘the transgressed body’ is represented in the paintings through ‘controlled’ gesticulation of the figurative form; psychic transformation is expressed through the unconscious manipulation of figurative form and ‘psychic wholeness’ is expressed through the dissipation of the figurative form into space. Psychic transformation and creative transformation express a mutually dependent, symbiotic relationship, in which the state of psychic wholeness is achieved. Expression within my creativity is the means whereby my intentions of psychic growth and healing are fulfilled.

The role of the conscious and the unconscious in releasing creative expression is discussed. The relationship between the conscious and the unconscious is defined with reference to Jung and Freud. The transference of the unconscious mind in creative expression is discussed with reference to the primary process. The processes

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1 The harmonious interaction of the unconscious and the conscious within the psyche.

2 A relationship between two organisms that is mutually beneficial in some way.
The ability to impose order onto the external world in creative expression is addressed in the correlation made between creativity and ritual. The capacity of creative expression in providing a state of psychic wholeness, or soundness, through transformation is discussed. The interaction of the conscious and the unconscious, and the expression of a unitary reality, is discussed with reference to this transformation. The transforming of expression into a visual aesthetic, and the process of individuation is addressed within the discussion of a unitary reality.

The interaction of the unconscious and the conscious is discussed with reference to the concept of psychic wholeness. The unconscious as a force for psychic harmony within creative expression is discussed with reference to 'psychic disharmony'. The healing aspect of unconscious interaction is addressed, with reference to the release of 'unconscious repression' and 'unconscious tension'.

Symbolism and healing is discussed with reference to the concept of symbolisation as a means of unconscious, emotional expression. The concept of non-conceptual symbolism within this context is referred to. The capacity of the symbol as a means of expression and identification is regarded as contributing to its ability to heal. The symbolic functioning of consciously employed elements in my work is addressed, in which the concept of analogy is introduced. The role of symbolism in establishing a relationship, in art, with the external world, is significant to the discussion of healing. Various definitions of 'symbol' are provided, within this discussion, with strong reference to Umberto Eco (1984).

My creative work is addressed according to the unconscious and conscious employment of elements. The acts of application and selection of media are discussed as symbolic activity. The distortion, gesture and placement of the figurative form; texture and space are referred to under unconscious employment. Inserted objects and applied natural elements are discussed with reference to conscious employment. The individual paintings are discussed in accordance with the series to which they apply.

Section 2 of the dissertation provides a commentary on the practical work. The role of the figurative form is discussed in relation to the issues of claiming and identity in art.

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6 An experience of a total sensory nature involving unconscious and conscious processes.
of condensation and displacement, and their relationship with the aesthetic formulations of creative expression, is acknowledged. The unconscious employment of pictorial imagery and material content in my work is discussed with reference to the expression of repressed emotions and psychological issues.

Creative expression as an agent of transformation is discussed. The capacity for psychic growth in creative expression is regarded as a means of personal transformation, in that the sphere of consciousness is increased. The interaction of the conscious and the unconscious is considered as the means whereby psychic growth is made possible. The processes of integration and introspection are discussed as the means whereby conflicts, contradictions and repressed issues are resolved in creative expression. Psychic healing, as a result of this resolution, is addressed.

Inner and outer states in creative expression are discussed, whereby the artwork is regarded as the outer state of the artist's inner state. The relationship between creative expression and the mental processes involved is essential within this discussion.

The assimilation of the external world within acts of creativity is discussed with reference to Wollheim (1973), in which bodily activity, object-selection and the structuring of objects in art, are observed. The artwork as 'outer state' is considered as pertaining to the external world.

Artwork, as a mode of expression, is discussed in the defining of the expressionistic quality in aesthetics. The establishing of a relationship between the external world and the artist's inner state, as a force for healing, is addressed. A correlation is made between creative expression and 'play', in which the concept of adaptation is referred

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3 Wollheim refers to creative expression as activities that are expressive in nature. His definition of the term 'expression' in the visual arts is discussed as being "connected with the revelation of feeling in behaviour" (Wollheim 1973: 88).

4 Psychic growth, according to Ferguson (1986), maybe understood as an effect of a transformation within the psyche, in which an awareness of one's consciousness occurs. This is discussed in the dissertation as being brought about by the interaction with the unconscious by the conscious.

5 The term 'heal' is discussed on page 22 of the dissertation as a condition of 'soundness' or 'wholeness'. Psychic healing refers to the bringing of the psyche towards a state of wholeness. This is discussed with reference to the avoidance of fragmentation in the mind. The concept of 'wholeness' is connected to the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious within the psyche.
Figurative form as an extension and a representation of the self is addressed. The manipulation and eventual dissipation of the figurative form in my paintings is discussed as a creative process through which psychic transformation is expressed. The concept of the ‘cosmic body’, in relation to the discussion of figurative dissipation, is addressed with reference to the works of Van Gogh and Anselm Kiefer.

The application of mediums is discussed with reference to the notion of physical activity in art as a means of symbolisation. Reference to Jackson Pollock’s drip method is discussed in relation to physical employment.

Elements of unconscious employment are discussed with reference to distortion of figurative form, distorted gesture and symbolic placement of figurative form. Distortion, as a means of expressing emotional and psychological wounds, is addressed. The implications stated above concerning the figure-ground relationship are acknowledged.

Elements of conscious employment refer to inserted objects, applied natural elements, and the image of the orifice. The concept of symbolic functioning, of these elements, is discussed with reference to the art of schizophrenic patients, and the art of Ethiopian healing scrolls.

The employment of media within the paintings consists of wax, cement, gauze and bandages. Reference to the work of artists involved with the employment of these particular media is discussed.

Section 3 involves a discussion on the individual paintings, structured according to Series A; B; C; D and E. The series represent the various stages within the creative process through which psychic transformation is expressed. The elements of unconscious and conscious employment will be discussed according to each individual painting.
SECTION 1. HEALING FORCES

1.1. The Role of the Conscious and Unconscious in Releasing Creative Expression

The release of creative expression is instigated by the interaction of the conscious and unconscious mind. Creative expression essentially produces imagery of which the "inner counterpart is not applied to any external image but stands on its own" (Arnheim 1969: 99). Inner, mental processes are responsible for the creative instigation of expression, yielding to both unconscious and conscious sources. Freud and Jung, although proposing different theories on the relationship between the unconscious and the conscious, agree on its symbiotic nature.

Jung believes the unconscious and the conscious mind to be very closely linked together. What is not grasped or completely acknowledged by the conscious mind, slips into the unconscious, it does not get erased. Thus part of the unconscious consists of a multitude of temporarily obscured thoughts, impressions and images that, in spite of being lost, continue to influence our conscious minds. (McLynn 1997: 52)

Freud (Smith 1999) founded a relationship between the conscious and the unconscious based on the principle of mental continuity. The essential characteristic of the process of continuity states:

Unconscious mental excitations are interposed between our conscious ideas; every conscious excitation arises out of and dies away into an unconscious excitation. (Van Der Hoop 1923: 168)

Freud (Van Der Hoop 1923) refers to these unconscious excitations as repressed unconscious material. He believes these unconscious thoughts and emotions are repressed unconscious desires. These thoughts and associated emotions, in their
repressed state, are subjected and transformed by the primary processes, presenting themselves as manifest imagery⁷.

Freud (Glover: 2001) believes the primary process, responsible for the distortion of manifest images, as supporting the transference of unconscious desires.

The Kleinian theory of aesthetics acknowledges the relationship between unconscious desires and aesthetic imagery, stating that formal, aesthetic qualities of creative activity are deeply rooted within psychic processes. Klein believes that “unconscious phantasy⁸ may be seen as forming both content and mechanism (form) of psychological processes” (Glover: 2001). Mannoni (1971) asserts Freud’s perspective, describing the primary process as being the means whereby unconscious desires are assisted.

Gombrich regards the joke mechanism as “the germinal model for any account of artistic creation along Freudian lines” (Glover: 2001). The Freudian ‘joke mechanism’ theory, although unrelated to aesthetics, defines the relationship between psychic processes and the formal aspects of art. The primary processes of the unconscious (condensation and displacement), seen to operate within the joke mechanism, is described as being of influence to the content expressed (Glover: 2001).

Glover refers to statements by Ehernzweig and Gombrich, in support of this argument. Ehernzweig relates “the joke’s witty effect to objectively defined structures which are the workings of the primary process” (Glover: 2001). The unconscious processes of condensation and displacement, seen in the workings of dream imagery and in the joke mechanism, is evident in the aesthetic formulations of creative expression- in which unconscious images are subjected to the workings of the primary

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⁷ Freud’s use of the term ‘manifest images’, in reference to dreams, is described as “images which stand for something else” (Eco 1984: 136). Eco describes ‘manifest content’ as that which is organised into form, from ‘latent content’, by ‘oneiric labor’. The process of ‘oneiric labour’ is associated to those of condensation and displacement (Eco 1984: 139).

⁸ Fuller (1980) relates this term to unconscious mental processes in his description of the origin of the spelling of the word. Fuller claims it is spelt with ‘ph’ so as to “differentiate it from those usages which refer only to a conscious psychic process” (Fuller 1980: 114). Isaacs describes phantasy as “the mental expression, the psychic representative of instinct” (Fuller 1980: 114).
process. Creative expression may be regarded as the subjection of formal, aesthetic qualities to unconscious, psychic processes, in which, according to Gombrich, “the code generates the message” (Glover: 2001). Gombrich states:

The joke is a preconscious idea that has been exposed briefly to the workings of the unconscious. This means that it is not the content so much as the form, the dream-like condensation of meaning which is characteristic of the primary process, that is important. (Glover: 2001)

The form and content expressed in creative production, in correspondence to this theory, may be regarded as an indication to, and thus an expression of, the mental processes involved in the production art.

The subjective distortion of images and the manipulation of media in my work pertain to unconscious employment, and may be discussed with reference to Freud’s theories on the primary process, and the processes of condensation and displacement.

Pictorial imagery and material content in my work, arising from a creative impulse, are unconsciously employed. These images, ‘changed’ or ‘distorted’ by the primary process express unconscious desires. They are derived from my imagination and memory, and ‘shaped’ according to the expression of unconscious emotions and thoughts at the time. Distortion of figurative imagery, and the application and texture of media, attribute their character to an unconscious desire to express repressed thoughts and emotions.9

The acts of choice, application and placement of media, in my art, may be seen as a result of unconscious activity. This unconscious activity is an ever-present, active force, separate from the notions of chance. Freud refers to the workings of an unconscious mechanism in what one would otherwise regard as ‘chance’ or ‘free will’. His theory of determinism states that the “unconscious shows a somnambulistic

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9 It may be noted, at this point, that Freud (Storr 1972) refers to the expression of unconscious desires within creative activity as an act of fulfilling pleasure, unable to be pursued in the outside world. My expression of unconscious desire, however, refers to a need to release repressed thoughts and emotions limiting my psychic growth.
certainty in the calculations it makes without help from consciousness, so much so that it is impossible to choose a number by chance” (Mannoni 1971: 82). Unconscious rendering of imagery and materiality is explained by Georg Baselitz, who equates his unconscious employment to a lack of control over the aesthetic elements. Due to the largeness in scale of his work, he states:

The control of the details into the making of the figure — nose, eyes, mouth, ears, hands — can no longer be taken for granted when you are at work on the canvas. They can only be controlled in terms of their own content: their own colouring and their own materiality. (Curiger 1986: 40)

He continues:

The only explanation for every brushstroke you make comes from the picture itself and is made possible by it. Everything is arbitrary. (Curiger 1986: 48)

The unconscious, according to Jung, retains that information which is not ‘held’ by the conscious. This information, not rationalised by conscious processes, influences the conscious mind. The conscious and the unconscious contain the ability to be of influence to each other, and are therefore linked. Freud’s observations of the continuity of mental processes (of the conscious and the unconscious), re-affirms the notion of an existing link between them. The primary process, discussed within the concept of the joke mechanism, supports the transference of the unconscious in dreams and in creative expression. The processes of condensation and displacement are of influence to the aesthetic formulations of creative expression. The working of the unconscious mind is present, not only in the emotional, distorted rendering of aesthetic form and content, but also within the activities of creative expression. Freud’s theory of determinism is referred to in accordance with the concept of unconscious activity in creative expression. This theory, which states that the unconscious mechanisms of the mind are always active in regard to the creative process, is addressed in my work according to the selection of objects, their application and placement, and is not only limited to the actual visual content of manifest imagery.
1.2. Creative Expression as Transformative Agent

The interaction of the unconscious and the conscious is a cause for transformation. Ferguson (1981) discusses the transformation of people in reference to the transformation of consciousness. This concept refers to the “state of being conscious of one’s consciousness” (Ferguson 1981: 72), in other words, being aware of our mind and its thought processes. Ferguson refers to ordinary consciousness as being a “mind not aware of itself” (Ferguson 1981: 72).

Given the above, “anything that draws us into a mindful, watchful state has the power to transform” (Ferguson 1981: 72). The interaction with the unconscious by the conscious mind, in creative expression, involves the process of ‘introspection’ and ‘integration’, holding the capacity for ‘psychic growth’. This may be regarded as a ‘mindful state’. The interaction of the unconscious and the conscious instigates the transformational process of creative expression.

Due to the process of transformation, conflicts, contradictions, mixed feelings, all elusive material that usually swirls around the edges of awareness, can be recorded at higher and higher levels. Each new integration makes the next easier. (Ferguson 1981: 73)

The notion of integration through the resolution of inner conflict is made possible by the workings of the unconscious mind. Integration may be understood as the means whereby future psychic conflict (by unconscious tension) is avoided.

Images of creative expression, stemming from unconscious thoughts and desires, are subjected to emotional and psychic manipulation. This manipulation is a characteristic of the workings of the primary process (of the unconscious). The release of unconscious thoughts and emotions in art, through the manifestation of images, enables the visualisation of ‘unconscious content’. The unconscious enters the conscious. This ‘conscious awareness of inner self’ is also apparent in the physical immersion of unconscious activity in art, such as the application of media. Unconscious interaction in art allows for the release of repressed conflicts and emotions, the growth of consciousness and a greater sense of the self.
The interaction with the unconscious by the conscious mind, in creative expression, is a transformational experience involving psychic growth and harmony through the mental processes of introspection and integration. Ferguson believes inner conflicts as being “transformations waiting to happen” (Ferguson 1981: 69). Creative expression, as a means whereby these inner conflicts are resolved, is thus transformational.

Storr refers to the benefits of psychic harmony, achieved through creativity, in his observation of creativity, which he defines as: “a way of avoiding certain pathological states of mind like depression or schizoid-alienation” (Storr 1972: 176).

Van Der Hoop (1923) relates the repression of issues to the increase of unconscious tension. Creative ‘introspection’ in my painting, as a means of balancing repression, may be seen to reduce unconscious tension, producing psychic harmony. Psychic disharmony, or unconscious tension, may be understood as pertaining to a sense of conflict within the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious. Freud refers to psychic disharmony as being a result of a “conflict between the conscious thought and an unconscious feeling, which is not in harmony with it” (Van Der Hoop 1923: 33).

Jung’s definition of psychic disharmony provides an understanding of the inner psychic transformations involved with the internal processes towards achieving a sense of harmony.

Disharmony is being outside the narrow region which constitutes the Self, and our expressions are unlike those with which we are accustomed to and which are in harmony with our conscious organisation. Harmony requires the shifting of the Self towards the centre of this ‘narrow region’ — the nucleus of the Self has become more central after the change than it was before. It is only in those cases that the change will lead to a decrease of inner conflict and an increase of strength and assurance, which will enable the individual to develop more in accordance with his inmost nature. (Van Der Hoop 1923: 211).

The above provides a comparative discussion on the internal processes influencing the shifting of the self, as related to notions of psychic harmony and psychic disharmony.
The importance of unconscious interaction, enabled through the unconscious release of thoughts and emotions in art and physical activity, in achieving a sense of harmony or psychic balance, is acknowledged. Unconscious release within creative expression may be considered as a force for psychic harmony, in which unconscious tension is avoided. The release of repressed issues and emotions is, in itself, a psychic transformation. Repression of issues, according to Ferguson (1981), may be seen as a form of denial, and denial is the alternative to transformation.
1.3. Inner and Outer States in Creative Expression

The artwork, as a product of the expression of one's 'inner state', is regarded as external. It is released, existing outside of the person, in tangible and visible form. It is part of the external world. The artwork has entered the sphere of consciousness, to be addressed in a rational manner. The artwork, as defining the mental processes involved in creative expression, is, in this context, the outer state of the inner state of the artist.

Guntrip defines the relationship between inner and outer states in creativity as follows:

We live in these two worlds at the same time, one mental, the other material, the one a perpetuation of the past and the other an exploration of the present, and we are involved in both of them in situations and relationships which rouse in us excitements, emotions and impulses of all kinds. It is impossible to keep the two worlds of outer and inner reality, of conscious and unconscious mental life, entirely separate. (Fuller 1980: 114)

The content of artistic expression, in psychoanalysis, is analysed as a product of the artist's psyche. Within the acknowledgment of the mental processes of the creative act, expression may be regarded as the outpouring of the artist's inner world transmuted into formal, aesthetic qualities (Glover: 2001).

From works alone a great deal can be deduced about a man: his tenderness; his violence; his skill and industry; his loves (of past, of space, of ambiguity, of honesty, etc.); his hate and his self-hate. (Ashton 1976: 5)

This concept is dealt with on page 13, in which the notion of the artwork as characteristic of mental processes is observed.

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10 Guntrip refers to this concept as "aspects of the self, such as impulses, wishes and desires" (Fuller 1980: 114). 'Inner world' and 'inner state' may be regarded as pertaining to the same concept. 'Inner state' is referred to on
The Freudian point of view on creativity proclaims the artwork to be a “reactionary product to childhood impressions” [embodying the] “eliciting of unconscious conflicts and phantasies”\(^{11}\) (Glover: 2001). The act of creativity is understood as a means of self-satisfaction, in which the pleasure principle of unconscious desires is expressed.

Storr (1972) refers to Freud’s ‘Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming’ (1908), observing the comparison made between the activity of creativity (in writing) and a child at play. Freud states “the creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy... which he invests with large amounts of emotion — while separating it sharply from reality” (Storr 1972: 30). The act of creativity, according to Freud, does not integrate, nor establish, a relationship between the external world and the inner state of the mind. Glover (2001) refers to the theories of Klein and Segal in providing an alternative viewpoint to Freud’s theory on creative activity, in which it is not merely a fulfilment of unconscious desires, but an activity allowing for the development of essential mental processes.

The following discussion acknowledges the relationship between aesthetic expression and the mental processes involved.\(^{12}\) The concept of aesthetics as a visual expression (portrayal) of the mental process is explored within this relationship. Wollheim’s (1973) theory on the expressive nature of visual art is referred to, whereby the visual element of painting renders expression. A link between the aesthetic form or content expressed, and the mental processes involved in this expression, may be seen in terms of the correspondence between ‘inner feeling’ and the aesthetic expression produced. The relationship between the external world and the inner state of the artist’s mind is discussed with regard to the various ways in which the act of creativity is seen to assimilate the outside world in art production. ‘Outer state’, discussed above as being

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\(^{11}\) Fuller (1980) relates this term to ‘unconscious psychic processes’, in his description of the origin as to the spelling of the word. Fuller claims that it is spelled with ‘ph’ so as “to differentiate it from those usages which refer only to a conscious psychic processes”. (Fuller 1980: 114). Isaacs describes ‘phantasy’ as “the mental expression, the ‘psychic representative’ of instinct”. (Fuller 1980: 114).

\(^{12}\) Arnheim refers to the expressionistic value in aesthetics as the capacity to “convey intrinsic meaning” through the arrangement of the aesthetic elements themselves (Arnheim 1979:262). He states that artists, “with their unspoiled sense of form, can still put all aspects of shape and colour totally to the service of the intended meaning” (Arnheim 1979:262).
the artwork itself, is linked to the external world, in regard to Wollheim’s observations of external assimilation in creative expression. Bodily activity, object-selection and the structuring of objects in art, is also acknowledged.

Wollheim focuses on the close connection between painting and “the movements of the mind and the body” (Wollheim 1973: 94) in assessing this correspondence. Bodily activity in art production, is a “manual activity — whose variations coincide with variations of inner state” (Wollheim 1973: 95), and may therefore be regarded as a mode of expression correlating to the mental processes involved.

One of the means whereby painting is rendered as a mode of expression is in the act of ‘object selection’. Wollheim describes this as a tendency within the artist “to find objects in the outer world that seem to match, or correspond with, what we experience inwardly” (Wollheim 1973: 94). “This correspondence between inner feeling and outer object leads us to characterize the object in the language of feeling” (Wollheim 1973: 95). The object, although contrived from the outside world, may be seen to express the internal processes of the artist.

‘Correspondence’, as a constituent of the concept of expression in painting, is described by Wollheim as the “deliberate construction or assemblage of elements in the interests of expression” (Wollheim 1973: 96). Gombrich (Wollheim 1973) describes the expression of inner feeling within ‘correspondence’ as pertaining to the actual act of the selection of pre-existent elements.

Wollheim (1973) also defines expression as the revealing of one’s inner life, consisting of alternating emotional states or moods, through behaviour (manifest actions) or in language (manifested words). Within his definition, the issues of whether the behaviour expressed is correlative to the emotions of one’s inner life are raised. In other words, Wollheim asks whether the expression is declaratory of the feeling, and whether the characteristics of expression are indicative of our feelings in behaviour. Wollheim, in reference to these issues, distinguishes ‘true’ behavioural and linguistic expression (which operate on modes of self-governing or self-revelation) from “rule-governed” or “law-like” behaviour and language (Wollheim 1973: 86-88).
Wollheim states that one of the most important features of expression is its “appropriateness, or it’s physiognomatic character” (Wollheim 1973: 90). By this he means “the way expression seems so finely matched or adjusted to the inner state of which it is the outer correlate, that we can see the one in the other” (Wollheim 1973: 90). It is interesting to note that, according to Wollheim, the circumstances in which language resembles behaviour in regard to containing expressive qualities, is when it is “highly impassioned or emotive in its overall character” (Wollheim 1973: 89).

Expression in art (creative expression), given the above, may be understood as the behavioural declaration and manifestation of one’s inner emotional states, without accordance to a mode of rules.

Another question on defining expression in art is raised in reference to Ashton’s (1976) account of the artworks of Philip Guston. Ashton proposes the question of whether matter alone can carry expressive meaning. Ashton, in reply to the question posed, refers to Guston’s statement that “it is not enough to make a mark on a canvas, even if it creates radiant light or rhythmic sequence” (Ashton 1976: 4). If paint alone is not enough in rendering an expressive quality, then is expression in art an overall quality rendered from a collaborative sense of creative elements? Can an aesthetic element alone, render expression? Is it possible for a single element, without underlying structure or being in arrangement with other elements, to possibly portray inner meaning? For an element to be expressive, it needs to be able to correlate to the underlying emotion of that expression. It may not be enough to exist individually, even in it’s manipulated form. I would argue that this is more possible through the means of analogy.

Arnheim believes the artwork to obtain its full impact (where expression is concerned), only if the “perceptual pattern reflects the constellation of forces that underlies the theme of the picture” (Arnheim 1970: 262). He thus believes that a relationship to other elements within a space of creativity, in which an underlying structure exists, is essential in fully defining its expressive characteristics.

The direct, perceptual evidence, which is the mind’s most persuasive source of knowledge, must display itself in the overall composition and in the
organization of detail if the message of the picture is to act with full therapeutic strength. (Armheim 1970: 262)

It must be noted, at this point, that the issue of expression and analogy is not considered within the above argument. As discussed in the section below, on symbolism in art, it is possible for an individual element in art to render expressive qualities when it is symbolically or psychologically analogous. This, however, is dependent on the relationship between the artwork and the one perceiving the artwork.
1.4. Creative Expression and Healing

The following discusses the establishing of a relationship between the external world and the artist's inner state in creative expression, as a force for healing. The inner state of the artist is discussed by Ferguson (1986) as being one's emotional moods, which is naturally connected to the psyche. 'Inner reality', in relation to the term 'inner state', is referred to by Guntrip (Fuller: 1984) as one's 'unconscious mental life'. He defines 'outer reality' as being one's 'conscious mental life'. I use the term 'inner state' to suggest a psychological and emotional state, not necessarily pertaining to only the unconscious or the conscious — which are discussed as being of influence to one another. The 'external world' exists outside of the person's mind, although is subjected to the perception of the mind. Or as Trilling says:

The illustrations of art are made to serve the purpose of a closer and truer relation with reality (Storr 1972: 176).

The relationship to the external world in art making, in which one's inner state is expressed, is a central issue in this discussion. To maintain a state of transformation from a state of transgression, a realistic and non-detrimental relationship with the external world must be achieved. The external world may be internalised and expressed symbolically within creativity, however, this expressing of reality must relate to the experiencing of it for it to be realistic. Creating an enclosed space in one's acts of creative expression, in which the outside world is not acknowledged or assimilated in any way, cannot be considered as contributing to psychic transformation. The creative individual, on re-entering an interactive relationship with the outside world, is no better off than before his or her creative experience. Psychic transformation as an inherent part of the creative process is therefore essential. Storr (1972) refers to those acts of creativity, in which the external world is not acknowledged, as being acts of delusion.

Storr (1972) draws a correlation between 'creativity' and 'play' in their adaptive qualities. He observes, from the experiments of Harlow on the play of young animals, that the interaction with the outside world and its objects, and social interaction with others, is essential to the adaptation of the animal, or, in the case of the artist, the
individual. The correlation between the ‘creativity of adults’ and the ‘play of children’ is referred to by Freud. He states that, in a discontent society, the opportunity to release aggression and sexual desires in adults (which children do in play) may be found in “phantasy and its derivative, art” (Storr 1972: 172).

The Kleinian viewpoint places the source of the artist’s creative capacity within the context of “fundamental developmental processes that establish a rich, communicative phantasy life and a realistic relationship to the external world” (Glover: 2001). Glover, in reference to Klein’s definition of ‘inner world’, states that it is a complex interaction between both inner and outer experience. Glover acknowledges the Kleinian viewpoint, stating: “it is the strength of the inner, unconscious phantasies which will determine just how aspects of the external world will become internalised within, or projected from, the psyche” (Glover: 2001).

Ehrenzweig’s theory on ‘undifferentiated image-making’ supports Klein’s theory on the relationship to the external world in art. He believes the artist “to be able to return to a state of child-like ‘syncretistic’ vision or ‘undifferentiated’ perception” (Glover: 2001).

Storr observes that ‘ritual’ “can act like a bridge between the inner world of the subject and the external world” (Storr 1972: 177). He likens the act of creativity to ritual by the ability of ritual to impose order onto what appears “ill regulated and beyond control” (Storr 1972: 177). Storr defines his conclusions as follows:

In these attempts to make order out of chaos, man was able to enlarge and deepen his perception of the external world, and thus become better able to understand, appreciate and eventually control at least some of its aspects. (Storr 1972: 177)

Klein describes this inner world as consisting of internalised objects, representing, amongst other things, real people “who are continually becoming internalised in a variety of situations provided by the multitude of ever-changing experiences, as well as phantasised ones” (Glover: 2001). The internalisation of the external world in the production of art may be acknowledged in Wollheim’s (1973) theory of object-
selection, discussed earlier with reference to his discussion of expression in visual art. The act of appropriating external elements from the environment, as a means of self-expression in art, may be regarded as an act of internalisation.

This internalisation of the external world is processed in art making, by means of symbolisation. This may be substantiated in the following quote by Winnicott, in which a correlation of creative activity to the act of ‘play’ is necessary.

Winnicott took a more benign view of play, regarding it as a safe play in which the growing child is initiated into culture and learns to endow the outside world with enriching symbolic experience. (Glover: 2001)

Play, like creative expression, also functions as a healing mechanism.

The word ‘heal’ is defined, according to the Concise English Dictionary, as “to make whole or sound; to cure; to restore to soundness, to amend”. ‘Health’, according to the same reference is defined as a “sound bodily or mental condition; a condition of wholeness”. ‘Healing’, therefore, may be regarded as the act of restoring to a level of wholeness. The acts of creativity and expression promote a sense of psychic wholeness through transformation.¹³ This transformation involves the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious. The creative principle, in regard to creative expression, is characterised by the interaction of the conscious and the unconscious.

The creative principle is so deeply rooted in the deepest and darkest corner of one’s unconscious, and in what is best and highest in one’s consciousness, that we can comprehend it only as only as the fruit of one’s whole existence.

(Neumann 1959: 169)

Neumann (1959) refers to this psychic structure of wholeness as a revelation. The term ‘revelation’, suggests that this ‘joining’ constitutes a transformational

¹³ Creative expression as a means of transformation is discussed previously with reference to Ferguson (1981). Psychic development (towards psychic wholeness) as far as integration and introspection are concerned, is discussed with reference to the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious.
experience. He refers to transformation as “embracing every change, every broadening and narrowing, every development, every change of attitude and every conversion” (Neumann 1959: 150).

Jung describes (in the context of the above quote) the psychic process of harmony, from a state of disharmony, as involving a shift in the Self towards the centre. Psychic wholeness, involving the ‘joining’ or ‘interaction’ of the unconscious and the conscious, may also be regarded as involving a ‘shift’, in which this interaction and conscious growth is a psychic transformation involving the ‘move towards’ the totality of the psyche.

When we consider the totality of the human psyche, in which the conscious and the unconscious are interdependent both in their development and in their functions, we see that consciousness can develop only where it preserves a living bond with the creative powers of the unconscious.

(Neumann 1959: 172)

Neumann associates the expression of a unitary reality to the experience of the totality of the human psyche, stating that it may only be perceived by a developed consciousness holding a relationship with the unconscious. Neumann refers to an undeveloped consciousness as being differentiated, stating that it operates as a ‘specialized organ’ which apprehends only a segment of the reality which exists” (Neumann 1959: 173). Jung explains the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious, as providing an experience of a total sensory nature.

Man never experiences or comprehends anything fully because of the number and quality of his senses. These limit the perception of the world around him. There exists unconscious aspects of our perception of reality. There is the subliminal absorption of events that have remained below the threshold of consciousness. To become aware of such happenings involves intuition and profound thought that leads to a later realization, and their emotional and vital importance wells up from the unconscious. (Jung 1978: 12)
One may regard this unitary reality as a symbolic reality. Psychologists once believed symbolic perception to be “an inward projection of an outward experience” (Neumann 1959: 173). This, however, involves a distinction between the internal and the external world, in that our perception of a symbolic experience is a projection of our internal experience of that image onto the external physical reality of that image. A unitary reality, however, is experienced as a whole, by the use of a totality of senses (from the unconscious and the conscious). “The symbolic element of this reality is the ‘sense content’ provided by the ‘feeling-toned’ experience of the unitary reality” (Neumann 1959: 173).

The healing aspect of the experiencing and expression of this unitary reality exists within two processes. The first process involves transforming expression into an aesthetic act. This is observed in the following quote.

To Kristeva, art is the expression of a wound that cannot be adequately named or symbolised in verbal language, and its therapeutic potential lies in the transformation of darkness and pain into an aesthetic form.

(Hutchinson 1994: 195)

This transformation, involving the visual portrayal of emotions and psychological issues in creative expression, may be regarded as ‘externalisation’. Hutchinson states in the quote mentioned above, that the externalising of latent issues is of a therapeutic nature.

Arnheim (1970) addresses the concept of externalisation in creativity, with reference to the drawings and paintings of patients in art therapy. Externalisation as a force for healing is thus apparent given the above.

Evidently, however, the fight is waged also within the art itself. The effort to visualize and thereby to define the powers which the patient vaguely faces and to discover the correct relations between them, means more than just rendering observations on paper. It means to work out the problem by making it portrayable. (Arnheim 1970: 262)
The second process contributing to the healing force for the expression of a unitary reality is the ‘individuation process’. Storr defines this process as involving “the integration of fragments, resulting in a state of wholeness” (Storr 1972: 283). This notion is also mentioned by Henderson with reference to Jungian psychology, in which “wholeness is conceived as representative of the ideal state of the personality which is troubled by fragmentation” (Henderson 1997: 52).

Therefore, psychic wholeness may be seen to be inherent in the expression of a unitary reality. This ‘one reality’ involves a simultaneous perception of reality — the union of an internal ‘feeling experience’ and an external ‘visual experience’. This ‘joining’ is responsible for the ascending transformation that constitutes the individuation process, involving “the assimilation of all flaws, defeats, failures… which are normally thrust aside” (Neumann 1954: 196).

The interaction of the unconscious and the conscious constitutes an experience of a unitary reality in art. This unitary reality requires an experience of a total sensory nature, requiring the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious. The concepts of psychic harmony and psychic growth are related to the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious within the experiencing of this unitary reality. Unconscious and conscious interaction is encouraged in my creative process. Creative expression may be regarded as a force for psychic healing.

Depth psychology has found that the psychic life of an individual comprises a tendency towards balance and wholeness. This tendency toward wholeness compensates for disturbances of development, it supplies largely unconscious counter-movements that correct excessive one-sidedness (Neumann 1959: 158).

Expression, as a healing force, is discussed above with reference to mental processes and the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious. Expression as a healing force is also apparent outside of this framework, solely concerned with aesthetics. Healing is, in this context, concerned with the concept of ‘satisfaction’. The satisfaction that the aesthetic content not only corresponds with the meaning or emotions desired to be expressed, but that the internal conflicts or issues are
perceptually characterised by the aesthetics. Aesthetic form must act as “the perceptual carrier of meaning” (Arnheim 1970: 140) in order to satisfy.

In fact, it is by the structural properties of lines and colours that even some ‘material’ desires are best satisfied. (Arnheim 1970: 140)

The satisfaction that the structural, aesthetic elements express the intended meanings (inner conflicts) is part of healing, in which the expressive release of repressed issues is visually confirmed.
1.5. Symbolism and healing

The etymological definition of the word 'symbol' comes from the word, 'throw in'. A symbol was originally an identification mark made up of two halves of a coin, each piece only becoming fully effective when they matched up to make an original whole. (Eco 1984: 130)

Given the above, it is evident that the object/content did not function without its counterpart. In the semiotic definition of symbol, Eco (1984) observes the deferring of this 'rejoining', stating that the “first half of the couple is always interpreted by our substitution of another first half of another couple” (Eco 1984: 130). The symbol changed from one of identity to one of substitution. Due to the 'deferring' of the 'rejoining', Eco (1984) observes a widening of the gap between signifier (content) and signified (expression/meaning of content). It is from this gap, that the functioning and interpretation of the symbol assumes various definitions.

The 'vagueness' and 'openness' of the symbol, defining it's ineffectiveness at expressing a final, set meaning, may be considered as a consistent characteristic. The concept of the symbol as 'open' refers to its ability to deny further analysis of the meaning symbolised — the expression of a definite or specific meaning is avoided. This 'openness' gives the symbol its characteristics. Jung's definition of a genuine symbol believes the symbol to be “ambiguous, full of half-glimpsed meanings and inexhaustible. They are paradoxical because they are contradictory” (Eco 1984: 140). This 'openness', inevitably holds complications as to the interpretation of symbols.

In Firth's pragmatic definition of symbol, interpretation is described as being one in which the interpreter has much scope for exercising his own judgement, therefore providing “a greater lack of fit, perhaps even intentionally, in the attribution of the fabricator and interpreter” (Eco 1984: 132). A genuine symbolic mode, described by Eco, is one in which “neither the sender nor the addressee really wants or is able to outline a definite interpretation” (Eco 1984: 136). Given the above, any governing factor guiding or controlling the meaning, and thus interpretation of the symbol, (as in other metaphors of speech such as a metaphor or allegory), is avoided — the symbols function purely as a means of expression.
Symbolism in my paintings, with regard to the unconscious employment of material elements, results from a ‘mode of feeling’, expressing the emotions of my unconscious thoughts. Any interpreter, in this case, is identifying with my experience, expressed in tangible form, which is extended even further through the connection of this experience to his or her own experiences. This is possible because the interpretation and meaning of the symbol is ‘open’. Ashton explains this ‘mode of feeling’ and ‘openness’ of the symbol in reference to Symbolism in modern art.

In the early phases of modern art when Symbolism prevailed, the idea was that a painting, like a poem, was a matter of essences. Something whose value resided in its memorability, its aura, its synthesis of sensations that came together in the mind of the beholder somewhere outside of its actual physical facture. (Ashton 1976: 3)

The concept of ‘identification’ in symbols may be understood when observing the tendency of the unconscious mind to identify with things. Symbols and the unconscious mind may be equated within this discussion, as symbols may be regarded as manifest imagery, in which unconscious thoughts and emotions are contained. Milner states:

The unconscious mind, by the very fact of its not clinging to the distinction between self and other, seer and seen, can do things that the conscious logical mind cannot do. By being more sensitive to the sameness, rather than the differences between things, with finding the familiar in the unfamiliar. (Anheim 1970: 173)

The aesthetics of Romanticism defines the relationship between content and meaning, in terms of the symbol, as operating in a united sense in which expression and content is inseparable. Schelling (Eco 1984) supports this theory of symbolism and aesthetics, believing the symbolic artwork to be a self-presentation in which the artwork becomes the idea, as opposed to signifying the idea. The Romantic theory may also be applied to those elements of unconscious employment alluding to an emotional or psychological expression, in which meaning resides in expression. The concept of
‘analogy’ in relation to ‘expression’ is of importance in reference to the symbolism of unconsciously employed elements. The dependence of art on analogy is evident in Ashton’s (1976) discussion of the Symbolist and realist views in art. Ashton states that before painting in the modern arts became autonomous, analogy was the “mode of perception” (Ashton 1976: 3). Ashton states that “Recognition sprang from the just analogy, and paint was in the service of memory and sensibility” (Ashton 1976: 3). Within autonomous art, according to Ashton (1976) analogy had to be sustained, or based within a psychological framework.

Elements referring to the choice, application and textural build-up of media in my paintings, inherit their symbolic qualities largely through symbolic activity. Eco defines this term as follows:

Symbolic activity is that by which man organises his own experience into a system of contents conveyed by an expression system. The symbolic is the activity by which experience is not only coordinated, but also communicated. (Eco 1984: 142)

The concept of symbolic activity is acknowledged by Eco, in his reference to the Kantian theory, stating: “symbolic activity does not name an already known world, but establishes the very conditions for knowing it. Symbols are not translations of our thoughts, they are its organs” (Eco 1984: 144). The emotions expressed may be seen to be dependent on the actions belying them.

Glover (2001), in reference to Klein, establishes a physiological correlation with physical and symbolic activity. Klein states that the psychic discharges involved with the symbolism in ‘play’, is related to the physical discharges of energy. Based on Klein’s theories which define a relationship between the symbolism in ‘play’ and the symbolism in artistic activity, and taking into consideration the above, it may be stated that physical action in art is symbolic. Wollheim’s description of bodily activity in art as a “manual activity — whose variations coincide with variations of inner states” (Wollheim 1973: 95), reasserts the notion of physical activity as symbolic.
The theories of ‘object-selection’ and ‘correspondence’, provided by Wollheim and Gombrich (Wollheim 1973) respectively, state that the act of selecting elements and then arranging or placing these selected elements for the function of expression, contributes to the correlation between one’s inner state or emotions and the content expressed. The creative activities of selection, application and placement may therefore, also be regarded as symbolic, in the sense that they express an emotion without abiding by governing rules, but by the mere fact that they are considered, by the artist, as resonating the acquired emotion. This expressionistic quality is responsible for the release of unconscious thoughts and emotions.

The role of symbolism in the contribution of healing lies in the act of expression. Symbolic activity is defined above as being inherent in the act of self-expression. Symbolism is a means whereby the artist may express specific emotions and thoughts, which, expressed without the use of symbolism, would not be able to be rendered in a way that satisfies his or her expression. Without the symbolic nature of the act, the expression would be rendered meaningless. Symbolisation is therefore a means whereby the artist may relate and identify with the content expressed. Without this connection between artist and artwork, the sense of release, of repressed psychological and emotional issues, is not obtained. Identifying with what is expressed is essential to the processes of introspection and the conscious awareness of repressed issues. Without the awareness and processing of the issues expressed, psychic growth and thus psychic healing is not possible in art. The ‘openness’ of the symbol also provides the viewer with an experience of connection to the artwork. This ‘connection’ may contribute to a personalised experience of self-realisation.

Symbolism inherent in unconscious aspects of creative expression may be seen as being of a non-conceptual kind. Bevan explains symbols as able to be “void of intellectual concept” (Bevan 1939: 253).

So far as something seems to represent or stand for some reality other than itself, it may be counted as a symbol. Yet there are cases in which there are no distinct conceptions in the mind of that reality behind it, nothing expressible in words or even visually imagined. (Bevan 1939: 244)
He continues:

The reality they think they apprehend behind the visible thing is characterized purely by the emotion it produces. (Bevan 1939: 246).

Symbols ‘void of intellectual concept’ may thus be regarded as symbols ‘pertaining to non-intellectual concepts’. This type of symbol may be found in symbolic expression, or symbolic activity in which physical employment defines the emotion expressed. In this case, symbolism is inherent in the emotional content of expression, as opposed to operating by analogy, in which the symbolic meaning is found ‘outside’ of what is expressed.

This notion of non-conceptual association may be compared to the notions of ‘mystical participation’ and ‘psychic identity’. “Primitive belief in mystical participation or what psychologists refer to as psychic identity implies the notion of unconscious associations and the belief in things not explanatory by common sense” (Jung 1978: 43). Therefore, it may be argued that the ‘abstract’ or ‘emotional’ quality conjured up by the essence of the materials and the nature with which they are applied produces symbolic non-conceptual associations. Given the above, one may also refer to this as ‘emotional associations’.

Older defines the term ‘association’ as “something linked in memory or imagination, or by correlation or analogy with an object, idea, person or event” (Bevan 1939: 240). Bevan concludes “the ability of a thing to operate symbolically through emotional analogy, necessitates a focus on the issue of inherent value of the thing itself” (Bevan 1939: 251). Given the above, it may be concluded that that which is able to instigate an emotional response in someone, must possess a level of inherent value.

The aspect of healing attributed to symbolism within this context is based upon a sense of connection (triggers an experience) to the inherent value of things, providing a sense of ‘extended identity’. This type of connection may be understood as an extension of ones’ identity within materials of the external world, or as in my paintings, to the natural elements placed on the surface.
Jung associates this connection to those cultures or rather, societies, which have not yet adjusted to assimilate into the modern world. He describes their connection to the natural elements surrounding them as “supporting a belief of their existence within the universe, giving them a sense of unity” (Jung 1978: 39). This sense of unity is also established through the connection to the experience provided by the emotional content pertaining to non-conceptual association. (This applies to artist and addressee).

Symbolism, in my work, is also seen to operate according to conceptual analogy. This type of association is attributed to the elements of conscious employment, such as the insertion of resin blocks containing insects and seeds. Symbolism here operates differently to that of unconscious employment, in that it does not function by means of expression in which content and meaning are joined. The means by which this type of symbolism operates, complements the Hegelian definition of symbolism, which states that “the forms do not signify themselves, rather they allude to or hint at a wider meaning” (Eco 1984: 146). Content and meaning, therefore, contain a correlative relationship as opposed to being invested within each other. The healing aspect of these inserted objects is contrived from their intended function — that of energy transfers — contributing to rejuvenation, and the act of ‘making whole’. The symbolic functioning and placement of these objects is relevant to their contribution to healing within my work.

The healing capacity of symbolism within creative expression is evident in Klein’s theory on ‘defective symbolisation’, noted by Glover (2001), in which the association to the symbolisation of infants is made. The use of symbols is considered as a cathartic means of expelling harmful memories. Klein states:

From the earliest stages the infant begins to search for symbols in order to relieve himself of painful experiences. (Glover 2001).

The healing capacity of symbols may also be seen to exist within its ability to establish a relationship with the external world in art. Symbolism, as a means whereby a harmonious balance between the internal world and the external world is achieved, is acknowledged by Klein, in which she concludes: “symbolism is the basis
of the subject’s relation to the outside world and to reality” (Klein in Glover: 2001). Play, according to Winnicott, is regarded as “a safe space in which the growing child is initiated into culture and learns to endow the outside world with enriching symbolic experience” (Glover 2001).

Symbols in my work express the capacity to heal in various ways. Symbolisation within unconsciously employed media, and in the physical activity of unconscious expression, functions by means of expression. Symbolism within this expression exists in the emotional quality of the aesthetic content. Meaning and content exist within each other. Symbolisation of consciously employed elements, such as the intentional insertion of objects in my work, functions by means of conceptual analogy. The symbolic nature or meaning of this content is not inherent within its expression, but exists by means of association. The healing nature of symbols may also be attributed to its ability to retain and establish a harmonious relationship with the external world in art.

The vagueness and openness of the symbol enables the avoidance of a defined, set expression or meaning, thus contributing to an experience in which identification is enabled. Identification with the content and imagery expressed, is essential to the concept of healing in art, in which introspection and assimilation are vital processes of psychic growth. The concept of identification in symbols is operational in regard to the tendency of the unconscious mind to identify with things. Symbolism, in my paintings, with regard to the unconscious employment of media, results from a ‘mode of feeling’, expressing the emotions of my unconscious thoughts. Symbolism within this context requires the meaning, or expression, and content of the aesthetic elements to operate within each other, in a united sense. The role of symbolism in the contribution of healing lies in the act of expression. Symbolic activity in my work, such as the selection and application of media, is inherent in the act of self-expression. These creative acts are symbolic in that they belie emotions. It is this emotional experience through which the actions are co-ordinated.

Symbolisation may be understood as the means whereby the artist may relate and identify with the content expressed. Without this connection between content and artist, the sense of satisfying the release of repressed issues and emotions, is not
obtained. The contribution of symbols to the establishing of a relationship with the external world in creative expression, discussed previously, is another means by which symbolism in my work is a force for healing.
SECTION 2: Principles Governing Creative Methodology

2.1. The Figure

On the most basic level the body remains a viable subject in that it is the common denominator of humanity, a centre of human existence, a place from where we are. (Von Bonsdorff in Henderson 1997: 138)

Depictions of the body invested within the figurative form focuses on physicality and emphasises texture. However, this does not, by any means, refer to the perception of the body as a material entity, with disregard to one's psyche, emotions and soul. This perception would support the idea of dualism inherent in the Cartesian and Platonic philosophies, as well as in medical discourse, in which the notion of the 'body as object' is employed.\(^{14}\)

This dual perspective is balanced in my work by the expressive nature of my pictorial process that places the body within a psychologically and emotionally charged realm. The figurative form is subjected to emotional interpretations, as may be observed in figurative distortion. Symbolism allocated to these forms, are used to convey expression of emotional and psychological wounds.

The figurative form may be regarded as a means of claiming, from which the process of identification is enabled. The initial placement of the figurative form onto the canvas, in the act of creative expression, is a process whereby the exterior space is claimed. Through this act of claiming, the exterior realm becomes a non-threatening space into which my existence, or rather, identity, may be inserted. This non-threatening aspect, involving the process of familiarization, encourages the expressive nature of mark making and application. My creative expression offers me a deeper understanding of myself, and therefore a fuller sense of identity. The figurative form, operating as an extension of the self, confirms the expressive quality within the content, as pertaining to self-identity.

\(^{14}\) This dual perspective regards the body as 'object which perceives' (physical body), as opposed to 'body which experiences' (living body) (Leder 1993: 23). Cartesianism "tends to entrap the human body in the image of the physical body, treating it as the general class of physical things". (Leder 1993: 23)
The figurative form is an extension of myself, which may be regarded as an extension of my psyche (my memory or past; my imagination; unconscious desires and repressed emotions.) The figurative form is thus an extension of my ‘living being’. It is a mechanism of self-extension.

The figurative form, in defining the specific area in which I am represented, is necessary in the intentional, symbolic placement of inserted elements. These inserted objects function symbolically in transferring energy from themselves into my being. Figurative form as a representational mechanism is thus symbolically employed.

The figurative form, within the context of a transgressed state, functions as a mechanism for the mental processes of self-interrogation and analysis. The figure is subjected to these processes in the manipulation of pose, in which it is ‘pinned down’ and ‘stretched out’. (This is evident in Al of Series A).

The creative process, representing psychic transformation, depicts the dissipation of the figurative form into the contents of the painting surface (as seen in CI of Series C). The emotional and psychological aspects of myself are communicated through the symbolic associations of the application and texture of materials. The body becomes ‘active materiality’ in that the media exists within an extremity of texture, that one feels as if their senses of smell and taste are employed along with that of touch. The media contains the fabrication of my existence. The media and the imposed natural elements, such as pea-pods, bones and stones, operate as an extension of the self, through which identity exists. The notion of self-identity is now employed within my sense of connection with media, as opposed to the figurative form, as an extension of the self. It is through identification with the extended self, that transformation and psychic healing occur.

Self-identification through the use of media and applied natural elements may be observed in the work of Anselm Kiefer, regarding the painting ‘Alexander VT’ of 1966. In this case, the element of self-identity is visually depicted within an image, as opposed to being directly employed within the painting.
I bring myself in the middle of the pyramid and at the end of the process I am the pyramid, physically, stone by stone. I want to be nothing else than a pyramid (Saltzman 1999: 3)

The ‘merging’ of the figurative form into the contents of the painting surface sees the disintegration and complete break down of form. The notion of the body as ‘cosmic being’ within this transformation may be employed. Cacciari defines the cosmic body with reference to the work of Anselm Kiefer, in the following quote.

In these paintings, the body melts away under the thrust of energy which brings back to life the forces of nature, the sunflower and it’s seeds. He therefore follows the legacy of Van Goghs’ symbology and archetypes of a salvific alchemic vein in order to introduce the figure of the human being, or rather, the artist, as a cosmic person. (Cacciari 1997: 18)

The body is no longer in a state of transgression — the media, content and imagery employed in the paintings, no longer suggest a transgressed state. The healing processes within the act of creative expression and psychic transformation, is responsible for the body in transit. The figurative form enters complete disintegration during the later stages of transformation. It is no longer a site of self-confrontation and cleansing, but a site of acceptance. It is no longer the expression of emotional and psychological wounds, but merely an expression in itself, where self-extension and identity prevail.
2.2. Unconscious Process

The application of media in my creative expression involves direct, physical action. The following focuses on physical employment as an unconscious activity, operating by a symbolic mode. The act of application is unconsciously employed in that the actions belie the emotions. Phillips refers to this as “free individual expression through direct action” (Phillips 1999: 62). This notion is based on a theoretical perception of body and mind, which claims that the two entities are integrated and not separate. The expressive quality of this application is influenced by the aggressive nature of my body, employing speed and spontaneity. The interaction of the various media, and their relationship to each other is instigated and influenced by this physical application. The character of application, defined by mark making and texture, are of influence and, given the above, may be considered as symbolic.

Symbolic activity, involving physical employment, may be understood as the reaction of the physical body to unconscious emotions and thoughts, resulting in their expression. Symbolic activity is discussed previously in the dissertation and so need not be examined more closely within this context.

Pollock’s method of ‘drip painting’, in regard to physical immersion within creative expression, is discussed with reference to Warr (2000). His ‘drip method’, in which paint is ‘applied’ onto the canvas laid on the floor, involves the actions of the body by which the ‘drips’ are rhythmically co-ordinated. Warr states that this method “presented the artist engaged in a heroic performance, of which the painting became the material embodiment, the ‘product of an event’. This placed the emphasis on the activity of painting itself” (Warr 2000: 50). Physical immersion within creativity is heightened in the works of Yves Klein, in which the human body becomes the ‘living brush’, “creating a new painting technique that involves the application of the paint directly from the human body” (Warr 2000: 54). Physical employment, as a means of engaging with one’s unconscious in acts of creative expression, is observed in Klein’s work, in which the paintbrush is abandoned in search of complete intellectual detachment from his paintings. He states:
I painted with the more anonymous roller, trying to create a distance- at the very least an intellectual distance- between the canvas and me during execution (Warr 2000: 54).

Scale

The large scale of the paintings enforces unconscious interaction by creating a space in which the artist exists, and through the encouraging of physical employment. Physical activity is discussed above as symbolic, in that unconscious emotional states are expressed through the actions of the body.

Large scale (and heavy texture) demands that the painting be placed on the floor during the creative process. Scale as a means of limiting unconscious employment is apparent whence regarding it as a limited area in which to physically express ones’ self. Rosenberg describes the large canvases of the abstract expressionists, as an “arena in which to act” (Phillips 1999: 61). Mark Rothko makes the following observation:

To paint a small painting is to place yourself outside of your work. I want to be very intimate and human. To paint small pictures is to place yourself outside of your experience. However, you paint large pictures, you are in it. It isn’t something you command. (Phillips 1999: 32)

In the depiction of the figurative form, scale may be considered as lending presence and weight to the figurative image. This sense of solidarity to figurative form is observed in the earlier works of Anselm Kiefer, in which Saltzman states: “assertion of the human figure on a massive scale...the monumentality lending a weight and presence to the image” (Phillips 1999: 57).
Texture

Texture in my painting renders a material physicality endowed with a psychological presence. The texture is applied through direct, physical application. Artist, Saburo Murakami, refers to the encapsulation of unconscious rendering of Self through texture in the following statement. He states:

We must not keep on aimlessly adjusting and manipulating the canvas. Instead our sense must be internally concentrated to a point from which it bursts onto the canvas and assumes a tangible form (Warr 2000: 52).

The thickness of texture emphasises the emotional quality of the mark making. This thickness, or rather, the texture itself, is dependent on the strength of the emotion to which it is connected. Each media contains a specific quality related to a specific feeling. If, at that moment, that feeling is what needs to be expressed, then the media to which it is symbolically related is unconsciously employed at strength, resulting in a textural build-up of that media. The build up of texture more so than in other areas, is random due to it’s unconscious employment. The mark making and application of texture is an extension of my bodily actions. Golub communicated the irrationality and baser instincts of human behaviour through crusty surfaces, often removing paint with a meat cleaver. The scraping off of the paint from the surface “becomes analogous to “the body under duress” (Henderson 1997: 27). Goberman discusses the symbolic nature between texture and meaning in reference to the ritual sculptures of the Dogon tribe, in which he states: “with use over time, the objects develop a variety of patinas, often becoming thickly encrusted, making their surfaces an indication of their intended meaning” (Goberman 1988).

The surface of the painting becomes analogous to the emotional body — it is emotionally invested and psychically charged. The mark making within the texture represents an emotional manipulation of substances, in which internal anger, pain and a struggle with the self, is represented.

15 Physical immersion, discussed previously as a means whereby unconscious employment is
Distortion

Figurative distortion is an expression of the “distorted or maimed symbols of psychological wounds” (Henderson 1997: 47). This distortion is a result of unconscious expression. Francis Bacon concludes the above in the following quote.

Distortion, to me, is a heightened sense of reality. It is analysing the shape and form, and projection of that, to such an extent that reconstruction is inevitable. It is allowing ones’ personal understanding to be a means of manipulation.

(Hindon 1985)

Distortion of figurative imagery in my work is most often employed within the unnatural extension of limbs, contributing to the awkwardness of pose. The figurative form is instinctively removed from realistic portrayal due to its unconscious rendering within a painting surface that is more concerned with emotive expression.

Gesture

If gesture is the facility of the body to express emotion, then it would follow that distorted gesture expresses distorted emotion. In the light of the interconnectedness between emotion and psyche, where emotion is a function of the psyche, it would thus be prudent to say that the figurative gestures of distortion, in my work, represent a mindset of a violated, disempowered16 state.

The line depicting the gesture of the figurative form, is a means whereby the ‘inside area’ is defined. This is the boundary defining the internal and the external, in my work. It is composed in a manner of complete awareness to the overall emotion within the painting. The manner of the form is the defining statement of what the elements in encouraged, is unavoidable as I am literally ‘in’ the painting throughout the creative process.  
16 This term is used to describe a state involving a lack of psychic and moral power. It is used in reference to a ‘transgressed’ state, emphasising the notion of empowerment within the process of personal transformation in creative expression.
the painting, in their connectedness, express. The expression of internal states, and its relationship to the external world, is dependent on the gesture and pose of the figure.

Placement

The placement of the figure within the paintings is determined by the unconscious actions of intuition and spontaneity. This unconscious placement of the figurative form creates a symbolic relationship between the figure and surrounding space. The central position of the figurative form within the surrounding space, for example, symbolises unconscious emotions of isolation and instability.

The work of Georg Baselitz is highly concerned with the meaningful placement of the figure inside space. Baselitz is more concerned with imagery, as opposed to content, which he connects to the “cogency of pictorial construction” (Curiger 1986: 46). The construction of pictorial elements, in part, relies on the placement of imagery in space. The figurative form in his work, as in mine, is almost always self-contained within the surrounding space. A tension is created, intensifying by the markings (of paint application) on the painterly surface.

Figure-ground

Due to the unconscious placement of the figurative form within surrounding space, the figure-ground relationship operates on a symbolic level. The placement of the figurative form within this space therefore affects the nature of this symbolic relationship. The figure-ground relationship may therefore be regarded as expressing different states of emotion or the subtle nuances of similar psychological situations. The central, floating image of the figure defines space as symbolic, in which the laws of gravity are denied. This emotional and psychological expression within the symbolic, figure-ground relationship may be observed in the work of George Baselitz. Baselitz’s figures appear upside down in his pictorial space, depicting a state of internal and social chaos (Curiger 1986). Stability is denied through the aversion to the laws of gravity in his paintings.
Surrounding space

The ‘space’ in my paintings acts as ‘surrounding space’ in conjunction with the depiction of the figurative form. This space is psychically charged, rendering the textural markings as emotionally symbolic — also operating as a psychically charged space. The mark making of the painting surface within this space, defining my struggle with the Self and the interaction with an unconscious aspect of identity, establishes space as an extension of my psychic identity.
2.3. Conscious Process

Symbolism

The capacity of consciously employed elements in my work, as a force for healing, is dependent on their symbolisation. Their ability to act as symbols is dependent on the concept of belief.

Symbolic elements in art, in relation to conscious employment, are apparent in the works of Adolf Wolfli, as in the art of Ethiopian medicinal or healing scrolls. In the following, it is evident that symbolism is the mechanism whereby the artwork is functionary.

Wolfli was a schizophrenic patient whose works were examined by artist, DuBuffet, and others with regard to the structuring of aesthetic elements as contributing to inherent therapeutic value.

The formal elements in Wolfli’s work create a surfeit through the multiplication of formal and figurative elements. The artist is symbolically protected within this enclosed space.” (Mercier 1997: 24)

Ethiopian medicinal scrolls also place a symbolic dimension onto the protective functioning of their work. The depictions on these scrolls are referred to as Talisman. Talisman originate from the eventual intertwining of ancient Greek and Hebrew lettering. They are graphic symbols, operating as an active force ensuring health. They are objects of irrationality with therapeutic functions (Mercier 1997: 9-13, 15).

Inserted objects

Insects, such as butterflies and geckoes, are cast in transparent resin and inserted into the painting surface. These objects function as symbolic healers — transferring
energy into the content of the painting. The act of insertion is intentional and premeditated. The placement of these elements is symbolic, and therefore relies on conscious thought and action.

**Natural elements**

The inclusion of natural elements, such as pea-pods, stones, pebbles, and bone, contributes to a sense of inherent value within the non-figurative space, to which I connect. Within this connection exists the capacity for identification. The pea-pods, in A3, B1 and B3, are applied to the surface in various forms of manipulation, and in different stages of dispersion. They represent symbolic value, correlative to the emotions expressed in the specific painting. The stones and bones, being symbols of eternity in which the threat of immortality subsides, provide a symbolic quality of timelessness. This connection with elements from the natural world is previously discussed in reference to Jung, as mystical participation, or psychic identity.

**The orifice**

The oval orifice is a hollowed-out space, first appearing in painting C1. It represents a space in which the energy of self-assertion and extension is concentrated. It becomes, through its re-use, a symbol of self-extension, in which mortality is defied. In the case of C2 and C3, in which the construction of stones and bones exist on it’s surface, the symbolisation of sacredness and protection, referring to my extended existence, is implied.
2.4 Media

Wax, bandages and cement, in my paintings, are regarded as elements of unconscious employment. They are employed through the act of application, which is established as an activity of unconscious, symbolic behaviour.

i. Wax

The effect of wax on the surface adds a new dimension to the materiality of the images and thus the interpretation of their content. (Henderson 1997: 42)

Wax contains inherent qualities, lending itself to the notions of the body as a raw, mortal being, expressing psychological wounds. The consistency of wax, once melted and applied, tends to flow and clot, suggesting the nature of bodily fluids. The transparent softness, and its tendency to harden, represents the characteristic nature of unresolved emotions pertaining to the unconscious mind. Like the mind, wax is impressionable, and like damaging aspects of the psyche, when undealt with, has the ability to harden and suffocate. The wax creates a surface texture, having been imposed upon the underlying gauze, often concealing it. This denies the bandages of their symbolic and literal functions of containment. The depiction of a psyche suffering from disengagement with oneself and others is affected by the wax having seeped through its coverings, hardening and encrusting upon the surface. This is a subtle process, symbolic of a stubborn intent to make apparent what has undeservedly gone unacknowledged. The wax, once applied, is manipulated just before it hardens, leaving tactile impressions and scrapings symbolic of my engagement with an attempt at resolving personal, psychological issues. The symbolic use of wax in my paintings, to protect, nurture and heal may be observed in the work of Joseph Beuys, in which his "preoccupation with warmth and intimacy to renew body and self, with concrete physical experience of life-giving materials’ is evident (Kuspit 1993: 199). His interest in fat and felt as art media, were “emblems of healing and magic” (Moffit 1992: 11).
ii. Bandages and gauze

Bandages function in concealing the wounds and containing bodily fluids and blood. This functional characteristic operates symbolically, suggesting the hidden nature of emotional wounds by an unhealthy psyche, in which the instinctive human action of submerging trauma and unprocessed issues are represented. Bandages and gauze are applied in layers, in between the wax and cement. They act as a bonding agent to which the substances cling to, and resolve into. The bandages, being a means of stability and bonding, may be considered as an agent of healing, and symbolically, psychic healing. The covering up of physical wounds, so as to keep external dirt etc. outside, may be seen on a symbolic level. The creative transformation deals with a state of transgression in which personal boundaries have been violated. The ‘closing off’ of ‘emotional wounds’ is an act which allows for a recovery period in which psychic healing may occur. Given the above, the figures in the paintings may be seen as wounded victims in a state of disempowerment.

iii. Cement

The hardening tendency of cement and it’s visual ‘roughness’, expresses, on a symbolic level, the unsympathetic attitude towards the Self during the stage of transgression- due to the emotions of guilt and remorse. The cement is directly applied with my hands — the markings of self-destruction are held steadfast due to the hardening and drying process with which the cement undergoes. These markings therefore imply a sense of time gone by, in which aging is a means of self-decay.

The media within my work is discussed with reference to wax, cement and bandages. The inherent qualities of these media are treated and manipulated as characteristics analogous to specific emotions and psychological states. Their functionary attributions are treated as symbolic analogies within my paintings.
SECTION 3: Discussion of Individual Paintings

The paintings are grouped into four main series, *Series A; Series B; Series C, Series D, Series E and Series F*. This grouping is a result of psychic transformation, developing within the creative process in stages, in the first four series. (*Series E and Series F* may be understood as preliminary series.) Each series, therefore, represents a stage of the transformation process. There are three paintings within the first three series, and may therefore be considered as a triptych. In the case of *Series A*, painting *A1* is a triptych in itself, and therefore contains a triptych within a triptych.

The paintings within *Series A and Series B*, (the first six paintings of the creative process), are discussed according to the following sub-titles: Media inside figurative form; characteristics of surrounding space; figure-ground relationship; manipulation of figurative form; figure in relation to objects and inserted objects or added natural elements. *Series C and Series D* series represent stages in the psychic transformation process, in which the contents of creative expression are drastically altered. This is mainly due to the disintegration of the figurative form into the surrounding space. The paintings within these two series are discussed according to sub-titles of their own.
3.1. Series A

AI

**Manipulation of Figurative Form — Pose**

The process of subjective self-identity began with the investigation of the physical body, seen in the triptych of AI, in which the 'opening up of' and the 'stretching out of' the figurative form is visually apparent within the frontal pose, depicting arms stretched above the head and the pushing back of the legs. The pose of vulnerability, (reminiscent of rape and physical invasion), to which the figurative form is subjected, represents the beginnings of a psychic investigation, in which the psyche, and thus the physical body, is forcibly examined.

**Media within figurative form**

The media used, such as wax and metal slates, are analogous to the emotional qualities of the psyche. Media is therefore symbolic of mental states and emotions. The third figure contains 'lumps' of porous stones, reminiscent of malignant sites in which the concentration of self-destructive, repressed emotions are suggested. The media applied within the figure continue to react to each other after application onto the painting surface — the result being a flowing and clotting of layers of various media. The inside of the body is thus depicted as a complicated environment, the layering suggestive of the process of examination.

**Inserted objects**

The torsos of the figures contain either a central, vertical plane consisting of resin blocks containing insects and seeds, or a mutilated, metal strip. This 'vertical plane' is suggestive of the central core of the body, to which energy is directed, or which its violated state is represented. Surrounding space and figure-ground relationship within this painting remains undeveloped at this stage.
The second phase of transformation within the creative process is initiated in the second painting belonging to Series A.

Manipulation of figurative form — Pose
The figurative form in A2 is turned away from the frontal-facing figures in A1. This suggests a 'moving forward', of the physical body, suggestive of the transformational process. The metal strip, extending from the forehead of the figure, represents the mental processes at play. The figurative form is removed from a controlling context of subjected examination, to one of 'free exploration' — the figure is let loose to move around and find itself within this creative space. The body as physical form is invested with psychic and emotional energy in which it is a vehicle for psychological expression. My creative expression is no longer subjected to conscious will. Instead, I am an observer, allowing for the expression of repressed, latent thoughts and associated emotions. The gesture of the figurative form is unconsciously employed. The figure is in a crouching position, as if it is stabilising itself for psychic transformation. The crouched position expresses the 'smallness' of the figure, suggesting the state of vulnerability and incompetence felt.

Media within figure
The figure mainly consists of wax, cement, gauze and bandages. These 'bandaged forms' appear as injured victims, helpless, desperate and incapable. Texture is undeniably rough and unsympathetic, and hand markings are evident in the surface layers of cement and wax. The implications of these expressive characteristics are discussed above, in reference to self-identity and extension. The inherent qualities of the media used, to which analogy of psychological states is made, is discussed previously. Wax in A2, for example, symbolises the unconscious mechanisms involved in the creative process, and thus in the figurative form itself.

Surrounding space
The surrounding space is an extension of the figure, representing my psychological and emotional state. The creative process, in which the figure is applied to the canvas first, the space surrounding it second, encourages the notion of space as a psychological extension of the body. Space is therefore, in the creative process, defined according to the figurative form.

The surrounding space is shaded in overall darkness, with varying tones to suggest movement, or a sense of activity. The space is not static, but rather an extension of the figurative form, active with psychic and emotional energy. Activity within this space may be observed in the texture, in which markings are imprinted into its thickness. Activity within this space is symbolic of energy contributing to the nourishment and healing of the body, as defined by the figurative form. However, there remains a dual functioning of space. Not only is it a mechanism of protection and healing, but may also be regarded as that which separates, a mechanism of isolation, where loneliness lies in darkness.

**Figure-ground relationship**

The figure-ground relationship is symbolic due to the unconscious placement of the figure within the space. This unconscious placement assists psychological and emotional expression.

**A3**

**Manipulation of figurative form — Pose**

*A3* shows two figures, the one being an imagined being from the unconscious mind of the figure in front. Transformation is suggested by the pose, in which the figure is ‘turned away’ from the frontal pose of the figures in painting *A1*, moving forward. Psychic transformation is represented through the manipulation of the figurative form. The figure, with extended limbs hanging aimlessly by the side and head lowered—attributing to a lack of pride beyond rational humility, suggests an evolutionary process, in which one’s primitive state is seen entering a state of progression. A contradiction exists within this representation. Evolution may be understood as involving physical adaptation, implying the development and ‘civilisation’ of the human being. This ‘progression’ may be considered as referring to the developing and
refining of the conscious, in which the irrational and instinctual nature of the unconscious is segregated, or rather, repressed. The mental processes in my creative expression are related to the interaction with the unconscious, pertaining to a psychic transformation relying on the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious. Psychic transformation, as depicted through the figurative form, therefore suggests, in this painting, that 'progression' or 'development' of oneself, involves the 'return' to ones inner state, in which the unconscious is present.

The frontal figure, in relation to the underlying figure, contains a relationship to this figure, and a symbolic meaning solely related to unconscious mechanisms. The full meaning of such a depiction may not be entirely explained, as a process of self-examination, in regard to the images expressed, is an intricate and time-consuming process.

**Media within figure**
As stated in discussion of *A2*

**Surrounding space**
The characteristics of the surrounding space, as discussed in *A2*, may be applied to *A3*. The creative process is, however, more visually evident within the surrounding space of *A3*, in that images beneath the surface, are visible. The sensitivity of space is more defined within this painting. This sensitivity complements the meaning behind the symbolic elements of conscious employment, which 'speak of' the need for maternal love, nourishment and protection.

**Figure-ground relationship**
Space is still regarded as surrounding the figurative form, however, the central placement of the form is adjusted. The figure is grounded in the centre of the vertical plane, but exists at the top of the horizontal plane. There exists a large density of space below the figure. The figure-ground relationship, due to this adjustment, is more intricate than in *A2*. Unconscious meaning is employed within this relationship, in which the emotional aspect may not be ignored. The figure, walking on top of a dense, unoccupied area, as opposed to walking on the 'ground' may be perceived as enforcing the notion of 'not being grounded'. However, the figurative form does not
appear to be unstable in any way. I may only conclude that this ‘irregular’ placement yields to the overall emotional quality of the painting, which is open to the ‘emotional perception and understanding’ of those which address it.

**Inserted objects and applied natural elements**

Pea-pods are used as symbolic objects due to their functional qualities of containment and protection. The pea-pods in *A3* are applied, in tact, onto the surface. They are the outer shells housing the seeds of their extended existence. This maternal quality is essential to the nurturing of a healthy psyche. These pea-pods have dried out, and are on the verge of splitting open. They are enclosed within latex rubber-cast from the inside chambers of bamboo shoots, which is stretched around the pods and bluntly sewn closed. This symbolic act reinforces their containment, a psychic characteristic of a transgressed psyche. Their insertion into a thick, sticky layer of bitumen, literally ‘swallowing’ the inserted elements, symbolises the unconscious psyche and its stubborn containment of desires.

**Figure in relation to objects**

This relationship is unable to be defined as placement of figurative form and application of natural elements are unconsciously employed. Regarding my analysis, involving a process of post-conceptualisation, I may only suggest that the structured, horizontal format in which these elements are unconsciously placed, emphasises the stability of the figure, to which they are related.
3.2. Series B

B1

Manipulation of figurative form — Pose
The figure resumes a pose reminiscent of that in A1. The legs are forced back, in line with the horizontal plane. A1 discusses this characteristic in regard to the vulnerability of physical, and thus psychic, invasion within the state of transgression. According to a state of transformation, however, this may be regarded as a sign of recovery, in which previous fears and the effects of these fears are overcome. The freedom to employ the same pose but in detachment from the psychic and emotional associations held previously, is not due to a means of forgetting, but to a means of recovering.

Media within figurative form
The associated meanings of the media used in accordance with the figure, and their application, may be referred to in reference to A2 and A3.

Surrounding space
The activation of space and the reasons for this activation are referred to in A2 and A3. However, the dual functioning of space within this painting, in which protection and a feeling of isolation are represented, no longer exists. Each series pertains to a stage within the transformation process. Past experiences of isolation, the fear of isolation, and the effects of this on the psyche, having been processed and dealt with in the psychic and creative process, no longer exists. A relationship with the external world is established. Surrounding space as a mechanism of segregation, enforcing isolation, is no longer implied. Space functions, within this painting as a mechanism of rebirth, in which the purging and cleansing of detrimental emotions is in effect.

Figure-ground relationship
The same placement of the figure within surrounding space may be observed in A3, in which a dense area of space lies beneath the figure. Interaction between figure and
space, emphasising the notion of space as a psychic extension of the figure, is suggested in the whiteness of the body filtering into the darkness of space. This is symbolic of the ‘release’ of internal conflicts and fears. Acknowledgment of an outside world is, therefore, present within this painting. Space now has layered meaning, and does not merely exist as an extension of my psyche.

**Inserted objects**

Pea-pods are placed in structured rows at the bottom of this painting. However, their containment is not enforced, as in A3. On the contrary, they are, in places, pulled apart and applied onto the painting surface in halves. Psychic transformation may be observed in the contrast of the manipulation of the pea-pods, in A3 and B1. The need to retain oneself, (in which having maternal protection is regarded as not yet being completely open to the outside world), in the fear of being violated, is no longer represented by enforced containment.

Small stones are placed in painting 1B within a side column, in which they form inner and outer rings, creating the formation of circles. The stones contain a sense of inner power due to their qualities of timelessness and eternity. These circles are stylisations, symbolically representing eternity, and ‘rings of protection’.

A gecko, inserted into a transparent resin mould, is placed within the figurative form in between the inner thighs of the legs, which are forced backwards. This placement is site-specific, in that it is understood as ‘guarding’ the site of physical invasion, functioning as protector and healer.

**Figure in relation to objects**

The relationship of placement of the figurative form, and the applied natural elements is referred to in the previous discussion, in reference to 3A.

**B2**

**Manipulation of figurative form — Pose**

B2 is divided into two halves, top and bottom. A figurative form is placed within each half of the painting. These two figures assume the poses of prayer. However, the
figure placed in the top half of the painting is distorted in such a way that the arms appear unnaturally twisted, and the head pushed so far down that the back is uncomfortably arched. The gesticulation of prayer is presented in a sarcastic and mocking manner. Faith and belief in an external religious figure poses a conflict to the creative process in which I am the sole creator of my external world. The figure within the bottom half of the painting assumes a more convincing pose of prayer, in which a sense of sincerity is assumed. Manipulation of form, in the figure below, is evident in the unnaturally extended arm, twisted geometrically and extended to the edge of the painting. This extension symbolises a 'reaching out', in which the need for faith is apparent.

**Media within figurative form**
The lack of media and texture within the top figure denies the projection of emotional intensity. This 'emptiness' is attributed to a lack of faith, and thus sarcastic attitude, depicted in the distortion of form. Media and texture in the figure in the lower half of the painting, project emotional qualities. The bandages suggest a healing of the emotional 'void', above mentioned.

**Space**
The space in *B2* is divided evenly into a top half and a bottom half. This division is representative of the conflict discussed above. Unlike the previous paintings in *Series A* and *painting B1*, space is depicted through a light range of colours. The darkness of space representing rebirth in *B1*, enabled this change of the meaning of space in *B2*. The emotions of alienation and fear, represented by darkness, no longer consumes a large area, but is rather designated to a small, confined area attached to the figure in the bottom half of the painting. Space, being an extended area defining the emotional qualities of the psyche is now based on a relationship with the external world. This external interaction may be regarded as the reasons for the change in colour. Space as a confined and segregated entity no longer exists.

**B3**

**Manipulation of figurative form — Pose**
The figurative form assumes a pose of prayer, in which the arms are extended out in front of the kneeling figure. Unnatural extension of limbs is depicted once again within the figurative form. This extension may be attributed to the eagerness or ‘desperation’ to find a belief in an external entity which may offer some sense of internal strength. It also represents a desire to find a place within the outside world in which no conflict exists. The extension of the limbs creates an awareness of the capacity of the human being to act, to make changes, to be of value. Sincerity is communicated through the head, which is thrown back and looking up to the heavens.

**Media within figurative form**

The unconscious application and layering of media within this form contribute to the emotional qualities of a raw, ‘true’ nature. This complements the mood of sincerity depicted within the painting. The underlying layers are apparent because of the uneven, rough application of cement on the surface, suggesting the nature of emotional and psychological intensity within the unconscious. The smoothness of the wax, and the crustiness of the dried cement, represents a visual conflict synonymous to internal, psychological conflict. The ‘crusty’ appearance of the figure resembles ritualistic statues, in which the layering of media is an effect of applying materials onto the statue, as ‘gifts’ to the gods, or in acts of worship. The conflict thus arises, does the statue, within this ritualistic act, become god. In my creative expression, the human figure is enlarged in scale, and is the focus of the ritual act of creativity. The energy is directed to the figurative form representing me, which is depicted as searching for exterior faith. Is this exterior faith internal? This conflict is raised as a result of psychic growth, in which ‘enlightenment’ of the self, occurs.

**Space**

The overall containment of darkness within the surrounding space is broken in B2. A comparison to B2 is necessary in observing the exchange of darkness and lightness within the structure of the B3. B2 depicts the surrounding space in lightness, shades of white, confining the dark area previously occupying the whole space around the figure, to a small, oval-shaped area extending from the head of the bottom figure. This is symbolic of a transformation in which a relationship with the external world is established- ‘darkness is overcome with lightness’. B3 depicts an exchange of colour in structure, in which the lightness is confined to an oval-shaped area, defining it from
the exterior darkness. The dark shaped area in B2, representing the characteristic extension of the psyche, is now, in B3, a light area. Psychic wholeness within oneself and harmony with the exterior world is achieved.

**Figure-ground relationship**

The relationship between the figure and space is relieved of tension, and manages to portray a sense of acceptance to the opposing areas of light and dark. The concentration of darkness within the dark area is reduced, and space is activated with less intense texture and more focus on loose, sketchy markings. Successful interaction between 'external' and 'internal' is established.

**Applied natural elements**

Pea-pods are applied in four structured rows at the bottom of the painting. These pods are dried and manipulated in the same way as in A3, in which some pods remain whole, and others are torn apart to show the seeds inside. As discussed above, the natural elements function as elements contributing to the transference of energy and thus act as mechanisms of rejuvenation. The sense of tension is absent in their manipulation, unlike in A2, as their containment is not forced, and their freedom to proceed in the natural act of dispersion, not restricted.

**Figure in relation to natural elements**

The figurative form is placed above the rows of pea-pods, in the gesture of prayer. The natural elements are suggested as being inside the ground, as the figure is seen to be kneeling on the ground. A direct meaning may be attributed to the relationship between figure and natural objects, in which the pea-pods may be seen as the 'seeds of existence' of the figure- all the issues in the past, which are now buried and ready to grow again under the nurturing and 'wholeness' of a transformed psyche.
3.3. *Series C*

A discussion on the paintings within *Series C* is not discussed according to the subtitles of the previous sections, in that the figurative form is no longer depicted. A transformation in the creative process was necessary in expressing this stage of transformation pertaining to the psyche, in which a ‘cleansing’ of the self and a ‘processing’ of unconscious thoughts and emotions is achieved. This section focuses on the celebration of the living body, in which acceptance of the self is acknowledged.

*C1*

The dissipation of the figurative form into the surrounding space was initiated by the ‘pulling off’ of texture and bones placed inside the figurative form. The surrounding space, depicted by a concentrated pattern made up of pea-pods is developed within what was the figurative form. The boundary defining the figure from the space no longer exists. Tension between space and figure is absent in this complete interaction.

The notion of the body is depicted within the emotional expression of media and applied natural elements. The focal point within the painting is the image of the orifice, which is employed in *C2* as a starting point for extended creative expression.

*C2*

The images of the orifice are placed in a vertical line down the centre of the painting. This image is extracted from *C1* and re-used within this painting. The application of media operates within what I refer to as surrounding space, in that the application was secondary to the initial placement of the orifices. Bones and stones represent a structured pattern inside the orifices, a personalised ritual enforcing protection onto the oval shapes symbolising sites of extension and rebirth.
The application of stones and bones is heightened within $C_3$, in which the surface area displays the random concentration of stones and bones, representing 'ritual sites'. The body, as a site for ritual, is represented within the entire surface area. The conflict arising in $B_3$, no longer exists. The search for 'god' internally and externally, contributing to a sense of conflict, gives way to a sense of respect and acceptance. The need to find faith is restored by the 'acceptance of being part of everything'.
3.4. Series D

The paintings in Series D evolved from the cutting up of three large paintings into smaller sections. Each section became a painting. The content in these paintings consist of textural media, applied stones, resin and bitumen. The paintings exist as an expression of unconscious experiences. The expressive quality of the paintings exists within the contrasts between texture and tone. For example, the roughness of cement contrasts with the smoothness of the stones, and the darkness of the bitumen and its' absorbing nature contrasts with the reflective quality of the resin.

The applied stones are placed at the bottom of the paintings, adding density, and a sense of 'heaviness' to the lower half of the paintings. This is symbolic of a sense of being grounded.

The image of the orifice is repeated within some of these paintings, in which the symbolic nature is emphasised.
3.5. Series E

Series E and Series F

The paintings in Series E and F do not relate to the previous series discussed. They do not form part of the expression of a psychic transformation, however, are involved in this transformation.

Series E relates to the issue of human or social interaction, in which establishing a place for oneself, amongst others is the issue of concern. This concern is, in part, correlative to the issue of ‘inner state in relation to the external world’, which is addressed throughout the creative process in the previous paintings. E1, E2 and E3 employ two figures each. The tension between these figures is addressed within the charged space surrounding them. The energy within this space is visually apparent through the markings, the dark and light contrast within the layering of media, and the smoothness and roughness of texture. E3 depicts a single figure, internally containing the tension from the previous paintings in this series. The external energy is contained within this figure, resulting in an extended protrusion from the head. This protrusion may be regarded as psychological ‘headache’.

Resin blocks, containing seeds and insects, are inserted into the painting surface, acting as ‘energy-providers’, in which rejuvenation and the will to transform is encouraged.
3.6. *Series F*

*Series F* is concerned with a type of physical analysis of the human body, in search for a psychic understanding of oneself. However, these paintings do not form part of a transformation, in that the issue of concern within this series does not ‘get taken further’. The paintings were not part of a process that had the intent to resolve, merely investigate. This series may therefore be seen as a pre-investigation of the previous series, rather than being a part of it. The paintings within this series consist of charcoal drawings on a white background. The lines of the drawing are aggressively interwoven, to produce the form of a figure. These figurative forms are analytically rendered, in which ‘free movement’ or emotional and psychic characteristics are not addressed.

The poses of the figures within these paintings are distinct. There is no doubt as to whether a side or frontal position is being assumed. This characteristic employs the concept of analysis, resembling a familiarity with the poses of figures in medical textbooks or diagrams.

Side panels of texture and colour, are added onto these paintings, in which a contrast of pre-transformation and post-transformation is emphasised. These side panels use texture of media to convey emotional and psychological intensity.
CONCLUSION

The creative process is a means of self-exploration through which a sense of empowerment is achieved. Creative expression exists to assist psychic transformation.

The concept of psychic transformation through expression involves the interaction of the unconscious and the conscious, in which repressed conflicts and emotions are released. The process of externalising latent issues into tangible, visible content, and the introspection and processing thereof, allows for psychic healing. Psychic harmony, in which unconscious tension is resolved, exists within this healing process.

Symbolisation is used as a force for healing, providing a means whereby inner states are communicated through the expressionistic nature of the artwork. Symbolism is the means whereby expression is invested with meaning, allowing for the expulsion of harmful, painful experiences.

Personal expression contains the means whereby outer states reflect inner states, establishing a realistic, harmonious relationship with the external world. Creative expression is not a means of escapism, nor is it an expression of fantasy. It is an essential act in which the process of transformation allows for essential psychic adjustments and 'shifts', pertinent to a sound, healthy existence within the progression of, and interaction with life.

My personal transformation, caused by the creative process, has expelled psychic disability through expression. My process of self-exploration has enabled a progression, in which self-acceptance and psychic growth are of prime value.
Series A: Painting A1

Media: Bitumen, oil paint, wood stainer, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, wax polish, string, cloth (bandages, gauze, scrim), rubber, latex rubber, stones, resin blocks – peaches, resin blocks – seeds, metal, nails, cement, slate (on masonite).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2200mm
Series A: Painting A2

Media: Bitumen, oil paint, wood stainer, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, wax polish, string, cloth (bandages, gauze), shells, stones, metal strips (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series A: Painting A3

Media: Bitumen, oil paint, wood stainer, cement, creiestone, adhesive, wax, wax polish, enamel, cloth (bandages, gauze, scrim), latex rubber, string (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series B: Painting B1

Media: Bitumen, oil paint, cement, cretestone, wax, wax polish, adhesive, cloth (bandages, gauze, scrim) stones, resin, insects, seed pods (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series B: Painting B2

Media: Universal undercoat, oil paint, bitumen, cement, cretestone, cloth (bandages, gauze), wax, wax polish, adhesive (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series B: Painting B3

Media: Bitumen, oil paint, cement, cretestone, wood sealer, adhesive, wax, wax polish, cloth (bandages, gauze, scrim), resin, stone, seed pods (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series C: Painting C1
Media: Bitumen, oil paint, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wood stainer, wax, wax polish, resin, seed pods, tree bark (on canvas).
Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series C: Painting C2

Media: Oil paint, bitumen, cement, cre'estone, adhesive, wax, wax polish, resin, stone, bone, skrim, (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series C: Painting C3

Media: Bitumen, oil paint, cement, cretestone, wood stainer, adhesive, wax, wax polish, resin, scrim, cloth, wood stainer, stones, bones (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1800 x 2000mm
Series D:

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 200 x 300mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 200 x 300mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 200 x 300mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 200 x 300mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 200 x 300mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretesone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 305 x 405mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 305 x 405mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 305 x 405mm (individually)
Series D: (continued)

Media: Bitumen, wood stainer, varnish, enamel, cement, cretestone, adhesive, wax, resin, stones, bone, latex rubber (on canvas).

Dimensions: 305 x 405mm (individually)
Series E: Painting E1

Media: Charcoal, ink, oil paint, bitumen, wood stain, wax, cement, crestone, adhesive, universal undercoat, pea pods, thorns (on masonite and canvas).

Dimensions: 1000 x 1100mm
Series E: Painting E2

Media: Charcoal, ink, oil paint, bitumen, wax, cement, cretestone, adhesive, universal undercoat, seed pods, nails, Perspex (on masonite and canvas).

Dimensions: 1000 x 1100mm
Series E: Painting E3
Media: Charcoal, ink, oil paint, bitumen, wax, cement, cretestone, adhesive, universal undercoat, seed pods, nails, Perspex (on masonite and canvas).
Dimensions: 1000 x 1100mm
Series E: Painting E4

Media: Bitumen, wax, oil paint, ink, universal undercoat, cement, cretestone, cloth (bandages, gauze, scrim), resin, seeds, netting (on canvas).

Dimensions: 1500 x 1100mm
Series F: Painting F1

Media: Charcoal, matt varnish, universal undercoat, bitumen, cement, cretestone, wood stainer, nails, Perspex, adhesive (on masonite and canvas).

Dimensions: 1000 x 1500mm
Series F: Painting F2

Media: Charcoal, matt varnish, universal undercoat, bitumen, cement, cretestone, wood stainer, nails, Perspex, adhesive (on masonite and canvas).

Dimensions: 800 x 800mm
Series F: Painting F3

Media: Charcoal, matt varnish, universal undercoat, bitumen, cement, cretestone, wood stainer, nails, Perspex, adhesive (on masonite and canvas).

Dimensions: 1150 x 800mm
Series F: Painting F4

Media: Charcoal, matt varnish, universal undercoat, bitumen, cement, cretestone, wood stainer, nails, Perspex, adhesive (on masonite and canvas).

Dimensions: 600 x 500mm
BIBLIOGRAPHY


