

FRANCIS BACON
A PSYCHOBIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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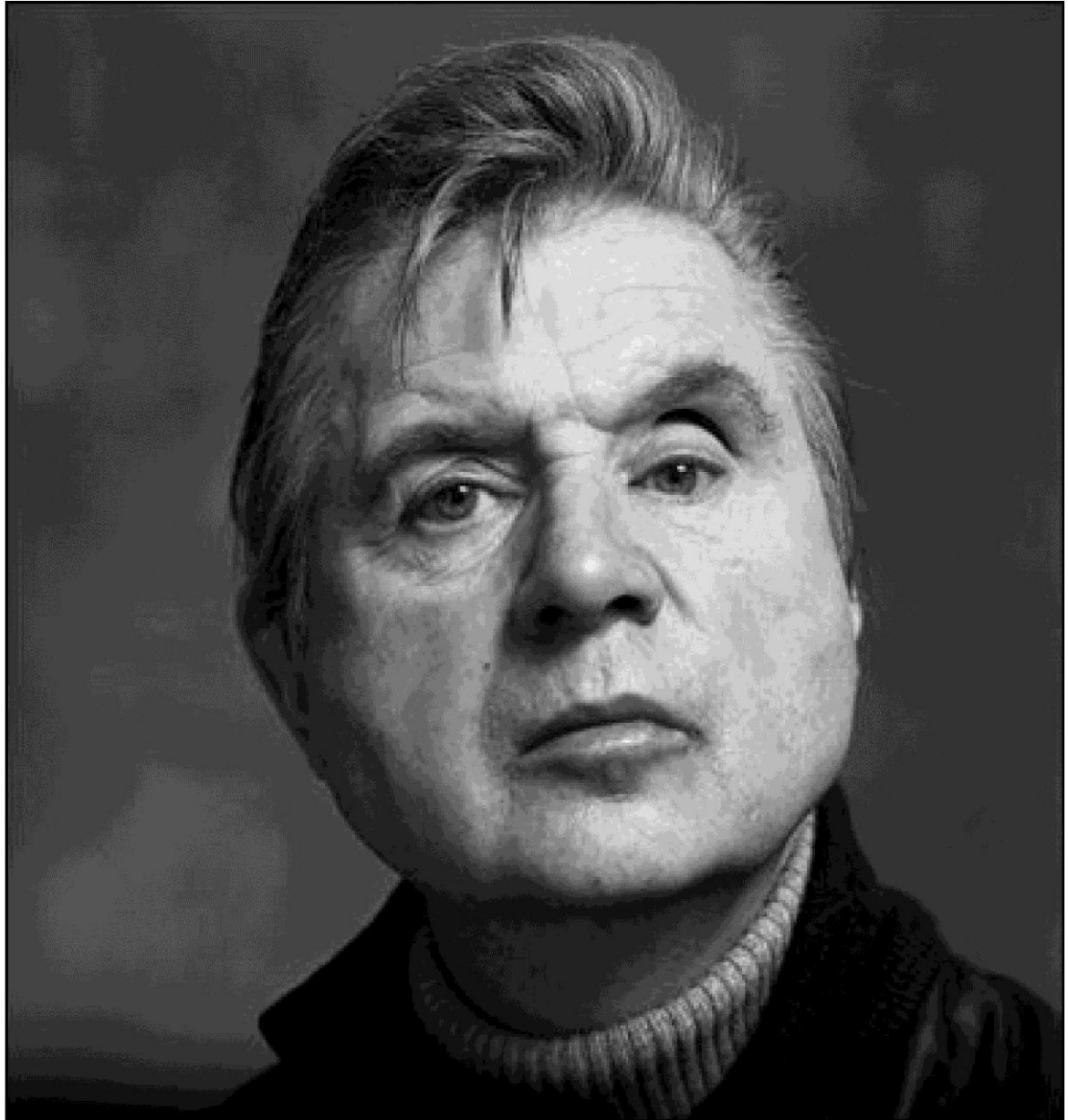
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Cover Image: Photograph of Francis Bacon in London (Kasterine, 1979)

“Don’t forget I look at everything!”

DEDICATION

This Study is dedicated to the memory of my parents,

WINSTON BARTHOLOMEW SAAYMAN (1940-2010)

ARLENE SAAYMAN (1941 – 1974)

BARBARA LYNN SAAYMAN (1947 – 2005)

Every image casts its shadow into the past – Francis Bacon

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For the professional expertise and generosity of time and dedication I came to expect from my supervisors, I thank them, but for tolerance, forbearance and encouragement in the face of relentless text and frequent neuroses, my debt to my supervisors, Professors Greg Howcroft and Louise Stroud is immeasurable.

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ABSTRACT

The study consists of a psychobiography of the British artist, Francis Bacon (1909-1992). Psychobiography employs a qualitative approach to understanding the life story of an individual through the lens of psychological theory. It is typically dedicated to the lives of well-known or enigmatic people and covers the person's entire lifespan. For this study the analytical theory of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) is used to explore and describe Bacon's life and personality through concepts relating to personality functioning, history, mythology, anthropology, symbology and religion. Francis Bacon has captured the imagination of the art world for many years - especially where it is felt that the figure-subject is still the highest form of art - and his reputation among the foremost of English painters is assured. Coupled with his artistic output is a life full of curiosity, eccentricity and controversy. This alone would qualify him as a suitable subject for a study such as this, but his extraordinary *oeuvre* of painting hugely adds to his attractiveness to the psychological researcher. To ensure an accurate description of Bacon's life, extensive data is examined using Alexander's (1988) model of identifying salient themes. The study considers the nature and methodology of psychobiography, the theories of Jung, the life of Francis Bacon and then synthesises relevant material in a psychological profile. The findings of this study indicate that Bacon's intense, creative and unorthodox life of genius fully justifies the research and provides an example of how a theory that is flexible can be an appropriate means of understanding complicated personalities. Jung's description of the evolution of the personality allows for applicability and coherence, while at the same time accommodating even the most maverick of non-conventional lives.

Key concepts: Psychology, Psychobiography, Francis Bacon, C. G. Jung, Art, Painting, 20th Century.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 Chapter Preview

This chapter provides a general overview of the study and introduces a connection between Jung's theories as an appropriate conceptual model and the psychological identity and development of the artist, Francis Bacon. The structure of the research, the research subject and the field of psychobiography are considered. The research problem, aims, scope and limitations are also articulated and the researcher's personal passage in the pursuit of the aims is described.

1.2 General Orientation to the Research Study

In recent times, growth in academic psychobiography has been accelerated by calls from influential psychologists to make post-graduate research not only clinically applicable, but also to ensure that it is rich and descriptive in terms of the theory upon which it is built. Psychobiographical studies are ideally suited to the investigation and extension of theory grounded in sub-disciplines such as personality, career, health and developmental and positive psychology. Psychobiography also presents an ideal methodology for the further development and testing of the suitability of psychological theories, especially those dealing with development and personality (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2009).

1.3 The Subject and Structure of the Research

The research comprises a psychobiography of Francis Bacon in which the analytical psychology of Carl Gustav Jung is applied as a theoretical model. The treatise consists of seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the central concerns of the study; Chapter Two provides an overview of psychobiography as a valid and valuable methodology in gaining insight and usefully applying psychological theory to real situations; Chapter Three articulates the research design and methodology; Chapter Four consists of an overview of those aspects of Jung's analytical theory that can be usefully applied to the life of Francis Bacon; Chapter Five presents an overview of Bacon's life structured on seminal concerns articulated by Jung; Chapter Six provides a discursive synthesis between the life and psychology of Francis Bacon and the analytical psychology of Jung; and Chapter Seven provides useful conclusions, suggestions for further study and a consideration of the efficacy and limitations of the completed study.

The text is punctuated throughout with images of Bacon's life and work. These are in no way intended to 'illustrate' concepts under discussion - as this would be at best vague and at worst misleading - but rather to provide a cumulative body of visual information that can act as Bacon's voice in the explicative trilogy of Jung, the researcher and the artist. Depending on the tenor of the discussion in each chapter, each of these voices may be more or less dominant. Sometimes the artist must be especially heard, sometimes Jung and sometimes the researcher, but consistent throughout is the intention to weave as complete an integration of the principle sources as possible.

1.4 The Aims, Scope and Limitations of the Study

The broad aim of the study was to explore and describe the life of the artist from a Jungian perspective and in so doing develop a useful psychobiography of the man considered to be one of England's greatest modern painters (Farson, 1993). The objective was thus to establish a coherent collusion between theory and biographical history. Since the study is a consideration of both a life and a body of work, it is important to clarify that matters of taste, aesthetics and art-critical evaluation, whether implicit or explicit, are incidental to the core of the examination. The study does not pretend to offer an appraisal of the work *per se*, but does consider its expressive and other qualities in the context of revelation and illustration of the main concern of the study, the life and psychology of the artist. The scope of the study might thus be considered to be all aspects of Bacon's life and work that assist in the generation of a coherent and valuable psychological understanding of the man, but a cardinal limitation exists in the fact that the study does not argue for merit, whether it be moral or aesthetic.

1.5 Francis Bacon (1909 – 1992) as a Subject for Psychological Research



Figure 1.1. *Three Studies for Self-Portrait* (Bacon, 1974). □ Christies 2012.

Wandering up and down the ramp at the Francis Bacon exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum on a sunny afternoon is a grisly experience. The joys of painting and the presence of a brilliant mind are not enough to dispel one's embarrassment, as if one had been caught, and caught oneself, smiling at a hanging (Kozloff, 1968, p. 159).

Thus, the art critic Max Kozloff responding to the 1965 New York retrospective exhibition of the British artist, Francis Bacon. His remarks are especially insightful because in his critical response he recognises that the 'grisly' imagery is undershot by a scrupulousness in design and a hedonistic intuition for paint that makes the paintings rich in evocation, structure and design. Much the same can be said of the artist as a personality. A homosexual, social maverick, loyal friend or bitching queen, recluse or *bon vivant*, Edwardian gentleman or bar room yob, Bacon led his life, with its fascinating beginnings and triumphant end, its contradictions, paradoxes, convolutions and surprises, in a way that make it a rich source for psychobiography. That this life parallels and is exemplified by the genesis of an extraordinary *oeuvre* of epochal paintings is an added bonus.

At the time of his death, Bacon was generally considered to be one of three of the most important British artists - the others being Lucien Freud and Frank Auerbach - and frequently referred to in such canonising terms as "the most important British painter since Turner" (Hughes, 2008, The Art and Design section, para. 7). While it is true that his work added a hugely significant dimension to the tradition of painting, his life was consistently in parallel with his formal artistic development and it is that life that is interesting to the researcher.

The distinguished art critic and one of Bacon's closest friends, David Sylvester, published an obituary in *The Independent* a few days after Bacon's death. He, too, remembered Bacon the man:

Since he died, I've not thought about him as a painter. I've only thought about the qualities which have long made me feel he was probably the greatest man I've known, and certainly the grandest. His honesty with himself, his constant sense of the tragic and the comic, his appetite for pleasure, his fastidiousness, his generosity, not only with money, that was easy, but with his time, above all, I think, his courage. He had faults which could be maddening, such as being waspish, bigoted and fairly disloyal, as well as indiscreet. But he was also kind and forgiving and unspoiled by success and never rude unintentionally (Farson, 1993, p. 4).

This study attempts to establish a coherent conceptual explication of the multi-layered, perhaps obscure, identity that characterised much of Bacon's social and personal career. In 1962, when Bacon was already internationally famous, *The Observer Weekend Review* published this description:

In a backstreet behind Piccadilly, a man may sometimes be encountered wearing a huge pair of sunglasses, grey flannel coat, tight trousers, grey flannel shirt, and black tie. He walks rapidly into the darkness. He has cropped hair, a round puffy face and looks about 35. He is in fact in his early fifties - his conquest of age at once gives him a slightly spooky, Dorian Gray quality - and he is the artist Francis Bacon ... He is, indeed, a freak ("The Observer Profile," *The Culture Section*, 1962, para. 1).

The article is interesting for the way that it throws light on the stark distinction that Bacon's appearance, behaviour, speech, sexual and social mores – not least his art – provoked in contrast to the grey and conservative post-war, pre-Beatles, British world view. It is appropriate that a man who could take British painting out of its rather suburban gentility or self-conscious modernism and rub the middle class's values into the charnal house of such works as *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944), would appear to be a freak. But in common with most

encounters with the unusual, an acquaintance with Francis Bacon provides an antidote to the alienating characteristics – like one might come to know and love John Merrick the sensitive and tortured individual after being appalled and repelled by the freakshow appearance of ‘The Elephant Man’. Nigel Gosling (1967) writing for *The Observer*, noted that

Bacon is a slightly fey-looking, soft-moving, soft-speaking man, civilised and intelligent, with that elusive anonymity which creates a stronger personality than hairy-chested forcefulness. He slips through any kind of labelling... The slash of paint with which he transforms the features of a friend is a gesture of love so fierce that it makes a revolting wound. ‘Each man kills the thing he loves’, quotes Bacon from Oscar Wilde - and he adds, typically, ‘is that true? I don't know.’ Tension breeds violence, and violence is everywhere in Bacon's work. You feel the presence of a sensibility so delicate that the gentlest stimulus is an assault. ‘I believe that anything that exists is a violent thing. The existence of a rose is a violence.’... Bacon has dredged deeply and agonisingly into the spring of existence. What he brings up is murky, rich, even rank, but it is certainly one aspect of truth. I believe that future generations will continue to be moved by it, and even, which might alarm Bacon, find it totally beautiful (para. 62).

This criticism is typical in that it stresses the persistent ambivalence in Bacon's work of a violent beauty. It seems that the common trope in dealing with the work is oxymoron and it is the same conjunction that emerges in an investigation of his life. This conjunction, or dichotomy, is echoed in Nietzsche's (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 2008) view that the artwork arises from a synthesis of the Apollonian and the Dionysian impulses – a fusion of order and chaos, of attraction and repulsion.

Bacon's younger contemporary, the painter R. B. Kitaj, made the point that knowing an artist's work was not enough in itself. Quoting Picasso, whom Bacon admired, he remarked that, “it is not sufficient to know an artist's work. It is also necessary to know when he did them, why, how, under what circumstances,” adding, “Bacon might not agree with that, but I do” (Horne & Lewis, 1996, p. 24).

‘Why, how and under what circumstances’, are questions that have been mulled over in the “flood of biographies and articles published since the artist's death, though none has been incisive about the artist's close involvement with his subject matter” (Cooper, 2011, Anxiety of Analysis section, para. 14). For his retrospective at the Tate Gallery in London in 1989, Bacon collaborated in the preparation of a commentary on each painting, giving background information and any relevant autobiographical details. In the event, the artist withdrew this material at the last moment and sadly the commentary has never been issued (Cooper, 2011). Deprived of, or choosing not to acknowledge the ‘facts’ that inform particular pieces of Bacon’s art, critics have tended to fall back on generalities that reinforce the mystery and mysticism of the work rather than offering insight into its aetiology in a particular personality (Cooper, 2011). It is this area that the study attempts to address.

1.6 The Psychobiographical Approach

Stroud (2004) points out that the field of psychobiography is concerned with the study of lives, with the emphasis being on providing explanations for aspects of the life history that are not derived exclusively through the use of common sense or psychological principles. The researcher presents a narrative that both cogently explores a life story and articulates that narrative through the application of relevant and revelatory psychological theory. This scientific reconstruction and interpretation of a biographical subject represents an effective synthesis of psychology and biography (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2005).

The value of the intensive investigation of one human being is the yielding of results that should enable a feature of theory to be confirmed or questioned (McLeod, 1994). In so doing, the researcher aims to illuminate the theory and its application. In turn, the study of lives can help the psychologist to develop more general psychological theories. The study must ultimately contribute to knowledge, the relevant domains should find usefulness and meaning in the study, and the study should be useful for practitioners (Creswell, 1994).

1.7 The Research Problem

Any psychological case study can be presumed to be based on an exploration or examination of the mores, emotions, life-style, self-perception, fears, motivations or other driving factors that determine the individual's place in the world, using the principles, theories, approaches, philosophy and science of psychology as an instrument for the optimal understanding of that individual. In this psychobiography the chosen life –*The gilded, gutter life of Francis Bacon* (Farson, 1993) – is examined through the lens of Carl Jung.

1.8 Introduction to Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)

Carl Gustav Jung was the founder of Analytical Psychology. Emerging from a strong religious background, Jung's student life at Basel University had a liberating effect on him and he qualified in medicine in 1875 (Stevens, 2001). Initially a disciple of Sigmund Freud, he later found himself unable to accept his mentor's approach to important psychoanalytic areas such as the interpretation of dreams as well as his

“mechanistic view of the person, which regarded the individual as the product of a ‘repressed sexual past’” (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008, p. 94). Jung understood and acknowledged the importance of sexuality in the development of the personality, but he perceived the unconscious as encompassing much more. He refused to reduce everything in a person's current life situation to repressed childhood instincts, especially if instinct referred primarily to sexuality (Mitchell, 2011). It was his belief that psychological development - the growth towards the realisation of an individual's true potential - continued throughout the whole of life rather than being limited to childhood (Crain, 1985). Jung accepted that behaviour was the consequence of past events but maintained that it was also directed towards the future. His theory thus incorporates the deterministic past but also stresses a teleological perspective towards the future and can therefore be considered to be less pessimistic than Freud's (Meyer et al., 2008).

In 1913 Freud terminated his friendship with Jung because of their irreconcilable theoretical views. This estrangement was a blow for Jung and caused the period known as his ‘dark years’ during which time he experienced a difficult journey of self-exploration, which he called his ‘confrontation with the unconscious’ (Meyer et al., 2008). Jung's direct, personal experiences and revelations fueled his commitment to knowing the nature of the psyche and in the first line of his autobiography *Memories, dreams, reflections*, he wrote “My life is the story of the self-realisation of the unconscious” (Jung, 1989, p. 3).

After parting with Freud he went on to develop his own approach to psychotherapy, which he called Analytical Psychology. The precedence he gave to dreams and visions and the idea of understanding them through investigations of

philosophy, religion, art and literature reflect his eclectic pursuit of knowledge regarding the functioning of the psyche (Crain, 1985). He transformed psychotherapy from a practice concerned with the treatment of the sick into a means for the higher development of the personality. Jung viewed people as being orientated towards a perpetual creative development in striving to achieve completeness and wholeness of self. "Individuation," said Jung, "generally has a profound healing effect on the person" (Jung, 1962, p. 433).

Jung's analytical psychology forms an elaborate explanation of human nature that combines ideas from history, mythology, anthropology and religion (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). It was thus worth investigating Francis Bacon in the light of Jung's theoretical assumptions because the apparent chaos of Bacon's life is so elegantly resolved in the paintings he made over his lifetime.

1.9 The Researcher's Personal Passage

Important for the dynamics of psychobiography is a consideration of the researcher's own personal passage as a third voice in the trilogy of concerns. In this respect, the hermeneutics involved in any conjunction of understanding, opinion, prejudices and science that such a study involves, demands clear insight into and articulation of the researcher's own points of departure, predisposition and prejudice.

The researcher first encountered the work of Francis Bacon a decade ago when attending an art course. Like most people who are subjected to the portentous and distorted images, the researcher was at first perplexed (though attracted and intrigued) by the content. The work most certainly did not fit into any assumptions held about

what an 'oil painting' should be. Later, in 2007, the researcher encountered her first original Bacon in the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice (*Study for Chimpanzee* 1957). This raw and uncompromising image had a profound effect in its capacity to speak directly to both the intellect and the senses.



Figure 1.2. Study for Chimpanzee (Bacon, 1957). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2008.

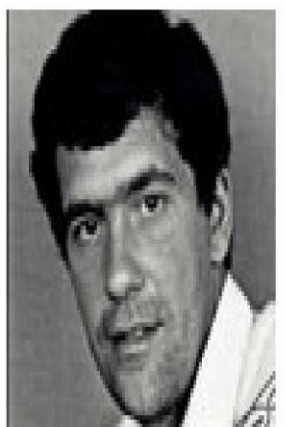
It was through a growing acquaintance and familiarity with such content that important insight into a more sophisticated reading of the process and presentation of visual imagery was gained, along with the knowledge that the phenomenon has to be both *seen* and *understood*. Seeing is a relatively straightforward business, but

understanding requires at least the capacity to go beyond the nominal appearance and subject and to recognise the revelatory and multi-layered aetiology and genesis that separate the object from mere illustration or imitation. As Kozloff (1968) concludes, “those who are unable to achieve an aesthetic distance will be *merely* repelled by repellent subjects” (p. 163). [Researcher’s italics.] It was this duality of appreciation – the enriching capacity for diametrical response – that made itself apparent in a journey from intrigue and surprise to responses that are more about admiration and delight.

For Bacon, painting seems to have been a secret, guarded and intimate act, yet in the end it is through his paintings that he speaks. Those masterpieces were made to ‘unlock the valves of feeling’ and return the onlooker even more violently to life; not just to Bacon’s life but to the viewer’s own (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007). Few painters share his power to conjure up a shape without literally describing it, to create images that seem to have no basis in the experiential world but are at the same time vividly arresting, to create a world of his own in each picture so that you seem to be peering into it through a mental keyhole (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007).

There is a certain element of voyeurism in gazing on the magical house of horrors, an element that allows for a sometimes guilty delight and intrigue, just like Kozloff’s (1968) hanging.

Table 1.1 Selected Influences on Bacon's Development ("The Art Story Foundation," 2011).

ARTISTS	FRIENDS	MOVEMENTS	IMAGES
			
Eadweard Muybridge	John Deakin	Cubism	The Eumenides.
			
Pablo Picasso	George Dyer	Expressionism	Nurse in <i>The Battleship Potemkin</i> , 1925
			
Diego Velázquez	John Edwards	Surrealism	Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X, 1653

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the framework for the study, introduces the reader to Francis Bacon, the psychology of Carl Jung, the justification for psychobiography and sketches a broad picture of the relationships between them. The research problem is defined and the researcher's personal passage considered. Chapter Two focusses on the nature, appropriateness, merits and demerits of Psychobiography as a significant pursuit in psychological study.

CHAPTER 2

PSYCHOBIOGRAPHY: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Chapter Preview

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the nature, historical context and development of the psychobiographical approach to the study of lives. A brief account of the value and benefits of psychobiography as well as critical responses to the approach is included.

2.2 The Nature of Psychobiography

Psychobiography entails the study of historically significant and extraordinary individuals over their entire life span with the purpose of uncovering and reconstructing their lives from a psychological orientation (Fouche, 2010). Psychobiographers are therefore tasked with deciphering meanings, often only implied, in order to make sense of individual's lives (Schultz, 2005). The individual is viewed holistically within his or her particular social and historical context, which is appropriate because it has been argued that such a context is the only appropriate means for understanding humans in general (Hones, 1988). Similarly, it can be argued that the 'historical present of the interpreter', that is, the immediate context and disposition of the researcher, will further shape the nature of any interpretative understanding of the subject (Gadamer, 1976). People are in many ways like poems and may be 'interpreted' in different, sometimes contradictory ways at different historical points and by the same or different interpreters (Schultz, 2005). Such

thinking reflects not only a Jungian psychological orientation, but also a hermeneutical approach where “the present is seen and understood only through the intentions, ways of seeing, and preconceptions bequeathed from the past” (Palmer, 1969, p. 176-7).

The enduring psychobiographical position can indeed be encapsulated in the ongoing process of daily life where people live and make meaning through interpretation, whether it be tacit or explicit (Schultz, 2005). Speculating or interpreting what a mysterious person may have really meant when he or she said this or that is certainly part of the world of relationships and psychobiographers regard individuals as worth understanding in this deep way because they assume that such knowledge can be valuable (Schultz, 2005).

In order to further conceptualise the nature of psychobiography, it is worth considering some of the concepts that are associated with it. The first concept is that of conventional biography.

Biography. In the tradition of formal biography, the biographer studies an individual’s life and prepares a factually accurate account of it, balanced with an attempt to tell a good story. Over the centuries, biography has undergone shifts in style and focus, moving from idealisation to sensationalism to more disinterested attempts at recording histories (Elms, 1994). While history is ideally concerned with a useful description of events in the past, McAdams (1994) has pointed out that biographers have tended to neglect their subject’s human failings. His opinion echoes the view of Carl Jung, who aptly commented that a good biography ought also to

show people in their underwear (McGuire & Hull, 1977). Biographers should therefore list not only the superficialities of the life but should seek also to identify the subject's primary motives, goals, or ambitions as well as his or her imperfections and inner lives of feeling, desire and fantasy (McAdams, 1994).

Elms (1994) regarded the biggest changes in the nature of biography as having occurred when biographers started to embrace the broad theories of personality developed by psychiatrists and psychologists. It was these early approaches that assumed the popular name of 'psychobiography', which was defined as "biography that makes substantial use of psychological theory and knowledge" (Elms, 1994, p. 242). According to this definition, there can be psychologically insightful biography that is not technically 'psychobiography' if it is not making explicit use of psychological theory or research. On the other hand, not all psychobiography is psychologically insightful. Runyan, in an interview with Schultz (2001) makes the point that good biography might be psychobiographical, but other good biography might be primarily literary, social, cultural, or historical. The relationship between psychology and biography can therefore be regarded as a somewhat tenuous one, albeit one of apparent complementarity (Elms, 1994). Fouche and Van Niekerk (2005b) view the relationship as symbiotic and say that psychobiography, in essence, reflects this synthesis.

Autobiography. This refers to the documentation of an individual's life that is written by the individual himself (Bromely, 1986) and can be thought of as reflection upon reflection (Bruner, 1990). "It is an account given by a narrator in the here and now about a protagonist bearing his name who existed in the there and then, the story

terminating in the present when the protagonist fuses with the narrator” (Bruner, 1990, p. 121). Many autobiographies include descriptions of subjective experiences, usually accompanied by accounts of external events. Jung’s (1963) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, for example, has become one of the most widely read autobiographies because it emphasized both Jung’s integrity and also the surprisingly introspective orientation of the autobiographical approach. It’s focus on Jung’s dreams and visions throughout his life, rather than on people, places or public events, characterized the autobiography in such a way that many other autobiographies have followed Jung’s lead (Elms, 1994). Redefining one’s life history to fit a final self-image is not unusual in autobiographical writing and even Jung acknowledged that he did this when he said, “I have now undertaken ...to tell my personal myth...Whether or not the stories are ‘true’ is not the problem. The only question is whether what I tell is *my* fable, *my* truth” (Elms, 1994, p. 52). Jung’s words convey an important aspect of the nature of autobiography in that any autobiography is written at least in part to record how the world looks from one uniquely idiosyncratic perspective. Jung tried to tell his personal myth but unfortunately his autobiography has been tampered with by others who have rewritten his story in ways with which he would perhaps not altogether have agreed (Elms, 1994).

Life Histories. Individuals may be better understood when viewed through time. A life history is a locus that connects seemingly separate events into a coherent whole. It is a thread of time that connects and creates a sense of oneness, explaining the present and future in relation to the past. A biography is a description from one viewpoint of a life history but can never completely describe all events (Bourdieu, 1987). A life history approach therefore entails the seeking by researchers of insight

into similarities amongst different individuals as opposed to the exploration into the uniqueness of a single life (Rosenwald, 1988). The approach is thus more of a technique for reconstructing experience, a mechanism for producing the experience of self as unity and totality and many institutions can facilitate this process (Bourdieu, 1987). Interacting with individuals, describing the way they express their understanding of the world and analysing this expression is seen as a strength and facilitates connection of the changing biography of the individual with their social history. Life history research and its derivative, psychobiography, may thus be seen to encapsulate “the true spirit of the qualitative approach to the study of human behaviour” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 286).

Life Stories and Life Narratives. Humans provide their lives with a sense of meaning and purpose by constructing internalized narratives of the self, that influence thinking and actions geared towards the future (McAdams, 1985, 1994, 1996). They differ from other organisms in that they are storytellers and as such, they are able to anticipate their individual and societal futures and recount their individual pasts (Elms, 1994). Emphasis is on description rather than on exploration and may take the form of stories or logs (Atkinson, 1988; Bromley, 1986; Cole & Knowles, 2001). Stories can be expressed in various forms of communication, including legends, myths, history and motion pictures (Fouchè, 1999; Sarbin, 1986). It is precisely because humans incorporate these elements as part of their self-conception (McAdams, 1994, 1996; Olney, 1972) and act upon these personal myths ‘as if’ they were true (Adler, 1929), that insight is gained into how individuals compose their lives (Roberts, 2002). Life stories and life narratives are thus the subjective oral or written accounts of the events, contexts and relationships of the narrator and are

limited to the material provided by the narrator (Atkinson, 1988; Bromley, 1986; Cole & Knowles, 2001).

Psychobiographers, however, seldom employ a narrative based theory for making sense of lives, and individuals are generally approached, not as text, but as tangible beings. The reason for this is that most psychobiographers are structuralists and as such, assume that motives, scripts, unconscious ideas, personality conflicts, and so on are real, actual, mental structures (Schultz, 2005). “In the most extreme narrative-based models, mind is text, self is story and story is fiction. There is nothing behind the story and story is all there is” (Schultz, 2005, p. 17).

Psychohistory. A political, social or cultural event is historically interpreted using psychological theory, which is usually psychoanalytical (Berg, 1995; Loewenberg, 1983; Runyan, 1988b). Although the fields of psychohistory and psychobiography are closely related, psychohistory is usually limited to important historical figures like Richelieu, Hitler or Churchill and tries to go beyond individual psychology to group behaviour (Gay, 1985). More explicitly, according to Kren and Rappoport (1976) “it attempts to understand the social conditions shaping the development of the individual psyche, and then the psychological factors forming the social conditions” (p. 21).

Historical Psychology. This refers to the history of psychological phenomena and the related history of thought about psychological development and the life course (Runyan, 1988b).

Historiography. This approach involves efforts to reconstruct meaningful and appropriate historical explanations of past events using information in the form of government documents, public records, confidential reports, newspaper editorials, photographs, films and artefacts. After critical analysis, evaluation, and selection of authentic source materials, which are then integrated into a body of literature, history is written and subjected to scholarly methods of criticism and review (Berg, 1995).

Case Studies. Psychological case study concerns itself with the documentation of specific events or emotional episodes within a particular period of an individual's life in contrast to the psychobiographical approach, which documents the individual's entire life span (Louw & Edwards, 1993). Psychobiography is essentially an extension of case study research so any approach to case study applies to psychobiography as well. Individuals may be understood from a variety of angles. One can

- i) explore the effects of early life history on personality and achievement;
- ii) identify habitual modes of psychological defense used by a person;
- iii) sort out the preferred life story sequences or themes employed by the person when he talks about his life;
- iv) isolate formative events such as an early experience of loss, for instance, that seem to underscore many of the person's attitudes and concerns;
- v) examine a person's history of reinforcement, or the consequences a person's behavior elicits from their environment;
- vi) reveal sets of enduring traits like extraversion or introversion, the underlying patterns of behaviour; or
- vii) point out the common 'scripts' resorted to by individuals as they reveal who they are.

All such approaches are encountered from time to time as one begins to look into the literature (Schultz, 2005).

Having considered these approaches it can be said in summary that psychobiography is not merely a way to do a biography, it is a way to do psychology and the involvement in more interpretive, historical psychology can be viewed as a return to the heart of psychology (Elms, 1994).

2.3 The Value and Benefit of a Psychobiographical Case Study

The value of studying individual lives has repeatedly been recognized and advocated by many scholars who understand that individual lives are rich in personality and reflect developmental, and psycho-historical importance (Alexander, 1988; Carlson, 1988; Runyan, 1982). Psychobiography is one of the major arenas in which an in-depth understanding of individual lives is pursued and one in which the relationship between evidence, general theory, and the explanation or interpretation of individual lives is examined in some detail. Psychobiographers involve themselves with thinking and writing about complex, creative, and sometimes inevitably contradictory lives because they are centrally concerned with making advances in the understanding of individual people and individual lives and more broadly in the social sciences (Schultz, 2001).

The subjects of psychobiographical studies are often exactly those people whom knowing more about, and as intimately as possible, may be seen as most valuable: the world's Gandhis and Hitlers, Picassos and Van Goghs. Freud again

paved the way in this regard when midway through his career he made known his desire to take psychoanalysis into the realm of biography in order to “extend psychoanalysis beyond those on the couch to consider eminent individuals previously unreachable” (Robins, Fraley & Kreuger, 2007, p. 309). These personalities; the politicians, writers, intellectuals, cultural icons, are those who epitomise the limits and the architecture of the human mind in all its horror or magnificence (Schultz, 2005). Knowing them is important because to know them is to know oneself. “If individuals are all in some respects like all other people, like some other people, and like no other people” (Kluckhohn & Murray, 1953, p. 53), then psychobiography and case-study approaches serve to fill that gap in the available information, namely, how people are unique, or how they function regardless of any reference group (Schultz, 2005). Further advantages of psychobiographical research will now be discussed.

The Uniqueness of the Individual Case within the Whole. Because emphasis is on the individuality of the whole person rather than on the individuality found in a single area only (Runyan, 1984), the research provides a unique and holistic description of the individual being investigated and focuses on one person’s life (Carlson, 1988; Elms, 1994). Psychobiographers thus try to make sense of one life at a time and by doing so they put the person back where they should be in psychology, namely as a dynamic target in the front and center (Schultz, 2005). As Schultz (2005) says:

If psychology ought to strive for anything, if it hoped one sunny day to step away from its labs, one-way mirrors, instruments, and apparatuses into the uncontrolled world of life, then saying something vital about people, not single-file nameless mobs, but actual individuals with a history – should be job one (p. 3).

The Socio-Historical Context. To gain a holistic understanding of the person, the larger, contextualized background in which the person lived is given attention and emphasis is placed on the individual's socio-historical and cultural experience, family history and socialization (Roberts, 2002). This has resulted in more studies being conducted with greater focus on examining how the life course is influenced by socio-structural, demographic and historic conditions (Runyan, 1982).

Process and Pattern Over Time. Psychobiographers tend to use qualitative rather than quantitative research methods. Their focus is therefore not just on individual personalities in their unique complexity, but also on lives. They aim to understand the life history of the person as it unfolds through time, not just to take a snapshot of the person at a particular moment (Schultz, 2005). In this regard, psychobiographers have been provided with a rich and diverse tradition to draw upon because of the contributions, which have come from the field of adult personality development, life history research in psychopathology and lifespan development (Fouchè, 1999). The researcher is able to trace patterns of human development over the entire course of a person's life and experience because of the focus on finished lives. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of personality in progress, whereby the researcher can document different dimensions and processes in an individual's functioning at any time and in any specific situation (Fiske, 1988).

Subjective Reality. Modern social scientists have tended to omit the subject's humanity by pursuing causal, objective accounts of generalized behaviour patterns. This has meant that despite philosophical, literary and other explorations of the individual, the uniqueness and diversity of human meaning has traditionally been

relegated to a secondary concern (Rustin, 1999; Simonton, 2003). The situation has however changed with the growth and influence of postmodernism and narrative analysis and today there is a greater emphasis on individual meaning and choice (Roberts, 2002; Stead & Subich, 2006; Stroud, 2004). The in-depth exposure and study of the subjective reality of an individual and subsequent level of empathy that develops, has for example, come to be characteristic of a psychobiographical approach, which allows for translation into a clear and emotionally compelling story (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Carlson (1971), personality cannot be studied experimentally and to understand a person requires interpretation, not variable manipulation. To discover why someone did what they did, or how they became what they became, or what drove them requires the performance of some essential tasks such as reading written products, analyzing dreams, journals and letters, talking to intimates and inspecting creative work. In other words it requires stepping out of the laboratory and into reality and psychobiography provides the ideal platform on which to do so.

Theory Testing and Development. Life history material provides an ideal laboratory for testing and developing various theories of human development (Carlson, 1988). The researcher compares and analyses data collected against the theory, which acts as a template aiding in conceptualization of case data within the theoretical constructs. This allows for generalizing from the case study to the theory (Yin, 2003). Theories, or at least hypotheses, also emerge out of psychobiography because psychobiographers produce inspirations, strong hunches or insights, which in time lead to formal propositions that can be tested against larger groups of people. In this way psychobiography brings various findings to bear on single lives, discovering

what works and what doesn't (Schultz, 2005). Psychoanalysis, for example, emerged out of Freud's self-analysis combined with analyses of hysterical patients, as did Jung's analytical psychology. Maslow, Piaget, Erikson, Laing, Murray, Allport, Tomkins, and others took the task of speculation very seriously and made their way into theory by starting with a person, or a handful of persons and then branching out from there. In the end they articulated models of mind, which are theoretically applicable to all people (Schultz, 2005).

2.4 The Criticisms of Psychobiography

Bad psychobiographies do exist and their existence, according to Elms (1994), can be likened to a bad car repair. As with any field of endeavour, there are both talented and untalented practitioners but one wouldn't dismiss the entire field of medicine, for example, because there are a few poor internists (Elms, 1994).

Freud's work on da Vinci, for example, while considered the most influential psychobiography (Elms, 1994; Runyan, 1982), was far from perfect and much of its influence has been due to the fact that it was theoretically and methodologically flawed (Elms, 1994). Freud's objectivity was clouded by identification with his subject. Freud not only admired da Vinci, but also began to see himself in his subject's life and work. Feelings towards the subject are not always positive and sometimes psychobiographers dislike their subjects, which makes their work prone to pathography or inaccuracy (Elms, 1994). There have been psychobiographical works done on politicians, for example, that have been clouded by the psychobiographer's political bias. Freud's hatred for U.S president Woodrow Wilson motivated his

collaboration with William Bullitt (1966) to publish the scathing psychobiographical work *Thomas Woodrow Wilson: A Psychological Study* (Robins, Fraley & Kreuger, 2007). This work continues to be a classic example of how a psychobiography can go wrong because of the pervasive biases apparent in the work and strong criticisms leveled by leading psychobiographers and presidential historians (Elms, 1994; George & George, 1964). As stated by Robins, Fraley and Kreuger (2007) “Psychologists often choose subjects for whom they feel some emotion, positive or negative. The inherent subjectivity creates major chinks in psychobiography’s scientific façade” (p. 309). Subsequent psychobiographers have tried to avoid making the same mistakes that Freud and others made, but nonetheless, the major criticisms aimed at the earlier psychobiographies have also been aimed at the whole field, in the past, as well as in the present (Robins et al., 2007).

Psychobiography has been criticised as being both “asocial and ahistorical and as inevitably tending toward reductionism” (Izenberg, 2003, p. 32). Izenberg (2003) in a demonstrative discussion of Kandinsky argues that:

It is precisely the most original and idiosyncratic intellectual and artistic creations that often require psychobiographical explanation because they are the ones most clearly marked by the individuality as well as the genius of their creators. It is where those creations go beyond the cultural conventions of the Zeitgeist, where their solutions to the problems of the times are most original that the input of personality may be the most telling (p. 32).

Izenberg (2003) goes on to argue that the claims that inform an investigation should not be *a priori* theories of personality but rather rooted in hard evidence and reasonable inference. “It is . . . the [creative, artistic] work that should pose questions to the life, and not the other way around” (p. 32). Izenberg (2003) suggests that the

manner and degree of cultural deviation – divergence from the *Zeitgeist* demonstrated by the work – should be the spur to psychobiographical explanation and that this process is compatible with “contextual factors of ideology, social class, political conflict and the historical moment. They all form a continuum of modes of explanation that all cultural historians invoke to their benefit” (p. 32). In simpler terms, there would appear to be a reversal of means and ends when considering how, say, an art historian and a psychobiographer would approach the relationship between personality and divergence from the norm. The art historian is interested in the divergence while the psychobiographer is interested in the personality and each uses the other as means. The primary objectives (ends) are opposite, though the body of knowledge and insight may be similar. Since the present study is a psychobiography of an artist, this distinction is a useful one. The research will consider the personality of Francis Bacon *through* the work, whereas an art historian would consider the work *through* the personality.

Further criticism stems from the fact that traditionally it was required that psychological dissertations be based on empirical research, which was interpreted as quantitative or nomothetic research. Psychobiographical research is usually qualitative, does not make use of statistics or experiments and as such has been accused of being unscientific and therefore not ‘psychology’ (Elms, 1994). Scientific psychology emphasizes the necessity of reliable evidence and uses conceptual paradigms of developmental and personality psychology as frameworks within which to trace and explain the typical patterns of human development (Howe, 1997). Academic psychology tends to be theory-centred, concerned with developing general conceptual and theoretical analyses of various classes of psychological phenomena

such as in the areas of developmental, social, personality, abnormal, cognitive and biographical psychology (Jacobs, 2004). Psychologists have thus abstained from conducting detailed studies of individual lives, thinking that such studies did not contribute to the formulation of more general truths (Rosenwald, 1988).

Psychobiography, however, does involve painstaking factual research and researchers have argued that, according to standard dictionary definitions, 'empirical' meant "related to facts or experiences...based on factual investigation" (Elms, 1994, p. 242). "No inherent difference thus exists between the extensive collection of biographical fact about one individual in a life-historical study and the few facts collected about each of many individuals in the standard sort of 'empirical' psychological research" (Elms, 1994, p. 243).

Gadamer (1979) argues that any procedure used to establish the true nature of phenomena that is prefaced on a state of disinterest is doomed to failure because such a procedure attempts to bypass or ignore the unavoidable fact that all attitude and even logic is founded on historical assumptions that will, despite any conscious attempt to marginalize it, colour and alter the individual's worldview. Consistent with Gadamer's (1979) notion of the historical present is that individuals exist and function within a particular (and temporal) moment in history and the nature of one's responses and understanding is determined by this locus. By exploring the narrative dimensions of human development, psychologists do move away from logico-deductive modes of experience (Bruner, 1986) but this is done in order to gain a more holistic understanding of the reality in which individuals perceive themselves to function.

Roberts (2002) points out that it is precisely because of a variety of factors including: a) an increasing disillusionment with static approaches to data collection, b) a growing interest in the life course, c) an increased concern with lived experience and how best to express and reveal it, and d) a sharing in the growing popularity of qualitative research in general that there has been a surge of interest in the method.

In the context of continued scepticism, Elm's (1994) view is that it is important therefore to stress the fact that what psychobiography ultimately offers is relevance by advocating the value of single lives, generating new theories or simply fine-tuning those already established. Schultz (2005) recommends that the publication of a comprehensive collection of essays is also certainly helpful to remind critics or tell them for the first time what the field offers. He furthermore states that it should not be necessary for psychobiography to go on defending itself *ad nauseum* because in its various forms it has nonetheless flourished both within the mainstream of psychology and outside of it, in scholarly arenas at large (Schultz, 2005). These sentiments are echoed by personality psychologists such as Alfred Adler (1870 – 1937) and Erik Erikson (1902 –1980) who have argued that psychologically informed biography is probably the best means to capture a human life situated in time (McAdams, 1994).

2.5 The Historical Growth and Progress of Psychobiography

According to Runyan (1988a) progress in psychobiography may be viewed from two different perspectives. Firstly, that of the historical growth of the field and secondly, that of the analysis of progress in our knowledge and understanding of

individual lives (Runyan, 1988a). In the context of psychobiography Runyan (1988a) proposes that it is important to bear in mind that ...

The concept of progress is put forward as a way of addressing the extent to which any knowledge is reliable in the study of lives, as a way of comparing life history studies not to some absolute standard of truth, which can be impossibly difficult to specify, but rather of comparing a given study with prior studies in terms of a variety of specifiable criteria and a particular frame of reference (Runyan, 1988a, p. 304).

In terms of the first perspective, namely that of the historical growth of the field, progress may be viewed in terms of criteria such as the range of disciplines involved, the increase in books, articles, and dissertations, and the rise of associated professional organizations and publication outlets, (Runyan, 1988a).

Range of Disciplines Involved. The strength of psychobiographical study is that it is uniquely poised to take advantage of theoretical developments in a diversity of fields and is thus intrinsically interdisciplinary in allowing the canvas of the human life to be explored and interpreted from the broadest possible perspective (Schultz, 2005). Psychobiographers do tend to draw from various sources of knowledge not only from psychology, but also from related areas such as history, political science, and critical theory, taking what is useful and making use of it (Schultz, 2005). Many important contributions have been made to psychobiography by psychoanalysts and psychiatrists from as early as the days of Freud and his followers, through to Erikson and his studies of Young Man Luther (1958) and Gandhi (1969). There were a few other earlier psychobiographies, for example, Sadger (1908, 1909) but Freud's *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his childhood* (1910, 1957) was certainly the most influential (Runyan, 1988a). It has traditionally been regarded as a defining

point for the field of psychobiography. Freud later also collaborated on a psychobiographical study of US president Woodrow Wilson (Schultz, 2005) and since then numerous psychobiographical studies have been published over the years.

Psychological approaches to biographies flourished in the 1920s and initially these studies defined their goal as ‘applied psychoanalysis.’ In spite of frequent criticism of the approach, the production of psychoanalytical biographical works continued through the 1930s and by the end of the decade there were ‘psychobiographical’ studies of writers such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Moliere, Sand, Goethe, Coleridge, Nietzsche, Poe, and Rousseau, and of public figures including Caesar, Lincoln, Napoleon, Darwin, and Alexander the Great (Anderson, 1978). The 1940’s reveal a period of stagnation for psychological biography, with only a few studies such as Guttmacher’s (1941) study of George III and Langer’s (1943 - only published in 1972) *The Mind of Adolf Hitler* being done (Runyan, 1988a). Production of psychobiographies slowly picked up again in the 1950s with studies such as those of Jonathan Swift and Lewis Carroll (Greenacre, 1955), as well as Beethoven and his nephew (Sterba & Sterba, 1954). “Since the 1960s there have been extensive psychobiographical analyses of writers, artists, musicians, politicians, religious leaders, scientists, criminals and others” (Runyan, 1988a, p. 297).

The development of psychobiography is closely related to the development of personality psychology as a whole, both in testing the strength and effectiveness of general personality theories for illuminating individual lives and in contributing to developing a better understanding of individual persons (Runyan, 1988a). Runyan (1988a) says this progress has occurred as a result of the work of academic

personality psychologists, many of them influenced by Murray, Allport and White. “Literary critics such as Edel on Henry James (1985), Crews on Nathaniel Hawthorne (1966), or Bate on Samuel Johnson (1977)” (Runyan, 1988a, p. 298) can also be included in the list of contributors. Furthermore, “there is the psychohistory group around deMause and his Institute for Psychohistory, with studies of Jimmy Carter (deMause, 1977) and Ronald Reagan (deMause, 1984)” (Runyan, 1988a, p. 298). A wide range of other disciplines has contributed to psychobiography, including those from sociology, anthropology, religion, education, music, the history of art, the history of science and others. This is because experts in each area often attempt psychobiographical interpretations of leading figures in their fields. It can justifiably be said that the practice of psychobiography overlaps with a large number of existing disciplines and professions whose authors simply choose a somewhat different set of subjects (Runyan, 1988a).

Increase in Books, Articles, and Dissertations. Since 1995 perceptions of psychobiography began changing and the psychobiographical method has become a significant research approach (Roberts, 2002). This change has been facilitated to a large extent through the publication of books such as those of Runyan (1982), Alexander (1990), and Elms (1994), these authors being amongst some of today’s leading psychobiographical researchers. Other well-known and respected psychobiographers include Irving Alexander, Nicole Barenbaum, Avril Thorne, Ed de St. Aubin, Dan Ogilvie, Dan McAdams, Ruthellen Josselson, Jefferson Singer, James Anderson, and the late Henry Murray (Schultz, 2005). William Todd Schultz does not mention himself when he refers to these noteworthy individuals but he can certainly be included in the list.

South African psychologists have traditionally neglected their obligation to the field of psychobiography by failing to record the life stories of outstanding South African figures from a psychological perspective (Vorster, 2003). Consistent with the change in perceptions observed generally, the situation in South Africa has also started to change, with much psychobiographical work being done in the past decade by various academics and post-graduate research scholars at South African universities. This has meant that the field has evolved into an established research genre (Fouchè, 2010). Dr Roelf van Niekerk was the first academic to introduce psychobiographical research to academic programmes in South Africa (Fouché, Smit, Watson & Van Niekerk, 2007) and the majority of psychobiographical studies completed locally have tended to come from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and Rhodes University (Fouché et al., 2007).

South African psychobiographical studies have for the most part been completed as postgraduate research endeavours in masters and doctoral degree programmes in psychology, where academic staff have initiated and nurtured psychobiography as a strategic research focus area within their faculties (Fouchè, 2010). More recently studies have also been nurtured in the departments of psychology at the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Free State and there continues to be a steady increase in the use of the methodology of psychobiography in South Africa (Fouché, 2010).

Studies have been conducted on a wide variety of influential figures through the use of various theories of lifespan development, particularly those of Levinson (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee, 1978) and Erikson (1950) (Fouchè et al., 2007). According to Fouchè (2010) South Africa has a 'hall of fame' and studies have been done on a variety of exemplary personalities including: *The Life of Jan Christian Smuts: A Psychobiographical Study* (Fouchè, 1999); *The Life of Helen Martins, Creator of the Owl House: A Psychobiographical Study* (Bareira, 2001); *Bantu Stephen Biko: A Psychobiographical Case Study* (Kotton, 2002); *A Psychobiographical Study of Dr. H.F. Verwoerd* (Claasen, 2007); *B. J. Vorster* (Vorster, 2003) and *A Psychobiographical Study of Wessel Johannes 'Hansie' Cronjé* (Warmenhoven, 2006).

Additionally, studies by South African researchers have included the following non-South Africans: *A Psychobiographical Study of Mother Theresa* (Stroud, 2004); *Karen Horney: A Psychobiographical Study* (Green, 2006); *Vincent Van Gogh: A Psychobiographical Study* (Muller, 2009); *Ray Charles: A Psychobiographical Study* (Biggs, 2008); *Mahatma Gandhi: A Psychobiographical Study* (Pillay, 2009); *A Psychobiographical Study of Helen Keller* (Van Genechtén, 2009); and *Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer: A Psychobiographical Study* (Chezé, 2010). This research has considerable logistical and administrative value for postgraduate research and the supervision process as well as being of academic benefit to the theoretical development of South African psychology (Fouchè, 2010).

Rise of Associated Professional Organizations and Publication Outlets. The proliferation of publications in psychobiography has been accompanied, and in part

made possible by a growing institutionalization of the field, as indicated by the development of professional organizations, conferences and conventions, specialist journals and dissertations. In spite of the growth of publications, the development of associated professional organizations and publication outlets, the academic institutionalization of work in psychobiography is still, however, relatively limited and it remains unusual to find formal academic training in the discipline (Runyan, 1988a). This phenomenon should not, however, be seen as a lack of progress because it is possible to have substantial intellectual development in a field with little, or even no penetration of academic institutions (Runyan, 1988a).

The second perspective, which relates to progress in enhancing knowledge and understanding of individual lives, may be viewed in terms of criteria such as “the comprehensiveness of the evidential base, the insightfulness and persuasiveness of interpretation, critical examination of prior explanations, application of new theoretical advances and the literary or aesthetic appeal of the narrative account” (Runyan, 1988a, p. 306).

Comprehensiveness of Evidential base, Insightfulness, Persuasiveness and Critical Examination of Prior Explanations. It bears mentioning that some of the early psychobiographies were published by researchers who had very little formal training in psychoanalysis or psychiatry and this led to a number of attacks on the method (De Voto, 1933; Whilbey, 1924). The approach has, for example, been viewed as excessively subjective, too partial to the single case, interpretive and over-reliant on psychoanalysis. The subsequent publication of George and George’s *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (1964) as well as Erikson’s

Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History (1958) marked significant change and progress in the approach because these publications heralded the adoption of a more rigorous and deliberately methodological type of psychobiography (Runyan, 1988a).

Application of New Theoretical Advances. More recently the psychobiographical approach has developed to a point where it can now be conceptualised in a more diverse and differentiated manner. It is still “often psychodynamic, but psychobiography may also draw on phenomenological, trait, or social learning theories of personality, as well as from resources of social, developmental, cognitive, and abnormal psychology” (Runyan, 1988a, p. 296).

Literary or Aesthetic Appeal of the Narrative Account. In terms of this criterion, it can be argued that while there has been progress, not all new psychobiography is ‘better’ than earlier works. The same study may be seen as progressive or regressive in terms of a variety of factors and may additionally be progressive in some respects but regressive in others, depending on the standpoint of the particular analyst (Runyan, 1988a). Runyan (2005) for example, says that an issue that is often overlooked but should not be ignored, is that in psychobiography, style matters. This sentiment is echoed by Schultz (2005) who argues that psychobiography is only as good as the theory on which it rests but if the theory isn’t ‘true’ or if it is applied tactlessly or artlessly, it will not inspire the reader’s confidence and will not persuade. Theory should be applied every step of the way, but in such a way that it does not dismay the reader. Schultz (2005) has found that “the blend of plodding, generic, spuriously precise, clunkily objective and almost pusillanimous prose one

comes to expect (with dread) of standard research-journal-style writing only undermines the effectiveness of the psychobiographical essay” (p. 13). In psychobiography the story about a life that has already attracted the reader is told. It is essential that the narration of the life be done creatively and skillfully because the story can further enhance or detract from the initial intensity of interest (Schultz, 2005).

Details should be dwelt on, caressed, finessed and there should be no oversimplification or generalization. If understanding people can be regarded as being analogous to the interpretation of a poem, then psychobiographers cannot deny the artfulness of the psychobiographical enterprise (Schultz, 2005, p. 13).

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter provided a brief overview of the nature and history of the field of psychobiography and its related concepts. An overview of the value and benefits to the field of psychology has been provided in addition to a consideration of the criticisms of the field and the nature of progress within it. The following chapter outlines the research design and methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Preview

In this chapter, some of the preliminary methodological considerations and difficulties inherent within a psychobiographical study are considered. The chapter includes a discussion of the strategies that can be employed to overcome such difficulties including: the analysis of an absent subject, researcher bias, reconstruction, reductionism, pathography, cross-cultural differences, the infinite amount of biographical data, inflated expectations, elitism and easy genre. These considerations are viewed in relation to their application to the life of Francis Bacon. The aims of the research, the research design, the psychobiographical subject, the data collection and analysis methods are outlined. Attention is also given to ensuring trustworthiness by looking at the issues of validity and reliability and how they apply to qualitative research studies. The chapter concludes with a review of the ethical considerations applicable to the study.

3.2 Primary Aim of the Research

The primary aim of the research is to explore and describe the life of the artist Francis Bacon from a Jungian perspective and in so doing develop a useful psychobiography of the man often called England's greatest modern painter since Turner (Farson, 1993).

The purpose is to generalize the results of the study to aspects of the theory used and not to the larger population, which Yin (1994) describes as a process of analytical generalization. Francis Bacon is studied in terms of Jung's ideas on personality structure and on how the personality develops. The analysis is grounded in a framework based on the personality shifts that Jung outlined. These include: The first half of life and the second half of life. The transition to the second half of life is often marked by the mid-life crisis (Crain, 1985).

3.3 Preliminary Methodological Considerations

Psychobiography requires the adoption of a posture informed by the science of psychology. Biography, autobiography, memoir, literary analysis - all such endeavours are less than psychobiography when they omit a psychological viewpoint (Schultz, 2005). Psychobiographers tend to make use of psychoanalytic theory in their work. Although this is not strictly necessary and other personality theories can and have been used in psychobiographical studies, psychoanalytical theories would seem to have several advantages. They address psychological development, they are well suited to the intensive analysis of individuals, as in clinical case studies, and they claim to penetrate beneath the surface of the personality to its underlying dynamics (Haslam, 2007). Cognizance must be taken of the fact that while there are indeed advantages related to conducting a psychobiographical study, there are also difficulties associated with the approach that need to be considered. Some of these difficulties will now be addressed.

3.3.1 Analysing an Absent Subject

In trying to understand lives, the medium is text. Taking the long view of a life history, people are first and foremost what they tell us - their life story (Schultz, 2002). It is argued that the lack of direct contact with the subject means that there is less information available. Psychobiographers are, however, able to access various information sources and analyse them in terms of their ultimate effects (Anderson, 1981), which suggests that the absence of the subject may be viewed as both problematical and advantageous.

Multiple sources of information pertaining to Bacon's life are available in the public domain including interviews, letters, quotes and other biographical information. The accessibility of this information allowed the researcher to encapsulate an entire life history, or at least the core parameters of the subject's life story. This facilitated the exploration and discussion of the consequences of Bacon's decisions, actions and choices in a way that might not have been possible if he had been 'on the couch' (Green, 2006). To ensure that Bacon's 'voice' was heard, his paintings were incorporated into the body of the text throughout the study and these images speak loudly and clearly.

3.3.2 Researcher Bias

Clarification of researcher bias at the outset is particularly important because a potential danger for psychobiographers is that they lose themselves in the life of another. Before beginning an analysis of any psychobiographical subject, one must

explore as deeply as possible any personal motives for undertaking the task. These motives, which are often marginalized or even ignored, doubtless steer inquiry. The researcher may secretly wish to vindicate subjects, attack them, love them, or participate vicariously in their fame. The researcher's pursuit of their secrets may be a way of pursuing her own, a working through of conflicts and anxieties (Schultz, 2005). All such matters warrant careful consideration. The more one knows about what one wants the more one can control the subterranean framing of the questions one asks and answers (Schultz, 2005). To counteract the dangers of subjectivity it was important that the current researcher received independent feedback from other psychobiographical researchers, colleagues and the supervisors of the study on the degree of subjectivity exhibited in the writing (Anderson, 1981).

3.3.3 Reconstruction

Reconstruction occurs when one inferentially invents psychological facts for which no direct evidence exists. It is often resorted to in the absence of verifiable data about childhood history (Schultz, 2005). To counteract this tendency it was essential that the researcher's best insights were tied rather to sets of evidence - a body of supporting facts drawn from Bacon's biographical record (Schultz, 2005).

3.3.4 Reductionism

Psychobiographers are often criticized for emphasizing psychological factors at the expense of external historical or societal factors, even when the subject's life is significantly impacted upon by the cultural context (Runyan, 1988b). Reductionism

occurs when adult character and behaviour is explained exclusively in terms of early childhood experience, while later formative processes and influences are neglected. When the psychological, pathological, or the influence of childhood conflicts is overemphasized, psychobiographies become flawed (Runyan, 1982). Certain scenes are indeed related to early occurrences, but their construction - the shape they take - is an adult achievement. The scenes are therefore simultaneously past and present, and probably predictive of future conflicts and life-themes, as well (Schultz, 2002).

Regarding this issue Runyan (1982) says the following:

Childhood is indeed almost always a factor but should not however be the only factor. Contemporary psychobiographers are aware of such dangers, and avoid them by integrating the psychological with the social and historical - by analyzing not just pathology but also strengths and adaptive capabilities and by studying formative influences not just in childhood but throughout the lifespan (p. 209).

On the other hand, it is not likely that understandings derived from similar social, cultural and historical groups to which the subject belongs, will be sufficient either, because researchers are often most interested in those individuals who stand out significantly from other Renaissance painters, other nineteenth-century writers, or other twentieth-century politicians. Reductionism reduces explaining a lot by way of a very little, and for psychobiography, it needs to do the opposite (Runyan, 1982).

To avoid reductionism, the present researcher used multiple sources and considered the socio-historical context in which Bacon lived. Additionally every attempt was made to apply and explain Jung's theory in as adequate and appropriate a manner as possible.

3.3.5 Pathography

Pathography is also a form of reductionism and involves psychobiography by diagnosis, or reducing the complex whole of personality to static psychopathological categories and or symptoms (Schultz, 2005). Elms (1994) advises the adoption of a eugraphic approach instead, whereby the psychobiographer looks at the manner in which the subject becomes and remains relatively psychologically healthy (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2005a). The present researcher's approach was to facilitate a balance between eugraphy and pathography.

3.3.6 Cross-Cultural Differences

The cross-cultural application of psychological concepts has been criticized because of the likelihood that the culture within which the subject lived would differ significantly from the culture of the researcher, thus rendering the concepts cross-culturally problematical (Fouche & Van Niekerk, 2005a). In order to overcome any potential difficulties in credibility arising from the obvious cultural and historical distance between the present researcher and subject, a number of steps were taken. The present researcher familiarized herself with the social and political conditions that prevailed during the period in which the artist lived including the cultural climate of the British art world. The researcher also has direct personal experience of the dialogue of the contemporary art world. It was deemed important to undertake this historical research of the cultural context in which the research subject lived in order to develop a culturally empathic understanding of the subject (Anderson, 1981a, 1981b).

3.3.7 Infinite amount of Biographical Data

Psychobiographers are often faced with an overwhelming amount of available archival information and need to employ appropriate strategies to reduce the data into manageable quantities. Alexander's (1988) approach stipulates first identifying data into nine salient categories. A discussion of these principle identifiers is included in the section related to data analysis. According to Schultz (2002) another method for singling out key events in personal narratives is to examine the scenes from each life story that come to assume a kind of super-saliency. These scenes have been labeled 'prototypical scenes' and it is in their details, that the blueprint of a life can be discovered even though their authors may not have presented the scenes in such terms. The prototypical scene thus becomes a method of life illumination, and serves as an anchor for inquiry (Schultz, 2002).

Schultz's 'saliency cues' and 'prototypical scenes' steered the present researcher in the direction of finding cogent coherences while examining Bacon's life. The facts converge on such saliencies and in effect demonstrate their power (Schultz, 2002).

3.3.8 Inflated Expectations

The present researcher recognized that psychological explanations posited were merely speculative, supplementing existing explanations from a psychobiographical perspective (Anderson, 1981). The narration of prototypical scenes for example, is also an undeniably creative act and the safest approach is to regard this narration as both a truth and a lie because while the literal reality of the

scene carries obvious weight, so does the fictional component provided retrospectively by the subject. By keeping its identifiers in mind and staying on the lookout for its often-incongruous appearance in biographical material, the chances of developing the right interpretations was increased (Schultz, 2002).

3.3.9 Elitism and Easy Genre

The focus on individuals who are ‘famous’ or ‘important’ has given rise to criticism amongst researchers (Simonton, 1994). Francis Bacon was chosen as the subject of this research study because he exemplifies a particular complexity of mind and personality, which is interesting in the context of art production in general and in the context of psychology in particular. A particular mind was studied as an outstanding exemplar, to gain a better grasp of the personal psychology and charismatic appeal of one of the key figures of contemporary culture. Had Bacon not been famous he would not have come to the present researcher’s attention. It is partly because of his fame arising from his exceptional ability as a painter that makes him an engaging subject of a psychobiography. On this matter it is interesting to note that Elms (2003) in his article *A Presley Pathography*, has questioned the lack of quality psychobiographical research into the life of other famous or important people including, for example, Elvis Presley. Mere importance is not enough for most psychobiographers, it has to be the right kind of importance (Elms, 2003).

In their continuing struggle for scientific respectability, most psychologists steer away from pronouncements about any specific case. Instead they relentlessly

pursue the general. Contrary to claims of elitism is the tendency to dismiss individual variation as statistical 'error' but as Elms (1994) says:

Its time for psychologists to sniff a rose or two, instead of merely measuring the mean attitudes of a thousand-person random sample toward red roses versus white. The understanding of a single life can be an important goal in itself...Lesser figures demand attention as well. The sheer particularity of personality should provide sufficient grounds for us to say, 'Sometimes let's look not only at what is found in everybody or in most people, but in a few or in one (Elms, 1994, pp. 16-17).

The matter of easy genre demands attention. Runyan (1988b) and Elms (1994) argue that a good biography requires extensive research of numerous sources to understand the subject's socio-historical context, sound psychological knowledge, and substantial literary skill. It should go without saying that the complex and multi-faceted life experience of a person such as Bacon or any person for that matter, was worthy of and demanded a high level of thoroughness and research enquiry.

3.4 Research Design

The research design for the psychobiography of Bacon can be defined as a qualitative single-case study over a lifespan (Yin, 1994). It can also be described as qualitative-morphogenic in nature. This type of design emphasizes the individuality of the person within their socio-economic context (Elms, 1994; Runyan, 1988a).

Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning – how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and the structures of their world. This qualitative research is a descriptive study in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words, pictures and scenes. The process is inductive in

that the researcher, as primary instrument for data collection and analysis, builds abstractions, concepts, hypothesis, and theories from details (Creswell, 1994).

Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Creswell, 2003) refer to 'pattern theories' as an explanation that develops during qualitative research. Pattern theory does not emphasize logical deductive reasoning. Instead pattern theory uses metaphor or analogies so that relationships 'make sense'. Pattern theories are systems of ideas that inform. The concepts and relations within them form a mutually reinforcing, closed system. They specify a sequence of phases or link parts to a whole. The researcher synthesizes discoveries and findings in a manner to reflect the analysis and interpretations. A type of written portrait including history, themes and critical episodes or 'prototypical scenes' emerges yielding a rich and textured impression of the subject over an extended period of time (De Vos et al., 2005).

3.5 The Psychobiographical Subject

Psychobiography is, in essence, a form of case study. Case studies are typically directed at gaining an understanding of the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity (Huysamen, 1994). The subject for the present study was selected via a purposive sampling technique based on the researcher's judgement (Berg, 1995; De Vos, 1998). The artist was chosen on the basis of his interest value, uniqueness, complexity and life achievements.

He was unlike anyone else in life, as in his art. He was a true original, as if he had descended from another era. Everything he did was different, the deliberate way he walked, the particular way he talked, his particular emphasis on words, which made his conversation irresistible. When he entered a room it was an occasion (Farson, 1993, p. 4).

3.6 Data Collection and Analysis

Document collection for this study involved the researcher looking at information derived from several sources. These sources included quotations from interviews, and other secondary material in the form of biographies, letters, and interviews with journalists as well as audio-visual material. Multiple sources of data enhance the internal validity of the information collected (Yin, 2003). The stability of published data as sources allowed for frequent reviewing and cross-referencing of biographical information.

With qualitative research the idea is to purposively select documents or visual material that will best answer the research question (Creswell, 1994). The psychobiographer must highlight the salient events and apply psychological theory in order to produce an illuminating and coherent narrative. It is important that the life of the subject be understood within the particular social, cultural and historical context. This should be done in a manner, which does not merely reduce early life experiences to causal notions or try to force-fit the life experiences into a theory. There should be a complementarity between data and theory, where the researcher has deftly used theory to interpret the complexity of a human life (McAdams, 1994).

Several components might comprise the discussion about the plan for analyzing data. According to Tesch (cited in Creswell, 1994), the process of data collection and analysis is eclectic, there is no 'right way' and metaphors and analogies are appropriate as open-ended questions. Data analysis for this study required being comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts. The

present researcher also needed to be open to ambiguity and the possibility of the existence of contrary or alternative explanations for the findings (Creswell, 1994).

To study any aspect of human functioning, one must decide what constitutes the essential data and what content may be set aside. Alexander's (1988) model suggests a way of organizing and prioritizing qualitative biographical data, whereby data is reduced to make it more accessible, manageable and understandable. Alexander (1988) proposed two general strategies for the analysis of personal data: (a) letting the data reveal itself, and (b) asking the data a question. With the first strategy, Alexander (1988) provides nine useful guidelines or principle identifiers of salience to rationalize data by, for example, reducing it into manageable quantities. These include primacy, frequency, uniqueness, negation, emphasis, isolation, error, omission and incompleteness and are described below. The second strategy of asking the data a question, emphasizes the extraction of 'core identifying units', 'themes' or 'schemas', by asking appropriate questions that are related to the aims of the study. In this way the sorting of large amounts of information for specific answers to specific questions, which have been generated within the theory, is facilitated. An essential dialogue is created between the extracted data and the theory that enables analytic generalization. Data reduction, theme identification and comparison with theory ultimately increase the trustworthiness of any findings (Alexander, 1988).

3.6.1 Alexander's (1988) Nine Principles of Salience

Primacy. Information presented first is commonly perceived as being most important as in the tradition of attaching extra importance to earliest memories, first

loves, first traumas, and so on, under the assumption that people do not start stories haphazardly (Schultz, 2002).

Frequency. When subjects frequently retell the same story, sometimes in almost identical language, that act marks the episode as peculiarly unfinished and psychologically compelling (Schultz, 2002).

Uniqueness. Material stands out because of its patent oddity. Occasionally life events stand out for their unrepeatedness, regardless of whether or not subjects draw attention to them in speech or writing (Schultz, 2002).

Negation. This refers to the importance of events turned opposite or denied in explanation, representing unconscious or repressed material (Elms, 1994).

Emphasis. This cue includes "obvious forms of accent or underlining in oral or written communication" (Alexander, 1990, p.17). Alexander names three types: overemphasis (attention focused on something typically considered commonplace); underemphasis (little attention paid to something important); and misplaced emphasis (when means-ends sequences stretch the limits of credulity).

Error. Errors include all forms of 'mischievement'--verbal slips, distortions, miscommunications, and ostensible accidents. Such 'bunglings' can reveal hidden motives or conflicts (Schultz, 2002).

Isolation. Isolation is non-sequitur speech, the seemingly irrelevant association or aside (Schultz, 2002).

Omission. Elms (1994) calls omission the ‘Sherlock Holmes rule.’ An example might be a subject's failure to identify a particular family member in an autobiographical essay including detailed interactions with all other members of the family unit (Schultz, 2002).

Incompletion. Incompletion occurs when a topic is introduced then abruptly terminated without explanation (Alexander, 1990).

The present researcher described the subject and his context, objective sets of experiences and the chronology of his life. Data classification included identifying stories or ‘prototypical scenes’, locating epiphanies and identifying contextual materials for life (Schultz, 2005). Indicators of prototypical scenes are cues that overlap those outlined by Alexander (1988; 1990). These cues are *specificity*, *incongruity*, and *interpenetration*.

Specificity. A striking richness of detail is often met with in prototypical scenes. They are not recalled generically, as concepts lacking content, they are recalled with precision, apparent certainty, and exactitude. These scenes have a certain frozen quality to them, like ‘pauses’ in an ongoing movie. To the subject, they stand out like agates in a bag of rocks. And with each new rehearsal, the details are freshly implanted (Schultz, 2002).

Incongruity. Salient psychological episodes stand in isolation from surrounding speech. In much the same way, prototypical scenes seem incongruous.

They are interruptions in an otherwise smooth flow of text; they land, as it were, lumpily on the page (Schultz, 2002). Alexander (1988; 1990) draws attention to the quality of 'fit.' When episodes lacked 'fit', such episodes were bracketed for future close inspection. Incongruities were not simple afterthoughts.

Interpenetration. Aside from their specificity and incongruity, prototypical scenes draw attention to themselves through their obvious repetition. They interpenetrate. The scene intrudes and elbows its way into texts like slips of the tongue or fragments of recurrent dreams that will not be denied representation. Their resulting psychologically important repetition and presence, owes its tenacity to strong motive forces. The scenes have an emotionally unfinished quality, are subtly allegorical and evolve into especially potent signifiers successfully condensing an astonishing range of core (and probably unconscious) life history elements (Schultz, 2002).

From the purposively sought material the present researcher theorized toward developing patterns and meanings, narrated by focusing on processes, theories, and unique and general features of the artist's life and work (Creswell, 1998). According to Runyan's advice in an interview with Schultz (2001) the researcher's tasks involve looking critically at interpretations evaluated in light of criteria such as: 1) how logically sound they are, 2) how much of the evidence they account for, 3) how much they stand up to attempted falsification or 4) how consistent they are with other knowledge the researcher has about the person (Schultz, 2001). Runyan's advice was noted and is followed throughout the study. The discipline of psychobiography has developed various methodological guidelines for psychobiographical study (Schultz, 2005).

Some of the most prominent of these, which were also utilized, included the following:

Use of Prototypical Scenes. Prototypical scenes in the life of the subject serve as a model of their personality pattern. Prototypical scenes get told and retold not only because they really happened, but because of what they represent, the life story of the individual writ-small, so to speak. In one condensed package, they symbolize the leitmotif of a life. Their truth is less important than their representativeness (Schultz, 2002). Using Jungian theory to provide a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the present researcher examined such ‘prototypical scenes’ that emerged from the literature found on Bacon’s life.

Use of a Series of Indicators of Saliency. Markers such as primacy, frequency and uniqueness of an event in a life are useful for identifying significant patterns (Schultz, 2005).

Identification of Pregnant Metaphors or Images. This facilitates organization of autobiographical narratives. The present researcher reviewed interviews conducted with the artist as well as images of some of Bacon’s most iconographical paintings (Schultz, 2005).

Logical Coherence or Consistency. This functions as a criterion for adequate psychological interpretations. By asking why some explanations seemed more persuasive the present researcher could identify qualities of persuasive explanations generally and then look for features of the more persuasive explanations (Schultz, 2005).

3.7 Ensuring Trustworthiness

Validity and Reliability Concerns. The usual constructs of validity, reliability and objectivity are inappropriate to a qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba propose four alternative constructs that more accurately reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm. These constructs are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (De Vos, 2005).

In terms of *credibility* the aim of the present study was to describe and explore the subject in as in-depth a manner as possible within adequately stated parameters so that the complexities of variables and interactions were so embedded with the data derived from various sources that they could not help but be valid (De Vos, 2005).

Transferability. In the present psychobiographical study transferability refers not to statistical generalization but to generalizing the results of the study to the theories applied and not necessarily to the larger population (Yin, 1994).

Dependability. It is not likely that the present study could be replicated. The pursuit of dependability was thus related to the consistency of the findings in terms of the research question, data collection and analysis of material. Variability and exceptional situations are valued as learning opportunities in qualitative research (Krefting, 1991).

Confirmability. This can be increased by checking whether the findings of the research study can be confirmed by another. Neutrality was not seen as researcher

objectivity but rather in terms of the capacity of data to be confirmed (Krefting, 1991).

To address the above-mentioned canons, increase the accuracy of the findings, authenticity and credibility of the present study, the following strategies proposed by Lincoln and Guba in De Vos (2005) were employed:

Triangulation. Data was cross-checked and multiple perspectives obtained thereby reducing the risk of researcher bias.

Rich, Thick Descriptions. Holistic, context rich materials such as photographs and videotapes provide background meaning to support data analysis (Byrne, 2001). The use of Bacon's paintings added to the richness and authenticity of the study.

Presentation of Negative or Discrepant Information. The presentation of data that runs counter to the identified themes, labels and categories of the study allows the reader to more effectively judge these constructs (Byrne, 2001).

Peer Debriefing. Questioning by others ensured that the account of the artist's life and experiences resonated with people other than the present researcher. Two research supervisors for the study acted as external auditors and determined whether other researchers would be able to draw similar conclusions if faced with the data (Flick, 2006). In addition to increasing the accuracy of findings and ensuring the trustworthiness of the present study, certain ethical issues required consideration.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

There is a limited existence and availability of ethical guidelines for psychobiographers according to Elms (1994), who suggests that all intimate knowledge obtained be treated and documented with respect. Elms (1994) notes that only the American Psychiatric Association (1976) has published broad guidelines, which stipulate the following: Firstly, psychobiographies should be done on long-dead persons, who preferably have no close living relatives who could be embarrassed. Francis Bacon died in 1992 and most of the information used was archival, freely accessible and already existed in the public domain. Secondly, psychobiographies may not be conducted on living persons without their prior consent. This factor was thus not relevant to the present study. Elms (1994) indicates that these guidelines do not significantly emphasize confidentiality or the need to ethically justify conducting a psychobiography, but unequivocally states that “ethical psychobiography doesn’t just avoid the unethical, it adds to our human understanding of ourselves and other human beings” (p. 255).

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the preliminary methodological considerations involved in a psychobiographical study and applies them to the research of Francis Bacon. A discussion of the primary aim of the research, the research method and design, the psychobiographical subject, data collection and analysis followed. Issues related to ensuring trustworthiness and ethical practice are also considered. The next chapter provides an overview of the psychoanalytical theory of Carl Jung.

OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL APPROACH

4.1 Chapter Preview

Jung was a prolific writer and his theories prodigious. His *Collected Works* amount to no less than eighteen large volumes and other existing as well as pending publications constitute a vast literature for the student (Storr, 1983). It would thus be unrealistic for the researcher to attempt to cover every aspect of Jung's theories. As Henderson (in Hayman, 1999) states: "Jung could never be put in a frame...He always burst out of it, destroying the frame at the same time" (p. 5). It is both the complexity and non-conformity of Jung's body of writing that was considered to be a particularly appropriate analytic tool for an investigation of the similarly complex Francis Bacon (McAdams, 1994). The overview of Jung's theory that follows is aimed at extracting only those aspects directly useful to this study. Reciprocally, Bacon's paintings have been selected to further enhance and illuminate some of Jung's theoretical concepts. The chapter thus provides a broad and selective overview of central concepts of Jung's psychology as well as his views on the development of the personality as they can be related to a study of Bacon's life.

4.2 The Analytical Psychology of Jung

To Jung, human beings are complex, dynamic organisms made up of opposing factors that may drive or draw them into action, either consciously or unconsciously. In view of this, one may regard his view of the person as dialectical. He believed that these opposing forces are present in all people and that human beings strive towards a

harmonious integration of polarities in the Self (Meyer et al., 2008). His theory may also be described as holistic because he does not concentrate on just the structures, processes and content of the individual psyche, but places the psyche in a broad, inherited collective context, which he calls the collective unconscious (Meyer et al., 2008). This perspective is consistent with the holistic view of the person much advocated by psychobiographers. Jung's (1912/1969, CW 7) holistic position is made quite clear when he says:

Anyone who wants to know the human psyche will learn next to nothing from experimental psychology. He would be better advised to abandon exact science, put away his scholar's gown, bid farewell to his study, and wander with human heart through the world. There in the horrors of prisons, lunatic asylums and hospitals, in drab suburban pubs, in brothels and gambling-hells, in the salons of the elegant, the Stock Exchanges, socialist meetings, churches, revivalist gatherings and ecstatic sects, through love and hate, through the experience of passion in every form in his own body, he would reap richer stores of knowledge than text-books a foot thick could give him, and he will know how to doctor the sick with a real knowledge of the human soul (p. 409).

4.3 Dimensions of Being Human

Jung identifies four dimensions of being human, including the physiological dimension, the social dimension, the psychic dimension and the spiritual or religious dimension (Meyer et al., 2008). These dimensions will now be discussed.

4.3.1 The Physiological Dimension

This dimension pertains to all the processes and drives that are essential for physical survival, including the need to breathe, eat, drink and have sex. Jung did not overlook the importance of biological factors on human existence, he simply refused

to place psychic processes in a biological framework (Meyer et al., 2008). He believed that psychic processes should be studied in their own right, in terms of their own intrinsic regularities, rather than to be traced back to a physiological origin and acknowledged only in a physiological context (Sharp, 1991). He proposed that each animal species is uniquely equipped with a repertoire of behaviours adapted to the environment in which it has evolved (Stevens, 1994).

Controversial at the time, these ideas are currently more widely accepted. Ethologists, for example, now claim that ‘innate releasing mechanisms’ inherited by the animal in its central nervous system and activated when appropriate stimuli are encountered in the environment, are responsible for the ‘repertoire of behaviours’ (Stevens, 1994). The findings of ethologists and sociobiologists demonstrate impressive similarities between the behaviour apparent in animal and human societies and between that of widely differing populations of human beings. These findings corroborate Jung’s previously unpopular assertion that “the human psyche, like the human body, has a definable structure which shares a phylogenetic continuity with the rest of the animal kingdom” (Stevens, 1982, p. 22). Closely related is Jung’s (1976, CW 18, para. 1228) theory of archetypes. He writes:

The term archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a ‘pattern of behaviour’ (p. 267).

4.3.2 The Social Dimension

This dimension concerns an individual's interaction with other people (Meyer et al., 2008). The search for and maintenance of contact and relationship with others is a fundamental drive, having roots in biological survival. It is the direction of one's core energy, which Jung calls the 'psyche'. That core energy, the core self with the predisposition to experience wholeness is one's 'essence.' Jung states that the persistent push toward wholeness is as instinctual to human beings as is hunger and thirst (Lipthrott, 2008). Development can therefore be viewed as the product of the dynamic interaction of the system with its environment in the process of socialization. Jungian theory supports the idea that the environment, beginning in the family, and subsequent socialization, are significant factors in distressing the self (Lipthrott, 2008).

According to Jung, people exist in relation to all of the members of their human family who have existed over time. A human life is part of a family tree and individuals are continuously living the ancestral life, catering to instincts thought to be their own, but which are quite incompatible with their character. The un-lived life of the parents makes a deep impression on the life of their children, as if branding them with a particular destiny (Levy, 2009). People become the heirs to the family 'fortune', the current karmic fruition of the family tree and are thus not living their own lives but are paying the debts of their forefathers. The family inheritance patterns, shapes and informs the offspring to unconsciously act out and become an instrument for the incarnation of the ancestral unconscious. This ancestral inheritance is significant because it shapes the lives of the children who sense the underlying

spirit of things. An oppressive atmosphere of apprehension and foreboding, for example, can seep insidiously into the core of a child's being (Levy, 2009).

Children are infected indirectly through the attitude they instinctively adopt towards their parent's state of mind. They either fight against it, or else they succumb to a debilitating and compulsive imitation. In both cases they ultimately act according to their parents' wants and needs (Levy, 2009). The influence of the father is regarded as significant and it is postulated by Jung that the father's personality can be overwhelming because his influence originates not only from the individual human being but from the representation in him of a pre-existing instinctual pattern of behaviour - an archetype (Rothgeb, 1992). "The role of the father 'imago' is thus an ambiguous one, characteristic of the archetype, whose potentialities exceed human capacity in the unconscious" (Jung 1970, CW 4, p. 323). It is therefore "parental influence, even though repressed into the unconscious, that directs the maturing mind" (Jung, 1970, CW 4, p. 301-323). Like the curse of Atrius when parents repress their unconscious and do not take responsibility for doing their own inner reflection, neurotic states are passed on from generation to generation (Levy, 2009). The more of an imprint the parents make, the more profoundly will their offspring be influenced and the more likely it will be that they end up fulfilling all the things the parents have repressed and kept unconscious (Levy, 2009).

Jung suggests viewing parents as 'children of the grandparents', who are formed, in turn, by all preceding generations. It is thus an ethical responsibility for the parents to deal with their own unhealed complexes so as to shed light on and deal with the unconscious areas within. When they choose not to, they remain in an artificially unconscious state and this is when their influence becomes a moral problem. The

archetypal idea of the sins of the fathers being visited upon the sons and daughters is at least psychologically true, and has found expression in inspired sources as varied as ancient mythology, the Bible and Shakespeare (Levy, 2009). With this perspective of the ancestral influence, the time frame through which a person relates to his family and ultimately himself is expanded and the psychobiographer who examines the entire lifespan of the person being studied would need to take this into consideration (Fouche, 2010).

The primary parents therefore play an important role in a child's life but other caretakers such as teachers, clergy, relatives and friends are often another profound source of influence and potential wounding or healing. In addition, societal beliefs and expectations regarding gender roles, child-rearing practice, judgements about what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and numerous other beliefs and values all impact on human development (Lipthrott in Rothgeb, 1992). A particularly important area of development where these influences become significant is related to the impact they have on the selection of a partner.

Selection of a mate is only partially based on conscious choice, and is primarily the result of the unconscious desire to complete or correct what was unfinished in childhood. A person will select a partner who carries both the positive and negative characteristics of caretakers and who was perhaps wounded in the same areas, but adapted in a complementary way (Lipthrott, 2008). Jung's view of marriage is that it is an attempt for the individual and for humanity to heal itself, which is related to the drive to wholeness (Jacobi, 1971). Choosing a partner and being in a committed relationship can become an opportunity to help each partner heal the wounds of childhood and reclaim their full potential for the relationship and for the

expression of their lives. What can sometimes be regarded as ‘incompatibility’ thus becomes a positive force in the development of each partner in the relationship (Liphthrott, 2008). In Jung’s view “when two personalities meet it is like mixing two chemical substances: if there is any combination at all, both are transformed” (Jacobi, 1971, p.106).

4.3.3 The Psychic Dimension

The psychic dimension was considered in terms of its principles of operation, structural components and levels including the personal and collective unconscious.

4.3.3.1 Principles of Operation of the Psyche

Jung maintained that the psyche is a self-regulating system, which strives to maintain a balance between opposing qualities while at the same time actively seeking its own development or individuation (Meyer et al., 2008). According to Jung there are three principles of operation on the psychic level. These include the principle of opposites, the principle of equivalence and the principle of entropy (Boeree, 2006).

The Principle of Opposites. This principle implies that “every wish immediately suggests its opposite” (Boeree, 2006, p. 2). An individual with a good thought, for example, cannot help but have somewhere within himself the opposite bad thought. According to Jung, it is the opposition that creates the psyche’s libido in much the same way as the splitting of an atom. It is the contrast that gives energy, so that a strong contrast gives strong energy, and a weak contrast gives weak energy (Boeree, 2006).

The Principle of Equivalence. According to this principle the energy created from opposition is assigned to both sides equally and is directed into the resulting behaviour of the individual, depending on the person's attitude towards the wish that was not fulfilled (Boeree, 2006). Energy lost in one component of the system will simply reappear in another component. This energy is conserved and may be transferred to the archetype of the shadow, thereby strengthening the 'primitive' unacceptable part of the psyche (Jung, 1947/1960e, CW 8).

The Principle of Entropy. This refers to the tendency of all energy to become evenly distributed (Meyer et al., 2008). The psyche constantly redistributes energy from stronger to weaker components so that ideally all subsystems have an equal amount of psychic energy at their disposal in order for the system to be in total balance (Jung, 1960h, CW 8). Ice in the glass warms up and melts, while simultaneously cooling the water around it. Such entropic forces are dynamic and Jung believed that the dynamic principles that apply to physical energy also apply to psychic energy. These forces include causality and teleology as well as progression and regression (Meyer et al., 2008). Jung's position on causality and teleology can be described as neutral since he felt that the dynamics of human motivation were determined by both the aetiology of the past and the teleology of expectations of the future (Meyer et al., 2008).

4.3.3.2 Structural Components of the Psyche

Jung viewed the psyche as a dynamically structured totality or whole; not an indivisible whole, but rather a divisible or divided entity that continuously strives

towards wholeness (Jung, 1960h, CW 8). His lifelong fascination with the human psyche is the central theme in his work and can be regarded as an attempt to delve into the secret of personality. In this quest he identified various structural components (Meyer et al., 2008), which are connected yet also function quite independently of one another. The components are themselves archetypes that have acquired their own personalities and Jung named them the *Self*, the *Ego*, the *Persona*, the *Shadow*, the *Anima* and the *Animus* (Meyer et al., 2008). They are, in most cases, in polarised relationships and reconciling the polarities brings about the eventual integration of the conscious and the unconscious into a whole (Meyer et al., 2008). According to the alchemists, integration and assimilation of opposite polarities is expressed by the *Ouroboros*, which is the snake that eats its own tail (Eire, 2009). The *Ouroboros* symbolizes *The One*, who proceeds from the clash of opposites, and therefore constitutes the secret of the *prima materia*, which stems from man's unconscious (Jung, 1963/1970, CW 14, para. 513). It will be useful to discuss each of these components and it is considered helpful to think of Jung's ideas metaphorically rather than to view them in a concrete and static way. As explained in Chapter one, a selection of Bacon's paintings has been incorporated into the body of the text to further illuminate Jung's concepts.

4.3.3.2.1 The Self

This most important archetype constitutes the ultimate unity of the personality and is in effect the totality of the entire psyche. The self exists from the beginning of life and the ego, along with other structures, develops out of it (Meyer et al., 2008).



Figure 4.1. Study from the Human Body (Bacon, 1949). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon.

Jungian theory is organised from the point of view of the self, not from that of the ego, as early Freudian theory was (Meyer et al., 2008). “The self is the whole circumference, which embraces both consciousness and unconsciousness, it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness” (Jung, 1936, p. 41). Its goal is to achieve individuation or development of the organism’s fullest potential and can be regarded as having a teleological function while acting as the conductor behind the personality responsible for bringing about optimal adjustment in each stage of life (Boeree, 2006).

The self is symbolised by the circle, the cross and the mandala - figures that Jung found himself drawn to painting. These symbols can be as simple as a figure of geometry or as complicated as a stained glass window (Stevens, 1990). In everyday life, “the self is commonly projected onto figures or institutions perceived as possessing pre-eminent power...suprapersonal entities such as the state, God, the sun, nature or the universe” (Stevens, 1990, p.41). The self is perhaps best represented in

the personifications of Christ and Buddha, who are believed by many to have achieved perfection. “One can then explain the God-image...as a reflection of the self, or conversely, explain the self as an *imago Dei* in man” (Jung in Manning, 2004, p.187). The self is the archetype that represents the transcendence of all opposites, so that every aspect of one’s personality is expressed equally. Von Franz (1964) says:

If an individual has wrestled seriously and long enough with the anima (or animus) problem, so that he, or she, is no longer partially identified with it, the unconscious again changes its dominant character and appears in a new symbolic form representing the self, the innermost nucleus of the personality. In the case of a man, it manifests itself as a masculine initiator and guardian, a wise old man, a spirit of nature and so forth (p. 207).

“As a totality the self is a *coincidentia oppositorum*, it is therefore bright and dark and neither” (Jung, 1963/ 1970, CW 14, p. 108n). A person is then neither and both male and female, neither and both ego and shadow, neither and both good and bad, neither and both conscious and unconscious, neither and both an individual and the whole of creation (Storr, 1983). Without opposites, there is no energy, and therefore no action and no need for it. Wholeness exists because the opposing forces have been integrated (Meyer et al., 2008) but while the goal of life is to realize the self, Jung believed that only in death is the perfection of the personality truly achieved (Boeree, 2006).

4.3.3.2.2 The Ego

The ego is roughly equivalent to consciousness, excluding yet remaining influenced by all that is unconscious. Jung saw the ego as the centre of the field of consciousness, which contains one’s conscious awareness of existing and a continuing

sense of personal identity. It thus includes awareness of the external world as well as consciousness of oneself (Crain, 1985). According to Jung (1925/1954c, CW 17),

Consciousness is always ego-consciousness and in order for the individual to be conscious of himself, he must be able to distinguish himself from others. It is only where this distinction exists that it is possible for relationships to occur (p. 326).

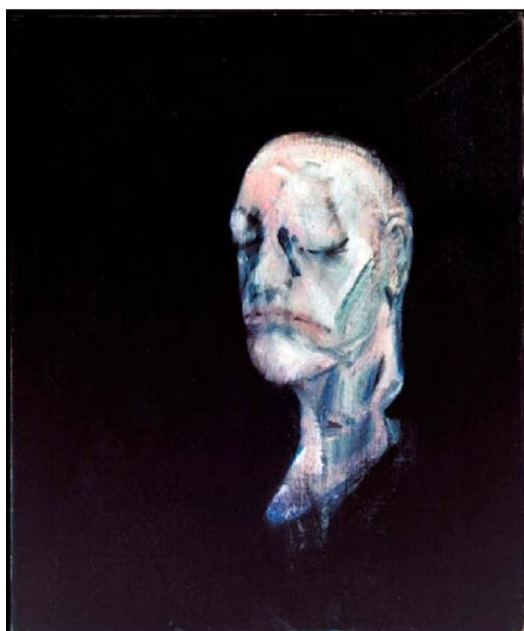


Figure 4.2. Study for Portrait II (After the Life-mask of William Blake) (Bacon, 1955).

□ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

Ego-consciousness, the conscious experience of the ‘I’, emerges from the unconscious and arises out of the self during the course of early development. It functions in an executive manner so that it not only promotes survival, but also makes life worth living (Jung in Meyer et al, 2008). The ego is an expression of the self, though by no means identical with it, and the self is much greater than it. The ego is also the “bearer of personality and can be regarded as the organiser of one’s thoughts,

intuitions, feelings and sensations. It has access to those memories, which are not repressed” (Stevens, 1990, p. 30).

According to Jung, the ego comprises four inseparable functions and ways of perceiving and interpreting reality: Thinking, Feeling, Sensation, and Intuition (Meyer et al., 2008). Generally, a person favours the most developed function, which becomes dominant, while development of the other functions can lead to growth of the personality (Hall & Nordby, 1973). It is often through a person’s least developed, or ‘inferior’ function that the unconscious tends to reveal itself most easily (Jung, 1954b, CW 17). The unconscious will eventually break through in the form of dreams or images as a result of mounting tension and when this occurs there is a balancing or supplementing of the conscious orientation (Sharp, 1991).

4.3.3.2.3 The Persona



Figure 4.3. Self Portrait (Bacon, 1972). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

This is the ego’s mask, the image or identity one presents to the outer world (Crain, 1985). The persona has been called the ego’s public relations person, and is a

necessary part of everyday functioning. It grows out of the need in childhood to adapt to the expectations of parents, teachers and peers. One's social success often depends on having a reasonably well-functioning persona, which is flexible enough to adapt to different situations and which is a good reflection of the ego qualities, which lie behind it (Storr, 1983). Personas vary with roles and individuals may indeed hold several personas. Some people develop their personas to the exclusion of the deeper parts of their personalities (Crain, 1985). When they are identified with their persona, in this way, they not only deceive themselves in terms of identity, but also risk alienation from their genuine emotions and experiences. This is when neurosis and pathology can develop (Meyer et al., 2008). On the other hand there are people who lack a developed persona "blundering from one social solecism to the next, perfectly harmless and innocent, soulful bores or appealing children. From them we can see how a neglected persona works" (Jung, 1992, CW 7, p. 198).

On the one hand the persona is a social identity and on the other an ideal image. It is experienced as individuality before being differentiated from the ego. Functioning as a mask through which the collective psyche speaks, there is however nothing individual about it. What appears to be individual is at bottom collective because fundamentally the persona is nothing but a compromise between the individual and society as to what a man should appear to be. While real in a sense, in relation to the essential individuality of the man concerned it is only a secondary reality in which others often have a greater share (Jung 1966b, CW 7, para. 245f).

4.3.3.2.4 The Shadow

The shadow is a complex in the personal unconscious with its roots in the collective unconscious and is the complex most easily accessible to the conscious

mind. It often possesses qualities that are opposite to those in the persona, and therefore opposite to those of which we are conscious. One aspect of the personality compensates for another: where there is light, there must also be shadow (Corey, 2009).



Figure 4.4. *Figure with Meat* (Bacon, 1954). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

The shadow of beauty is the beast (Van der Post, 1975). If the compensatory relationship breaks down, it can result in a shallow personality with excessive concern for what other people think. The Shadow is closely connected to Freud's concepts of the Id and its structures, Thanatos and Eros, containing the animal instincts and thus representing one's inherited primitive instincts (Corey, 2009). It is the 'dark side' of the ego and the storehouse for the individual's capacity for evil (Van der Post, 1975). The shadow, like the Id, is amoral, rather like an animal that cares for its young or kills prey without complicating morals or self-criticism. Sexuality and the life instincts in general are represented as a part of the shadow archetype, which derives from the pre-human, animal past, where survival and reproduction were the primary concerns and people were thought to be less self-conscious. For the human, this

amoral inheritance may be difficult to accommodate, so the shadow becomes something of a dumping ground for those difficult-to-admit inclinations and is forced out of mental awareness by the ego's defence mechanisms. The barriers to individuation are thus contained in the shadow personality - those qualities that one would rather not see in oneself, as well as unrealised potentials (Van der Post, 1975).

These usually repressed and unconscious feelings are nevertheless capable of influencing one's life and of driving behaviours. Even when one is conscious of dark 'unseemly' feelings, there is a tendency to hide them because of shame or embarrassment. The shadow self is very often disowned and ends up being projected and when this occurs people are inclined to blame on others what they unconsciously dislike most in themselves (Van der Post, 1975). Jung certainly revealed in great detail how the individual imposed his quarrel with his own shadow onto his neighbour, in the process outlining scientifically why people inevitably see the mote in the eye of the other person before recognising the beam in their own. It is not just out of ignorance of the beam, but an unconscious means of avoiding recognition of it as a reflection of one's own distasteful feelings (Van der Post, 1975). Jung (1978b) says, "Projections change the world into the replica of one's unknown face" (p. 9).

Projection was traditionally aimed at the person of the Devil, but when people began consigning him to the realm of mythology, human targets were established. The mechanism of the shadow could be usefully applied as an explanation for a wide range of polarities such as the Nazi persecution of Jews, racial prejudice, misogyny and xenophobia. Not surprisingly, it is the role of the shadow in the life of the individual, the life of civilisation, and the reality of religion that was one of Jung's closest concerns. It is only when the quarrel between man and his shadow, is

dissolved and reconciled that wholeness in the Jungian sense can be achieved (Van Der Post, 1975). Jung (1971c) puts it elegantly:

The meeting with ourselves is one of the more unpleasant things that may be avoided as long as we possess living symbolic figures into which everything unknown in ourselves is projected. The figure of the devil, in particular, is a most valuable possession and a great convenience, for as long as he goes about outside in the form of a roaring lion we know where the evil lurks: in that incarnate Old Harry, where it has been in this or that form since primeval times. With the rise of consciousness since the middle ages he has been considerably reduced in stature, but in his stead there are human beings to whom we gratefully surrender our shadows. With what pleasure, for instance, we read newspaper reports of crime! A bona fide criminal becomes a popular figure because he unburdens in no small degree the conscience of his fellow men, for now they know once more where the evil is to be found (p. 238).

The shadow, however, is actually ‘innocent’ because it functions without choice and when integrated rather than being repressed, can be very useful to the individual in seeing or realizing the full aspect of the inner self. This energy can be redirected positively into vitality and life. Troublesome as it may be, and possibly remaining largely unconscious, the shadow is an important aspect of the psyche and part of what gives depth to one’s personality. Acceptance of the shadow does not imply being dominated by this dimension of one’s being, but simply recognizing that it is a part of one’s nature (Corey, 2009). Owning one’s shadow is difficult but necessary so that it can be brought into relationship with its opposite, the persona, and so provide some integration of these two complexes within the individual’s personality, something which is thought to be essential for individuation to occur (Mitchell, 2011). As Jung (1942/1958, CW 11) states...

Good does not become better by being exaggerated, but worse, and a small evil becomes a big one through being disregarded and repressed. The shadow is very much a part of human nature, and it is only at night that no shadows exist (p. 286).

4.3.3.2.5 The Anima and Animus

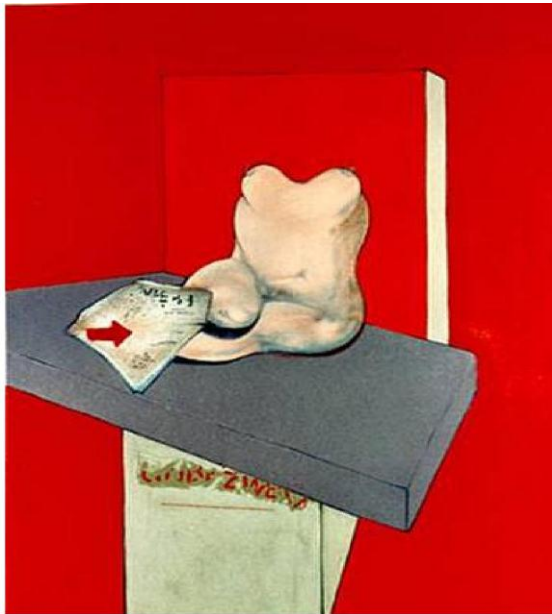


Figure 4.5. Diptych: Study of the Human Body after a design by Ingres – Right hand panel detail (Bacon, 1982-84). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

The anima and animus refer to the feminine and masculine sides of personalities. In men ‘the woman within’ is called the anima and in women ‘the man within’ is called the animus (Crain, 1985). These figures are derived in part from the archetypes of the feminine and masculine, and in part from the individual’s own life experience with members of the opposite sex, beginning with mother and father. They inhabit the unconscious depths as a compensation for the one-sided attitude of consciousness and a way of rounding out the experience of belonging to one sex or the other (Storr, 1983). The anima and the animus are together referred to as syzygy (Jung, 1966a, CW 7).

The anima may be personified as a young, spontaneous and intuitive girl, as a witch, or as the earth mother. It is likely to be associated with deep emotionality and

the force of life itself. The animus may be personified as a wise old man, a sorcerer, or often a number of males, and tends to be logical, often over-rational and argumentative (Boeree, 2006). Communication with the collective unconscious generally occurs through the anima or animus archetype. This communication is important (Storr, 1983) because as happens with the shadow, these archetypes are first met in projected form. They possess a numinous quality, which plays a role in how people, for example, fall in love. In a man, the archetypal image is projected onto an unknown woman who may then appear fascinating and immensely appealing. Ancient Greek myth suggests that human beings are always looking for their other half - the half that the gods took from them - in members of the opposite sex. When someone falls in love at first sight, they are said to have found a person that 'fills' their anima or animus archetype particularly well (Jung, 1959b, CW 9, part 2).

Jung was influenced by the gender-based thinking of his time, but he recognised that the 'masculine' aspects of the psyche such as autonomy, separateness, and aggression were not superior to the 'feminine' aspects such as nurturance, relatedness, and empathy. Rather, they form two halves of a whole, both of which belong to every individual, and neither of which is superior to the other. The male or female role that must be carried out is part of one's persona and for most people that role is determined by their physical gender. Jung, like Freud, Adler and others, however, felt that all individuals are really bisexual in nature (Boeree, 2006). A foetus, for example, has undifferentiated sex organs that only gradually, under the influence of hormones, become male or female.

Additionally, in the social sense, the individual is molded by the environment to identify with whatever gender role is filled and by fulfilling only these expectations

only half of one's potential is developed (Storr, 1983). The reason this occurs is because the anima and animus are much further away from consciousness than the shadow, which can be seen through and recognized fairly easily. In normal circumstances the anima and animus are therefore seldom, if ever, realized (Jung, 1959a, CW 9, part I).

4.3.3.3 Levels of the Psyche

Jung saw the human psyche as being divided into a conscious and an unconscious level, with the latter further subdivided into a personal unconscious, containing the complexes and a collective unconscious, containing the archetypes. He clarified, "By psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious, so we use the term 'psyche' rather than 'mind', since mind is used in common parlance to refer to the aspects of mental functioning that are conscious" (Jung, 1971a, CW 6, para. 797). The unconscious refers to those psychic images not sensed by the ego. Some unconscious processes flow from one's personal experiences but others are received from ancestral experiences and have universal themes. The personal layer of the unconscious is distinct from the collective unconscious (Crain, 1985). A discussion of these layers follows.

4.3.3.3.1 The Personal Unconscious

Each individual's personal unconscious is unique and can be regarded as the storeroom of individual experiences and interactions with the world and the accompanying interpretations of these (Crain, 1985). The contents of the personal

unconscious are usually unavailable to consciousness and there is a continual interaction between the personal unconscious and the ego (Meyer et al., 2008).



Figure 4.6. Man Writing Reflected in a Mirror (Bacon, 1976). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

The personal unconscious is a product of the interaction between the collective unconscious and the development of the individual during life. It is made up of the things one has experienced every day of one's life as well as being a dumping ground for things one is uncomfortable with and would prefer not to have in the consciousness (Edinger, 1984). Jung's definition of the personal unconscious is as follows:

Everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things which are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness; all this is the content of the unconscious (Jung, 1947/1960e, CW8, para. 382).

All more or less intentional repressions of painful thoughts and feelings can be called the sum of these contents, which is the personal unconscious (Jung, 1919/1960f, CW8). The personal unconscious contains the complexes, which are composites of ideas or experiences loaded with specific emotional intensity (Meyer et al., 2008).

The Complexes. Jung's research on word association in which a person's responses to stimulus words can reveal complexes, contributed significantly to his fame. He developed the galvanometer, a machine that could measure the physical reactions of the individual to the stimulus (Rothgeb, 1992). Jung described a 'complex' as a node in the unconscious. It may be imagined as a knot of unconscious feelings and beliefs, detectable indirectly, through behaviour that is confusing or hard to account for. This happens because a complex is largely unconscious and has a tendency to behave independently or autonomously, acting like a splinter identity in a way that causes the individual to feel that their behaviour is out of their control. An example of this is when an individual does something seemingly out of character and later says: 'I don't know what came over me'. This sense of autonomy is possibly most marked in abnormal states of mind, and can be seen most clearly in people who are ill (Meyer et al., 2008).

Complexes may originate in the collective unconscious and are characterised by archetypal contents. Some of them may be related to traumatic environmental experiences, or they may be caused by internal conflicts but they exist in the psyche of all people. Jung held that the psyche has the ability to bring into awareness dissociated complexes and archetypal material in order to provide a balance to conscious life (Mitchell, 2011). He believed that the ego was prone to making

inappropriate choices or to one-sidedness but that material arising from the unconscious could help to bring a better balance to the individual and enable further development to take place (Storr, 1983). It is only when an individual's ego is not strong enough to reflect on a complex in a way that it can be made use of that the individual will experience difficulties. The problem for the individual is therefore not the existence of the complexes, but the breakdown of the psyche's capacity to regulate itself. The parental complex, for example, is worth discussing in this regard (Meyer et al., 2008).

The Parent Complex. The parental complex refers to a group of emotionally charged images and ideas associated with the parents (Sharp, 1991). Jung believed that the numinosity surrounding the personal parents was to a large extent due to an archetypal image of the primordial parents resident in every psyche. This imago of the parents is composed of both the image created in the individual psyche from the experience of the personal parents and collective elements already present (McDowell, 1999). The image is unconsciously projected, and when the parents die, the projected image goes on working as though it were a spirit existing on its own (McDowell, 2006). The primitive then speaks of parental spirits who return by night (revenants), while the modern man calls it a father or mother complex (Jung, 1916/1960b, CW 7 para. 294). Such experiences have their origins in the process of 'participation mystique.'

Developmentally speaking, participation mystique is a primitive and unevolved state of consciousness in which the person is magically fused and merged with their environment so as not to be able to differentiate between themselves and others at a fundamental level. When participation mystique happens between a parent

and a child, it is a state of mutual unconscious identification in which they are co-dependently entangled and are not able to experience their psychic autonomy and independence from each other. This primitive identity causes the child to feel the conflicts of the parents and to suffer from them as if they were its own (Levy, 2009). The parties are psychically tied to each other in a way that reciprocally limits their freedom. The extent to which the parents do not relate to their offspring as autonomous and independent beings, but rather, as unconscious extensions of their own psyche, is the extent to which the parents have not fully psychologically separated and individuated themselves. They are essentially still fused in a state of participation mystique with the unconscious of their parents (Levy, 2009).

Neurotic disturbances existing in the unconscious prompt the pre-existent parental archetype. It is almost always parental problems that have been kept hidden or that have become unconscious that are most problematic and usually never the open conflict or the manifest problem that has a deleterious effect. The way the parents mediate the underlying, numinous archetype is what amplifies its effects upon the children. Just as a bird's migratory and nest-building instincts are not individually learned, but are inherited from its collective ancestry, the power of the parents is derived from the primordial, archetypal image that resonates deep within the psyche of our species (Levy, 2009). The danger, however, is precisely this unconscious identity with the archetype: not only does it exert a dominating influence on the child by suggestion, it also causes the same unconsciousness in the child, so that the child succumbs to the influence from outside and at the same time cannot oppose it from within. The child's outer process with the parent becomes internalized and becomes an inescapably compelling inner process (Sharp, 1991). The release from the parental imago, and thus from childhood, is never complete as long as a positive or negative

resemblance to the parents is the deciding factor in, for instance, a love choice, (Jung, 1927/1964a, CW10, para. 74).

4.3.3.3.2 The Collective Unconscious

Jung believed that there exists at the deepest layer of the psyche, a collective unconscious which is inherited and shared by all mankind (Crain, 1985).

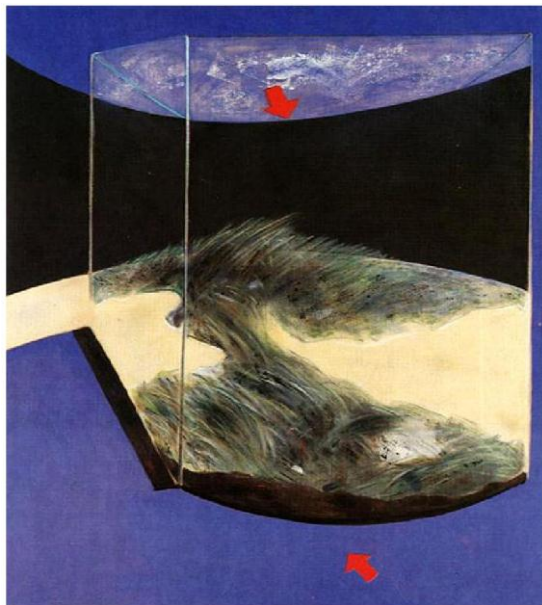


Figure 4.7. *Landscape* (Bacon, 1978). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

This reservoir of man's experiences is a kind of knowledge that is inborn and can be called one's 'psychic inheritance'. It is made up of innate energy forces and organizing tendencies called archetypes. One can never know the archetypes directly, but one can learn about them through archetypal images found in the myths, art, dreams and fantasies of peoples throughout the world. Through these images people try to express their deepest inner yearnings and unconscious tendencies (Crain, 1985).

According to Tandon (2008),

There are some experiences that show the effects of the collective unconscious more clearly than others, such as the experiences of love at first sight, of *deja vu*, and the immediate recognition of certain symbols and the meanings of certain myths, the creative experiences shared by artists and musicians all over the world and in all times, or the spiritual experiences of mystics of all religions, or the parallels in dreams, fantasies, mythologies, fairy tales, and literature. Experiences of this sort can all be understood as the sudden conjunction of one's outer reality and the inner reality of the collective unconscious (p. 69).

Collective unconscious images are not inherited ideas, but rather they refer to the individual's innate tendency to react in a particular way whenever one's personal experiences stimulate an inherited predisposition toward action. The collective unconscious thus includes the general cellular memory of past ancestors that is located inside of the body and is passed on genetically (Jung, 1969, CW 8). Jung also perceived it as something one taps into by psychic means, as a current 'over-mind' of the human race, which can be thought of as a sort of genetic superego as it crosses cultural boundaries. The superego contains parental voices that constrain thought and behaviour, whereas the collective unconscious contains archetypes that constrain thought and behaviour in much the same way (Mitchell, 2011).

The Archetypes. Archetypes are components of the collective unconscious and serve to organize, direct and inform human thought and behaviour. The various archetypes predispose one to approach life and to experience it in certain ways, according to patterns laid down in the psyche. Jung treated the archetypes as psychological organs, analogous to physical ones in that both are morphological constructs that arose through evolution (Stevens, 2006). Jung refers to these constructs as 'pre-existent forms' and by this he means 'the archetype-as-such', which

constituted the objective psyche (McDowell, 2001). It is only archetypal images however, that are capable of being known and coming to consciousness. The archetypes themselves are deeply unconscious and unknowable (Stevens, 2006). According to Tandon (2008), “The archetype is like a black hole in space: You only know it is there by how it draws matter and light to itself” (p. 70).

Samuels (1985) asserts that an ‘archetype-as-such’ was not an objective reality: “The archetypal may be said to be found in the eye of the beholder and not in that which he beholds ... The archetypal is a perspective ... with no pre-existing or prescribed focus ... The focus is elected by the individual” (p. 53). A hard-wired cortical image would be genetically inherited and thus shaped by the process of biological evolution. Within each individual it would be refined by sensory input (McDowell, 2001). Stevens and Price (1996) echo this view, citing evolutionary psychologists, who have described ‘genetically transmitted ... patterns of behaviour’, evolved while humans lived as hunter-gatherers (pp. 9, 26-29). Pietikainen (1998a, 1998b) argues that the archetype itself is not genetically inherited but that archetypes are “culturally determined symbolic forms, that are transmitted by learning” (p. 380). Jung is however supported in his view by Hogenson (1998) who disagreed with both Stevens and Pietikainen when he referred to recent work in cognitive science and suggested, as did Jung, “that we inherit not a generalized image but the tendency or the potential to form the image” (p. 367).

Jung holds that the potential to form the image of the ‘archetype-as-such’ is an underlying constant, while the archetypal image is a particular image, which has been chosen to represent that constant. The image is derived from the natural environment or from the cultural environment and it articulates the ‘archetype-as-such’ with

learned information (McDowell, 2001). Archetypal representations can include the projected ideas of the world around according to the way the individual perceives the world (Tandon, 2008). These intricate structures of the archetypes are represented through various archetypal images and ideas that may be expressed in art, architecture or religion and are individually experienced either in dream or waking consciousness (Neumann, 1954). Individual perceptions may tend toward positive or negative, varying according to diverse influences from upbringing, education and enculturation (Tandon, 2008). The archetypal viewpoint encompasses not only personal experience but also principles of organization that structure that experience and which include principles of balance and integration (McDowell, 2001). It is only through the analysis and interpretation of symbols evidenced in dreams, fantasies, visions, myths, art and so on that the collective unconscious and the archetypes can be analyzed and understood (Jung in Meyer et al., 2008, p. 101).

The self and the other archetypes discussed in the section on structural components are sometimes referred to as ‘the big five’, but there are many other archetypal figures. Some of these include the great mother, the father, the child and the hero. There are archetypal events, such as birth, death, separation, and archetypal objects such as water, the sun, the moon, snakes, and so on. “The ‘Wise Old Woman’ or helpful ‘Old Woman’ is for example, a well-known symbol in myths and fairy tales for the wisdom of the eternal female nature” (Jacobi, 1978, p. 331). “The ‘Wise Old Man’, the archetype of wisdom and meaning or some other very powerful aspect of eternal masculinity, is her male counterpart” (Hannah, 1988, p. 291).

The Mother Archetype. This is a particularly helpful example of an archetype because people come into the world predisposed towards this influence. The mother

archetype is thus the built-in ability to recognize a certain relationship, that of ‘mothering’ (Tandon, 2008). This relationship has the effect of ‘containing’, which leads to security and trust, or ‘devouring’, which leads to anxiety and mistrust (McDowell, 2001). Jung says that this is rather abstract and we are likely to project the archetype out into the world and onto a particular person, which is usually, but not inevitably, one’s own mother. Should the archetype lack a particular real person for its focus, there is a tendency for individuals to personify the archetype by turning it into a mythological ‘fictional’ character, symbolizing it (Tandon, 2008). “The mother archetype is symbolized typically by the primordial mother or ‘earth mother’ of mythology, by Eve and Mary in western traditions, and by less personal symbols such as the church, the nation, a forest, or the ocean” (Tandon, 2008, p. 71). According to Jung, someone whose own mother failed to satisfy the demands of the archetype may well be one that spends his or her life seeking comfort in the church, or in identification with ‘the motherland’, or in meditating upon the figure of Mary, or alternatively in a life at sea (Boeree, 2006). Jung states that ...

The more remote and unreal the personal mother is, the more deeply will be the son’s yearning for her clutch at his soul, awakening that primordial and eternal image of the mother for whose sake everything that embraces, protects, nourishes and helps, assumes maternal form, from the Alma Mater of the university to the personification of cities, countries, sciences and ideals (Jacobi, 1971, p. 100).

The Wise Old Man. The wise old man is the guru or mentor figure. Jung himself, in his mural paintings and his carvings, gave visual expression to his personifications and abstractions regarding some of the great archetypal images. His imaging of the Japanese Sensei whom he had imagined while still a boy is particularly significant because Jung had come to rely on this fantasy of the Wise Old Man after

his father had let him down. In all his moments of greatest abandonment, when he had no male company of any kind, this archetype stayed firmly with him. The series of ‘portraits’ at Bollingen suggest that this figure was a very real presence for Jung (Van Der Post, 1975).

The Puer Aeternus. Puer aeternus is Latin for ‘eternal child’ and is used in mythology to designate a child-god who is forever young. Psychologically it refers to an older man whose emotional life has remained at an adolescent level, usually coupled with too great a dependence on the mother (Sharp, 1991). The puer typically leads a provisional life, due to the fear of being caught in a situation from which it might not be possible to escape. “He covets independence, pushing boundaries and limits, and tends to find any restriction intolerable” (Sharp, 1991, p. 109).



Figure 4.8. *Study after Velázquez* (Bacon, 1950). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

The ‘negative’ side of the puer is the child-man who refuses to grow up and meet the challenges of life. “The one thing dreaded throughout by such a man is to be bound to anything whatever” (Von Franz, 2000, p. 8). Plans for the future slip away in fantasies of what will or could be, while no decisive action is taken to change (Von

Franz, 2000). “Common symptoms of puer psychology are dreams of imprisonment and similar imagery: chains, bars, cages, entrapment and bondage. Life itself, existential reality, is experienced as a prison. The bars are unconscious ties to the unfettered world of early life” (Sharp, 1991, p. 110.). The shadow of the puer is the ‘old man’ or ‘senex’, associated with the god Apollo - disciplined, controlled, responsible, rational, ordered (Sharp, 1991). “Conversely, the shadow of the senex is the puer, related to Dionysus-unbounded instinct, disorder, intoxication and whimsy” (Sharp, 1991, p.110). The ‘positive’ side of the *puer* appears as the Divine Child who symbolizes newness, potential for growth, and hope for the future. This side also portends the hero that the man sometimes becomes (Von Franz, 2000).

The Mana Attributes of Archetypes. Concepts analogous to *mana* in various cultures include the power of magic and of seeking the intervention of a specific supernatural being, whether deity, saint or deceased ancestor. The concept of a life-energy inherent in all living beings is a common archetype, appearing in many ancient religions and systems of metaphysics (Long, 1954). In Jung’s view, all archetypes have a positive side that points upwards and a negative side that points downwards. “Both aspects, celestial and chthonic, were potentially of equal value for Jung, as he sought for what he termed a ‘coniunctio oppositorum’, a union of opposites” (Jung, 1978a, p. 265). Similarly, with respect to the goal of the individuation process itself, “as a totality, the self is a coincidentia oppositorum, it is therefore bright and dark and yet neither” (Jung, 1963, p. 108n). “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light”, he argued, “but by making the darkness conscious” (Jung, 1978a, p. 265).

4.3.4 The Spiritual or Religious Dimension

Jung was sympathetic towards religion and particularly interested in its symbolism. It did not matter to him whether God and the unconscious were identical or not. He postulated that the breakthrough of archetypal images from the unconscious into the realm of consciousness was the basis of religious experience and often of artistic creativity (Jung, 1916/1960d, CW 8, para. 362, para. 420.) His commitment to explicating some of the archetypal symbols becomes apparent in his work on comparative mythology and is also conveyed in the words of his epigraph written in 1957 when he refers to the decades he worked on *The Red Book* from 1914 to 1930. It reads...

The years... when I pursued the inner images, were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this. It began at that time, and the later details hardly matter anymore. My entire life consisted in elaborating what had burst forth from the unconscious and flooded me like an enigmatic stream and threatened to break me. That was the stuff and material for more than only one life. Everything later was the outer classification, the scientific elaboration and the integration into life. But the numinous beginning, which contained everything, was then.

It was Jung's opinion that "what the religious man calls God, the scientific intellect called the collective unconscious" (Hayman, 1999, p. 4) and for him the terms, collective unconscious and psyche were interchangeable. He regarded the psyche as divine in contradistinction to human (Hayman, 1999). The religious dimension refers to mankind's dependence on and subjection to experiences that elude rational explanation. Jung's idea of religion is therefore much larger and subtler than religious practice and includes all the irrational aspects of being human (Meyer et al., 2008). Some of these ideas are related to transpersonal phenomena, which Jung explains in terms of the concept of synchronicity and numinosity.

Synchronicity. Synchronicity is the occurrence of two meaningfully related events that are not linked causally or teleologically. Often, people dream about something, like the death of a loved one, and find the next morning that their loved one did, in fact, die at about that time. Sometimes people pick up the phone to call a friend, only to find that their friend is already on the line. Jung believed these were indications of how we are connected with our fellow humans and with nature in general, through the collective unconscious (Meyer et al., 2008).

Numinosity. This is Jung's term for unusual, extraordinary or heightened modes of psychological awareness. 'Numinous' applies to the otherwise inexplicable action of beings and forces that the consciousness of primitive man experienced as fascinating, terrible and overpowering (Neumann, 1954). Such experiences were attributed either to a quality belonging to a visible object or the influence of an invisible presence. A peculiar alteration of consciousness usually resulted from an encounter with this indefinite transpersonal and divine source (Jung, 1954b, CW 17). The precipitating object of numinosity may be externally or inwardly perceived stimuli and the feeling values that are evoked take the form of the numinous (Clark, 1994). The numinous effect facilitates a balanced sense of life or 'wholeness' through disintegration and subsequent reconstruction and healing (Jung, 1954a, CW 16).

Numinosity, however, needs to be understood in terms of Jung's idea of the archetype. He differentiates the archetypal image from the archetype itself by suggesting the archetype proper is never amenable to representation and cannot reach ego consciousness. It exceeds man's power of representation and at first no form can be given to it because so many contradictory motifs and symbols are joined in the archetype, making its nature paradoxical (Neumann, 1954). When later the primordial

archetype takes form in the imagination of man, its representations are thus often monstrous and inhuman (Neumann, 1955). “This is the phase of the chimerical creatures composed of different animals or of animal and man – the griffins, sphinxes, harpies for example- and also of such monstrosities as phallic and bearded mothers” (Neuman, 1955, p. 13).



Figure 4.9. Second Version of Triptych. Left panel (Bacon, 1944). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The symbolic imagery of the unconscious is the creative source of the human spirit and has a tendency to combine contradictory elements to bring the most diverse provinces of life into contact with one another by weaving them together (Neumann, 1954). It is only when consciousness learns to look at phenomena from a certain distance that the mixture of symbols prevailing in the primordial archetype separates into the groups of symbols characteristic of a single archetype or of a group of related archetypes, that they become recognizable (Neumann, 1954). “Through the symbol,

mankind rises from the early phase of formlessness, from a blind, purely unconscious psyche without images, to the formative phase whose image-making is an essential premise for the genesis and development of consciousness” (Neumann, 1954, p. 16).

4.4 Psychological Types

In *Psychological Types* Jung (1921) introduced the concept of introverted and extroverted personality types, which can be thought of as outlooks determining a person's experience of life (Kreuger & Theusen, 1988). These concepts are briefly explained as follows:

Introversion. This refers to the inner-directedness and flow of psychic energy indicating a person who is preoccupied with his or her own emotions and experiences (Meyer et al., 2008). Introverts tend to be quiet, understated, deliberate, and fairly detached in social situations. They do enjoy limited interaction with others, but are more inclined to solitary activities such as reading, writing, watching movies, inventing and designing (Kreuger & Theusen, 1988).

Extraversion. This refers to an outer-directedness and flow of psychic energy indicating a person who reveals a lively interest in the world around him (Meyer et al., 2008). Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive and gregarious. They take pleasure in activities that involve large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, public demonstrations, and business or political groups (Kreuger & Theusen, 1988).

Ambiversion. People exhibit degrees of introversion and extraversion and most people fall in-between the two extremes, exhibiting both tendencies in respect to different aspects of their lives. An ambivert is normally comfortable with groups and enjoys social interaction, but also relishes time alone and away from the crowd (Kreuger & Theusen, 1988).

Jung intended these words to refer to whether the individual faced outward through the persona toward the physical world, or inward toward the collective unconscious and its archetypes. He further refined these ideas according to four functions of the mind: thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting. In each person one or more of these functions will predominate, but for a person to become whole the other functions also need to be developed (Jung, 1971a, CW 6).

4.5 Individuation and Individuality

Individuation is the process through which individual beings are formed and differentiated and in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology. It means becoming an individual and 'individuality' implies becoming one's own, incomparable and unique self (Jung, in Jacobi, 1999, p. 124). According to Stein (2005),

Individuation is a force of nature, every bit as strong and persistent as the instinct of sexuality and the will to power. If not chosen consciously, the drive toward individuation may produce bizarre twists and turns in a life's course as it insists on individuality in the most unexpected places and at inconvenient times (p. 5).

One of Jung's first uses of the term 'individuation', occurs in a text from 1916, *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos*. The text, referred to by Jung (1916a) came to him in a visionary experience, more or less dictated from the unconscious (Stein, 2011). In *Septem Sermones*, a teacher named Basilides of Alexandria refers to the *principium individuationis*, stating that it is the essence of *creatura*, and sets the *creatura* apart from the *pleroma* (Stein, 2005). "For the individual human being (i.e., *creatura*), it is a matter of life and death to become separate and distinct or face getting beyond one's own nature, away from *creatura* and thus falling into indistinctiveness" (Stein, 2005, p. 2). Nothingness is the other quality of the *pleroma* (Stein, 2005) and for Jung the differentiation from collective values was absolutely fundamental for the development of personality (Stein, 2005). He makes this clear when he says ...

This is the essential nature of individual consciousness: to be itself, it must create distinctions and separateness. It is in accord with human nature, therefore, to seek individuation, which is not optional, not conditional, not subject to vagaries of cultural differences but is essential. The *pleroma* is 'All and Nothing.' It contains all possible psychological 'qualities' but without distinction or separation. It is the primal psychic *materia*, the Great Mother, the matrix out of which all consciousness will emerge (Jung, 1916, p. 380).

The fundamental principle of the *pleroma* is inclusion without distinction. It is against this background that the consciousness of the single individual emerges. Distinctiveness and thus individual consciousness requires "continuously making distinctions between the-I and the not-I: not this, not that, but something other, something apart and unique" (Stein, 2005, p. 3). Pairs of contrasting qualities come into view while making these distinctions and once these qualities become manifest the individual is tempted to identify with one side of the pair and to deny the other. Contrasting qualities may include: good and evil, time and space, beauty and ugliness, male and female. Identification with either side marks the first stage of definition

where shadow is created, along with the illusion of distinctiveness (Stein, 2005). The pieces of the collective with which the ego identifies and that function to facilitate adaptation to the social world mean that a somewhat distinct but still collective personality and character come into being – the persona. This is a step in the direction of individuation, however it is not yet the real thing because the qualities identified with are collective, not individual (Stein, 2005).

While Jung considered it an entirely normal part of early development that infants become attached to their mothers and enter into a state of *participation mystique* with their close caregivers, he believed it was also essential for the person to be able to differentiate themselves in such a way as to be able to achieve ‘individuality’ (Stein, 2005). Forming unconscious attachments and forging psychological identity with important people in one’s immediate environment is something he viewed as a necessary phase that would later enable the child to form similar relationships with other family members and eventually with the wider society. Through the development of this type of human identity, which is a socially constructed persona, the collective gives voice to itself (Stein, 2005, p. 4). The child becomes a good citizen, a loyal son or daughter, a reliable employee, a faithful husband or wife, an ethical professional, and people feel confident that they can lend such a person their trust and high regard. Such people may represent the family, the community, even for the nation or all of humanity, but they do not represent themselves as individuals (Stein, 2005). This is because the persona is actually a ‘segment of the collective psyche’ and merely mimics individuality (Jung, 1916/1960b, CW 7, paras. 464–470).

The existence of the persona can therefore be a subtle enemy of individuation if it is not made conscious as a ‘mask’ because “human beings have one faculty which, though it is of the greatest utility for collective purposes, is most pernicious for individuation, and that is the faculty of imitation” (Jung in Stein, 2005, p. 4). Jung was not an admirer of imitators (Stein, 2005) and emphasized the need for people to take responsibility for authentic living when he stated: “If you live according to an example, you thus live the life of that example, but who should live your own life if not yourself? So live yourselves” (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 231). To remain unconscious of the persona means that true individuality lies dormant and hidden away. A person then “assumes the role of mouthpiece for the collective attitudes with which they have identified” (Stein, 2005, p.4). Individuation and a life lived by collective values appear to be two divergent destinies and Jung saw this type of conflict as a possible source of neurosis (Stein, 2005). In Jung’s view they are related to one another by guilt because whoever embarks on the personal path becomes to some extent estranged from collective values. “Those aspects of the psyche that are inherently collective are however not lost and to atone for this ‘desertion’, the individual becomes obliged to create something of worth for the benefit of society” (Sharp, 1991, p. 68).

The collective psyche must be contrasted with the concept of *individuality*. Accordingly, the individual would be a point of intersection or a dividing line, neither conscious nor unconscious, but a bit of both (1916/1960b, CW 7, para. 507). “He is the *reflecting surface* in which the world of consciousness can perceive its own unconscious, historical image, even as Schopenhauer says that the intellect holds up a mirror to the Universal Will” (Stein, 2005, p. 10). To pursue Schopenhauer’s

metaphor, this aspect of the individuation process is much like a comparison between a painting and a mirror as one recognizes that, unlike the painting, the contents reflected in the mirror are temporary, appearing and disappearing according to events outside. Similarly, a shift in awareness sees through the fixed identifications and the person is able to let them pass into and out of view without clinging to them and trying to make a permanent feature of the scene that is being temporarily mirrored in consciousness (Stein, 2005). “In this mirror, one sees now not only others but also oneself, naked. Self-acceptance becomes possible with a degree of clear-sightedness and lack of illusion” (Stein, 2005, p. 7).

The invisible, unconscious elements of the personality lie outside the range of the ego complex in the mirror of consciousness, and thus the process of individuation is necessarily a slow and progressive one, but in order to bring the process about, the ego must relinquish control over the contents of consciousness temporarily in favour of a process that is not entirely under its management (Stein, 2005). “Assimilation of unconscious contents leads to a process, which alone signifies individuation, and its product is individuality, which is particular and universal at once” (Jung, 1992, CW 7, p. 297). The act of giving over control to an irrational process of emergence and synthesis gives birth to the transcendent function, the essential core of individuality (Stein, 2005).

4.6 The Transcendent Function

According to Jung (1957/1960c, CW 8) the psychological factor that he called the *tertium non datur* or transcendent function “arises from the union of conscious

and unconscious contents” (p. 69). The function is called transcendent because it allows an individual to transcend his or her attitude and arrive at a new one. This in turn facilitates psychological growth (Miller, 1951). “It therefore represents a more complete picture of the whole psyche and specifically of individuality than can be obtained by the ego complex alone through introspective reflection and taking inventory of what simply appears in the mirror of consciousness” (Stein, 2005, p. 11). The metaphysical Jung and the scientific Jung seem to be in conflict with each other regarding the transcendent function because on the one hand Jung maintains that there is ‘nothing mysterious or metaphysical’ about the transcendent function, but on the other hand, refers to the unconscious as deeply unknowable. Indeed “The very idea of uniting conscious and unconscious material is abstract, subtle, abstruse and otherworldly” (Miller, 1951, p. 14). In his discussion on the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, Jung explains:

The tendencies of the conscious and the unconscious are the two factors that together make up the transcendent function. It is called ‘transcendent’ because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible without the loss of the unconscious (Miller, 2004, p. 14).

Fundamental to the transcendent function is the idea that “conscious and unconscious opposites can be bridged by the emergence of a symbol from the fantasy producing activity of the psyche” (Miller, 1951, p. 4). The main method for creating the transcendent function is active imagination, which Jung describes as the process of making conscious, through deliberate effort, the unconscious images and fantasies that are potential attributes of the individual but are not now, and perhaps never have been, accessed by the ego complex. The images that are captured through active imagination, Jung found, offer a rich prospective value for the further development of

conscious attitudes (Stein, 2005). The symbol in turn produces something that is not merely an amalgam of or compromise between the two opposites, but rather “a living, third thing, a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation” (Jung, 1957/1960c, CW 8, p. 90).

Unconscious images and patterns that emerge are different from those that were unearthed in the prior analysis of identity where all were from the past and fixed in place for reasons relating to early development, introjection and identity creation (persona and anima/animus identities). These images from active imagination arise in the present from the unconscious matrix, and they are archetypal, often numinous, and definitely compensatory to the personal equation and prevailing attitudes of the ego complex. The earlier images constricted individuality and psychological options while these expand individuality in the direction of the self, offering new options for feeling and action (Stein, 2005). It is this new synthetic psychological structure that is able more completely to represent a person’s wholeness and individuality in all its heights and depths, from the instinctual to the spiritual— body, soul, and spirit (Jung in Stein, 2005, pp. 11-12). The creation and growth of the transcendent function, enables the person to be himself fully, freely, and genuinely (Stein, 2005). While the goal is wholeness and a healthy working relationship with the self, the true value of transcendence lies in what happens along the way. The coming together of apparently irreconcilable psychic contents thus forms the basis of healthy development, providing a new position from which the individual can proceed (Meyer et al., 2008). Needless to say, “this irrational process is a deeply spiritual one since the contents that emerge from the unconscious are typically numinous” (Stein, 2005, p. 11).

4.7 Instinctive Factors

According to Jung, instinct is not an isolated thing, nor can it be isolated in practice. It is an involuntary drive toward certain activities and is always coupled with something like a philosophy of life. Instinct stimulates thought, and if a man does not think of his own free will, the result is compulsive thinking, for the two poles of the psyche, the physiological and the mental, are indissolubly connected (Jung, 1954a, CW 16, para. 185). “Instincts can be modified according to the extent that they are civilized and under conscious control, a process Jung called psychization” (Sharp, 1991, p. 73). Psychic processes, which are usually consciously controlled, can become instinctive when imbued with unconscious energy and this is likely to occur when the level of consciousness is low, due to fatigue, intoxication, depression and so on (Sharp, 1991).

There are five prominent instinctive factors that have been identified by Jung including *hunger, activity, reflection, sexuality and creativity*. Perhaps the most fundamental of all drives is that of *hunger*, which is a primary instinct of self-preservation (Sharp, 1991). The urge to *activity* manifests in travel, love of change, restlessness and play. Under *reflection*, Jung included the religious urge and the search for meaning. A close second to hunger is the *sexual drive*, which is particularly prone to psychization, a process where the purely biological energy of sexuality is diverted into other channels. There is often conflict between instinctuality and morality and this conflict tends to occur most frequently and most conspicuously in the realm of sex. For Jung this seems to be “the *sine qua non* of psychic energy” (Jacobi, 1971, p. 104).

It is only in regard to sex that people feel the need of a question mark and there is always the 'sexual question'. "This is discussed by men and women who challenge the existing sexual morality and who seek to throw off the burden of moral guilt, which past centuries have heaped upon Eros" (Jung, 1912/1960a, CW 7, p. 427). There isn't usually any mention however of a 'murder question' or a 'rage question' even though these things are all examples of instinctual behaviour. The conflict between ethics and sex is not just a collision between instinct and morality, it is also a struggle to give an instinct its rightful place in one's life. As the wise Diotima said to Socrates: "Eros is a mighty daemon. We shall never get the better of him, or only to our own hurt. He is not the whole of our inward structure, though he is at least one of its essential aspects" (Jung in Jacobi, 1971, p. 105). Eros belongs on one side to man's primordial, animal nature, and on the other side he is related to the highest forms of the spirit and only thrives when spirit and instinct are in right harmony. If one or other aspect is lacking the result is a lopsidedness that may easily veer towards the pathological where "too much of the animal distorts the civilised man, too much civilisation makes sick animals" (Jung in Jacobi, 1971, p. 105).

It is therefore important to recognise the power in this instinct, which seeks expression and cannot always be made to fit in with well-meaning moral laws (Jung in Jacobi, 1971). Sexuality is therefore not mere instinct, it is also an undeniably creative power, which is not only the basic cause of our individual lives, but a very serious factor in our psychic life as well. "There are grave consequences that sexual disturbances can bring in their train. Anyone who overlooks the instincts will be ambuscaded by them" (Jung in Jacobi, 1971, p. 104).

Creativity was for Jung in a class by itself. His descriptions of it refer specifically to the impulse to create art (Sharp, 1991). The term ‘creative instinct’ is used because creativity, like instinct, is compulsive. It is not common, and it is not a fixed and invariably inherited organization (Sharp, 1991).

Jung regarded a great work of art as being like a dream because for all its apparent obviousness, it does not explain itself and is always ambiguous. The creative process can be thought of as a living thing implanted in the human psyche. Indeed, the special significance of a true work of art resides in the fact that it has escaped from the limitations of the personal and has soared beyond the personal concerns of its creator (Jacobi, 1971, p. 196).



Figure 4.10. Triptych (Bacon, 1976). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2006.

The creative impulse can be viewed as a psychic factor similar in nature to instinct, having a close connection with the instincts, but without being identical with any one of them. It has much in common with the drive to activity and the reflective instinct but it can also suppress them, or make them serve it to the point of the self-destruction of the individual. Creation is as much destruction as construction (Jung, 1937/1960g, CW 8, para. 245). Jung saw art as a unifying mechanism through which human beings understand their experience and he explored its use as a healing agent. His most notable contributions are his studies of active imagination and the

experience of the interaction with a visual image (Jung, 1961b, CW 18). Active imagination is based on the belief that “images have a life of their own and symbolic events develop according to their own logic” (Jung, 1963, p. 290). Literary criticism developed from Jung’s work assumes that all creative works—including literature, myths, religious rituals and symbols, and dreams stem from the same inner psychic source, the collective unconscious. The ability to switch back and forth between the flow of thought coming from unconscious and conscious thought is essential and psychologically this is a creative process (Bowers, 2011).

Jung believed that much of art contains archetypal themes and that a symbol can be open to endless interpretation because people have a need to find meaning in things or else they would not be able to think about them (Piedalito in Bowers, 2011). Interpretation however means moving away from the living mystery. Jung says that as long as one gets caught up in the process of creation, one neither sees or understands and in fact, ought not to understand, for “nothing is more injurious to immediate experience than cognition” (Jacobi, 1971, p. 195).

For the purpose of cognitive understanding though, it is necessary to detach from the creative process and look at it from the outside. Only then does it become an image that expresses what is called ‘meaning’ and Jung’s argument is that perhaps art has no ‘meaning’ as it is understood in terms of the traditional sense of the word. Art, he thought, is more like nature, which simply ‘is’ and ‘means’ nothing beyond that. “Meaning may indeed be nothing more than mere interpretation – an interpretation secreted into something by an intellect hungry for meaning. Art, however, needs no meaning, for meaning has nothing to do with art” (Jung in Jacobi, 1971 p. 195).

Jung's studies provide detailed descriptions of the function of art in the human psyche and he remains one of the most commonly cited contributors to this area of study. The significance of his work on active imagination is evident in the practices of expressive arts and art therapy. Erich Neumann, one of Jung's students, contributed to the study of art and consciousness. His work, *Art and the Creative Conscious*, is a four-essay discussion of the role of art in analytical psychology (Neumann, 1959). Similar to Freud, he describes the development of the artist as the best of many maladjustments. His writing implies that creativity is the domain of the feminine and that a creative man has experienced a different development of the anima than a non-creative man (p. 19). Neumann's work puts forward the idea that the creation of meaningful art is based on the creation of new images based on the foundational, archetypal images of the unconscious (Neumann, 1959, p. 108). This presents an important tool for art criticism as well as the conceptual development of artists (Bowers, 2011).

Literature, language, and the arts were so much a part of the lives of early analytic psychologists (Bowers, 2011) that Ellenberger (1970) writes "One cannot begin to understand men like Janet, Freud, and Jung without realizing that they had been immersed from childhood in an atmosphere of intensive classical culture that pervaded all their thinking (p. 194)." Examples of this can be seen in the mythic interpretation of the human experience, the use of word association, active imagination and other non-linear means of understanding the human experience (Bowers, 2011).

4.8 Development of the Personality

While Jung concentrates mostly on the process of individuation and the transcendent function (Meyer et al., 2008), he was one of the first theorists to describe an adult developmental position in psychology. He outlined personality shifts, which seem to occur consistently before external situations demand them (Crain, 1985). Our life, says Jung, “is like the course of the sun. In the morning it gains continually in strength until it reaches the zenith-heat of high noon. Then comes the enantiodromia: the steady forward movement no longer denotes an increase, but a decrease, in strength” (Jung, 1992, p. 74). Each shift is mediated through a new set of archetypal imperatives, which seek fulfillment in action (Levinson, 1978).

Four general periods can be identified including Childhood and Youth, which are part of *The First Half of Life*. The Middle Life and Old Age are part of *The Second Half of Life*. *The Mid-life Crisis* marks the transition from the first period to the second but “there is no bell that rings at precisely the same point for everyone” (Levinson, 1978, p. 19). According to Jung (1921/1971b, CW 6) ...

A change from one milieu to another brings about a striking alteration of personality, and on each occasion a clearly defined character emerges that is noticeably different from the previous one. The true character or real personality can be hard to identify but a person who is a genuine individual would have the same character despite the variation of attitude. He would not be identical with the attitude of the moment, and he neither would nor could prevent his individuality from expressing itself just as clearly in one state as in another (para. 798f).

4.8.1 The First Half of Life

The first period, until the age of thirty-five or thirty-six, is a time of outward expansion. Maturation forces direct the growth of the ego and the unfolding of capacities for dealing with the external world (Meyer et al., 2008). This time is just like an exploding celestial body, and the fragments travel out into space, conveying increasingly greater distances. Mental horizons broaden, wishes, expectations, ambitions and the will to conquer the world and live, go on expanding until one comes to the middle of life (Jung in MacGuire and Hull, 1980). The developmental phases include the following:

4.8.1.1 Childhood (Birth to Puberty)

Starting before birth, the ‘transition into childhood’ continues for the first two or three years of separate life. During this period the infant develops into a separate person and learns to distinguish the ‘me’ from the ‘not –me’ and to form a primordial sense of the self. It further learns that others also have an enduring existence and character (Levinson, 1978). Childhood can be divided into three sub-stages namely: *The Anarchic Stage*, *The Monarchic Stage* and *The Dualistic Stage* (“Jungian Center News,” 2010).

The Anarchic Stage. This stage is characterised by chaotic and sporadic consciousness, which emanates from the infant’s general overall awareness of stimuli. Jung maintains that a newborn child’s psychic life does not as yet possess perceivable ego consciousness (Meyer et al., 2008). Experiences of the anarchic phase may enter

consciousness as primitive images, which cannot be properly verbalised (“Jungian Center News,” 2010).

The Monarchic Stage. This stage of childhood is characterised by the development of the ego and the development of logical and verbal thinking. Children begin to see themselves objectively and to refer to themselves in the third person (“Jungian Center News,” 2010).

The Dualistic Stage. Childhood entails the development of the ego as a ‘perceiver’. This is when the ego is divided into the objective and the subjective. Children start referring to themselves in the first person and are aware of their existence as separate individuals (Jung, 1969). Jung’s child image ran counter to contemporary social and educational theory in its assertion that children are not ‘blank slates.’ Children, Jung posits, are heirs to the whole human race with all the potentials and innate tendencies that have developed over millennia of human evolution (“Jungian Center News,” 2010). In his opinion, “every infant is born with an intact blueprint for life, both physically and mentally” and the “whole personality is present in potentia from birth” (Stevens, 1990, p. 36). This blueprint serves to guide the child through various stages in pursuit of the fullest possible realization of the self. The role of the environment is therefore only to emphasise and develop aspects already within the child (Stevens, 1990).

At first the mother is the most important person in the child's world upon whom the child is most dependent, but the child is also the product of many generations of the family history. The child's psyche records impressions about father,

about marriage, and about siblings and other persons in and around the family circle (Levy, 2011). While the existing potentials and innate tendencies remain constant and give children their own character the most important of these factors: mother, father, and marriage, are imprinted in the child's mind as archetypes (Stevens, 1990). They will be deeply rooted in the child's way of viewing the world and as Jung maintains “nothing exerts a stronger psychic effect upon the human environment, and especially upon children, than the life which the parents have not lived” (Jacobi, 1971, p. 131). When the child turns out to possess a character, which is not in the least like that of the parents and is in fact very different from both parents and that of its siblings, it can cause misunderstandings and conflict within the family. All the lives the parents could have lived, but for whatever reason did not, are passed on to the child in substitute form. The child is then driven unconsciously in a direction that is intended to compensate for everything that was left unfulfilled in the lives of the parents. Hence it is says Jung: “that excessively moral-minded parents have what are called ‘unmoral’ children, or an irresponsible wastrel of a father has a son with a positively morbid amount of ambition, and so on” (Jacobi, 1971, p. 131).

At about 5 or 6 the child moves from early to middle childhood, expanding his social world from the immediate family to a larger sphere containing school, wider peer group and neighbourhood. He begins to resolve his emotional struggles within the family and to become more disciplined, industrious and skilled (Levinson, 1978). When a child is unable to reach these goals, neurosis may develop because of something about the domestic environment or the relation between parent and child, particularly with the mother, or in the mother herself, or in the relationship between

the parents. Parental negligence, slothfulness, neurotic anxiety or ‘soulless conventionality’, for example, could lead to the development of neurosis (“Jungian Center News,” 2010). By ‘soulless conventionality’ Jung meant that the parents had developed strong personas in trying to conform to the expectations of their social group, and, as a result, were living inauthentic lives. Impressionable and prerational, the child therefore had to be cared for with understanding and respect and recognized as a new and individual creature, which needed to be true to the law of its own nature (“Jungian Center News,” 2010). According to Jung:

Childhood is important not only because warpings of instinct have their origin there, but because this is the time when, terrifying or encouraging, those far-seeing dreams and images appear before the soul of the child, shaping his whole destiny, as well as those retrospective intuitions, which reach back far beyond the range of childhood experience into the life of our ancestors. Thus in the child psyche the natural condition is already opposed by a ‘spiritual’ one (Jacobi, 1971, p. 130).

Without conscious attention, the influence of the parents or the ‘parental imago’, originating in childhood, will go on living even after the parents have died. It will continue to exert an influence on a host of significant areas of life such as relationships, romantic prospects, choice of marriage partner, marital success or failure (“Jungian Center News,” 2010). In this regard Jung (1913/1961a, CW 4) says:

The small world of the child, the family milieu, is thus the model for the big world. The more intensely the family sets its stamp on the child, the more he or she will be emotionally inclined, as an adult, to see in the great world his former small world (p. 312).

4.8.1.2 Youth and Early Adulthood (Puberty to 40's)

Youth. Individuation is known to be a crucial aspect of development in childhood and adolescence as the individual acquires a clearer and fuller identity of their own, becoming better able to utilise their inner resources and pursue their own aims. New levels of awareness, meaning and understanding are generated in this time (Levinson, 1978) and there is a separation from humanity in an attempt to realise the self and create an identity - I, myself (Boeree, 2006). In young people this may manifest itself in destructiveness, and can be expressed as animosity towards parents in attempts at self-assertion (Levinson, 1978). Puberty provides a transition from middle childhood to adolescence including bodily changes leading to sexual maturity as well as other changes leading toward full adulthood (Levinson, 1978). In the young, the opposites will tend to be extreme, and adolescents may exaggerate male-female differences veering from one extreme to another, rebelling one minute to finding religion the next (Boeree, 2006).

Early adulthood. Occurring from the age of approximately 17 to 22 and providing a bridge from adolescence to adulthood, it is part of both. This may be the most dramatic of all eras and is a crucial time in the life cycle during which the growing male is a boy-man (Levinson, 1978). Instinctual drives are at their height and the young adult seeks personal gratification of various kinds, but is burdened by the residues of childhood conflicts regarding such gratifications.

Jung makes it clear that it is in the youthful period of life that it is most beneficial to gain a thorough recognition of the instinctual side of ones nature when he says...

A timely recognition of sexuality, for instance, can prevent a neurotic suppression of it, which keeps a man unduly withdrawn from life, or else forces him into a wretched and unsuitable way of living with which he is bound to come into conflict. Proper recognition and appreciation of normal instincts leads the young person into life and entangles him with fate, thus involving him in life's necessities and the consequent sacrifices and efforts through which his character is developed and his experience matured (Jacobi, 1971, p. 133).

The effort of struggling to establish a place in society is both satisfying and stressful. "This is a time of extraordinary growth but is still only the prelude to adult living. The individual is still immature and vulnerable as he makes his way into the world" (Levinson, 1978, p. 21) and recognises that the problem-free days of childhood are gone forever.

The span from 20- 40 is the time of greatest biological abundance and of greatest contradiction and stress. The individual forms a preliminary identity and makes his first major choices about marriage, occupation, residence and style of living that define his place in the adult world. He 'pays his dues' and make his contribution to the survival of the species by having and raising children, maintaining a marriage and family (Levinson, 1978). Young people establish careers and families and they do what they can to advance up the social ladder, (Crain, 1985) contributing to the economy and welfare of the tribe in which they are most fully involved (Levinson, 1978).

During this phase, a certain degree of one-sidedness is necessary and even valuable for the young person who needs to dedicate himself to the task of mastering the outer world (Crain, 1985). Early adulthood is thus distinguished by its fullness of energy, capability and potential, as well as external pressure. "In it, personal drives and societal requirements are powerfully intermeshed, at times reinforcing each other

and at times in stark contradiction” (Levinson, 1978, p. 23). By the time the person reaches adulthood, if he is fortunate, he has a sense of doing something for himself as well as for others, of both satisfying his own needs and contributing to his society. He moves through a sequence of changes going from novice to a more senior position in work, family, and community. A man’s relationship with his parents and the members of his extended family also change over the years. At 20 he tries to get them to regard him as an equal and a man. By 40 he is taking on parental responsibilities for them and is also seen by the youth as senior, “a full generation removed from them” (Levinson, 1978, p. 23).

4.8.2 The Second Half of Life

In the second half of life the individual feels that the goals and ambitions, which once seemed so eternal, have lost their meaning and outlook shifts from emphasis on materialism, sexuality, and having children to concerns about community and spirituality. The individual reunites with the human race and becomes part of the collective once again. Adults start contributing to humanity and there is a move from destructiveness to creativeness (Boeree, 2006). This experience is what Jung calls a ‘metanoia’ or change of mind where there is a tendency to become more introverted and philosophical in thinking, with self-realization as the ultimate goal (Mitchell, 2011).

4.8.2.1 Middle Life (40 to 60 years)

Until the late thirties a man’s life is of necessity rather one-sided and imbalanced. Many valuable aspects of the person may have been neglected and suppressed. Of the four psychological functions only one or two are likely to have

developed much. Although no one develops all four functions to an equal degree, it is possible in middle adulthood to strengthen the formerly weaker functions and lead a more balanced life (Levinson, 1978). Jung (1930/1960i, CW 8) says the following . . .

The more we approach the middle of life and the better we have succeeded in entrenching ourselves in our personal attitudes and social positions, the more it appears as if we had discovered the right course and the right ideals and principles of behaviour. For this reason we suppose them to be eternally valid, and make a virtue of unchangeably clinging to them. We overlook the essential fact that social goal is attained only at the cost of a diminution of personality. Many – far too many – aspects of life, which should also have been experienced lie in the lumber-room among dusty memories, but sometimes too, they are glowing coals under grey ashes (p. 771)

The middle of life is thus a time of enormous psychological importance and can be the decisive moment in one's life. Every genuine appraisal must be agonising because it challenges the illusions and vested interests on which the existing structure is based. These forces continue to play a role in preserving the status quo and the man who critically assesses his life at 40 will be up against the parts of himself that have a strong investment in the present structure as well as being opposed by other persons and institutions seeking to prevent change (Levinson, 1978). It is therefore not surprising that many neuroses appear at the onset of life's afternoon as the process of reappraisal activates unconscious conflicts. These pathological anxieties and guilt, dependencies, animosities, and vanities of earlier years may keep a man from examining the real issues at mid-life, making it difficult for him to modify an oppressive life structure (Levinson, 1978).

Although growth during this period creates tensions and difficulties, the greatest failures come when adults cling to the goals and values of the first half of life (Crain, 1985). Through the process of individuation in middle adulthood a better

balance between the demands of society and the demands of one's own repressed (instinctual) unconscious can be achieved. When more attention is given to what Jung calls the 'archetypal unconscious' and if "a man nourishes the archetypal figures and gives them a more valued place in his life, they will evolve and enrich his life in ways hardly dreamed of in youth" (Levinson, 1978, p. 33). Before this balance can be reached, a person may experience a transitional period called the mid-life crisis, which marks the transition into the Second Half of Life.

4.8.2.2 The Mid-Life Crisis

At the age of roughly 35-40 the psyche begins to undergo a transformation. Jung (in Grun, 2006) claims that, "what youth found and must find outside, the man of life's afternoon must find within himself because the problems of this period cannot be resolved in the same way that they were solved before" (p. 52). For many men this transformation in the psyche is a time of moderate or severe crisis. Reappraisal of one's life can involve emotional turmoil, despair, the sense of not knowing where to turn, or of being stagnant and unable to move at all (Jacobi, 1971). "It is a sort of second puberty, another 'storm and stress' period, not infrequently accompanied by tempests of passion - the dangerous age" (Jung, 1992, p. 75). A man in this crisis may be somewhat irrational and because of this others may regard him as 'upset' or 'sick'. In most cases this is not the case because the desire to question and modify one's life stems from the healthiest part of the self and is considered to be a normal part of this developmental period (Levinson, 1978). Individuals are prompted to turn their energy away from the mastery of the external world and to begin focusing on their inner selves. They feel inner urgings to listen to the unconscious to

learn about the potentials they have so far left unrealized (Crain, 1985). After the age of forty a person who has not reached his dreamed of position in life, falls victim to a sense of disappointment. Having to confront a reality that differs from what had been hoped for may explain the extraordinary frequency of depression after the fortieth year (Jung in McGuire and Hull, 1980).

In his book, *In MidLife*, Stein (1984) calls this condition 'liminality', which he describes as a core feature of psychological transformation whenever it occurs in life. The term indicates a period of uncertainty, when one finds oneself drifting in limbo between fixed and limited identities. As the mirror of consciousness becomes emptied of fixed contents, one can then also begin to see oneself more clearly and perhaps even for the first time. There is an increase in consciousness about oneself, one's boundaries and one's true features, which means seeing the shadows and the flaws, as well as the lovely parts. What is lost here in identity, is gained in insight and moreover, becoming freed from persona and animus/anima identities, releases one from the past into the present (Stein, 2005). Ironically, it is only by turning inward and by becoming more focused on the self, that man actually makes a greater contribution to and becomes more connected with the collective (Stein, 1984).

The middle-aged adult still has the energy and resources for making changes in his external situation and individuals often take up long-neglected projects and interests and even make seemingly incomprehensible career changes (Crain, 1985). A man in this state often makes false starts as he tentatively tests a variety of new choices, not only out of confusion or impulsiveness but, equally, out of a need to explore, to see what is possible, to find out how it feels to engage in a particular love

relationship, occupation, or solitary pursuit. People often become religious during this period or acquire a personal philosophy of life (Levinson, 1978).

When the productivity of great artists is studied, it has been observed that at the beginning of the Second Half of Life their modes of creativeness often change. Nietzsche, for example began to write *Also sprach Zarathustra* when he was between thirty-seven and thirty-eight and this is one of his most outstanding works, quite different from everything he had done before and even after (Jung in McGuire and Hull, 1980). “From the middle of life onward only he remains vitally alive who is ready to die with life” (Jung in Jacobi, 1971, p. 140). “Naturally this means conflict and self-division but the point is not conversion into the opposite but conservation of previous values together with recognition of their opposites” (Jung, 1992, p. 76). With luck the individual will acquire insight from within and support from others for the effort to examine and improve his life (Levinson, 1978).

4.8.2.3 Old Age (60's onwards)

A man does not suddenly become ‘old’ at 50 or 60 or 80. Many mental and physical changes intensify his experience of his own ageing and mortality. These changes remind him that he is moving from ‘middle age’ to a later generation for which Western culture has only the terrifying term ‘old age’. No one of these changes happens to all men, however every man is likely to experience several and to be greatly affected by them (Levinson, 1978). It is however a great mistake “to suppose that the meaning of life is exhausted with the period of youth and expansion because

the afternoon of life is just as meaningful as the morning, only its meaning and purpose are different” (Jung, 1992, p. 74). According to Jung (1992)

Man has two aims: the first is the natural aim, the begetting of children and the business of protecting the brood. To this belongs the acquisition of money and social position. When this aim has been reached a new phase begins: the cultural aim. For the attainment of the former we have the help of nature and on top of that, education. For the attainment of the latter, little or nothing helps. Often indeed a false ambition survives, in that an old man wants to be a youth again, or at least feels he must behave like one, although in his heart he can no longer make believe. This is what makes the transition from the natural to the cultural phase so terribly difficult and bitter for many people. They cling to the illusion of youth or to their children, hoping to salvage in this way a last little scrap of youth (p. 74).

The older person tries to understand the nature of life in the face of death.

There is a search, in Erikson’s term, for integrity (Crain, 1985). The developmental task is to overcome the splitting of youth and age and find in each season an appropriate balance of the two. In late adulthood the archetypal figure of age dominates but it can take various forms of the creative, wise elder as long as a man retains his connection to youthful vitality, to the forces of growth in self and world. Man’s task is thus to sustain his youthfulness in a new form appropriate to late adulthood. To do this he must terminate and modify the earlier life structure (Levinson, 1978).

Some men can retire with dignity and security as early as 50, others as late as 70. Within this range, the age a man retires from formal employment and especially from a position of direct authority over other people should reflect his own needs, capabilities and life circumstances (Levinson, 1978). For the mature person, the continued expansion of life is obviously not the right principle, because “the descent towards life’s afternoon demands simplification, limitation, and intensification- in

other words, individual culture” (Jung in Jacobi, 1971, p. 133). After ‘retirement’ in this specific sense, he can engage in valued work, but it now stems more from his own creative energies than from external pressure and financial need. He is beyond the distinction between work and play and having paid his dues to society, he has earned the right to be and do what he himself finds most important. He can devote himself to the interests that flow directly from the depths of the self (Levinson, 1978). “Using the youthfulness still within him, he can enjoy the creative possibilities of the season. His task is thus to find a new balance of involvement with society and with the self” (Levinson, 1978, p. 36).

Generally speaking, with age most people come to be more comfortable with their different facets. They are less threatened by the opposite sex within and become more androgynous. Even physically, in old age, men and women become more alike and when the individual is capable of rising above his opposites and of seeing both sides of who he is, transcendence occurs (Boeree, 2006). “If a man creates a new form of self-in-world, late adulthood can be a season as full and rich as the others” (Levinson, 1978, p. 37). Some of the greatest intellectual and artistic works have been produced by men in their sixties, seventies and even eighties. Examples of these men include Picasso, Yeats, Verdi, Frank Lloyd Wright, Freud, Jung, Michelangelo and countless others. They have contributed their wisdom as elders in a variety of counseling, educative and supporting roles in family and community (Levinson, 1978). Late adulthood is thus a time of decline as well as opportunity for development. If a man can succeed at achieving a sense of integrity in his life, not simply of his virtue or achievement, but of his life as a whole then he can live without bitterness or despair during late adulthood. Finding meaning and value in his life, however imperfect, he can come to terms with death (Levinson, 1978).

More and more people are living into the eighties and beyond, but very little is known about development in those years and even Jung does not provide clear guidelines. One can therefore only speculate about this concluding segment of the life cycle but it must be noted that it is an oversimplification to regard the entire span of years after age 60 or 65 as a single period. Levinson (1978) offers the suggestion that a new period of time beginning at around 80 be referred to as late late-adulthood. For most men who survive to enter their eighties the process of aging is much more evident than the process of growth. Their life structure is usually comprised of only a few significant relationships and a preoccupation with immediate bodily needs and personal comforts. Under conditions of severe personal decline and social deprivation, life in this phase may lose all meaning but under more favourable conditions there is still opportunity for psychosocial development as well as senescence (Levinson, 1978).

Development means coming to terms with the process of dying and preparing for one's own death. At the end of all previous periods, part of the developmental work was to create a new basis for living, but a man in his eighties knows that his death is imminent and he lives in its shadow, and at its call. To be able to involve himself in living he must make his peace with dying. If he believes in the immortality of the soul, he must prepare for some kind of afterlife. If not, he may still be concerned with the fate of humanity and with his own immortality as a part of human evolution. To the extent that he is giving new meaning to life and death in general and to his own life and death in particular means that development is occurring. If he maintains his vitality, he may continue to be engaged in social life, providing others with an example of wisdom and personal nobility (Levinson, 1978).

Above all, he is reaching his ultimate involvement with the self, and as Levinson (1978) states:

What matters most now is his final sense of what life is about, his 'view from the bridge' at the end of the life cycle. In the end he has only the self and the crucial internal figures it has brought into being. He must come finally to terms with the self— knowing it and loving it reasonably well and being ready to give it up (p. 39).

Jung believed death to be the ultimate goal of life and that if a person could see it as such then they would not face it with fear but with the feeling of a 'job well done'. He viewed life after death as a continuation of life itself - a view that fits well with his theory of the unconscious as something that extends beyond any finite life and participates in the tensions of the universe (Crain, 1985).

4.9 Jung's Contributions

While Jungian theory has numerous critics, Jung's work has left a notable impact on psychology. His theory has had a marked influence on areas beyond the borders of psychology, especially literature and art (Crain, 1985). His concepts of introversion and extraversion have contributed to personality psychology and also influenced psychotherapy. Advice given by Jung to a patient suffering from alcoholism led to the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous, which has helped millions of people suffering from alcohol dependence (Cherry, 2011). Psychologists disillusioned with excessively positivist approaches that have brought psychology, and especially personology, to a sterile cul-de-sac, continue to look at his theory with interest (Crain, 1985).

Developmentalists in particular are increasingly recognising the importance of Jung's ideas, as is a growing body of empirical research. Neugarten's research, like Levinson's for example, documents some of the personality shifts Jung outlined (Crain, 1985). Jung is unique among personality theorists because of his emphasis on the second half of life, during which time the process of individuation is said to take place. This is a time in the life cycle neglected by many other psychologists but a time of significant psychological development nonetheless. For the Autumn and Winter seasons of life, Jung's psychology therefore has specific relevance (Mitchell, 2011).

The unorthodox methods for which Jung had been criticized seem no longer to be so 'unscientific' since they provide access to the unobservable and non-quantifiable facets of what it means to be human (Meyer et al., 2008). It is precisely this approach that makes Jung's psychology an applicable one for an investigation of an individual who has often been described as a marginal man.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of those of Jung's psychological insights that provide useful analytical tools for an investigation of a complex and creative life. The ensuing chapter provides a compilation of the findings from this investigation and is grounded within the framework of the personality shifts identified by Jung.

CHAPTER 5

THE LIFE OF FRANCIS BACON

5.1 Chapter Preview

The following chapter provides an overview of information pertaining to Francis Bacon's life. This overview is presented within the framework of the developmental shifts identified by Jung. These include, Childhood and Youth, comprising of *The First Half of Life*, The Middle Life and Old Age - part of *The Second Half of Life*, and *The Mid-life Crisis*, which marks the transition from the first period to the second. Bacon's lifespan is presented chronologically from his birth in 1909 to his death in 1992. A 'map' depicting this chronology is provided in appendix A. According to Jung, the individual's life begins before birth and continues beyond death. It is for this reason that events that occurred after Bacon's death have also been presented for consideration.

5.2 The First Half of Life (1909 -1949)

The first period, until the age of 35-40, is a time of outward expansion. Maturation forces direct the growth of the ego and the unfolding of capacities for dealing with the external world. Young people establish careers and families and they do what they can to advance up the social ladder of success. During this phase, a certain degree of lopsided development is necessary and even valuable for the young person who needs to dedicate himself to the task of mastering the outer world (Crain, 1985).

5.2.1 Childhood (Birth to Puberty)

“I think artists stay much closer to their childhood than other people. They remain far more constant to those early sensations. Other people change completely but artists tend to stay the way they have been from the beginning” - Bacon (in Peppiatt, 2009, p.3).

The influence of parents and other early caregivers is significant in this period because the family inheritance leads the child to unconsciously act out and become an instrument for the incarnation of the ancestral unconscious. This ancestral inheritance shapes the life of the child in the way that it insidiously creeps into the core of the child's being (Levy, 2009).



Figure 5.1. Paralytic Child Walking on All Fours (Detail) - From Muybridge (Bacon, 1961). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The Ancestral Inheritance. Francis Bacon was born in Dublin on the 28th October 1909. He was the second of five children born to an English mother and an Anglo-Irish father. His father, Captain Anthony Edward Mortimer ('Eddy') Bacon, was a veteran of the Boer War (Peppiatt, 1996). A retired army captain, he earned his living as a horse trainer. Horse-owners, trainers and fanciers tend to be individualistic and capricious people and Bacon's family had more than its fair share of such tendencies. According to Bacon, his father's career was an unsuccessful one, but one which he nonetheless pursued with great passion. He remembers his father being a highly-strung, intolerant, dictatorial character. While not unintelligent, he could be belligerent and argumentative (Russell, 1971).

Bacon's mother, Christina Winifred (Winnie) Firth, was heiress to a Sheffield steel business and coal mine. Her family did not have the ancestral pedigree of the Bacons, who claimed to be collateral descendents of the Elizabethan philosopher and statesman, Francis Bacon, but she was much wealthier than her husband (Davies, 1978). While described as being somewhat self-absorbed, she had an easy-going, gregarious nature and the gift of getting on with a wide variety of people (Russell, 1971).

Bacon's beautiful great-great-grandmother, Lady Charlotte Harley, was intimately acquainted with Lord Byron who dedicated *Childe Harold* to her. At one stage, Queen Victoria had given Bacon's paternal grandfather the chance to revive the family title of Lord Oxford, but he refused for financial reasons. Bacon rarely discussed his illustrious roots, preferring to portray himself as an outcast, "destined to carve his own path in the world" (Peppiatt, 1996, p.5).

Sins of the Father. “Surely there is nothing worse than the dusty saddle lying in the hall” (Bacon in Peppiatt, 2009, p. 395). According to Caroline Blackwood, whose Irish upbringing had been similar to Bacon’s, this poignant phrase was how the artist summed up his memories of the kind of horsey, Anglo-Irish family life he and Blackwood had both known (Peppiatt, 2009). In upper-class families parents were often absent and it was regarded as a regular occurrence that children would develop stronger attachments to their nannies (Farson, 1993). Bacon and his older brother, Harley, two younger sisters, Ianthe and Winifred, and a younger brother, Edward, were raised by a Cornish woman named Jessie Lightfoot who became Bacon’s closest companion (Peppiatt, 1996).

He was an awkward child and found it difficult to live up to the standards set by his father who established a puritanical tone in the home and used frequent whippings to instill discipline in the children. Home life for Bacon was cold and fraught and his father had little time for him (Davies, 1978). The only time he ever saw his father openly show emotion towards a human being was on the death of his four year-old brother. No emotions, other than impotent rage, were ever shown towards Bacon and he never spoke of his parents apart from rare references to his narrow-minded father as being an ‘absolute bastard’ (Farson, 1993). To make matters worse, Bacon was further diminished in his father’s eyes after he developed chronic asthma, which would flare up terribly if he went anywhere near a horse or a dog. This of course meant that he could not pursue any of the things his father loved doing like horse riding or hunting and it became clear that Bacon was never going to fulfill any of his parent’s expectations of him. His asthma subsequently became a life-long affliction and he would develop an attack at the mere thought of returning home (Farson, 1993).

There is no indication that he felt the least affection for his mother, or that she loved him. His sister, Ianthe, recalled in an interview that Francis did not have a lot in common with their mother who didn't take much notice of his art (Bacon's Arena, 2005). Certainly, her indifference to her son's attempts to get her attention by showing her the drawings that he brought home did not endear her to him (Davies, 1978). His drawings in those early days were decorative pictures of 1920s ladies with cloche hats and cigarette holders. From his parents, he had grown to expect abandonment (Russell, 1971). Jessie Lighfoot alone remained a constant in his life (Farson, 1993).

When war broke out in 1914, Bacon's father took a job in the War Office and the family moved to London (Russell, 1971). After the war they went back to a changed Ireland. A shadow of violence had been cast over the countryside after the War of Independence (1919-1921) and Civil War (1922-23), and this had a particular impact on the Protestant gentry, of which the Bacons were a part (Davies, 1978). The constant threat of danger and the sound of guns outside their homes was a prominent feature in Bacon's early life. The family ended up moving back and forth between England and Ireland, changing houses every year or two and never having a permanent home (Russell, 1971). Shifting houses often during this period led to a feeling of displacement that would remain with the artist throughout his life. It is not surprising then that he tended to portray man in various states of loneliness (Farson, 1993). The war did indeed have an effect on much of Bacon's art work. When questioned about his subject-matter, he would often refer to it as being the history of Europe in his life-time (Russell, 1971).

5.2.2 Youth and Early Adulthood (teens to 40's)

Of his youth Bacon said: “I had no upbringing at all. I simply used to work on my father’s farm” (Farson, 1993, p. 15).



Figure 5.2. Francis Bacon with a Rembrandt self-portrait (Penn, 1962).
© Condé Nast Publications Inc. 1963/
© The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

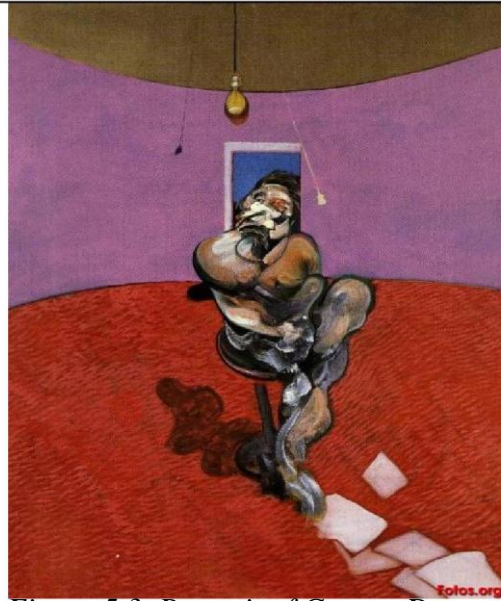


Figure 5.3. Portrait of George Dyer talking (Bacon, 1966). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

Maturational Forces and the Growth of the Ego. Having been so frequently uprooted also meant that Bacon’s only prolonged experience of formal schooling was at the Dean Close School, Cheltenham, where he boarded from the autumn of 1924 to the spring of 1926. Though not Irish, he had absorbed Ireland from his earliest conscious moments. Attempts to make him ‘less Irish’ by sending him to the Dean Close School were a complete failure because he always ran away and eventually left the school just as he was about to be expelled (Russell, 1971). According to Russell,

(1971) “It was a matter of inmost instinct with him that he should shift his ground, settling nowhere, identifying only with his own vagrant impulses” (p. 16).

Bacon's very limited formal education was also partly due to his chronic asthma. To ease his suffering during attacks he was given morphine and privately tutored in Nineteenth Century style by the local clergymen. Left to his own devices for long periods at a time, he developed an awareness of life that was quite independent of formal education. This awareness was further enhanced by the fact that he spent a great deal of time with his eccentric relatives (Russell, 1971). He even lived for a period with his maternal grandmother and step-grandfather, Winifred and Kerry Supple. He was close to Granny Supple, who openly disliked her son-in-law (Davies, 1978).

The homes of these relatives were full of paintings and this was Bacon's first introduction to the idea of art as something that entered directly into the life around him. Granny Supple's house near Abbeyleix, for example, contained the bow-ended rooms that would later echo in the backdrops of many of his paintings (Russell, 1971). The Supples were socialites and there were often visiting guests in their home, exposing Bacon to the company of a wide variety of interesting people with whom he learned to interact despite being a shy child (Russell, 1971).

Creating an Identity. Bacon was handsome and had a magnetic presence that people found alluring (Peppiatt, 1996). He enjoyed dressing up and at a fancy dress party at the family house in Suffolk, he dressed as a flapper with an Eton crop, beaded dress, lipstick, high heels, and a long cigarette holder. It was behaviour like this, coupled with his effeminate manner, that enraged his father and created even more of a distance between them (Farson, 1993). Throughout his life he continued to pay close

attention to his appearance. He liked to rouge his cheeks, tint his hair and enjoyed wearing women's suspenders under his trousers (Jones, 2005).

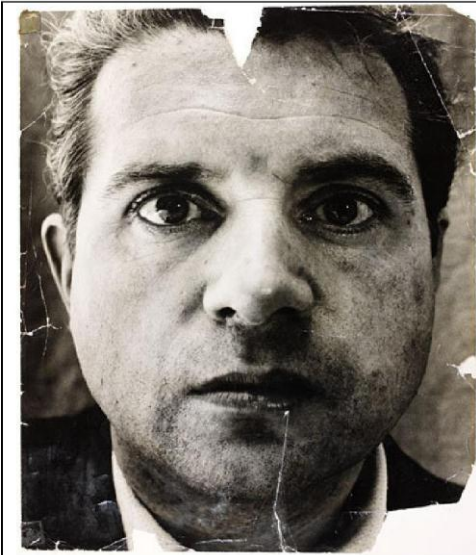


Figure 5.4. Portrait of Francis Bacon
(Deakin, 1952). © Conde Nast 2009.



Figure 5.5. Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1969).
© The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon the bachelor was always smartly dressed in public, appearing wealthy, debonair and vaguely aristocratic. His beautiful manners and gift for cosmopolitan and generous hospitality he acquired in youth from his grandmother (Davies, 1978). In formal society, he gave the impression of giving his whole self to any company he was in and then just as effortlessly he would suddenly disappear (Peppiatt, 2006). According to Peppiatt (2006), few men have been so at home in so many worlds, or so adept in adjusting from one to another. He had the appearance of a latter day Edwardian gentleman and managed to maintain his unique and striking looks even in old age despite being a heavy social drinker (Jones, 2005).

Puberty and The Mighty Eros. Family friend Caroline Blackwood claimed that Bacon had once told her that he had had his first sexual experiences with his

father's Irish grooms and that his father had arranged for him to be horsewhipped by them (Peppiatt, 2009). In adulthood Bacon confessed to having felt attracted to his father and this strong physical attraction had aggravated his sense of humiliation as a teenager (Russell, 1971). Throughout adolescence his emerging homosexuality strained relations with his family and matters came to a head when Captain Bacon caught his son trying on his mother's underwear while admiring himself in front of a large mirror (Farson, 1993). Bacon was subsequently expelled from the household in 1926 and spent the autumn and winter in London with the help of an allowance of three pounds a week from his mother's trust fund. There he lived on his instincts, simply drifting, and reading Nietzsche (Peppiatt, 1996).

The sixteen-year-old Bacon had no idea of what he wanted to do and he went from job to job, occasionally engaging in furtive encounters with older men. He thought nothing of petty theft or of riffling through the pockets of the men he picked up. In a final attempt to 'straighten his son out', Bacon's father sent him to a friend and relation named Harcourt-Smith, an ex-army man who was known for his 'manliness'. Bacon later recounted with considerable amusement that his father's plan went horribly wrong because he and Harcourt-Smith ended up in bed together (Davies, 1978). Harcourt-Smith had taken Bacon to the decadent, liberal city of Berlin in the early spring of 1927. After tiring quickly of the young man, he departed with a woman, leaving Bacon stranded. Not knowing what to do, Bacon had hung on for a while, wandering around Berlin and absorbing the local culture. According to Peppiatt (1996) "the erotic life of the city was startlingly uninhibited and artistically it thrived with new developments in architecture, painting and cinema" (p. 26). This was Bacon's first overwhelming cultural experience and he savoured Berlin's opulence as well as its squalor (Peppiatt, 1996). Despite his father's hopes, Berlin freed Bacon to

explore his sexual identity and he later came to view his time in Berlin as one of emotional awakening (Peppiatt, 2009). The relationship with his father had always been a difficult one but when his father died on 1 June 1940, Bacon was unexpectedly named sole Trustee and Executor of his Will. His father had requested that the funeral be as private and simple as possible (Peppiatt, 1996). There appears to be no record of how Bacon carried out these wishes or of what impact the death may have had on him.

Early Imprints and The Unfolding of Capacities for Dealing with the World. It was in the cinema that Bacon was to see the scene of a nurse shot in the eye and screaming on the Odessa Steps from Eisenstein's 1925 film, *The Battleship Potemkin* (Russell, 1971). He kept a photographic still of the scene in his studio and this reference, in several guises, is probably his most pervasive image (Harrison, 2006).



Figure 5.6. Still from *The Battleship Potemkin* 1925 (Eisenstein, 1898 - 1948).



Figure 5.7. Study for the Head of a Screaming Pope (Bacon, 1952). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon called the image a catalyst for his work and incorporated the shape of the mouth in subsequent work. Following an operation he had on the roof of his own mouth in the 1930's he even purchased a second-hand book on diseases of the mouth containing high quality, hand-coloured plates of open mouths. The operation had been an ordeal for Bacon who was terrified of hospitals and the image of the mouth obsessed him for the remainder of his life (Harrison, 2006). When pressed on the meaning of the open mouth, Bacon revealed,

I've always been very moved by the movements of the mouth and the shape of the mouth and teeth. People say that these have all sorts of sexual implications... I like, you may say, the flutter and colours that come from the mouth, and I've always hoped in a sense to be able to paint the mouth like Monet painted a sunset (Sylvester, 2000, p. 29).

After saving a bit of money in Berlin, Bacon decided to go to Paris where, despite his own recollections of being painfully awkward and shy, he met Yvonne Bocquentin, a pianist and art connoisseur, at the opening of an exhibition. Bacon had a remarkable ability to make the acquaintance of people who could help him develop his talents, and for three months he lived with Madame Bocquentin and her family at their house near Chantilly where he learned to speak French and visited the city's art galleries (Sylvester, 1987.) It was there that he saw Nicolas Poussin's *Massacre of the Innocents*, (c.1630, Château de Chantilly, Musée Condé) and its portrayal of a screaming mother trying to protect her infant. Bacon viewed the image as the best human cry ever painted and he again used the screaming mouth as a reference for his own work stating . . .

You could say that a scream is a horrific image; in fact, I wanted to paint the scream more than the horror. I think if I had really thought about what causes somebody to scream it would have made the scream that I tried to paint more successful. In fact they were too abstract (Sylvester, 2000, p. 29).

His visit to a 1927 exhibition of drawings by Picasso further aroused his artistic interest and thereafter he took the train into the city five or more times a week to see film shows and art exhibitions. He spent the next year and a half in Paris where the drawings and Cubist paintings of Picasso inspired him to start drawing and painting despite his having no formal art education (Peppiatt, 1996). Years later, in an interview with Francis Jacobetti (2003) for *The Art Newspaper*, Bacon spoke of Picasso with great reverence when he said,

Picasso is the reason why I paint. He is the father figure, who gave me the wish to paint. Picasso was the first person to produce figurative paintings which overturned the rules of appearance; he suggested appearance without using the usual codes, without respecting the representational truth of form, but using a breath of irrationality instead, to make representation stronger and more direct; so that form could pass directly from the eye to the stomach without going through the brain. Picasso opened the door to all these systems. I have tried to stick my foot in the door so that it does not close (para. 10).

Climbing the Social Ladder. “I should have been, I don’t know, a con-man, a robber or a prostitute. But it was vanity that made me choose painting, vanity and chance” (“Artist Francis Bacon Quotes,” 2011, para. 7)



Figure 5.8. *Untitled* (Bacon, 1960-1970). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

At the end of 1928 Bacon decided to return to London where he was often broke and managed to survive by dodging rent and resorting to petty theft (Russell, 1971). To supplement his income, he briefly tried his hand at domestic service, but although he enjoyed cooking, he quickly became bored and resigned. He worked for a short while in a telephone answering position at a shop selling women's clothing in Soho and was fired after inadvertently sending a poison pen letter to the owner (Farson, 1993). During this time he was befriended by Geoffrey Gilbey the racing correspondent for the *Daily Express* and worked for a time as his racing secretary. He developed a taste for good food and wine and found that he attracted a certain type of rich man. He quickly took advantage of this and advertised himself on the front page of *The Times* as a 'gentleman's companion' (Peppiatt, 1996). Of this work he remarked, "The replies used to pour in and my old nanny used to go through them all and pick out the best ones. I must say she was *always* right" (Peppiatt, 1996, p. 55).



Figure 5.9. *Three Studies of Isabel Rawsthorne (Detail)* (Bacon, 1967). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Among the many answers to his advertisements that were carefully screened by Nanny Lightfoot was one from an elderly cousin of Douglas Cooper, the owner of one of the finest collections of modern art in England at the time. The gentleman

found him part-time work as a telephone operator in a London club and sought Cooper's help in promoting Bacon's developing skill as a designer of furniture and interiors (Peppiatt, 1996). Bacon then set himself up in a studio at 17 Queensberry Mews West, South Kensington, where he began making Art Deco-style furniture, usually in stainless steel and glass. His furniture designs caught the attention of *The Studio* magazine, which presented them as examples of the '1930 Look in British Decoration' (Russell, 1971). This was a significant achievement considering it was his first foray into the creative world as a designer and it is often the case that even the very talented get no recognition at all. He managed to sell some of his work with the majority of it being acquired by the Australian Post-Cubist painter, Roy de Maistre, who became a close friend and mentor (Davies, 1978).

Establishing a Career. De Maistre played a pivotal role in guiding Bacon in his first steps in oil painting and eventually he produced a body of work to mount a modest exhibition of paintings and rugs in Queensberry Mews (Davies, 1978). At the age of 23 Bacon painted his first truly original work, *Crucifixion*, 1933.



Figure 5.10. *Crucifixion* (Bacon, 1933). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

At this stage he enjoyed some initial success as an artist. He became dismissive of his work as a designer, turning his nose up at his own designs (Kimmelman, 1989). In the same year, *Crucifixion*, 1933, was reproduced in Herbert Read's book, *Art Now* and purchased by the collector, Sir Michael Sadler (Russell, 1971). Bacon subsequently began devising plans to deal in his own work and organize his own shows, so he set up a gallery space in the cellar of Sunderland House in Mayfair. His first solo show, *Paintings by Francis Bacon*, of seven of his oil paintings and five or six gouaches was held in February 1934 at the new *Transition* gallery (Peppiatt, 1996).

Attempts to Master the Outer World. Despite these small successes, Bacon found it difficult to make a living and after such a promising start, his career began to slide. His one-man show at the Transition Gallery in February 1934 sold poorly and received a derogatory notice in *The Times*. He responded by destroying all but two of the works from the show including *Wound for a Crucifixion*, despite having a prospective purchaser in Eric Alden (Peppiatt, 1996). This was one of a very few paintings over whose loss Bacon later expressed regret. In the summer of 1936 he was again rejected as an artist when the International Surrealist Exhibition in London snubbed his work on the grounds that it was insufficiently surreal. Bacon became discouraged and worked only sporadically as a painter, returning to his previous life of drifting and supporting himself with odd jobs (Peppiatt, 1996). His domestic arrangements were also unstable and for a number of years he shared various living quarters with his old nanny Jessie Lightfoot.

In January 1937, at Thomas Agnew and Sons, he participated in a group show, *Young British Painters*. Agnew's was then known for shows of Old Masters

paintings. Although Bacon's success ultimately rested on his novel approach to figuration, his approach toward painting was profoundly traditional and the Old Masters were an important source of inspiration for him. In this collection, much of the iconography and style that was to become characteristic of Bacon's work first started to emerge (Peppiatt, 1996). His early paintings were influenced by Old Masters like Grünewald, Velasquez and Rembrandt, but also by Picasso's late 1920s and early 1930s biomorphs and the early work of the Surrealists (Zweite, 2006).

The Destructive Instinct. Only three works survived from the *Young British Painter's* exhibition and it was to be the last time that Bacon would put his paintings on show again until 1945. Very few of Bacon's early paintings survived as he regarded the paintings from his early years as so terrible that he painted over most of them or bought back others in order to destroy them (Kimmelman, 1989).

Bacon could be careless about leaving canvases behind in the places he had stayed and those who came after him would find them and sell them. The playwright Frank Norman attested to the artist's penchant for destructiveness when he witnessed a scene years later in Bond street when Bacon passed a gallery and spotted one of his discarded paintings. Going inside, he asked how much it cost and was told £50,000.00. Without a moment's hesitation he wrote out a cheque for the painting, carried it outside and stomped it to destruction on the pavement (Farson, 1993). His tendency to destroy or 'self-edit', was particularly prominent during his early years but continued as a theme throughout his life (Farson, 1993; Harrison & Daniels, 2008; Kimmelman, 1989; Peppiatt, 1996; Russell, 1971).



Figure 5.11. *Painting* (Bacon, 1978). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon/DACS 2008.

Finding a Niche. Towards the end of 1943, Bacon and Eric Hall took the ground floor of 7 Cromwell Place, South Kensington. Eric Hall was another one of Bacon's earliest patrons whom he had met while working at the telephone exchange in 1929. Hall was a married and influential member of the community who continued an intimate and tumultuous affair with the artist for a number of years (Davies, 1978). The affair ended in 1950 but Hall remained a loyal patron, friend and supporter nonetheless (Peppiatt, 1996). Cromwell Place was high-vaulted, north lit and had been damaged by a bomb but this did not deter Bacon from moving in. He was able to adapt a large billiard room at the back of the house into a studio and also used the house to operate an illegal casino with Eric Hall. Nanny Lightfoot moved in with the two men and because there was a lack of space, used the kitchen table as her bed (Peppiatt, 1996).

It was while living at Cromwell place that Bacon slowly began painting in earnest for the first time and the work he painted started to show an increasingly

recognisable style. The Second World War played a significant role in this regard because Bacon who had been pronounced unfit for active service in the war had volunteered for a role in Civil Defence where he worked in ARP (Air Raid Precautions). The job entailed civilian rescue and the recovery of the dead. Bacon carried these duties out until 1942 when he was forced to resign because his asthma had worsened amidst the dusty, rubble-strewn streets (Harrison, 2006).

The experience of treading among the ruins of bombsites seemed to prompt him to produce work with a more concentrated and visceral imagery. *Figure Getting Out of a Car* (c. 1939 - 1940) is evidence of this and was suggested by a photograph of Hitler getting out of a car at one of the Nuremburg rallies. The composition of *Man in a Cap* 1943 derives from a picture of Joseph Goebbels that appeared in *Picture Post*. A photograph of Hitler from the same issue was the basis for *Seated Man* and the more roughly painted *Man Standing* (Harrison & Daniels, 2008).



Figure 5.12. *Man in a Cap* (Bacon, 1943). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

There were other channels of influence too, including the poems of T.S. Eliot, whose play *The Family Reunion* inspired in him a rich source of ideas and sensations. *The Oresteia* by the ancient Greek dramatist, Aeschylus was another. He savoured the evocative translations from the trilogy in W.B. Stanford's *Aeschylus in his Style*, an academic study he bought soon after its publication in 1942. The Oresteia's treatment of an ill-starred family trapped within a murderous cycle of revenge and guilt held him enthralled in a way that began to seep into his paintings (Baldassari, 2005).

The Creative Instinct. Bacon said the following about his attitude towards what he produced,

I'm working for myself; what else have I got to work for? How can you work for an audience? What do you imagine an audience would want? I have got nobody to excite except myself, so I am always surprised if anyone likes my work sometimes. I suppose I'm very lucky, of course, to be able to earn my living by something that really absorbs me to try to do, if that is what you call luck ("The Art Story Foundation," 2011, para. 2).

The living space at 7 Cromwell Place enabled Bacon to produce the painting that unsettled his first audience. This was his first major canvas, the triptych, *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* 1944. The triptych was hung in a group exhibition at the Lefevre Gallery in April 1945, only weeks before the end of the war in Europe (Russell, 1971). Another one of his works, *Figure in a Landscape*, 1945 was also included in the show, but it was *Three Studies* that aroused the attention of the public and critics. Bacon's part-human, part-animal, eyeless creatures with bared teeth and elongated, phallus-like necks were perched on pedestals in rooms like those experienced at fun houses ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).



Figure 5.13. *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (Bacon, 1944).

© Tate London 2009.

The Primordial Image. “When I paint, I want to paint an image from my imagination, and this image is subsequently transformed” (Interview with Giacobetti, 2003, para. 14). Nothing like the *Three Studies* had ever been seen before and the painting aptly captured the residual feeling of angst and claustrophobia that was characteristic of war damaged England. At a time when painting in Britain, like so much else, had become enervated, these striking images symbolised renewed vitality (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007). Visitors to the Lefevre Gallery were shocked and disorientated by the paintings. They may not have liked Bacon’s work, but they were never to forget it. Bacon had made his mark (Kimmelman, 1989).

Despite the title, the figures in the painting were inspired by the Furies who pursued Orestes in Aeschylus’s tragedy. In the works that followed, he continued to combine imagery that could shock with traditional religious or literary sources, depicting crucifixions, screaming popes, and tortured bodies as he captured the brutality and isolation of those pushed to the limits of endurance. In doing so, he has been described as having expanded the figurative tradition of Western painting (Archimbaud, 1994). “Great art” said Bacon “is deeply ordered. Even if within the

order there may be enormously instinctive and accidental things, nevertheless they come out of a desire for ordering and for returning fact onto the nervous system in a more violent way” (Genn, n.d., The Order Category, para. 42).

5.3 The Second Half of Life (1949 - 1992)

Individuals are prompted to turn their energy away from the mastery of the external world and to begin focusing on their inner selves. They feel inner urgings to listen to the unconscious to learn about the potentials they have so far left unrealized (Crain, 1985). When more attention is given to what Jung calls the ‘archetypal unconscious’ and if “a man nourishes the archetypal figures and gives them a more valued place in his life, they will evolve and enrich his life in ways hardly dreamed of in youth” (Levinson, 1978, p.33).



Figure 5.14. Francis Bacon (Brandt, 1963). © Guardian News and Media Limited 2011.

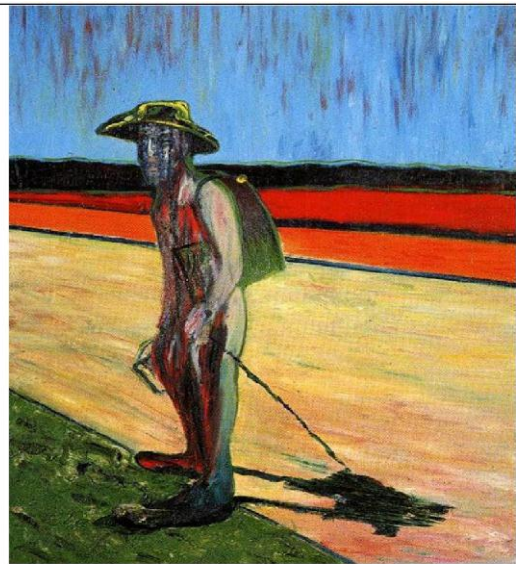


Figure 5.15. Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh V (Bacon, 1957). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

5.3.1 The Creative Accident

While *Three Studies* established Bacon, it was *Painting* 1946, which can be regarded as his *magnum opus*. Bacon described it as his “most unconscious work” (Peppiatt, 2006, p.17). In an interview with David Sylvester for the BBC he said:

It came to me as an accident. I was attempting to make a bird alighting on a field. And it may have been bound up in some way with the three forms that had gone before, but suddenly the line that I had drawn suggested something totally different and out of this suggestion arose this picture. I had no intention to do this picture; I never thought of it in that way. It was like one continuous accident mounting on top of another (Excerpt from the October 1962 interview).



Figure 5.16. *Painting* (Bacon, 1946). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2011.

“I have to hope that my instincts will do the right thing because I can’t erase what I have done. And if I drew something first, then my paintings would be illustrations of drawings” (Genn, n.d., The Instincts Category, para. 29) but “I want to create images that are a shorthand of sensation” (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 35).

In his work he frequently used the ‘creative accident’ - the act of splashing paint down and seeing how it lands on the canvas. Sometimes he would toss a bucket of paint across the canvas in order to promote spontaneity (Sylvester, 1975).



Figure 5.17. Jet of Water (Bacon, 1988). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

He placed heavy emphasis on the role of chance and accident in his work and denied using preparatory drawings, but he was really a much more deliberate artist than he admitted to being. Evidence uncovered in his studio after his death shows how he jotted down ideas for paintings in his own coded and elusive way. A comparison of several paintings and their sources reveals that he may have occasionally preferred to emulate the action of chance rather than to relinquish greater control (Cappock, 2005). “I want a very ordered image,” he said “but I want it to come about by chance” (Genn, n.d., *The Accidents Category*, para. 5). This apparent contradiction can be

understood in terms of Bacon's statement that "All painting is an accident. But it's also not an accident, because one must select what part of the accident one chooses to preserve" (Genn, n.d., *The Accidents Category*, para. 3). The creative process he described as:

A cocktail of instinct, skill, culture and a highly creative feverishness. It is not like a drug; it is a particular state when everything happens very quickly, a mixture of consciousness and unconsciousness, of fear and pleasure; it's a little like making love, the physical act of love. It can be as violent as fucking, like an orgasm or an ejaculation. The result is often disappointing, but the process is highly exciting (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 18).

The unpredictability of the 'creative accident' certainly signifies much of Bacon the artist and the man. He was the master magician, a conjurer of paint and he used accident in his painting with the compulsion of a gambler. He was a copious, perhaps compulsive gambler and this gambling grew out of his heightened awareness of the role of chance in life and one's vulnerability to it (Farson, 1993). Of this he said,

I'm greedy for life; and I'm greedy as an artist. I'm greedy for what I hope chance can give me far beyond anything I can calculate logically. And it's partly my greed that has made me what's called live by chance - greed for food, for drink, for being with the people one likes, for the excitement of things happening. So the same thing applies to one's work (F. Bacon, personal communication, March 23, 1963).

5.3.2 Middle life (1949 – 1969)

Before the balance of mid-life individuation can be reached, a person may experience a transitional period called the mid-life crisis.

5.3.2.1 The Mid-Life Crisis (Approximately 1944 – 1950's)

The process of reappraisal activates unconscious conflicts of earlier years and may keep a man from examining the real issues at mid-life, making it difficult for him to modify an oppressive life structure (Levinson, 1978). Reappraisal of one's life can involve emotional turmoil, despair, the sense of not knowing where to turn, or of being stagnant and unable to move at all (Jacobi, 1971). "It is a sort of second puberty - the dangerous age" (Jung, 1992, p. 75).

"And here you are...existing for a second" (Francis Bacon, personal communication).

Liminality. Painting 1946 was shown in several group shows and when Bacon

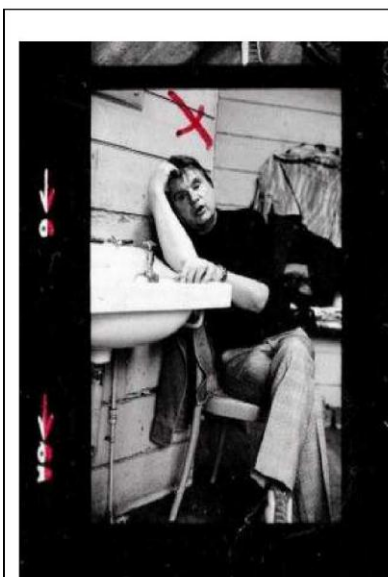


Figure 5.18. Francis Bacon (Stark, 1973). □
The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 5.19. Francis Bacon wearing Rolex GMT (Rolex, 2010).

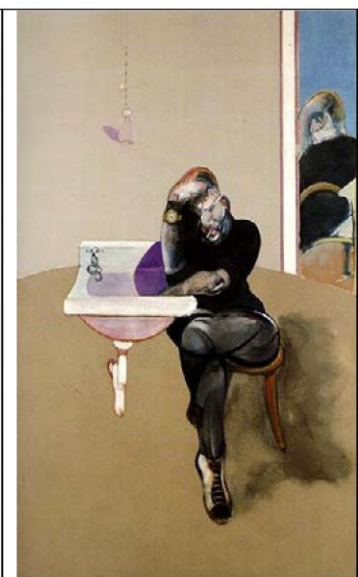


Figure 5.20. Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1973). □
The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

sold it to Erica Brausen, he did not make any attempt to build on this significant

breakthrough. In fact, he did the opposite and left immediately for Monte Carlo where he spent most of the next two years gambling with the proceeds of the sale. For the next 12 years he remained with Brausen's Hanover Gallery but did not mount a one-man show there until 1949 (Harrison, 2006). He spent large parts of the next few years on the Côte d'Azur, where the climate eased his asthma, the nightlife provided an outlet for his desires and the landscapes inspired him to do some inner reflection. The light of the coast impressed him, but this light made it difficult for him to paint and he scarcely completed any paintings while abroad. When faced with an imminent deadline, he would accomplish the greater part of his work in London ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). He admitted that his career was delayed because he had spent too long looking for a subject that would sustain his interest (Peppiatt, 1996).

Second Puberty - Storm and Stress Period. While gambling in Monte Carlo, he had a huge win, one so considerable that his friends urged him to return to England or entrust the money to someone to take back for him. Instead, he invited them to the Hotel de Paris for one of the most memorable dinners of their lives. Then he went back to the casino and promptly lost the rest of his money. On one occasion he broke into a friend's apartment and stole money so that he and his friends could spend the night gambling. After a winning streak he returned the same night and replaced the stolen money (Farson, 1993). He would occasionally turn to friends or even his dealers for help with a desperate financial situation that was caused by gambling. He would, for example, send letters to Brausen reassuring her that he was busy at work and that he needed additional funds while in reality he had nothing to show for himself (Farson, 1993).

As his first one-man show approached, Bacon returned to London and Cromwell Place in 1948 and rapidly built up a body of work. During this period he also spent a lot of time and energy in The Colony Room, which was a private drinking club at 41 Dean Street, Soho. It was known as Muriel's after Muriel Belcher, the formidable owner. Bacon was a founding member, and joined the day after its opening in 1948. He was 'adopted' by Belcher as a 'daughter', and was allowed free drinks and ten pounds a week to bring in friends and rich patrons (Farson, 1993). He had many drinking friends and hangers-on whom he would peremptorily jettison if he decided that they had become insincere. He led a wild life, using alcohol excessively and gambling. A big spender, he would lavishly spend money on his friends who claim that it was rare to see him without a bottle of champagne in his hand. He could usually be found in a restaurant or bar and his generosity meant that he always ensured that he had a coterie of people around him (Farson, 1993; Peppiatt, 1996; Russell, 1971).

At Muriel's or Wheeler's, Bacon always signed the bill, or the round was simply added to the tab. He would wave his bottle of champagne, slopping it into the glasses of those around him, spilling much of it on the floor, with the Edwardian toast: "Real pain for your sham friends, champagne for your real friends!", a habit he had acquired from his father (Farson, 1993, p.65). Some of his entourage included John Minton, the painter and illustrator, who also became a regular at Muriel's, as well as the painters Lucien Freud, Frank Auerbach, Timothy Behrens, Michael Andrews, the two Roberts, Colquhoun and MacBride, and most significantly for Bacon, the *Vogue* photographer, John Deakin (Farson, 1993).

The Incarnate Old Harry. Bacon's close personal friend and biographer, Michael Peppiatt, described the artist's 'magnetic presence', remarking that while Bacon...

Could light up the day with his wit and generosity; he could equally well plunge it into gloom; and part of the excitement of being with him lay in not knowing for long which way it would go. It was fascinating to watch such sudden changes and contradictions within one person...Bacon could not be pinned down. The closer you got to him, the more likely he was to turn nasty or simply disappear -- to go through a wall into a life where you could not follow (Brunet, 2009, p. 58).



Figure 5.21. Photograph of Francis Bacon ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 5.22. Three Studies from the Human Body (Bacon, 1967). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon was easily bored and prone to displaying inappropriate, intense anger, which he had difficulty controlling. For instance, Bacon had invited the host of a party

he had attended plus several newly-acquired acquaintances to dinner at Wheeler's. As soon as he sat down, his mood changed, obviously because he had re-assessed his view of his new companions. He called them all 'silly queens' and, when rebuked by the host, flung his glass of chablis into the man's face. Not surprisingly, the party broke up soon afterwards (Farson, 1993). Bacon could be moody and was notorious for his calculated cruelty when he was in a bad mood. "Like a man whose threshold narrowed as he sensed the onslaught of boredom, Francis claimed his victims. Yet he could display his charm with the skill of a conjurer" (Farson, 1993, p.66).

He had an anarchic fearlessness, which was unique and it seemed that the posher the occasion the more outrageously he would behave. On one particular occasion he actually booed Princess Margaret off a stage on which she was gamely singing. In his defence, the singing was reported as being too awful for words and he probably did everyone a favour, but considering that it was sporting, if vain, of the Princess to get up and sing in the first place, his reaction was regarded by others as cruel. He had little time for weakness in others and no patience for human foibles and small vanities (Farson, 1993). According to Michael Peppiatt in *The Observer Magazine* (2006a)

Somehow Francis got to the centre of your life. Being with him was such an enlivening experience that you wanted to have him at the centre of your life. I don't think he could have got through life being as difficult as he was if he hadn't had a hugely positive and vital effect on the people around him. You tended to get swept up in it (para. 8).

His voluble and witheringly sarcastic commentary, even of his friends, was balanced by loyalty and generosity. When called upon to make a contribution he was most obliging. When John Minton, for example, left for the West Indies and asked

Bacon to take over his post as a tutor at the school of painting at the Royal College of Art, Bacon agreed and for three months, he was thus on hand to talk to the students for two days a week (Peppiatt, 1996). Daniel Farson remembers an occasion when he had just lost his job and was so depressed that when Bacon came across him walking dejectedly in the street he immediately took pity on him and made sure that he had somewhere to stay and food to eat until he could get back on his feet again (Farson, 1993). John Deakin was another friend whom Bacon employed out of sympathy. Described by Barbara Hutton as ‘the nastiest man in the world’, Deakin had been fired by Vogue in 1948, but rehired later. He was sacked again for the last time in 1954 and this was when Bacon hired him (Harrison, 2006).

Making his Mark. The show held between 8 November and 10 December 1949 at Erica Brausen’s new Hanover Gallery was, in effect, his first professional one-man show. His paintings attracted the support of Wyndham Lewis who wrote in *The Listener* (1949): “The Hanover Show is of exceptional importance. Of the younger painters none actually paints so beautifully as Francis Bacon. Bacon is one of the most powerful artists in Europe today and he is perfectly in tune with his time” (p. 860). The following year he wrote of another exhibition: “Three large new canvases by Bacon prove him once more to be the most astonishingly sinister artist in England, and one of the most original” (Listener, 1950, p. 522). An article by Robert Melville titled *Francis Bacon* appeared in the December 1949 – January 1950 issue of *Horizon* magazine (edited by Cyril Connolly). Melville placed Bacon in the context of European painting and film, comparing and contrasting his work with that of Picasso, Duchamp, Eisenstein and, in particular, Salvador Dali and Buñuel’s *Un Chien*

d'Andalou (Peppiatt, 1996). For Bacon to receive this kind of attention meant that he had arrived in the art world.

In Camera. Bacon's mature style was established in the late 1940s when he evolved his earlier Surrealist style into an approach that borrowed from depictions of motion in film and photography, in particular the studies of figures in action produced by the early photographer Eadweard Muybridge. Photographs had always been a source of inspiration for Bacon (Harrison & Daniels, 2008). Many of his ideas and quirky compositional devices originated in the newspaper and magazine snapshots that he collected, and especially in the famous sequential photographs of prancing animals and walking, running and wrestling men that Muybridge took during the last quarter of the 19th century ("The Art Story Foundation," 2011).

Through photographs and other reproductions he was able to expand his repertory of attitudes and poses but return again to the source that had inspired him. He was keenly receptive to the physical nature of an image and in the twisted, awkward movements of Muybridge's figures, Bacon saw a repertory of images that were simultaneously startling and yet also commonplace. It was this impression of something sudden and unposed, yet absolutely true to life that he wanted to convey in his work (Kimmelman, 1989). From these images Bacon not only pioneered new ways to suggest movement in painting, but to bring painting and photography into a more coherent union. He was fascinated by medical x-rays and incorporated aspects of these images into his work. Some of his paintings, for example, contain areas that have been demarcated with arrows and the subjects of his paintings often give the impression of having been flayed. Bacon himself said, "don't forget I look at everything" ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007, The Biography section, para. 2).

John Deakin's photographs significantly contributed to Bacon's evolution into a portrait painter. He would pour over Deakin's contact sheets and it is thought that certain aspects of portrait photography reverberated within him poignantly. Deakin's models were, after all, Bacon's closest friends (Harrison, 2006). "One of the great fascinations of old photographs", Bacon said "apart from the texture, the scratches and stains and the general quality of them, is that you think, now they're all dead" (Harrison, 2006, p.163).

Existential Crisis. While Bacon had come alive in the art world, issues of existentialism were never far from his mind. He was never frightened of confronting the thought of death but when his old nanny Jessie Lightfoot died on 30 April 1951, he experienced her death as a significant blow. His closest companion, she had lived with him and been a part of his life since his childhood (Harrison, 2006). According to Farson (1993) it was thought that nanny Lightfoot was actually Bacon's mother but there is no evidence confirming this. He was devastated by her death and plunged into an emotional crisis. Unable to stay in the space they had shared for eight years without her, he reacted by selling the lease of the studio. "He spent the next four years in self-imposed exile, enduring a nomadic existence as he continually moved between apartments and borrowed studios" (Harrison, 2006 p.126).



Figure 5.23. *Man in Blue VII* (Bacon, 1954). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Change in Creative Mode. Lack of time had had a direct impact on what Bacon produced because his works became simpler and more focused in expression. They were also reduced to portrayals of single figures and dwelt on significant and disturbing details such as open mouths, teeth, ears and safety pins. *Head I*, 1948, with its restricted palette of greys and blacks established an ideal precedent for an artist who had found himself having to confront a deadline (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007).



Figure 5.24. *Head I* (Bacon, 1948). © The Estate of Francis Bacon / DACS 2009.

Bacon's subsequent paintings further departed from the earlier ones in that they were painted on the unprimed reverse side of the canvas. The artist had begun working in this way while still in Monte Carlo when he realised that he had run out of materials and was forced, perhaps out of desperation, to use the back of an already painted canvas (Bragg, 1985). In an interview with Melvyn Bragg for the South Bank

Show *Francis Bacon* (1985) on London Weekend Television, Bacon said the following:

Well, I was living once down in Monte Carlo and I had lost all my money, and, I had no canvases left and so, the few I had I just turned them, and I found that what is called the wrong side, the unprimed side of the canvas worked for me very much better. So I've always used them. So it was just by chance that I had no money to buy canvases with.

From 1948 on, Bacon painted only on the unprimed side of his canvas, which ideally suited his technique and temperament for the medium's uncompromising nature additionally provided him with a challenge. The raw canvas weave held the paint with more bite, enhanced its texture and allowed thinner applications to be absorbed permitting him to create the effects he wanted ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). He enjoyed going against the norm and the use of the 'wrong side' of the canvas possibly also carried a hint of 'difference' as did his insistence on expensive gilt frames. Despite his unconventional use of the unprimed side of the canvas, he was ironically, an old fashioned, conventional easel painter who used the traditional materials, oils and form of the great masters (Steffen, 2004). The gilt frames gave the work status, implying a sense of worth and old school grace. By combining the known (respectability associated with the gilt frames) with the unknown (the content of his work), Bacon rearranged the contextual expectations of the viewer and in so doing heightened the visual impact of his work. The presentational effect was further augmented by the fact that he liked having his paintings shown under glass, an uncommon practice and it is thought that he did this in order to have the viewer's own reflection mirrored in the image and thus drawn in and involved in the action portrayed (Cooper, 2011).

5.3.2.2 Exploration and Nourishment of Archetypal Images

“Images help me find and realise ideas. I look at hundreds of very different, contrasting images and I pinch details from them, rather like people who eat from other people’s plates” (Interview with Giacobetti, 2003, para. 15). Bacon described seeing images ‘in series’, and his artistic output often saw him focus on single themes for sustained periods (Sylvester, 2000). According to Peppiatt (2006b) the 50’s hold a lot of the clues as to who Bacon was and that this was when he located his biggest themes and focused especially on the question of man’s existence. An atheist, he was not governed by reverence of the papal figure or of the crucifixion (Yard, 1999). He painted variations on the crucifixion and later focused on half-human, half-grotesque heads, best exemplified by the 1949 *Heads in a Room* series (Hammer, 2005). The painting that stood apart though, was *Head VI*, 1949, with its sensuous purple cape.



Figure 5.25. *Head VI* (Bacon, 1949). © The Estate of Francis Bacon / DACS 2009.

When *Head VI* was exhibited in London it was met with “outrage and recognition” (Sinclair, 1993. p. 112). The painting stimulated much discussion because the image was seen as blasphemous. Author Andrew Sinclair commented on Bacon’s work and his reaction to the criticism:

Captive and monster, the sixth ‘Head’ protests and devours: his holy office is snare and threat. He is held in a skeletal cube that is a dead loss, a boxed hell without escape. The picture assaults the power of the Church: it is blasphemous. It represents Bacon’s heresy and protests against the rule of the organized religion, which he had known in Ireland. He told a shocked reporter that his *Heads* were ‘an attempt to make a certain type of feeling visual’. The feeling was his own fear of mortality and rage against authority. ‘Painting is the pattern of one’s own nervous system being projected onto the canvas’ (Sinclair, 1993, p. 111).

Undeterred by critics Bacon devised a suite of eight papal variations as well as *Study for Portrait I-VIII*, remarkable for its “macabre invention and economy of means” (Yard, 1999, p.13). *Study for Portrait I* grew out of a portrait of the critic David Sylvester who championed his work and became a valued friend (Sylvester, 1998a). Velázquez’s *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 1650 was another significant theme Bacon exploited consistently throughout the following decade (Sylvester, 2000). He hung a photograph of it on his studio wall and took artistic licence by fusing the image of the Pope with the scream of his other primary source, the still of the screaming nurse from Eisenstein’s film, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). The combination was done to memorable effect in the painting he called *Study after Velázquez*, 1950 (Sylvester, 2000). In 1953 he perfected his original achievement of *Head VI*, 1949 with *Study after Velázquez’s Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 1953. Of *Velázquez’s* painting, Bacon said: ‘I’ve always thought that this one was one of the greatest paintings in the world and I’ve had a crush on it’ (Sylvester, 2000, p. 42).



Figure 5.26. Velázquez's
Portrait of Pope Innocent
X, 1650.



Figure 5.27. Study after
Velázquez III (Bacon,
1950). © The Estate of
Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 5.28. Study after
Velázquez (Bacon, 1953). ©
The Estate of Francis Bacon
2009.

Bacon continually denied any implied meaning within these paintings despite numerous conjectures by critics of the papal 'Father figure' being a method of invoking his own father (Sylvester, 2000, p. 42). Surprisingly, Bacon never saw the original painting done by Velázquez and his experience of the image was entirely by way of reproductions. Years later in Rome he had the opportunity to view the painting but refused to do so and avoided visiting the gallery. When asked by Wiseman, Behr and Mooney in an interview for *Newsweek* (1977) why he did not go and see the work he replied,

I'm a very lazy person. When I see pictures even that I like I can't look at them for long because I find that it's afterward that they begin to work on me, that they unlock valves of sensation within me. It's what I receive from them that counts (para. 12).

Bacon's painting, thought to have been destroyed, remained hidden for 50 years until it was eventually recovered after his death ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).

The Phase of the Chimerical Creatures. By the 50's Bacon had acquired sufficient technical prowess as a painter and expressed his vision with force. He was eager to explore themes and take risks and created images that contained a rawness and sense of urgency that some thought was lost in his later works (Peppiatt, 2006b). In an interview with Joe Heaney for *Gay Times* (2006), Peppiatt remarked on this period of Bacon's life stating:

I've always been fascinated by the 50s because it seems to me Bacon was at his most fierce. He was very footloose. He seemed to explore a wide variety of themes, from landscapes to animals - he even did some paintings of children. He hadn't become fixed in one vision. All those great series come in the 50s - the Pope, the Van Gogh series, the William Blake series, some of crucifixions, all those animal paintings. It was a very inventive decade (para. 18).

Some of the themes he explored came from his trip to South Africa where his mother had moved after his father's death. His sisters Ianthe and Winnie had settled in neighbouring Zimbabwe. The sight of wild animals moving through the long grass affected him and he evoked the sensation in several canvases in 1952, notably *Study of a Figure in a Landscape*, 1952. On his first voyage back in 1951, he stopped off for a couple of days in Cairo where he took in the ancient Egyptian art, which he enormously admired. From 1953 to 1954 he painted four works based on the great Sphinx ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).

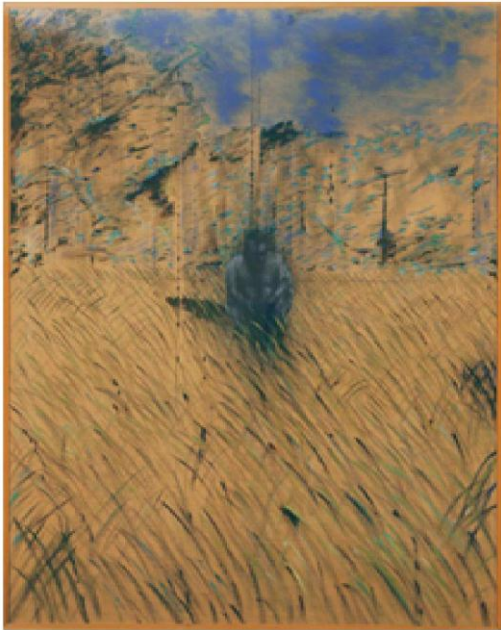


Figure 5.29. *Study of a Figure in a Landscape* (Bacon, 1952). © The Estate of Francis Bacon / DACS 2008.

Bacon had his detractors, but his international reputation continued to grow. His first solo exhibition outside England was held in 1953 at Durlacher Brothers, New York, and his first in Paris, at the Galerie Rive Droite, was held in 1957. In 1954 his work was featured in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, which he failed to attend even though he was in Rome. His first retrospective was held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, in 1955 and by 1957 Bacon's painting was undergoing a transformation in handling and colour. The change in his work became apparent at his exhibition at the Hanover Gallery in March that year where he presented six paintings inspired by Van Gogh's *The Painter on the Route to Tarascon*, 1888 (destroyed during the Second World War), including one painted the year before ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). It was not only Bacon's work that was changing, his lifestyle too appeared to be undergoing a metamorphosis of sorts.

5.3.2.3 Change in Life Structure

Bacon was a classic case of what might be called marginal man. He had never stuck to any one thing, one school, one home, one office, one profession, one way of life, one country (Russell, 1971). A period of transition was to follow and in October 1958 he signed a contract with Marlborough Fine Art. This arrangement ushered in a period of greater stability for the artist because the directors had offered to take on the considerable debt of £1,242 he then owed to the Hanover Gallery. Bacon respected the eye of Marlborough's co-founder Frank Lloyd, and the gallery's Valerie Beston was to handle his day-to-day affairs ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).

Three years later, in 1961, Bacon took over 7 Reece Mews, a converted coach house in South Kensington, just around the corner from his old studio at Cromwell place. The move brought an end to the ten-year period without a permanent studio of his own, and the change in circumstances had a profound effect on Bacon's life and art (Harrison, 2006). The first floor studio was to be the most important room in the artist's life and within months of moving in he produced *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, 1962 (Ogden, 2001).

Neglected Aspirations. There was a time in the late 1960s when Bacon had considered straying from painting by turning to sculpture. For several years he created sculptures in his head, a little smaller than lifesize, of the human figure. They were to be set in a simple, tubular steel framework, not unlike the ones which he had often used to isolate the human figure in his paintings, and each would be a unique cast. There were times when Bacon talked to people who could give him technical advice on his ideas and he almost developed a time-table for his debut as a sculptor, wondering in what kind of room the sculptures would look best (Harrison, 2006).

Suddenly though, around 1968, nothing more was heard of the idea because when his painting took off, as it did when Bacon began to work for his exhibition in Paris, there simply wasn't any room for the sculptural idea, or any need to pursue it further, since the new paintings consumed all his energy (Russell, 1971). He poured his energy and emotions into his art, often basing them on specific incidents in his life and it is thought that his dark relationships lay at the heart of his best work (Shockley, 2010). Any attempt to understand the artist would therefore not be complete without a review of his relationships.

5.3.2.4 Relationships

As Bacon's artwork may have marked the 50's as a significant period in his life, so too did his relationships. The whole decade was in fact overshadowed by his torturous relationship with Peter Lacy (Peppiatt, 2006).

The Sexual Question. Bacon's sexual preferences were a well known fact within the art world and amongst friends and acquaintances, but his homosexuality was not public knowledge until he was well into his 70s and even then he remained a very private person. Apart from rare references to the incidents with his father as a youth and the Irish grooms, he said very little about his sexuality in public. Even the obituary notices had few direct comments from him on the subject and information was often contradictory (Jones, 2005). Without any clear information, people fell back on generalisations. What is however known and has consistently been reported is that Bacon had many intense and unstable relationships throughout his life. It was claimed that he would start fights with sailors so that they would beat him up (Farson, 1993). One of his earlier lovers hurled him through a plate glass window, damaging his face so badly that his right eye had to be sewn back into place. Still claiming his love from

a hospital bed, it was weeks before he forgave fellow painter Lucian Freud for stepping in and admonishing his attacker (Shockley, 2010).

Bacon was homosexual in a time when unconventional sexual tastes were met with strong disapproval and the word 'queer' was used in a derogatory manner. Bacon however, disliked the word 'gay' and preferred to be called 'queer.' Despite appearing apparently at ease with his sexuality Peppiatt remembers that, privately, Bacon wasn't so comfortable "He used to say things like, its a defect. Its like being born with a limp" but on the other hand he assumed it fully (Heaney, 2006, para. 16). According to one of his oldest friends, the macho Peter Beard, Bacon may have been 'queer' but there was nothing camp about him and he declared vehemently,

I never saw one homosexual bone in Fran's body! He was the Rock of Gibraltar, the best of British. Hell, he wasn't camp, the guy used to take a leak in the sink! One time when we were walking through Paris, a car ran over his foot. The driver jumped out to help, but Fran just shrugged like the stoic he was. Next day his foot was so swollen he could hardly walk: that's what Hemingway called grace under pressure (Beard, 2008, p. 31).

There is little information available to indicate whether he involved himself with the gay liberation movement but it is thought that he would have regarded the movement as an intrusion into what he considered his private life (Jones, 2005). Richard Cork claims that although Bacon may have been very private he never made any attempt to hide his homosexuality and his paintings spoke out for him (BBC Arena, 1991). Some of his most erotic paintings are of male figures embracing and making love and he gave glimpses into personal moments in paintings like *Study of the Human Body*, 1949, which depicts a naked man behind a transparent curtain and *Two Figures*, 1953 (Jones, 2005).



Figure 5.30. *The Human Figure in Motion* (Muybridge, 1987).



Figure 5.31. *Two Figures* (Bacon, 1953).
© The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Two Figures, 1953 was based on a photographic study of wrestlers by Edward Muybridge and depicts two entwined male figures surrounded by a cage-like structure (Jones, 2005). The sense of interaction and enmeshment comes across powerfully in *Two Figures in the Grass*, 1954, again depicting two male figures engaged in some suggestive intimate activity and in *Figures in a Landscape*, 1956/1957 (Jones, 2005). The violent, passionate emotion also found its way into the Van Gogh series of paintings (Peppiatt, 2006).

Bacon had many casual affairs but there were only a few men that he is thought to have loved and with whom he had relatively consistent but always stormy relationships. Peter Lacy, a test pilot who had flown combat missions during the Battle of Britain, was one of these men. Bacon had met him after his affair with Eric Hall ended (Farson, 1993).

Destrudo Ergo Sum. Lacy was a known sadist and one of Bacon's closest friends remembers a conversation about whips and then being shown welts on Bacon's back (Farson, 1993). According to Peppiatt (2006), Bacon was obsessed with Lacy and he recalls the artist telling him that he could neither live with nor without the man. The relationship was a typically stormy one in which Lacy would beat Bacon up, tear up his paintings and then leave him on the street half conscious. Bacon was excited by violence and enjoyed being treated badly. Despite his effete appearance he could take a lot of punishment, but it is believed that he was pushed to his absolute limit by the affair with Lacy (Peppiatt, 2006).

On the opening day of the major Tate Gallery retrospective of Bacon's work in 1962, Lacey died, and in the midst of telegrams of congratulation, Bacon received one informing him of the death. He was deeply affected even though they had parted company years before but nonetheless managed to attend the opening and keep up appearances, acting as though nothing had happened. In memory of Lacy's final resting place, he painted the dark and ambiguous *Landscape near Malabata, Tangiers* in 1963 ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).

Some years after his relationship with Lacy ended, Bacon began a relationship with 39-year-old East-ender, George Dyer, in 1964. He claimed to have met Dyer while the man was burgling his apartment (Farson, 1993). Dyer was a petty criminal with a prison record and was said to be insecure, alcoholic, appearance-obsessed and never really fitting in with Bacon's circle of friends. He became a frequent subject of Bacon's paintings in the 1960s through the use of John Deakin's photographs (Jones, 2005). As usual, the relationship was a turbulent one. Dyer's lack of direction, depression, alcoholism and frequent suicide attempts caused great conflict between

the two. Dyer even resorted to trying to frame Bacon for possession of cannabis by hiding it in the artist's studio but fortunately Bacon was acquitted at trial ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). On numerous occasions Bacon tried to end things with Dyer by convincing him to leave London but these attempts proved unsuccessful. Dyer would not go away.

During this period a retrospective exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris was being organised - an exceptional honour for a living painter. In an ironical turn of events, two nights before the opening of the show, Dyer had been found dead from a drink and barbiturate overdose in a bathroom at the Hôtel des Saints-Pères. Bacon again had to face the death of a loved one in a manner similar to the experience at the opening of the Tate retrospective in 1962 when Lacy had died (Farson, 1993). As with Peter Lacy's death, he appeared to receive the news with a strange detachment ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).

It was only over the course of the next few years that the true strength of his grief was to emerge when he poured his feelings into a series of paintings referred to as the 'black triptychs.' These included: *In Memory of George Dyer*, 1971 and *Triptych, August 1972*. The most moving of these was *Triptych May-June 1973*, in which the harsh circumstances of Dyer's death are graphically depicted. The 'brutality of fact' and unsentimental way in which Bacon portrays Dyer's last moments has the effect of enhancing the poignancy of the painting ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).



Figure 5.32. Triptych May-June (Bacon, 1973). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon may have treated death with the same disdain as he treated life, but George Dyer's death had left him feeling desolate (Farson, 1993). Following the suicide of his lover he distanced himself from his circle of friends and became less involved with 'rough trade'. His art became more personal, inward looking and preoccupied with themes and motifs of death. According to Helen Lessore, Dyer's death affected him profoundly and he entered a period of calm that was helped by his friendship with John Edwards (Harrison, 2006). Bacon met the young and illiterate Edwards, another East-ender, in 1974. The relationship was probably Bacon's most enduring and stable friendship and Edwards eventually became Bacon's sole heir (Farson, 1993).

Evolving Style. Lacy's death may have been the catalyst to some of the changes in Bacon's work, but the artist had in fact been aiming since 1960 to tighten his human images by making them more factually 'like' and less generally reminiscent. Bacon began to move further and further away from the schematic, deep-shadowed space of the figure-paintings of the mid-1950s and it became evident that

this particular compositional device was no longer adequate for his ambitions (Harrison, 2006).

The style that had started to emerge was more directly based on images of contemporary life and sometimes on specific friends or acquaintances (Hammer, 2005). Bacon's works centred on two broad concerns: the portrayal of the human condition and the struggle to reinvent portraiture. To achieve this end Bacon's approach was to distort appearance in order to reach a deeper truth about his subjects (Harrison, 2006).

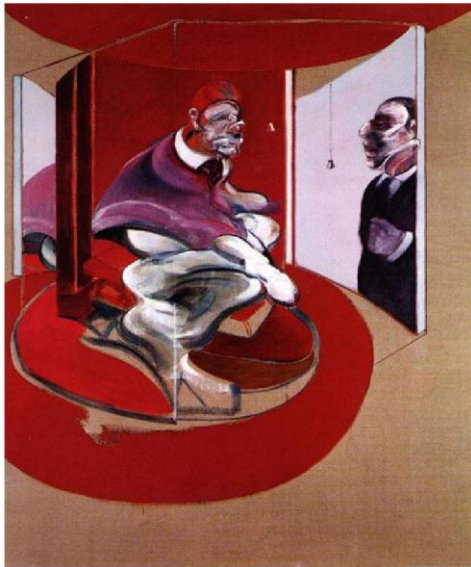


Figure 5.33. Second Version of Study of Red Pope (Bacon, 1962/1971). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The Replica of One's Unknown Face. He used only intimate friends as subjects, and never painted in their presence. This was because he would twist their features and practice his 'injuries' without having to contend with being judged by his sitters (Russell, 1971).



Figure 5.34. Study of the Male Back (Bacon, 1970). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

It was with John Deakin's photographs of close friends, Henrietta Moraes, Isabel Rawsthorne, Lucian Freud and Muriel Belcher that he was able to capture the essence of his subjects while remaining at a safe distance (Harrison, 2006).



Figure 5.35. Study of Isabel Rawsthorne (Bacon, 1966). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2005.



Figure 5.36. Portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne (Bacon, 1966). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

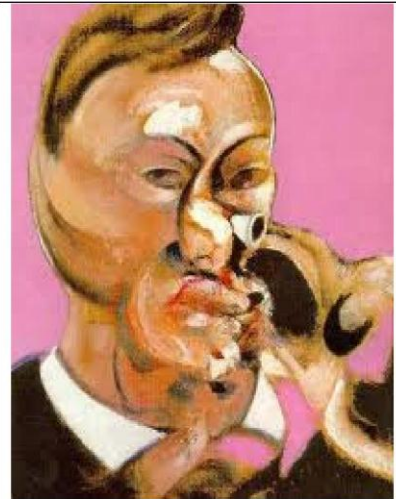


Figure 5.37. Study of Gerard Schurmann (Bacon, 1969). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

There were indeed times when his friends were offended, but their portraits nonetheless always revealed a remarkable and evocative likeness on completion, despite the distortions (Russell, 1971). The raw sexuality of the painting in which his friend Henrietta Moraes is naked and exposed is, for example, an elucidation of his understanding of the human body simply as meat and can be seen in the *Lying Figures* series (Harrison, 2006).



Figure 5.38. Henrietta Moraes (Deakin, 1962). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 5.39. Crouching Nude (Bacon, 1961). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

5.3.3 Old Age (60's Onwards 1969-1992)

“This is the artist's privilege - to be ageless. Passion keeps you young, and passion and liberty are so seductive. When I paint I am ageless, I just have the pleasure or the difficulty of painting” (Interview with Giacobetti, 2003, para. 27).

The older person tries to understand the nature of life in the face of death and there is a search, in Erikson's term, for integrity (Crain, 1985). Old age involves a

move from the natural aim to the cultural aim. The period may be characterised by simplification, limitation, and intensification, but also greater opportunity for enjoyment of the creative possibilities of the season. It is important for the older person to retain a connection to youthful vitality and if the individual succeeds at creating a new form of self-in-world through integration of polarities, transcendence can take place (Crain, 1985; Levinson, 1978).



Figure 5.40. Photograph of Bacon in old age (Wikipedia, n.d.).



Figure 5.41. Head III (Bacon, 1949). □

The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Enjoying the Creative Possibilities of the Season. Bacon spent considerable periods of time in Paris during the 1970s, and in 1974 bought a flat near the Place des Vosges where he was able to renew and deepen his friendships with Michel Leiris, Nadine Haim and Jacques Dupin. His 1976 portrait of Surrealist author and critic Michel Leiris, a small work of subtlety and insight, is among the finest he ever painted.

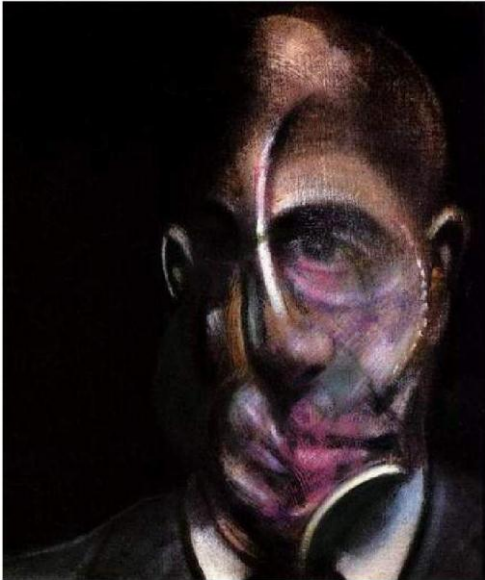


Figure 5.42. *Michel Leiris* (Bacon, 1976). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The following year an important exhibition of his recent works was hosted at the Galerie Claude Bernard in Paris (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007). His paintings from 1968 to 1974 were exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1975 and solo exhibitions and retrospectives of Bacon’s work were held around the world (Harrison, 2006). These spanned several continents, from Madrid and Barcelona in 1978 to Tokyo, Kyoto and Nagoya in 1983 and Washington D.C. in 1989. In 1985 the Tate Gallery, London, again held a major retrospective and three years later a retrospective was held in the New Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. It was the first show by a major Western artist to be mounted in the Soviet Union (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007).

Even filmmakers were intrigued by Bacon, with Bernardo Bertolucci using his images for his 1972 movie, *Last Tango in Paris*, noted for its ‘sexual explicitness and savagery’. One of his trademarks as an artist was that he often used railed enclosures in which portraits were painted and when the set designers started work on

The Silence of the Lambs, they turned to Bacon and his 'railed enclosure' to create the hellish cell of Hannibal Lecter (Farson 1993). Daniel Farson recalled reminding Bacon of his youthful comment when he had stated that he believed that ninety-five percent of people were passive and simply waiting to be entertained (Farson, 1993, p. 212). Bacon had swung round with a disdainful glare and declared: "Did I really say that? I must have been mad. It should have been ninety-nine percent!" (Farson, 1993, p. 212). Bacon who had always been drawn to the split-second captured on film, continued to fascinate and entertain all his life (Farson, 1993).

Retaining a Connection to Youthful Vitality. Even as old as I am, Bacon told Giacobetti (2003),

It doesn't stop me from looking at men...as if anything might happen, as if life were about to start again; often when I go out in the evening I flirt as if I were only 50. We ought to be able to change our engines (para. 28).

John Edward's contribution to Bacon's last years was undervalued at the time. Many people had wondered what the artist saw in a young man who was known to be illiterate and they had insisted that John Edwards could not possibly provide the intellectual stimulation that Bacon needed (Farson, 1993). What they had not understood was that when Bacon needed intellectual talk he found it easily in the company of David Sylvester or Michel Leiris, but he hadn't wanted that in a close companion. For Bacon, the young man was all he needed when they were on their own and he fussed over John with the beady eye of a mother hen allowing nothing and no one to distract him (Harrison, 2006). John Edwards had been a welcome relief after all the turbulent years. He was lively, young and street-wise with a happy disposition far removed from what George Dyer's had been (Harrison, 2006).



Figure 5.43. *Portrait of John Edwards* (Bacon, 1988). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Unlike George Dyer, Edwards proved to be a force for the good in Bacon's life and encouraged him to keep painting (Harrison, 2006). Bacon never gave up on desire and even in his last years and in declining health, (a cancerous kidney was removed in 1989) he and Edwards continued to enjoy a passionate relationship (Peppiatt, 2009).

The Space Within. "Many – far too many – aspects of life, which should also have been experienced lie in the lumber-room among dusty memories, but sometimes too, they are glowing coals under grey ashes" (Jung, 1930/1961i, p. 771).

As Bacon entered his seventies, his work continued to evolve. He met the challenge of producing paintings, such as *Landscape*, 1978 and *A Piece of Waste Land*, 1982, which were deliberately enigmatic, isolated segments of landscape without scale ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). Landscapes were not a subject Bacon usually worked with. He was a city person who painted the people around him, alone in his studio. He had started to become reclusive but liked to know that others

were at least somewhere nearby. Of this he said: “I need the city, I need to know there are people around me strolling, arguing, fucking—living, and yet I go out very rarely, I stay here in my cage” (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 7).



Figure 5.44. Francis Bacon (Bernard, 1984). © Mind the Image 2011.

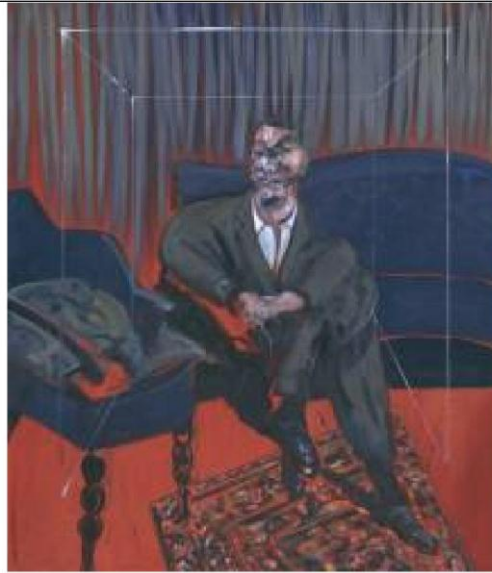


Figure 5.45. Seated Figure (Bacon, 1961). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

A caged man was how he described himself and in the 1978 *Landscape* he had managed to cleverly cage nature as well. Just as he did with the people in his paintings he succeeded in bringing the outdoors inside, encasing it in glass, and placing it in his studio (Kimmelman, 1989). Bacon’s studio became an overwhelmingly cluttered space over the years, with vibrant splotches and layers of paint on the walls and doors. Its layers of dust, debris and toxic pigments could only have worsened his chronic asthma and its East-West orientation was never perfect. Despite occasionally acquiring new and more spacious places to work, he always returned to this awkward but familiar room. The studio became Bacon’s complete

visual world with its heaps of torn photographs, fragments of illustrations and artist's catalogues providing nearly all of his visual sources. He had all but given up painting from life (Ogden, 2001).



Figure 5.46. Francis Bacon's studio with his last painting, possibly the beginnings of a portrait of George Dyer, on the easel (Ogden, 1992).

A Job Well Done. In his seventies there was an occasion that Farson (1993) remembers as being particularly memorable, when they were out and Bacon was in such an exuberant mood that someone asked him what he did. "I'm a painter," answered Bacon. "That's lucky," said the man, "I'm doing up my house at the moment and can give you some work if you want it." "How very kind of you" said the artist with a broadening smile (Farson, 1993, p. 213). The younger, moodier Bacon might have responded differently, but he could smile because he had already established himself beyond any doubt. Only a few days earlier, one of his pictures had sold for 3 million pounds and he did not need to prove himself to anyone (Farson, 1993). Bacon had done his job well - had 'paid his dues' in life. When the Tate

Gallery held a second major retrospective of his work his achievements were confirmed by Alan Browness, the gallery's director, when he stated that the artist was "the greatest living painter" (Farson, 1993, p. 215), a claim he substantiated when he explained:

No artist in our century has presented the human predicament with such insight and feeling. The paintings have the inescapable mark of the present; I am tempted to add the word, alas, but for Bacon the virtues of truth and honesty transcend the tasteful. They give to his paintings a terrible beauty that has placed them among the most memorable images in the history of art. And these paintings have a timeless quality that allows them to hang naturally in our museums besides those of Rembrandt and Van Gogh (Farson, 1993, p.215).

No artist could have hoped for higher praise, yet it left him open to attack too and there were always many detractors who dismissed his work as sensationalist and slick (Kimmelman, 1992). Margaret Thatcher notoriously described Bacon in the *New York Times* as "that man who paints those dreadful pictures" (Kimmelman, 1992, p.2). Controversial critic Peter Fuller was scathing about Bacon's subject matter, patronisingly referring to his subjects as "lonely figures still throwing up in lavatory bowls beneath naked light bulbs, (who) occasionally... hunch together on couches for some barbarous act of congress" (Cooper, 2011, Anxiety of Analysis section, para. 7). Fuller went on to attack Bacon's use of paint, saying that he "applied pigment as if he hated the stuff, dragging it across the raw, unsized canvas, which drains it of beauty and of all semblance of life. Bacon's technical inadequacies seem to me to be inseparable from his spiritual dereliction" (Cooper, 2011, Anxiety of Analysis section, para. 6).

While Fuller's rejection not only of Bacon's art but all that he stood for, was a view not universally shared, (Jones, 2005) Bacon's subject matter did make it

understandable that even though museums around the world bought his work, private collectors were often wary about decorating their homes with it. Bacon ignored his critics and maintained that he was simply a realist. He told Giacobetti, (2003)

I paint for myself. I don't know how to do anything else, anyway. Also I have to earn my living, and occupy myself. I think that all human actions are designed to seduce, to please. I don't give a toss about that any more. But maybe at the beginning, I painted to be loved? yes, that's certainly right. It's so nice being loved. Now I don't give a toss, I'm old. At the same time it gives you such pleasure if people like what you do. Today I paint very little, although I do paint in the morning because I'm unable to stop; or I paint when I'm in love, perhaps, but it's too late now, I'm too old (para. 5).

The Cultural Aim. While Bacon had become the best-known English painter and possibly the most popular since Turner, his work reflected his tendency to be a non-conformist. Turner, for example, painted things the English love: landscape, grand and gentle effects of weather and light, pictures of mountains and the sea that are full of primordial, romantic power. Bacon focused on his main subject and primal obsession, the human figure, radically reshaped and often engaged in sexual activities that before 1969 were illegal in England (Hughes, 2008). When Bacon discussed the nature of his work he said,

People always seem to think that in my paintings I'm trying to put across a feeling of suffering and the ferocity of life, but I don't think of it at all in that way myself. You see, just the very fact of being born is a very ferocious thing, just existence itself as one goes between birth and death. It's not that I was to emphasize that side of things—but I suppose that if you're trying to work as near to your nervous system as you can, that's what automatically comes out....Life...is just filled, really, with suffering and despair (Farr, 1991, p. 8).

Bacon did most of his paintings during a time when “automatism, abstraction, and non-objectivity were the popular methods of painting” (Hunter, 1989, p. 35). The

work therefore did not conform to what was fashionable and attests to Bacon's growing individuality and break from the cultural Zeitgeist of the time. These innovations were seen as a breakthrough for the open-minded (Hughes, 2008).

5.3.4 Old Old Age

At 80 years of age Bacon had astonishingly managed to maintain his boyish looks. His wide eyes, round cheeks, pouting mouth and hair falling casually over his brow had not changed much. Other than moving around more slowly and cautiously than he might have before, he had retained the jaunty sidestep which had been characteristic of his youth. Bacon however said the following,

These days I look like an old bird. I'm losing my memory, I've been seriously ill for two years, I have suffered from asthma attacks since I was a child and it gets no better in old age. Asthma is a terrible complaint; when night falls you are never sure if you will wake up the next morning. It attacks the very foundations of life-your breathing. You always feel as if you are in remission, always ready to die (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 6).



Figure 5.47. Three Studies for a Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1979 – 1980). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009).

Regardless of how Bacon may have felt about his appearance, he was still the same charmer as he had ever been, veering from being intensely private to being disarmingly frank when disclosing details of his drinking, fondness of men, friendship with gangsters and dislike of certain politicians, designers and fellow painters (Kimmelman, 1989). He was always eager to express opinions about art and literature. According to Michael Kimmelman (1989) Bacon could manipulate a conversation so that it never strayed from subjects he was prepared to discuss, and it was almost impossible to get him to talk about anything else. He particularly disliked analyzing his own work. “If you can talk about it, why paint it?” was one of his favorite comments and he tended to fall back on them as a way of sidestepping questions he didn’t want to answer (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 7).

Other painters, notably Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock, got short shrift and about Pollock he said, “I can’t see the point of those drips, and I think he couldn’t do anything else particularly well” (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 6). Abstract painting was considered by Bacon to be a version of wallpaper. He particularly disliked mystical imagists such as Rothko whom he found dull. One living artist for whom he had great respect was the Swiss sculptor and draughtsman, Alberto Giacometti, though Bacon’s approval was largely confined to his drawings (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007). Bacon’s friends knew he could be argumentative and unpredictable, especially after a few drinks, but they also knew him as a man of tremendous generosity, wit and vulnerability. Although he had created some of the most alarming and outrageous images ever painted, he was in fact immensely likeable and kind, a true gentleman (Kimmelman, 1989). He had been full of these kinds of contradictions his whole life.

Simplification, Limitation, and Intensification. During the 1980s, Bacon simplified his pictorial language, reducing it to its basic elements. The human body was shortened to a stump and a pair of legs (*Study of the Human Body*, 1982) or starkly implied by its residue (*Blood on the Floor—Painting*, 1986). His technique became more subtle and refined. Aerosol spray paint was used to create grainy, gauze-like textures with the suggestion of bruising and medical trauma (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007).



Figure 5.48. Study from Human Body (Bacon, 1991). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.



Figure 5.49. Blood on the Floor (Bacon, 1986). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

Among the most impressive achievements of his last decade were two portrait triptychs, *Three Studies for a Portrait of John Edwards*, 1984 and *Study for Self-Portrait, Triptych*, 1985-6. Both paintings convey a sense of calm - a quality rarely associated with the artist (“The Estate of Francis Bacon,” 2007)



Figure 5.50. Three Studies for a Portrait of John Edwards (Bacon, 1984). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

In his eighties he became increasingly reclusive. He could have lived anywhere in London but returned time and again to his cramped, ramshackle mews house in South Kensington where he could not paint anything so large that it would not fit down the steps and out the door (Ogden, 2001). On rare occasions when he permitted guests to see him at home, he had to steer them past the kitchen, which included a bathtub, to the cramped bedroom that doubled as a living room. He lived in that small place for more than a quarter of a century and ignored almost all the trappings of success (Kimmelman, 1989).

He was extremely wealthy but would cover his daily expenses by unrolling money from a wad of cash kept in his pocket. His few expenses included the occasional elegant suit, gambling debts, medical costs for ailing friends, lunches at smart restaurants or champagne for everyone at the Colony Room (Farson, 1993). He

had been going to the rundown drinking club in Soho for more than 40 years, but his appearances in Soho became increasingly rare as he grew older, remaining cocooned in his studio. He had in fact begun to turn against many of his former friends but this was due neither to snobbery nor to a sense of being superior. According to Farson (1993) it is possible that he had longed to go out but that people had stopped asking him (Kimmelman, 1989).

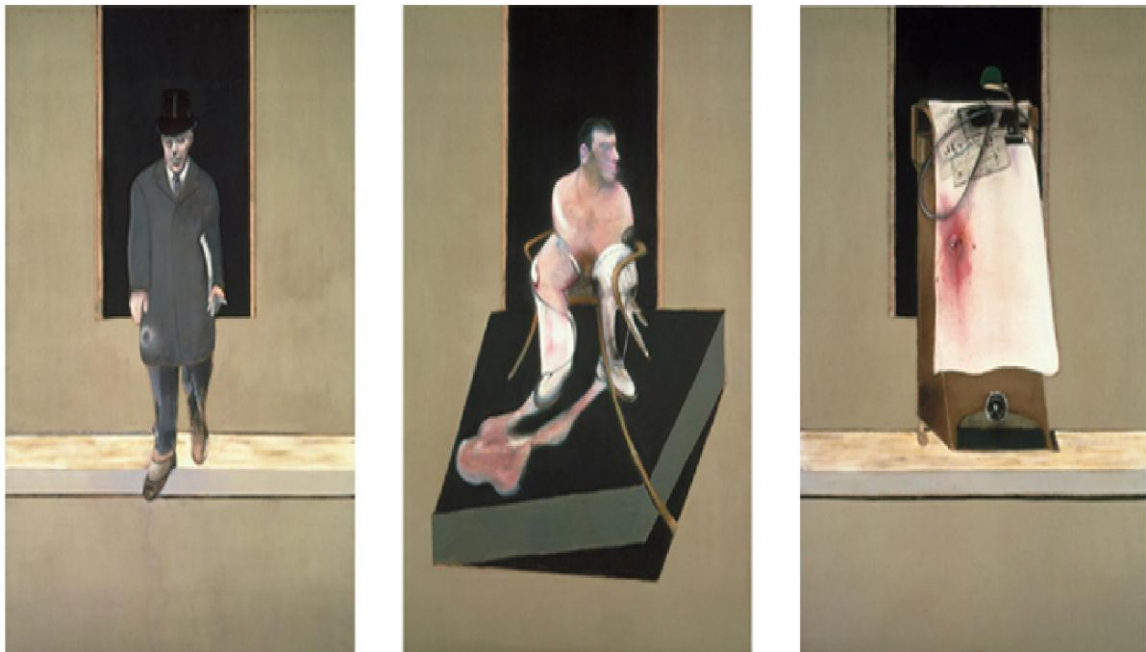


Figure 5.51. Triptych (Bacon, 1986-87). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

In an art world frequently more concerned with its own fashionable image than with the quality of work, Bacon continued to stand out like a classical master. He had an otherworldly quality coupled with a consistency in his style and life that marked him as a genuinely serious painter, “a survivor from that generation of post war intellectuals for whom culture was not largely a matter of money” (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 9).

Understanding the Nature of Life in the Face of Death. “I have often thought upon death and I find it the least of all evils,” wrote Bacon’s namesake and ancestor, the Elizabethan philosopher in *The Independent* (Graham-Dixon, 1992, para. 1).



Figure 5.52. Francis Bacon in Old Age (Unknown photographer, Artobserved, 2009).



Figure 5.53. Study for a Portrait of P.L., n°2 (Bacon, 1957). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

For Bacon the opposite was true and throughout his life he appears to have been preoccupied with mortality. He admitted to Giacobetti (2003) that he was obsessed with death and described how when he was 15 or 16 years old he had seen a dog peeing and had realised at that moment that he was going to die. “I think there is an equally important difficulty in man's life,” he said “The moment when you discover that youth does not last for ever. I understood it that day. I thought about death and since then I have thought about it every day” (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 28).

His dealer, Helen Lessore confirms “there was not a day when he didn’t think about death” (Farson, 1993, p.11). Bacon elaborated on his fascination with death when he said:

I have a feeling of mortality all the time because, if life excites you, its opposite, like a shadow, death, must excite you. Perhaps not excite you, but you are aware of it in the same way as you are aware of life. You’re aware of it, like the turn of a coin between life and death... I’m always very surprised when I wake up in the morning (Graham-Dixon, 1992, para. 2).

Bacon’s keen sense of his own mortality was seen to be the driving force behind his art. In an interview with Wiseman, Behr and Mooney, (Graham-Dixon, 1977) he was asked how he felt about the critics who said he put too much emphasis on death, decay and angst. He replied,

To me that’s so totally stupid. If one thinks of life, what is it? The inevitability of death is always with us, from birth onward. I don’t emphasize it. I accept it as part of one’s existence. One is always aware of mortality in life, even in a rose that blooms and then dies. I’ve never understood this aspect of criticism against me and I don’t, now, take any notice of it. It seems to me that the people who think in this way have never really thought about life. One has only to turn to the great art of the past to Shakespeare, to the Greek tragedies to realize how much of it was concerned with mortality. I’m not interested in violence. During the Vietnam War there was more violence on American television every afternoon than there is in all of my work. I accept violence, yes; I accept it as part of one’s existence (para. 3).

Despite his seemingly existentialist outlook on life, Bacon appeared to have been a *bon vivant*, who had spent much of his middle and later life eating, drinking and gambling in London's Soho with Lucian Freud, John Deakin, Daniel Farson, Jeffrey Bernard, Muriel Belcher and Henrietta Moraes, among others. He may have become more isolated and reclusive in his old age but he had very few regrets about his life. One of these regrets he admitted was that he had not started to paint earlier

when he was a young man (Wiseman, Behr & Mooney, 1977). During one of the last interviews with him during an aptly decadent lunch at Bentley's, he described old age as "a desert because all of one's friends die" (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 47).



Figure 5.54. Two Seated Figures (Bacon, 1979). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2007.

He continued as he had always done before, though, to assert that he was an optimist even though he was an optimist about nothing "It's just my nature to be optimistic" he stated as he polished off the last drops from a glass of champagne. "We live, we die and that's it, don't you think?" (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 48). When asked how he wanted to die Bacon replied, "Fast" (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 29). In his eighties he had not missed a beat (Kimmelman, 1989).

5.3.5 Death and Beyond

“When I am dead, put me in a plastic bag and throw me in the gutter” (Bacon in Farson, 1993, p. 1).

In Jung’s view, life after death is a continuation of life itself. This state of being is associated with an unconscious extension beyond finite life and a continued - albeit in a different form - participation in the tensions of the universe (Crain, 1985).

John Russell (1971) captures the spirit of Jung’s thinking and Bacon’s legacy perfectly when he says:

What once looked entirely of the moment has turned out to be timeless, and what once rang out like an individual cry of pain has been taken up, all over the world, as the first oboes ‘A natural’ is taken up by the whole orchestra (p. 9).

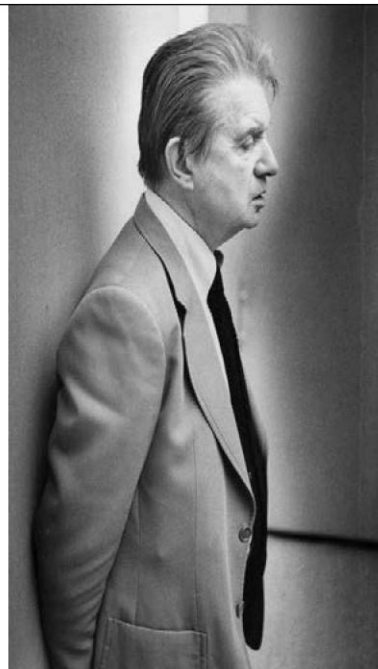


Figure 5.55. Francis Bacon in London (John Minihan, 1976).



Figure 5.56. Study of a Nude (Bacon, 1952-53). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2008.



Figure 5.57. Figure with Raised Arm (Bacon, 1949). © Artinvest 1999-2008.

With a final flourish, like a sleight of hand, Bacon died of a heart attack on the morning of 28 April 1992. He was 82 years old (Farson, 1993). Against the advice of his doctor, he had taken a trip to Madrid where he had fallen critically ill and requested to be taken to a Catholic hospital. This was ironic considering he was a man who had professed to a cynical secularism and had spent his entire adult life attacking all forms of faith, Christianity in particular (Peppiatt, 2009). Bacon had never been conventional and had always acted apart from the values of the mass culture. He despised the role of religion, referring to it as a ‘human crutch’ and was quite vociferous about the matter. If people spoke about religion in his company, he would often lose his temper (Farson, 1993).

The acerbic observer of the human condition who had once remarked that there could be nothing worse than dying among nuns, had knowingly entrusted himself to the Servants of Mary. The artist who had stripped the Crucifixion both of its traditional themes and its transcendental meaning spent his last moments beneath a crucifix hanging on the wall behind his bed, and he was cremated, to taped Gregorian chants, in a coffin bearing a metal cross on its lid (Peppiatt, 2009, p. 393)

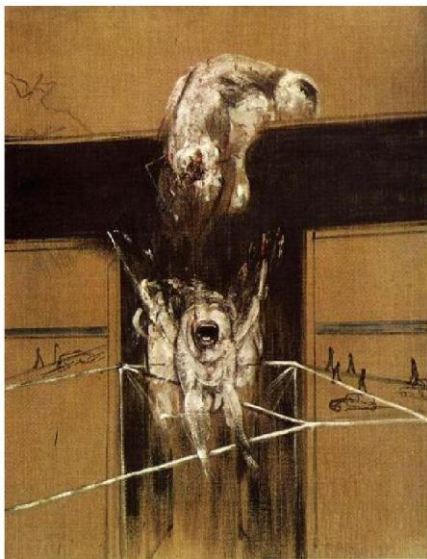


Figure 5.58. Fragment of a Crucifixion (Bacon, 1950). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon's remains were cremated in Spain and, as his father had done before him, he had requested that there be no service. His ashes were transported to England and scattered in a private ceremony ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007) "That was what he had hoped for, no fuss, no discovery of his body in an empty room a day or two later, not even a funeral. It was not so much a death as a disappearance" (Farson, 1993, p. 1). Inherently unpredictable and contradictory to the end "Bacon had ultimately died in the 'arms of the church' leaving the biggest enigma of his enigmatic life and causing people to question whether in his last moments he had turned from his lifelong atheism to Christ?" (Peppaitt, 2009, p. 394). What had compelled him and directed his actions is something no one will ever know for sure.

Unconscious Extension Beyond Finite Life. Bacon's entire estate was bequeathed to John Edwards who ended up donating the almost archeologically interesting layers of clutter in the studio at 7 Reece Mews to the Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin. The studio and its contents were carefully reconstructed in the gallery and opened to the public in May 2001 (Cappock, 2005). Additionally, draft materials, perhaps intended for destruction, were bequeathed to Barry Joule who later forwarded most of the materials to create the Barry Joule Archive in Dublin with other parts of the collection given later to the Tate (Edwards, 2001). Paintings that had previously been unseen or assumed to have been destroyed, including *Study after Velázquez*, 1950, were unearthed from amongst Bacon's belongings and revealed only in 1998, ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007).

Bacon, who was often prone to self-deprecation and skeptical about his lasting fame, greatly underestimated his stature in the art world. It was not only his

resurrected paintings that would not be buried but also his reputation that continued to grow after his death (Jones, 2005). International exhibitions, notably at the Museo Correr, Venice (1993), the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1996), the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin (2000), the Geementemuseum, The Hague (2001), Museo Serralves, Portugal (2003), the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (2003), the Institut Valencia, Valencia (2004), the National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (2005), K20 Kunstsammlung, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2006), the Palazzo Reale, Milan (2007) continued throughout the 1990s and beyond (Hunter, Peppiatt & Sylvester, 1998a).



Figure 5.59. Bacon's papal figure presides over Christie's London saleroom (Artobserved, 2009).

On 14 May 2008 his painting *Triptych*, 1976, (seen in Chapter 4) which has come to be considered an iconic object of the 20th-century, sold at Sothebys contemporary art sale for \$86.28 million to a Russian billionaire. It was the highest price ever paid for a post-war work of art at auction. It was an especially profound moment when the Tate Britain Gallery held a major retrospective in September 2008

because the retrospective was recorded as the largest one of his work ever mounted. The same collection then traveled to the Prado and the New York Metropolitan (Hughes, 2008). Bacon's work has yet to reach the cellar of any gallery for burying purposes.

Participating in the Tensions of the Universe. During his lifetime, Bacon had received a large amount of publicity but he was nonetheless able to lead a very private life. It was his view that the job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery (Shockley, 2010). Any discussions that might have arisen about his lifestyle were often discreetly avoided and redirected to focus on form, colour, historical influences and the like. The media, public and friends colluded with him in maintaining the secrecy surrounding the turbulent events of his life, and on any specifically homosexual interpretation of his work ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). His death was therefore a turning point, opening the way for respected writers and experts such as Michel Leiris and David Sylvester to at last address significant issues not only around his work but also around his life. The floodwaters, held in check for years, burst open and a spate of obituaries, reviews and biographies followed. These provided graphic, often explicit details of his life and loves where previously there had been little more than hints and innuendos (Jones, 2005). With death, Bacon's history had paradoxically taken on a new life. Peppiatt, quoted in *The Independent on Sunday* (2003) had the following to say:

A great artist leaves deep traces. Francis is as much alive after his death as he was when he was here. He was a transforming person. If you met him and spent time with him, you couldn't help but be changed, and this effect goes on. I think that's one of the signs of great genius, a person who actually transforms the lives around him (The Arts Section, para. 14).



Figure 5.60. Viewer in front of one of Bacon's paintings (Artobserved, 2009).

Bacon would have perhaps been surprised to find himself described as a person who transformed the lives of others and in his last interview said,

My painting is a representation of life, my own life above all, which has been very difficult. So perhaps my painting is very violent, but this is natural to me. I have been lucky enough to be able to live on my obsession. This is my only success. I have no moral lesson to preach, nor any advice to give. Nietzsche said, "Everything is so absurd that we might as well be extraordinary". I am content with just being ordinary (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 21).

Bacon's philosophy of life was indeed simple, direct and free of sentimentality. He remarked to Melvyn Bragg: "We are born and we die, that's how it is. But in between, we give this purposeless existence a meaning by our drives" (Farson, 1993, p. 265). He lived his life according to this philosophy and poured creativity, destruction, passion and despair into both his life and his work and that is why his paintings can be illuminated by biography ("The Estate of Francis Bacon," 2007). Former South African artist Marlene Dumas however seems to think that

maybe Bacon, like Picasso, deserves a bit of a rest after his death. Each in his own way was so typecast by the media and public opinion that one forgets what they've really achieved. Picasso simply became Mr. Macho, and Bacon Mr. Horror (Dumas, 2011).

The Sheer Fact of Existence. Bacon maintained all his life that he was simply a realist and that he did not paint merely to shock. His intention was to reproduce as immediately and directly as possible, what his friend, the French anthropologist and poet Michel Leiris, called 'the sheer fact of existence.' For Bacon this encompassed violence and beauty, absurdity and romance and he stated,

My painting is not violent, it's life that is violent. I have endured physical violence. I have even had my teeth broken. Sexuality, human emotion, everyday life, personal humiliation (you only have to watch television) - violence is part of human nature. Even within the most beautiful landscape, in the trees, under the leaves the insects are eating each other; violence is a part of life (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 19).

Bacon insisted that his paintings were not about anything in particular, that nothing was to be read into his borrowings from certain images, and that even his triptychs, which appeared to tell a tale in three scenes, were in no way narrative. He summed it all up elegantly...

You are born, you fuck, you die. What could be more violent than that? You come into this world with a shout. Fucking, particularly between men, is a very violent act, and don't let's even mention death. In between we fight to protect ourselves, to earn money; we are humiliated daily by stupid idiots for even more stupid reasons. Amidst it all we love or we don't love. It's all the same anyway; it passes the time (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 20).

"I've no story to tell" - Bacon (in Kimmelman, 1989, para. 42).



Figure 5.61. *End of the Line* (Bacon, 1953). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

5.4 Conclusion

The chapter provides a chronological review of the life and work of the artist Francis Bacon. The information found was grounded in a framework based on the developmental shifts outlined by Jung. Some of Jung's concepts associated with the different milieus were used to provide further anchoring of the life history as it unfolded in a parallel manner. The following chapter provides a discussion of the data found in terms of Jung's theoretical approach in an attempt to understand the artist's life and to additionally elucidate the theoretical constructs.

JUNG AND BACON: A PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Chapter Preview

The following chapter provides a discursive synthesis between Bacon's life and the analytical theory of Carl Gustav Jung. Bacon is considered in terms of Jung's four dimensions of being human: The physiological, social, psychic and religious dimensions (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008). The structural components of Jung's theory identified in Chapter four were pivotal in informing the researcher's understanding of Bacon. The interconnectedness of each of these structural components, particularly as it applies to a complex and often enigmatic human life, gave rise to a discussion that is arranged 'organically' rather than in hermetically isolated compartments as any attempt to apply a rigid taxonomy would lead to a falsifying of the nature of the man. For this reason, too, some of Jung's concepts, such as Individuation and Transcendence, are not considered as isolated phenomena, but rather in the context of the general discussion and are woven throughout the entire text. An explication of the researcher's understanding is preceded by a consideration of Bacon's psychological type.

6.2 Psychological Type

"The genius will come through despite everything, for there is something



Figure 6.1. Three Studies for Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1975). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

absolute and indomitable in his nature” (Jung, 1943/1954e, CW 17, p. 248).

Michael Peppiatt, one of Bacon’s oldest friends, repeatedly claimed that it would be very difficult to attempt to pin Bacon down to any particular type. Another longstanding friend, John Russell, echoed this view saying, “it seemed implausible that he would ever stop being what he had always been: one of nature’s unclassifiables” (Russell, 1971, p. 13). While he was certainly gregarious and talkative, most people who knew him acknowledged that in everyday life Bacon was the most private of men. It is reasonable to describe him broadly as being extroverted as a personality, but introverted and intuitive as an artist. Extrovert-intuitive types constantly seek novelty and find it difficult to sustain anything, whether it is a job, a relationship or a fixed idea. Such people are often impulsive inventors and creative innovators (Jung, 1971). Bacon was a supremely creative innovator who reinvented

the human image and produced a multiple imagery that was new and original (Sylvester, 1975, 1988). The artist directed much energy and value towards his inner world of images, indicating a libido that flowed inwards, connecting him with the subjective world of thought, fantasies and feelings. Introverts function most

satisfactorily when free from pressure to adapt to external circumstances. Bacon, commenting on the need to exhibit his work, said,

I need the money to go on but there is no pleasure in exhibiting at all. The only pleasure is to work for yourself and hope that sometime you'll do something that you really want. I would not mind if my pictures were never seen by someone else. Most artists are exhibitionists and I may be, but to myself rather than to the public. I would much rather have money and leisure and not have to have exhibitions. It's a way of life to me (Farson, 1993, p. 102).

Bacon would not paint in front of an audience. Portraits were painted from memory, from photographs and in general from anything except the actual living and sitting model. To have the models in the room inhibited him because as he said:

If I like them, I don't want to practise the injury that I do to them in my work before them. I would rather practise the injury in private by which I think I can record the facts of them more clearly (Sylvester, 1975, p. 41).



Figure 6.2. Study for a Nude with Figure in a Mirror (Bacon, 1969) □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Many commentators have remarked on his highly intuitive and instinctive nature (Farson, 1993; Harrison, 2005; Peppiatt, 1996; Russell, 1971; Sylvester, 1975). Intuiting comes from a complex, non-discursive integration of large amounts of information, rather than simple seeing or hearing. Jung said it was “like seeing around corners” (Boeree, 2006, p. 65). Bacon said, “I want to create images that are a shorthand of sensation” and at this he excelled (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 35).

According to Peppiatt (2006) Bacon transformed the lives of those around him. He had an impulsive, conflicted, and yet charming personality when he chose to display it (Peppiatt, 1996). His ability to influence and leave an effect on people can perhaps be understood in terms of Jung’s concept of the ‘mana personality’, which pertains to the extraordinary and compelling ‘supernatural’ power that emanates from certain individuals. Mana adheres to ‘the desired mid-point of the personality’ and this union of opposites –the ‘coniunctio oppositorum’, is part of the individuation process. The modern term for this archetypal mana force is ‘charisma’, an all-pervading vital force or psychic energy (Long, 1954). Mana can attract or repel, wreak destruction or heal, confronting the ego with a supraordinate force. Because one is convinced that such a figure embodying ‘mana’ has attained a higher consciousness or ‘transcendence’, the possibility of achieving it is established, and consequently one has confidence in making the transition in their company (Samuels, 1985).

From the various accounts given by people of the experience of being in Bacon’s company, it would appear that this vital force of archetypal energy to which Jung refers seemed to have emanated from him. His ‘charisma’ made him a personality irresistible to his devout followers, many of whom experienced his cruel

side and yet came back for more. People became addicted to him (Peppiatt, 2006).

Lucien Freud once called him the wildest and wisest man he had ever met. Even if he had not become a painter, his personality was so original that he would have made an impression on his time (Farson, 1993). John McEwan (1992) captured the essence of this vital force perfectly when he described the effect of being in Bacon's presence:

This Byronic aspect to his nature had something to do with a complete absence of sentimentality, a recklessness, a bleak rationality, an awareness that his lack of religious faith was in itself despair and also an intense animalism. The animalism was the first thing one felt on meeting him, a palpable magnetic field. He wanted to conduct this nervous energy into his painting, to vent its expressive power. On one occasion I was standing close behind him when an artist he disliked entered the room. Immediately he stiffened, bristled, became alert as a dog. It was the only time I have witnessed the hairs stand up on the back of a human neck. No fight ensued, or hostile conversation. It was more menacing than that. As a younger man he must have been capable of being quite terrifying (para. 23).



Figure 6.3. Dog (Bacon, 1952). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Ingrained in Bacon's personality, these well honed, intuiting and sensing functions may have developed as a result of having spent much time in the houses of his eccentric aunts. There was always a gathering of people around for him to observe and it was there that he experienced strangeness, which set the scene for much of his later life (Farson, 1993).

6.3 Dimensions of Being Human

"I would like my pictures to look as if a human being had passed between them like a snail, leaving a trail of the human essence and a memory trace of past events as the snail leaves its slime" - Bacon (in Harrison, 2005, p. 199).



Figure 6.4. Untitled Marching Figures (Bacon, 1952). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

6.3.1 The Physiological Dimension

Brian Morton, writing in *The Times Educational Supplement* claimed that Bacon's painting communicated a tremendous physicality, both of paint and its image. He said of the artist ...

Much of his work has had to do with the uneasy relationship between the physical body and the spiritual nature, while the plastic qualities of paint are 'thoroughly humane and wholly sympathetic.' A convenient ploy to suggest that this is all there is in Bacon's work, which, under a veneer of artistic historical generalizations, subverts a closer discussion of the sort of tremendous physicality, with which the artist grappled (Copper, 2011, Anxiety of Analysis Section, para. 16).

Jung did not deny the importance of biological factors in human existence, but he argued that the peculiar nature of the psyche could not be reduced to physiological processes alone (Meyer et al., 2008). The instincts induce a pattern of behaviour which is inborn and characteristic for a certain species, including all the processes and drives essential for physical survival, such as the need to breathe, the need to have sex and the need to eat and drink – to be nourished (Jung, 1960f, p. 344). Jung regarded the creative drive as being in a class of its own and forms part of the discussion on 'The Creative Accident' (see p. 280).

If art does indeed mirror life it would not be unrealistic to suggest that much of the content of Bacon's paintings reflects directly on the artist's preoccupation with his own and others' physical state of being. As John Berger (2004) wrote:

He repeatedly painted the human body, or parts of the body, in discomfort or agony or want. Sometimes the pain involved looks as if it has been inflicted; more often it seems to originate from within, from the guts of the body itself, from the misfortune of being physical (p. 15).



Figure 6.5. *Crucifixion* (Bacon, 1965). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon himself often spoke about painting as being the process whereby one attempts to project one's nervous system directly onto canvas and that his intention was to unlock the valves of feeling and therefore return the onlooker to life more violently. If one considers the reaction he got from his viewers, it can certainly be argued that his work often had a visceral, physical effect. While such reactions are impossible to predict or to control, it is certain that Bacon's desire to force a somatic response through image was a successful one.

The drama in Bacon's painting arises from the fact that, inevitably, the viewer cannot help but identify to some extent with what a picture shows. The distortion of the body's ordinary appearance in a painting can make us cringe with a new and discomfiting sense of how human flesh and bone are constituted (Faerna, n.d., *The Theater of the Body Section*, para. 2).



Figure 6.6. Man at Washbasin (Bacon, 1989). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon comes across as a person who was, from the beginning, ‘hatched’ exactly as he was and because his personality was so unique, it seems impossible to imagine him ever having been any other way. To Peter Beard however he said, “I worked on myself to be as unnatural as I could be” (Farson, 1993, p. 20). His unique repertoire of behaviours does indeed point to a person who was not completely at ease within his own skin. Bacon did not like the way the flesh and bones of his own body were constituted. He had pronounced jowls, and when he talked he would habitually tug at the collar of his lapels as if to camouflage the absence of a neck (Farson, 1993, p.50).



Figure 6.7. Reclining Man with Sculpture (Bacon, 1960-1961). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

He hated his puffy jowls and paid a great deal of attention to his outward physical appearance, applying rouge to his cheeks. For his hair he would apply a tone from a selection of Kiwi boot polishes in various browns and for many years he brushed his teeth with Vim (a pot-scouring agent) until a dentist friend took charge and stopped him from practising that particular habit (Farson, 1993, p. 40). Arguably, these biologically based concerns, including his chronic asthma, drinking habits and unconventional sexuality, are highly charged and idiosyncratic physical characteristics, but they were also a response to his formative environment. It is for this reason that the physiological aspects of Bacon's life cannot be considered in isolation and therefore, as Jung advised, these aspects were considered in terms of the dynamic interaction with the relevant social and psychic influences.

6.3.1.1 The Need to Breathe

Lucien Freud's wife, Lady Caroline Blackwood encouraged Bacon to speak of what she referred to as his 'traumatically painful' childhood. He told her of how when he was a little boy his parents had put him astride a pony and forced him to go fox hunting. He loathed the brutality of the 'sport' and developed a violent allergy to and fear of horses. Attempts to get him onto a horse would induce an asthma attack. Once he found himself on the hunting field he turned blue and started to choke with asthma (Farson, 1993). His parents were disappointed in him when he failed to respond to their ideas of 'manly' avocations and did not hide this feeling from him. They were very soon made to realise that he was never going to be the son they wanted.

Suffering from asthma all his life must have had an impact on Bacon's emotional development and may have contributed to a feeling of alienation and marginalisation. The morphine he was given, and the long hours spent alone as a child would have engendered an alternative perspective of the world in anybody. The morphine was to treat his allergy and it provided a massive relief from his asphyxia and also acted as a catalyst for the intense dream images he had for the rest of his life. Bacon claimed that he felt relaxed only when under the effect of morphine or, later, alcohol, and this may have helped to achieve a similar state of consciousness in which "images, in a daydream would fall into his mind" (Harrison, 2005, p. 212). On another level, the onset of asthma provided the means to avoid fearful situations and these usually involved interactions with his father.

Lady Caroline claimed that Bacon found it almost impossible to return to Ireland. “He developed a neurotic attack of asthma on the plane whenever he tried to get there. He could fly to any country in the world without mishap, but a flight to his homeland always proved disastrous” (Farson, 1993 p.16). This somatic reaction is a clear indication of the interrelated nature of his physical and psychic life and the fact that his childhood must have left a deep impression on him. He suffered the asthma with his characteristic stoicism, but remarked “It’s been with me longer than painting has and it’s a daily experience. If I hadn’t been asthmatic I might never have gone on painting at all” (Harrison, 2005, p. 208).

The confined, suffocating spaces occupied by Bacon’s Popes, other ‘father figures’ and vacuous men in suits depicted in his paintings “evoke the gasping for breath of the asthmatic” (Harrison, 2005, p. 208).

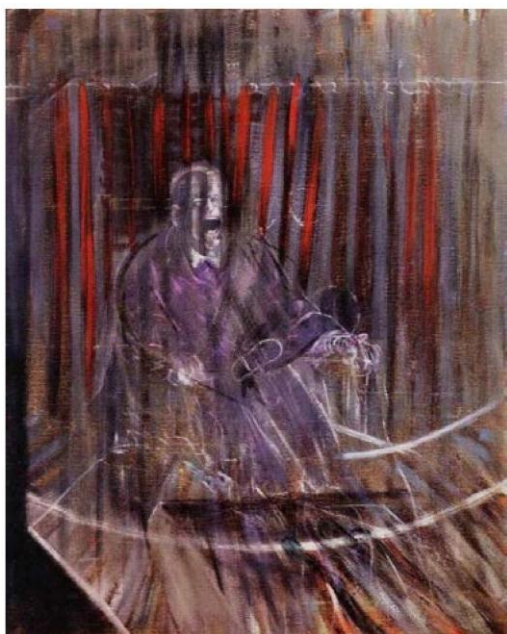


Figure 6.8. *Study after Velázquez II* (Bacon, 1950). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon consistently denied that his Popes were screaming, saying they may have been yawning or sneezing. Considering his own battle with allergies, this makes some sense, but one cannot ignore the fact that he also repeatedly referred to the desperate cries in *Massacre of the Innocents* and *The Battleship Potemkin*, suggesting that he may have been more concerned with the plight of the threatened children in both cases than with either the mother in the former or the nurse in the latter (Harrison, 2005).

In Poussin's painting, "the asphyxiation of the child is performed by one of Herod's male soldiers and in *The Battleship Potemkin* the cruelty is sparked off by a revolutionary, predominantly male political force" (Harrison, 2005, p. 208). Bacon found the predicament of the child in the throes of strangulation intriguing. This may have been because it resounded with his own asphyxiating fear of his father. It is worth noting here that until the 17th Century, the English church celebrated the Feast of the Holy Innocents by the whipping of children (Harrison, 2005).

In his paintings, Bacon projected the cries of fear (and possibly his own) into yells of frustration and despair. He may have been expressing his own pain and anger through the screaming images of Velazquez's Pope. Bacon's lack of reverence was perhaps an act of revenge on the father figures he was adamant the paintings were not intended to represent (Harrison, 2005). If indeed these inferences are valid, the transfer of this psychic energy would represent a perfect example of Jung's principle of equivalence.

6.3.1.2 The Need for Sexual Expression

From an early age there were signs in Bacon's life of an emerging homosexuality, indicating that his sexual preferences were innate. The fact that in the late 1920s Bacon lived briefly in the relatively promiscuous city of Berlin, might well have given him the courage to assert his particular form of sexuality, which he later referred to as a time of emotional awakening (Man, n.d.). What may well have been learned, however, was the masochistic expression of his sexuality, an aspect that was likely to have been a response to his relationship with his father. According to Jung,

It is almost a collective ideal for men and women to be as unconscious as possible in the ticklish affairs of love. But behind the mask of respectability and faithfulness the full fury of neglected love falls upon the children. You cannot blame the ordinary individual, as you cannot expect people to know the attitude they ought to adopt and how they are to solve their love problems within the framework of present-day ideals and conventions. Mostly they know only the negative measures of negligence, procrastination, suppression and repression (Jacobi, 1971, p. 99).

Bacon certainly knew about repression and suppression and his experiences as a child were evidently loaded with the emotional intensity associated with having a complex (Meyer et al., 2008).

The Father Complex. Jung argued that complexes may be related to traumatic environmental experiences and that when the ego was not strong enough to reflect on a complex in a useful way, the individual was likely to experience difficulties. The ego, for example, would be prone to making inappropriate choices or to one-sidedness, which could account for some of Bacon's confusing or hard to justify behaviour (Storr, 1983). The type of trauma inflicted on Bacon by his physically abusive father, who even had his grooms beat his young child (Farson, 1993), does

not end when the outer violence stops, but can continue in the inner world of the victim. Unable to arrive at the reality that the trauma is no longer present, the person acts in such a way as to recreate it. The persecutory inner world somehow finds its outer mirror in repeating self-defeating ‘re-enactments’ almost as if the individual were possessed by some devilish power or pursued by a cancerous fate (Kalsched, 1996).

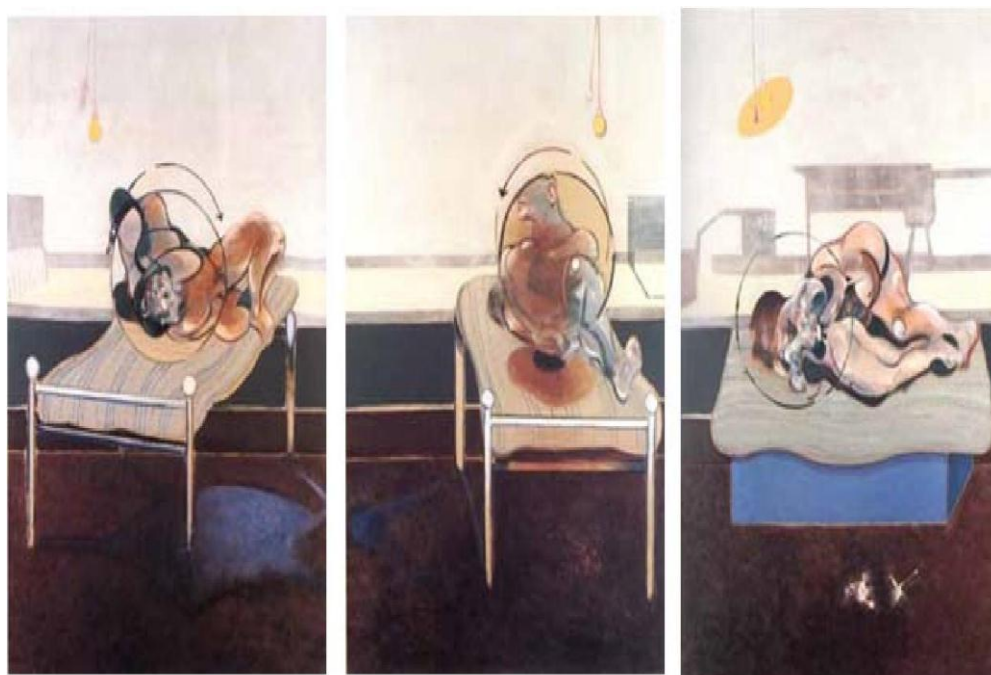


Figure 6. 9. Three Studies for Figures on Beds (Bacon, 1972). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The self-inflicted abuse of the masochist is indicative of the paradoxical nature of early traumatic experiences (Miller, 1994). Bacon’s self destructive behaviour could be seen as an attempt to gain mastery over his early trauma and its aftermath, but instead it becomes a violent re-enactment of the cruelty and punishment of his early childhood. Through self-destructive behaviours, Bacon regulates the timing and severity of his abuse, while paradoxically experiencing a sense of empowerment. In this illusion, self-destructive behaviours assume a continuation of the bondage and

identification with the early experience (Miller, 1994). Sexual masochism is usually chronic, and the person tends to repeat the same masochistic act. To protect the ego from fragmenting, the enactment provides an illusion of control, “aiding the person to manage potential disruptions of their internal and external worlds by keeping at bay traumatic memories” (Fonagy et al., 1991, p. 650). In Bacon’s paintings, the content of his trauma is demonstrated in what is unspoken and seen but not understood. His paintings become the reenactment of his trauma and through them he retells his story.



Figure 6.10. Untitled, Crouching Figures (Bacon, 1952). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

When Bacon did the series of Pope paintings, they were all screaming and distorted. In an interview with David Sylvester, he was asked: “Do you think your involvement in it (the Pope-paintings) has something to do with feelings about your father?” “I’m not quite sure I understand what you’re saying,” Bacon replied and

possibly did so warily. “Well, the Pope is il Papa,” Sylvester explained (Sylvester, 1975, p. 71). Bacon dismissed this. “I certainly have never thought of it that way,” he said, adding, “but I don’t know, it’s difficult to know what forms obsessions. The thing is, I never got on with either my mother or father” (Sylvester, 1975, p. 71). Bacon was one of those people who shut out the things which disagree with them and according to Jung, when one denies or suppresses aspects of oneself in this way, the energy will go towards the development of a complex.

It seems plausible to suggest that Bacon developed a father complex as a result of trying to deny his ambivalent feelings of fear and attraction, the energy of the two emotions becoming fused. His attraction to his abusive father certainly helps to explain his propensity for developing attachments to sadistic lovers (Farson, 1993). As Jung has said: “The release from the parental imago and thus from childhood is never complete as long as a positive or negative resemblance to the parents is the deciding factor in, for instance, a love choice” (Jung, 1927/1964, CW 10, para. 74).

6.3.1.3 The Need to be Nourished

Bacon described himself as being “greedy for life, for food, for drink, for being with the people one likes and for the excitement of things happening” (F. Bacon, personal communication, March 23, 1963). He did love to drink and eat good food and spent a lot of his life in restaurants and bars, a daily routine that led to serious debt. It is possible that he found solace and comfort in these activities and that they too are signifiers of a deeper more atavistic need for maternal nourishment.

The Mother Archetype. The idea of ‘nourishment’ resonates with Jung’s concept of ‘The Great Mother’ archetype (Jung 1938/1954d, CW 9i). It is worth repeating the quote from Jung in this regard where he states that,

The more remote and unreal the personal mother is, the more deeply will be the son’s yearning for her clutch at his soul, awakening that primordial and eternal image of the mother for whose sake everything that embraces, protects, nourishes and helps, assumes maternal form, from the Alma Mater of the university to the personification of cities, countries, sciences and ideals (Jacobi, 1971, p. 100).



Figure 6.11. *Female Nude in a Door Frame* (Bacon, 1972). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon described his mother as being indifferent to his emotional needs and his sister, Ianthe, confirmed his appraisal of her as being ‘completely self-absorbed’. While his father was overwhelming, his mother was absent. It is likely that this would have contributed to Bacon’s varied treatment of the female figure in his work. Sometimes ambiguous and sometimes very particular, the female form is revelatory.

In some of his most visceral paintings of the human body, the figures are of uncertain gender and seem almost to dematerialise under one's gaze, recoiling from contact in their own private spaces (Harrison, 2005). It is helpful to consider Jung's notion of The Great Mother, the transpersonal aspect of the biological mother in considering these forms.

The personification of the feminine principle represents the fertile womb out of which all life comes and the darkness of the grave to which it returns. Its fundamental attributes are the capacity to nourish and to devour. It corresponds to mother nature in the primordial swamp - life being constantly spawned and constantly devoured. If the great mother nourishes us, she is good; if she threatens to devour us, she is bad. In psychological terms, the great mother corresponds to the unconscious that can nourish and support the ego or can swallow it up in psychosis or suicide (Edinger, 1968, para. 43).

The positive, creative aspects of the great mother are represented by breast and womb. The negative, destructive aspects appear as the devouring mouth or the *vagina dentata* (Neuman, 1955). In more abstract symbolism, anything hollow, concave or containing pertains to the great mother. Thus, bodies of water, the earth itself, caves, dwellings, vessels of all kinds are feminine (Jung 1938/1954d, CW 9i). It is worth looking at how this symbolism manifests itself in Bacon's work as it provides an entrée into his psychic functioning.

The way he depicted the human body, for instance, is related to his view of it being nothing but a lump of flesh. Unable to connect with a mother who didn't 'see' him, he was perhaps deprived of a sense of identity, was himself just 'flesh.' He often spoke about his fascination with meat and would visit abattoirs to view the carcasses in an attempt to get a sense of the reality and rawness of being alive (Farson, 1993; Harrison, 2005).

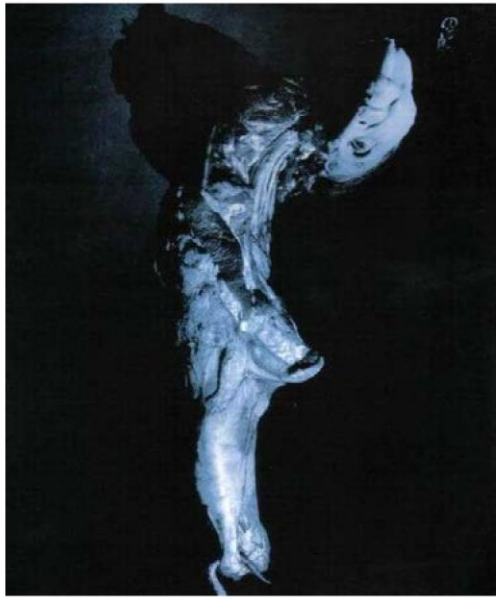


Figure 6.12 Francis Bacon & Meat Photograph (Giacobetti, 1991).

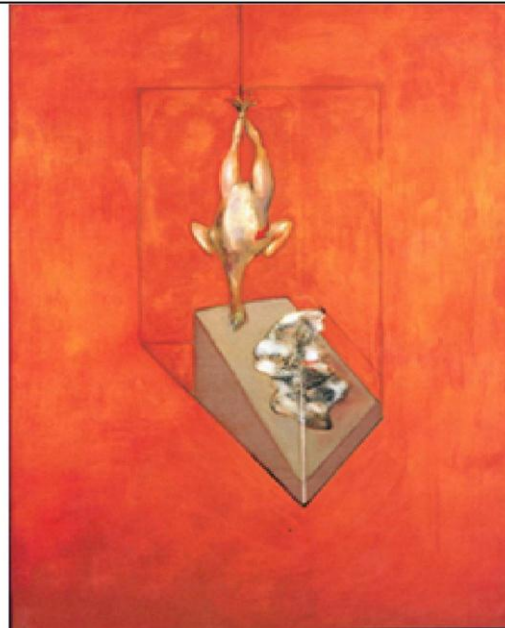


Figure 6.13. Triptych, Left Panel (Bacon, 1981-82). □The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

His self-portraits could be likened to ‘carcasses’ hanging in museums. The skin is thus an apt starting point to a discussion of the various maternal archetypal symbols.

The Containing Psychic Skin. When one considers the trauma of birth, the bursting forth from the mother’s protective skin, an infant’s first method of communication and source of reassurance is skin-to-skin contact (Harrison, 2005). This physical contact is also the precursor to the process of participation mystique, the state of mutual unconscious identification in which parent and child are co-dependently entangled and not able to experience their psychic autonomy and independence from one another (Levy, 2009). Bacon alluded to his infant psyche

when he responded to a question about whether his cube structures were intended to psychologically convey isolation or to demarcate territory (Harrison, 2005). He gave his usual explanation that they were devices that were used to facilitate seeing the image (his own?) more clearly, but then went on to say,

People go to bars to be closer to each other. The frustration is that people can never be close enough to each other. If you're in love you can't break down the barriers of the skin. How can you cut your flesh open and join it with the other person? (Harrison, 2005, p. 216).

To describe the aim of lovemaking in terms of “penetrating the skin and joining with one’s partner’s flesh,” exceeds the ordinary need for physical contact (Harrison, 2005, p. 216) and echoes the merging and fusion associated with participation mystique (Levy, 2009). Bacon’s extreme need for physical attachment could point to an earlier difficulty associated with the dualistic stage of childhood in which the child learns to see itself as a separate being. The individual who does not first experience the sense of being connected will have trouble achieving the necessary separation and differentiation required to attain a sense of self as an adult (Jung, 1969). To remain merged and fused is to be ‘swallowed up’ by non-distinction, the need for differentiation thus ‘undernourished.’

The painting *Studies from the Human Body*, 1975, shows a woman with swollen, though presumably nourishing, breasts that are withheld from the naked man-child who is tormented and writhing on a comfortless bench. She is detached from him both in space and behind the indifference of her expression, masked by one of Bacon’s trademark ‘glass’ discs (Harrison, 2005).

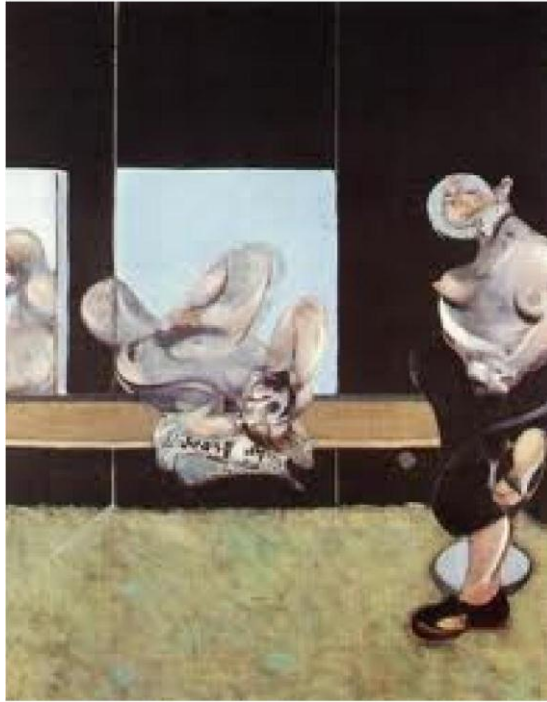


Figure 6.14. *Studies from the Human Body* (Bacon, 1975). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The scene is not about “incorporating the nourishment of a mother but about the primary identification with an alternative supportive structure, the glass barrier, which the child hugs and the ‘bed of discomfort’, which supports it” (Harrison, 2005, p. 228). This is the attachment drive, which seeks satisfaction as the child-man resigns himself to being unable to connect with and ‘be held’ by a mother who neglects his needs. The energy lost in one component however, will simply reappear in another and Bacon redirects this psychic energy by turning it into ‘exhilarated despair.’ He said that he never believed that one should have any security and or expect to keep any. “After all, as existence in a way is so banal, you may as well try and make a kind of grandeur of it rather than be nursed to oblivion” (Sylvester, 1975, p. 125).

It follows that Bacon’s paintings were explorations of selfhood, the subjects

separated by cubes or recoiling from 'contact' perhaps to avoid falling into

indistinctiveness –the nothingness associated with the pleroma and with getting beyond ones own nature. Alternatively, for an individual who had always been ‘set apart’, the paintings convey a sense of isolation and may have pointed to a desire to feel the acceptance and inclusion of losing oneself in “the primal psychic materia, the Great Mother, the matrix out of which all consciousness will emerge” (Jung, 1916, p. 380). In Bacon’s paintings, the figure often appears to be on the verge of dissolving, just before becoming unrecognisable. The painter concentrates all the violence of the brushstroke in the human form, using the agitated pictorial material to embody the convulsions of the flesh. To achieve this effect, Bacon at times hurled handfuls of paint against the canvas, forming it subsequently with his hands, the paintbrush, or other direct means. In these ways he affirmed his presence in all its brutality of fact (Faerna, n.d). Bacon defines his own boundaries and further affirms his ‘presence’ by placing his paintings, the extensions of himself, into glazed frames. These boxes performing the same function as a protective skin. The more abstract symbolism related to the mother figure does include the box, the coffin and the belly of the monsters that swallow up their victims (Neuman, 1955).

The Box. Harrison (2005) argues that Bacon’s use of picture glass (unusual with oil on canvas works) is paradoxical because, while the glass allows a penetration into the picture space, it also acts as a barrier. It draws the viewer in and yet keeps him at a physical distance. There is always a level of detachment and disconnection. Bacon admired the old masters and paid a peculiar sort of tribute to them in the way he framed and presented his paintings (Harrison, 2005). There is an interesting anomaly here because the contents of the paintings are maverick, even delinquent in the context of the great traditions of High Art, so the conventional outer covering – the social persona – of the frame, like Bacon’s well-mannered social graces,

camouflages the Dionysian interior. The enormous sheets of glass, behind which the paintings were hidden, gave one the fleeting impression of glimpsing something alarming, involuntarily, through a window (Harrison, 2005). Through the use of broad, thick, gilded moldings, polished and shiny, he conveyed the message that the viewer should not touch. The frame and its contents do not quite cancel one another out, but they imply cancellation. This, together with the anguish of the body's transgressive pleasures, is another of Bacon's paradoxes that can be related to the maternal bond (Harrison, 2005).

Vagina Dentata. It was Bacon's "dramatising of the oral ... that contributed most to the perception that his subject was violence" (Harrison, 2005, p. 216). Leonard Shengold quoted from K. Abraham's *The Development of the Libido* (1924) says:

Undoubtedly the teeth are the first instruments with which the child can do damage to the outer world. The relief from painful tension when the infant's teeth erupt through the mucosa of the gum may condition fantasies of explosive cannibalistic penetration, passive and active and that teeth can also connote the terror of passive masochistic annihilation (Harrison, 2005, p. 217).

Bacon's tooth imagery, similarly, while being about the potential for violence and physical harm (devouring), is also about the open, exposed and vulnerable mouth. This duality appears to perfectly reflect multi-layered concerns in Bacon's patterns of behaviour and attitude. Robert Fleiss's identification of a site for the castrating phallus of the parent as "the phallus equipped with a mouth" succinctly describes two of the Furies in *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (Harrison, 2005, p. 218).

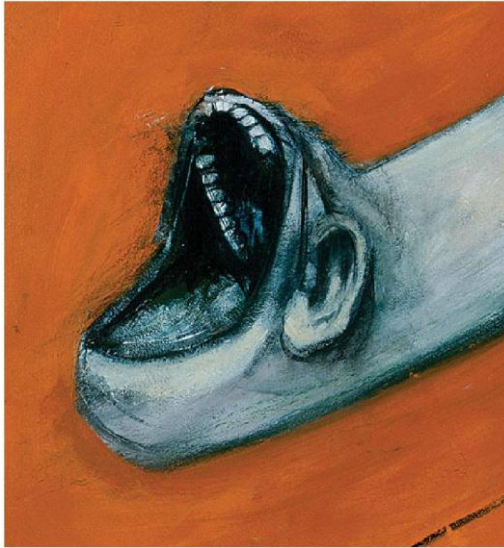


Figure 6.15. *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion – detail* (Bacon, 1944). © Tate London 2009.

Bacon was aware of the obsessive prominence of teeth (*vagina dentata*) in Picasso's work from 1929 onwards and he would have been aware of the fetishisation of body parts in the Modernist and Surrealist close-up photographs to which he was exposed. The press also generated a constant supply of "images of haranguing, gesticulating politicians from which he selected suggestively orotund mouths" (Harrison, 2005, p. 218). Bacon may have downplayed his obsession with the mouth by saying that he was merely interested in "trying to paint the mouth like Monet painted a sunset", but nonetheless hinted at its significance when he said "People say that these things have all sorts of sexual implications" (Sylvester, 2000, p. 29). He was certainly alert to images that nourished his obsessions and consistently sought and incorporated these into his paintings.

The Coffin. Bacon's obsessive collecting of photos and newspaper clippings of images can be regarded as excessive if one considers the amount of detritus found in his studio. The clutter that covered all the surfaces, tables and walls, was like some

strange compost in which his future pictures were fermenting and his past ones decaying (Harrison, 2005). His accretions were a precious archaeological record. One could also regard these archives as evidence of a search for 'the perfect image.' Bacon's resort to photography, both still and cinematic, was certainly constant and obsessive (Hughes, 2008). The use of photographs to paint his portraits instead of the living person was also a means of regulating the space and distance between subjects because the camera lens - pellicule (*skin* in French) is like a protective membrane that can be used to either get closer or further away from the subject (Harrison, 2005). The photograph becomes like a skin for Bacon to incorporate as a fragment into his painted image. Roland Barthes provides an apt analogy between the body, film and the action of light: "a sort of umbilical cord links the body of the photographed thing to my gaze: light, though impalpable, is here a carnal medium, a skin I share with anyone who has been photographed" (Harrison, 2005, p. 199). Barthes' words convey the sense of connection one gets from having been really seen by another, recalling the yearning of the child (and perhaps the artist) to hold the mother's gaze and for once see the self reflected.

Portraiture, too, embodies elements of participation mystique. It could also be regarded as being like an act of love and the penetration involved as profound as anything in sexual relations: each partner gives himself in such a case without reserve (Sylvester, 1973). Bacon distorted his subjects' faces in an attempt to achieve a greater likeness of them. He rearranges the 'rules of appearance' and there is a 'little death' where he destroys the visage of the subject (the barrier to connection that is the persona) so that the authentic self may then emerge. The way Bacon used railed enclosures in which to place the portraits of his friends (Sylvester, 1973) is

reminiscent too of the scientist pinning an insect to a board for inspection. To Sylvester (1975) Bacon said: “I’ve used the figures lying on beds with a hypodermic syringe as a form of nailing the image more strongly into reality or appearance ...I want a nailing of the flesh onto the bed” (p. 78). What he really seems to be saying, though, is that he is trying to pin down the elusive nature of the self.



Figure 6.16. *Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe* (Bacon, 1963) □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The Belly of the Monster. After Bacon’s death, Brian Robertson wrote that “he had a fantastic feeling for the figure: trapped, pinned down or imperilled like a moth or a hunk of meat” (Peppiatt, 2006, p.395). One could imagine that it was his way of trying to cling to something or capture its essence. He seems to greedily devour and consume the identities of the people he paints, absorbing their essence in a kind of ‘totem meal’ and then regurgitating them on canvas. Bacon carefully integrated the fragments of his source material into gestalts of figures. These ‘working documents’ were anything but trivial to him and his “favourite images, pasted or taped onto card, resembled touchingly poignant collages – talismans rather than simple references” (Harrison, 2005, p. 59).



Figure 6.17. *Triptych* (Bacon, 1991). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

He collected photos and images and turned these favourite articles into life on canvas in much the same way that the ‘Buffalo Bill’ character from Thomas Harris’s (1988) *Silence of the Lambs*, flayed his victims so as to sew himself an outfit of skin into which he could truly climb. Bacon excelled in the figure-subject domain and he, too, reinvented the human image (Sylvester, 1973).



Figure 6.18. *Study for the Nurse in the film "The Battleship Potemkin"* (Bacon, 1957). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The aerial space-frames that Bacon said were formal devices for ‘seeing the image more clearly’ nonetheless encouraged the perception that his “silently shrieking figures were symbols of contemporary anxieties and individual isolation” (Harrison, 2006 p. 118). These ‘cages’ introduce the presence of the Puer and the self that never matures, the bars the unconscious ties to the unfettered world of early life (Sharp, 1991). The circular or elliptical shapes – all symbols of the Great Mother that define areas of activity, and the tubular railings that form the skeletal plinths to separate and lift the subject, as in *From Muybridge ‘The Human Figure in Motion: Women Emptying a Bowl of Water /Paralytic Child Walking on all Fours’* (1965), possibly had similar atavistic origins (Harrison, 2005, p. 118).



Figure 6.19. *After Muybridge Study of the Human Figure in Motion-Woman Emptying a Bowl of Water and Paralytic Child on all Fours* (Bacon, 1965). □The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

“The eternal child in man is an indescribable experience, an incongruity, a handicap, and a divine prerogative; an imponderable that determines the ultimate worth or worthlessness of a personality” (Jung 1959a, CW 9i, para. 300).

The Puer Aeternus. Bacon revealed something of the eternal child within himself when he said: “I think artists stay much closer to their childhood than other people. They tend to stay the way they have been from the beginning,” (Peppiatt, 2009, p. 3). The one thing dreaded by the child-man is to be bound to anything whatever (Von Franz, 2000). Having lacked intimacy in childhood it seems plausible to think that Bacon may have found it difficult to bond with anyone or anything in adulthood. He had never stuck to any one thing, one school, one home, one office, one profession,

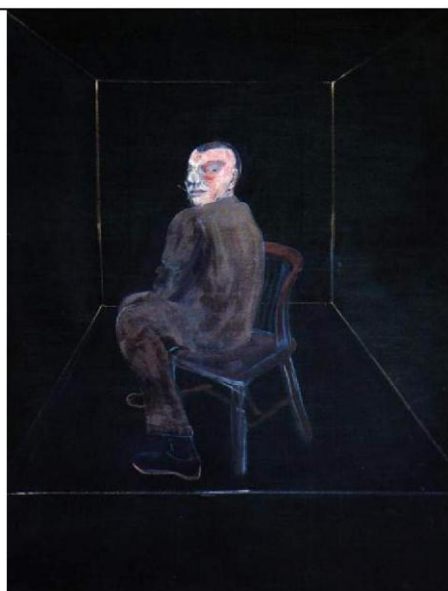


Figure 6.20. Study for Portrait X (Bacon, 1957). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

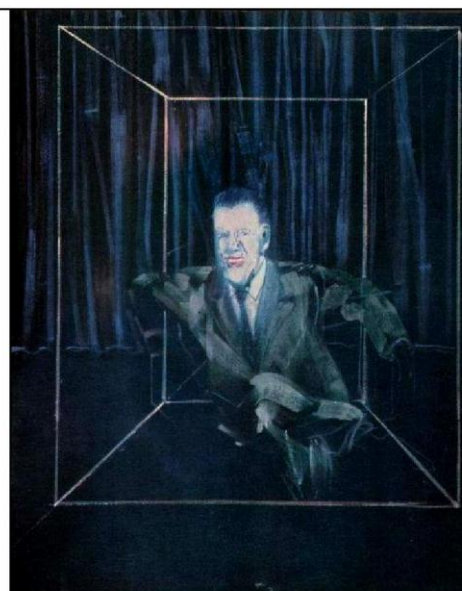


Figure 6.21. Portrait of a Man (Bacon, 1953). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009

one way of life, one country (Russell, 1971).

The puer’s shadow is the senex (Latin for “old man”), associated with the god Apollo: “Disciplined, controlled, responsible, rational and ordered. The shadow of the senex is the puer, related to Dionysus -unbounded instinct, disorder, intoxication and whimsy” (Sharp, 1991, p. 110). Bacon embodies both. He was on one hand disciplined to an unusual extent: in his attire, his interior designs, his ‘highly ordered’ paintings,

his monk-like living quarters and his control over how he was presented by

writers and the media, but on the other, chaotic – particularly evidenced in his notoriously untidy studio, his drifting and settling nowhere permanent, his drinking, gambling, petty theft and also his capacity for boorishness, such as booing a princess off a stage (Sylvester, 1975). While he paid considerable attention to his personal appearance and kept his living space almost Cistercian in its starkness and austerity, his studio – the arena for his creative expression - was a complete mess. Perhaps this was the only room in which he felt he could let his hair down and feel uninhibited. This might be seen as the order of the Senex penetrating through the unbounded studio environment of the Puer in the form of the images he paints. Bacon's hero, Nietzsche, provides a useful aphorism: "One must have chaos in oneself in order to give birth to a dancing star" (Harrison, 2005, p. 232). Bacon once said to Peter Beard:

There are two sides to me. I like perfect things, for instance. I like perfection on a grand scale. In a way I would like to live in a very grand place. But as in painting you make such a mess. I prefer to live in a mess with the memories and the damage left with one. I think we all have this double side to us. One likes order and one likes disorder. We have to battle for order (Peppiatt, 2009, p. 423).

It was only when Bacon was already 35 years old and just beginning to take himself seriously, that he learned that painting was perhaps the best way for him to bring order to the chaos of his life, to translate what he calls his 'obsessions' into concrete images (Kimmelman, 1989). The emotional rollercoaster of his life, the restlessness, the sexual indiscretions, the sense of frustration and claustrophobia one gets from descriptions of his childhood, his disregard for social norms and lack of concern for what others might think, are all aspects that became distinguishing features of his art. Clearly, his paintings are full of the iconography of the puer, the visions of imprisonment and similar imagery. Life itself, existential reality, is

experienced as a prison (Sharp, 1991). Bacon's cube-like 'prisons' caught the attention of the screenwriters for the movie *Silence of the Lambs*, who used his work as reference for the creation of the perfect prison cell of the cannibalistic Hannibal Lector.



Figure 6.22. *Francis Bacon*
(Unknown photographer). ©The
Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 6.23. *Sphinx III* (Bacon, 1954).
©The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Here again, one sees the metaphorical association with separation (individuality and individuation) and attachment (consumption and indistinctiveness). “For the individual human being, (creatura) it is a matter of life and death to become separate and distinct or face getting away from one’s own nature, away from creatura and falling into indistinctiveness” (Stein, 2005, p. 2).

Bacon ‘the eternal child’ ultimately sought the ‘nourishment’ he needed in the Colony Room, Muriel Belcher’s bar, where he remained a loyal patron until his death.

The Cave. Bacon's natural mother was prescriptive, was part of the patriarchy in terms of her expectations of him, so it is not surprising that in later life, when he was in a position to be in more control, he chose as his close friends women who were empowered, independent, strong-willed but collaborative. Muriel Belcher was the 'queen' of the Colony Room, but she co-opted Bacon as a partner in the marketing and



Figure 6.24. Muriel Belcher
(Photographed by Deakin, 1964).



Figure 6.25. *Sphinx-Portrait of Muriel Belcher* (Bacon, 1979). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

'character' of the place (Belcher referred to him as 'one of her daughters').

From Bacon's side, this collaboration gave him the status of one who was able to control as a mother through his role as 'host'(ess). The bar was a safe and womb-like enclave for Bacon, where he was able to exercise new powers of emotional and social control over his fellow drinkers. He could buy them drinks and nourish them, or cut them dead: It was all in his power. This situation was in essence a synthetic construction of a normal, healthy maternal relationship. In ideal circumstances, Bacon would have had the necessary emotional nourishment from his natural mother and the

means for healthy separation, but failing that, the Colony Room and all its

implications served as primary mother – affording emotional and spiritual nourishment – and the means for emancipation and adulthood. In the Colony Room he consumed and incorporated ‘mother.’ In that closed womb-like environment he could behave as he pleased and still be loved, and the ‘unconditional acceptance’ he received enabled him to establish a sense of identity.

There is massive polarity in Bacon’s treatment of the women in his paintings. Firstly, there is the identifiable personality, such as the portraits of Belcher, Moraes and Rawsthorne, in which the figure dominates the ground in ways that are forceful – even disturbing - but there are also the anonymous forms – female figures treated like meat – unidentified, flayed, disemboweled, flaccid or boneless. This polarity between how he treats identifiable women and his treatment of women in general indicates the intriguing likelihood that it was ‘personality’ in individual women that emancipated Bacon, while his general attitude would appear to have been nondescript or even hostile.



Figure 6.26. Triptych - Studies from the Human Body (Bacon, 1970). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

6.3.2 The Social Dimension

“A man is only half understood when we know how everything in him came into being” (Jung, 1943/1960j, CW 7, para. 67).

A human life is part of a family tree and individuals are continuously living the ancestral life, catering to instincts thought to be their own but which are quite incompatible with their own. People become heirs to the families ‘karmic fortune’, which shapes their lives in the way that they either fight against the parent’s state of mind or else they succumb to a paralysing imitation (Levy, 2009). The primary parents play an important role in the child’s life but other caretakers are often also a source of influence and potential wounding or healing (Lipthrott, 2008). The karmic inheritance also plays a role in the selection of a mate, which is primarily the result of the unconscious desire to correct what was unfinished in childhood (Jacobi, 1971).



Figure 6.27. *Man and Child* (Bacon, 1963). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Ancestral Inheritance. Bacon came from a long line of protestant gentry. He was named after his famous ancestor, the philosopher Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who presents an interesting blueprint for a complex and gifted character. Elevated to the office of Lord Chancellor of England in 1618, he was later to be prosecuted for bribery and corrupt dealings in chancery suits and then banished from parliament and court. This Bacon was apparently equally at home in roughhouse politics and in the most sublime of intellectual achievements. His writings on the widest range of subjects from history to law continue to contribute to English culture (Webster's Biographical Dictionary, 1971). The more recent Francis echoed many of these diversities and anomalies, he could hold court in the most refined of circles while also consorting with guttersnipes and other riff-raff. In another personality, the elevated circumstances of birth may well have inspired conventional achievement, but the contrary Bacon had opted for a life of sloth and consistently asserted that his goal in life was 'to do nothing.' As Jung said, it is not surprising when the child turns out to be the opposite of what the parents were (Jacobi, 1971). But these 'opposites' were only superficial. Bacon's father set a puritanical tone in the home, but he too had vices, like gambling, which Bacon inherited. He, like the noble ancestor before and his son after, was a person full of contradictions and paradoxes. The Bacon 'spirit' and tendency to live lives that were full of contradictions seems to have been passed on through the generations.

Sources of Wounding and Healing. Bacon enjoyed socialising and as an adult had a few friends and many hangers on. There is no mention of Bacon, the child, having had any friends. Moving from place to place and not being part of any mainstream schooling would have made for a lonely childhood. He had brothers and sisters but there is no indication of them having been close in any way and he was

unlike his siblings. They were hardier characters, could ride horses and were able to live up to their father's expectations, but Bacon believed his father dismissed him as a weakling. When his younger brother Edward died of pneumonia in 1927, Bacon remembered that his father was heartbroken. "It was the only time I ever saw my father show deep emotion. He loved my brother very much, but he never understood me" (Harrison, 2005, p. 219).



Figure 6.28. *Man carrying a child* (Bacon, 1956). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

One can only speculate as to what the impact of being the surviving child may have had on Bacon, but it is likely that he would have felt profoundly the rejection of being unable to live up to his parents' expectations or to be able to fill the empty space left by his brother. It is not surprising that a sense of rejection and feelings of unworthiness would prompt him to declare that he wanted to make a career out of 'doing nothing'. To claim to want to do nothing may even have been a form of defiance for his parents having hurt him in this way.

Bacon felt acutely his father's lack of empathy and affection and was destined to strive for the rest of his life to gain this attention, or to castigate him for having

withheld it. He felt similarly neglected by his mother. It was his perception that she found her marriage unsatisfactory (Harrison, 2005) and it may be suspected that her alienation from her husband had repercussions for intimacy and empathy with her children. It seems plausible then to attribute the evolution of his work – from the appeasing cloche-hatted drawings to images of screaming, lonely figures - to his mother's indifference to her son's emotional needs. According to Jung, someone whose own mother failed to satisfy the demands of the archetype “may well be one that spends his or her life seeking comfort in the church, or in identification with ‘the motherland’, or in meditating upon the figure of Mary, or in a life at sea (Tandon, 2008, p.71). Bacon, left for long periods of time in the care of others, did not feel connected to either of his parents and he did indeed spend many years ‘at sea’ drifting and living a nomadic lifestyle trying ‘to do nothing’. Rather than seeking comfort in the church, he actively despised the role of religion as a human crutch and identified instead with the Irish culture, which he absorbed from his earliest conscious moments (Russel, 1971).

Besides these influences, Bacon's closest companions were his nanny and his granny, two women on opposite ends of the social spectrum. Granny Supple, while slightly eccentric, was warm, aristocratic and gracious, whereas his nanny was a working class woman who thought nothing of engaging in the odd bit of theft when she needed to. Left to his own devices for long periods, Bacon learned in childhood how to improvise a life of his own. Most of his time was spent with people who were used to doing exactly what they wanted. “Life was lived outwardly and without hesitation, it being taken for granted that the world would turn their way. In Ireland especially, he met people who were outrageous and extravagant” (Russell, 1971 p. 15). The point is that he developed a very sharp eye for human peculiarities, which

was instrumental in his ability to recognise and capture an image (Russell, 1971).

According to Jung, Bacon's potential to form the image would have been something inherent and inherited (Hogenson, 1998) while the ability to articulate the image may indeed have been influenced by his cultural environment and learning (McDowell, 2001). His family had offered him quite involuntarily, an education in style and flare (Russell, 1971).

Interaction with Others. Bacon would test people by displaying bad behaviour towards them to see how much they would tolerate. Although a physical masochist, he was an emotional sadist (Russell, 1971). He was cynical about human relations and the expectation that he would be betrayed. He was, for example, wary of the intentions of a young artist called Dennis Williams who idolised him and who in the 1950s stayed in a small room adjoining his studio. Williams tried to make himself useful but felt that his 'personality had been wiped out' by Bacon's indifference to his ministrations and believed that Bacon was incapable of emotional attachment (Harrison, 2005). He said of Bacon: "In his clinical disengagement with humanity, he sees people as mountains of flesh" (Harrison, 2005, p. 220).



Figure 6.29. *Lying Figure in Mirror* (Bacon, 1971). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Here is evidence of a problem with allowing people to get close that can again be traced back to the concept of participation mystique. Bacon seems to project the same indifference he experienced with his mother onto others. Her traits were bound to have seeped into his personality. These traits, absorbed by him at the unconscious level of his psyche so that he acts out a style of life, which he thinks is his own, but is really taken over from his mother. By enacting these traits and mistaking them for his own, he lives a derivative style of life, which perpetuates an inability to establish intimacy. The detached personality of his mother would have had a significant effect on the development of Bacon's ego and it would appear his growth as a person was greatly hindered in this respect (Progoff, 1966).

Sir John Rothenstein observed that under Max Beerbohm's classification of people as 'hosts' or 'guests', Bacon was definitely a 'host' (Harrison, 2005). Being a 'guest' with Williams serving him must have frustrated his need to offer hospitality and the role of 'host', of course, involves control. The extreme generosity Bacon showed towards his partner, George Dyer, can perhaps also be seen as a control tactic because it relieved him of any sense of obligation on an emotional level. He was a grand-gesture giver of gifts but was very uncomfortable about receiving them. Bacon only realised later that his well-intentioned efforts to save Dyer from thieving by looking after him financially had removed his independence and ultimately Dyer's personality too, was cancelled out. His suicide was coterminous with one of Bacon's major exhibitions (Harrison, 2005). Bacon's posthumous triptychs of Dyer were regarded as fond memorials but they can also be considered as absolutions of guilt.



Figure 6.30. *Triptych - In Memory of George Dyer* (Bacon, 1971). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon practised a kind of fashionable, aristocratic plain-speaking: “Who can I tear to pieces if not my friends?” was a favourite maxim of his and he lived up to it. Indeed, he could be called ‘nice’, but he could be monstrous too. He bullied Dyer emotionally. Friendship to Bacon was where two people tear each other apart. “That way you learn something from each other” he said (Russell, 1971, p. 136). When he painted portraits, it was often his friends who came under scrutiny. “If they were not my friends, I could not do such violence to them. People believe that the distortions of them are an injury to them, no matter how much they feel for or care for you” (Russell, 1971, p. 139). These words reveal how Bacon associates true ‘closeness’ with being ripped to shreds. This had been his experience of family life and as Jung (1913/1961a, CW 4) said: “The small world of the child, the family milieu is the model for the big world” (p. 312). In Bacon’s case the people closest were the ones that could hurt the most. Those who survived his abuse were his ‘loyal’ friends. Those that disappeared could then be regarded as having been dismissed by him and not as having abandoned him.

While it is a cliché to suggest that all gregarious, creative people are fundamentally lonely, it is not unreasonable to think that Bacon was a lonely person. He may have longed to connect with others but instead he pushed people away. “Every wish immediately suggests its opposite” and in Bacon’s case he kills the thing he loves (Boeree, 2006, p. 62). This was perhaps a means of dealing with a fear of rejection. It was possibly also a way of maintaining the illusion of being in control. He was one of those people who shut out the things that are disagreeable, and intimacy may have been a particular challenge. Having lacked intimacy in childhood, he hesitated to accept it afterwards (Russell, 1971). He used his sharp tongue to keep people at a distance. “Usually devoid of sentimentality, he suffered on the few occasions that he yielded to it” (Farson, 1993, p. 19).

Challenging the Karmic Inheritance. In a patrilineal culture like Western civilisation the primary role of the father is as a connection to the generations that have gone before (Progoff, 1966).



Figure 6.31. *Study for Portrait II* (Bacon, 1956). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 6.32. *Study for a Pope* (Bacon, 1955). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The father is the link with history, with a specific national or racial group. He is the young man's biological link to the continuity of life (Progoff, 1966). While Bacon's mother seems to have been conspicuously absent, his father's presence was overwhelming. One can only speculate as to what the psychological effect of this would have been on Bacon's sense of self but one can assume that in order for him to have formed himself as an individual he would have needed to seek ways to overcome and balance his awareness of his ancestry. According to Progoff (1966),

The transpersonal aspect of the father, the archetypal father sets the basis for the young man's first feelings of his own identity and of his own value. He may eventually reject this and substitute a new conception of his own identity and value, carrying through the so-called 'killing of the father.' The active presence of a father image is essential, however, to provide the young man with a sense of himself in order that the growth process can get under way. Then it can proceed through the early years of life and into that time in late adolescence when it can legitimately be overthrown and a new sense of identity achieved (p. 38).

Bacon's defiant attitude was possibly the only means he had of preventing his personality from being wiped out and he railed against all the expectations of what would have been considered appropriate for a young man in his day and age. He fought against beliefs imposed upon his life and opposed anything that would engender an unquestioning and destructive acceptance of the vagaries of life and what may have seemed like fate to him (Hatch, 1988). His paintings often embody his challenge of fate in various guises. According to Hatch (1998) it is possible that "Bacon's fascination for Aeschylus' Orestes or for Christ was because they had questioned fate, while the Eumenides or Furies of Greek mythology, first presented in *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of Crucifixion* (1944), became a Leitmotif in the painter's work" (p. 163).

His attitude was perhaps also partly generational. He had grown up in a socio-political context when, as Miranda Carter (2001) put it, “there was an almost tangible Oedipal fury in the air among the aspiring artists and writers, ‘a curious hatred of old men’” (pp. 92-93). Bacon’s defiance was also expressed in the way in which he approached the canvas and was described by Hatch (1998) as a struggle between the artist’s will and the ‘inevitability’ of the paint. What others called fate, Bacon preferred to call ‘chance’ or ‘accident.’ “What Bacon admired of the writers he read was not what could be appropriated and re-formulated through the language of paint, but rather what could not” (Hatch, 1998, p. 163). Violating the image of powerful males, his deformations captured the collective post-war mood of disillusion in a nation that was moving in the direction of the anti-authoritarianism of the ‘Angry Young Men’ (Harrison, 2005). So, while it is easy to accept the idea of ‘Oedipal fury’, ultimately Bacon’s paintings of solitary beings also had a numinous quality in that they “transcend their personal, subjective constraints to reflect wider cultural issues and universal psychological and social concerns” (Harrison, 2005, p. 219).

Selection of a mate. “A formidable artist and compelling conversationalist who cultivated charm, conviviality and courteousness, Bacon was nevertheless emotionally immature” and in the affairs of love, “a late starter” (Harrison, 2005, p. 223). Jung says that the choice of a mate is based on one’s need to meet the unfulfilled needs of childhood, to complete the part of oneself that is unfinished. Bacon had never been able to establish a close relationship with his father and yet he was attracted to him. Overwhelmed by his father and possibly over-identified with the anima, one can speculate that he battled to incorporate the animus identity into his psyche and possibly sought this aspect of himself in other men, all of whom tended to be tough and overtly manly as his father had been.

Between the ages of about twenty and forty two, Bacon replayed his emotionally deprived childhood under the protection of caring, ‘surrogate parents’ - the men or the couples he lived with who also helped him establish his career. His passionate and violent affair with Peter Lacy could be described as his first adult romance or union of equals and lasted for ten years until Bacon was between the ages of forty-three and fifty-three. At the beginning of the controlling relationship with George Dyer he was nearly fifty-five and it was only at the age of sixty-seven that he assumed something resembling a paternal, albeit sexual, role in his friendship with John Edwards (Harrison, 2005). John Edwards was the only man with whom Bacon had a fairly stable and companionable relationship that did not involve violence. With Edwards, Bacon became the father he had always wanted himself and ended up giving the young man everything he had.

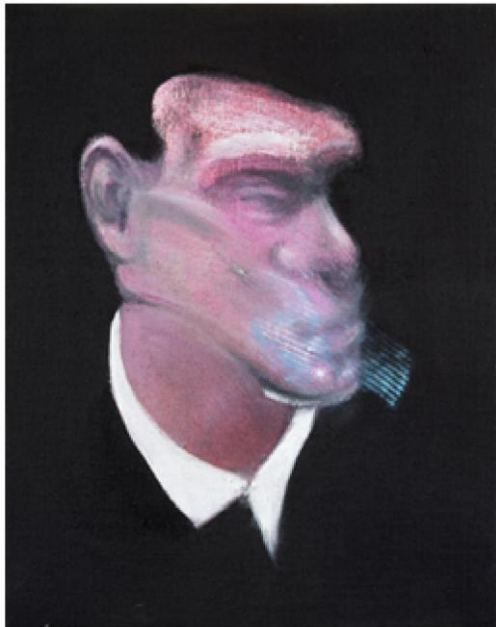


Figure 6.33. Study for a Portrait of John Edwards (Bacon, 1989). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

6.3.3 The Psychic Dimension

Just as instincts are unknown motivating dynamisms of biological behaviour, archetypes are unknown motivating dynamisms of the psyche. Archetypes are the psychic instincts of the human species, but biological instincts and psychic archetypes have a very close connection (Neumann, 1955). Although connected, the various components of the psyche function quite independently of one another and are, in most cases, in polarised relationships – personal and impersonal, conscious and unconscious, internalised and externalised, constructive and destructive, public and private. Reconciling the polarities brings about the eventual integration of the conscious and the unconscious into a whole (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008).

To understand Bacon in terms of psychic principles of functioning, it is necessary to accept that he was contradictory. He was a loner, though he relished company. His work is seen as pessimistic, yet he had an innate optimism that helped him to survive. He was the best company, the funniest and most humourous. “He claimed to be optimistic, even if he was optimistic about nothing in his state of exhilarated despair” (Sylvester, 1975, p. 83). He could be kind and generous, yet capable of sudden anger, even petulance (Farson, 1993). Bacon in life was a great accommodator of opposites. It is precisely this capacity to redirect and channel energy that gives tautness and yet also unpredictability to a career that could otherwise have been all negative irony on the one hand, or all naïve manual involvement on the other (Russell, 1971). A consideration of Surrealism, which had a significant influence on Bacon is illuminating in this regard.



Figure 6.34. *Triptych* (Bacon, 1974-1977). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

While Bacon had been rejected as ‘not being surreal enough’ he, like Picasso, took elements from Surrealism that he used to his own ends. His interest in the Surrealist attitudes in the cinema, as in painting, was that they cultivated images made of widely differing, not to say mutually antagonistic, elements (Harrison, 2008). These confluences were characterised in a famous phrase by ‘Le Comte de Lautrèamont’, “as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella,” (Ades, 1974, p. 30) - an incantation that was used by the Surrealists in their rejection of received ideas and conventional associations (Ades & Gale, 2001). This resonates with Jung’s views on individuation being “an assimilation of unconscious contents that leads to a process, which alone signifies individuation” (Jung, 1992, CW 7, p. 297). Bacon ultimately carried this notion of a ‘chance meeting’ forward brilliantly and perhaps more enduringly than any other painter, “in his inimitable merging of religious and profane, factual and imagined, traditional and revolutionary, high and low” (Peppiatt, 1996, p. 87). The effect of his work was to jolt the mind out of habitual associations by, amongst other things, establishing unconventional relationships between images. An important source of influence, which Bacon hardly mentioned was Amédée Ozenfant’s *Foundations of Modern Art*, 1929. Bacon was drawn to the book because of the extraordinary mixture of images it

contained. A plate that particularly fascinated him shows the British statesman, Sir Austen Chamberlain, reflected in a distorting mirror (Harrison, 2005).



Figure 6.35 Male Nude Before Mirror (Bacon, 1990). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Mirroring and distortion were part of Bacon's stock-in-trade and Jung's observation seems apt: "The individual would be a point of intersection, or an intersecting line, neither conscious nor unconscious, but a bit of both . . . the reflecting surface in which the world of consciousness can perceive its own unconscious, historical image, even as Schopenhauer says that the intellect holds up a mirror to the Universal Will" (Stein, 2005, p. 10). Peppiatt echoes this in reference to the images, "simplification, distortion of forms and modifications of natural appearances, are ways of arriving at intense expressiveness of form" (Peppiatt, 1996, p. 87). The young Bacon used the book by dipping into it and allowing associations to form freely (Harrison, 2005).

6.3.3.1 Structural Components of the Psyche

While the archetype of *The Great Mother* and *The Puer* have already been given consideration, the structural components of the psyche considered to be the ‘big five’ will now be discussed. These include the *Persona*, the *Self*, the *Ego*, the *Shadow*, the *Anima* and the *Animus* (Meyer et al., 2008).

6.3.3.1.1 The Persona

“We nearly always live through screens. When people say my work looks violent, perhaps I have been able to clear away one or two screens” said Bacon (Whitehead, 1998, para. 101).



Figure 6.36. Study for Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1981). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Moving from place to place and never having a permanent home meant that Bacon took it for granted that life was lived in a great many houses and not just in one. Visiting played a great part of Irish life, and Irish houses, like the people who

lived in them, had a great deal of style. Bacon soon got into the way of looking at rooms, and at the outlook from rooms, as being in some way an extension of the owner's personality. He developed a poetic feeling for space, which was quite independent of conventional grandeur or the notion of 'importance' (Russell, 1971). All of these changes in scene made him very aware of "the element of masquerade and dressing-up in grown-up life, and of the effect of environment upon human behaviour" (Russell, 1971, p. 16). Bacon ultimately believed "that life was ridiculous," saying "Even as a child, I knew life was impossible, a kind of charade" (F. Bacon, personal communication, October 1962).

First Impressions. Bacon would emphasize his words in a curious mock-cockney whine, a sort of measured Edwardian alto. It was said to be so enchanting it was difficult to convey in print, making a comment like 'I'm just a simple iddy-ott' sounded hilarious, though it looks infantile on paper. His appearance was extraordinary too. He wore a well-cut grey suit and an open-necked shirt, with an effect that was simultaneously smart, yet casual (Farson, 1993).

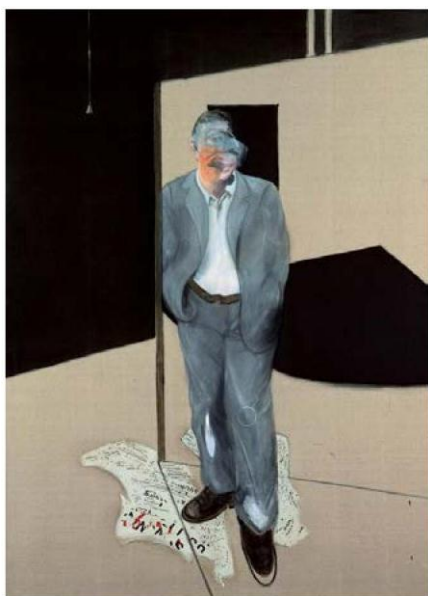


Figure 6.37. *Study of a Man Talking* (Bacon, 1981). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

His sister, Ianthe described him as a shy young boy who enjoyed dressing up (Peppiatt, 1996) and his style of dress was unusual for the time (Farson, 1993). He learned to hide his shy side but Farson (1993) hints at traces of this unexpected shyness, remembering him not wanting to go to dinner parties alone. It is possible that Bacon, who could be one of the most gregarious of men, hid his shyness behind a dramatic appearance and affected speech. He carefully controlled what he revealed of himself to others, occasionally giving glimpses of his true self but then quickly shutting the door again. To Sylvester (1975) Bacon said:

I think the analytical side of my brain didn't develop till comparatively late – till I was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight. When I was young, you see, I was incredibly shy and later I thought it was ridiculous to be shy, so I tried deliberately to get over this because I think old shy people are ridiculous. When I was thirty or so I gradually began to open myself out. But most people do it at a much younger age. So I always feel I wasted so many years of my life (p. 71).

Michael Peppiatt described Bacon as portraying himself as “an outcast destined to carve his own path in the world” (Peppiatt, 1996, p. 5). While this is quite an apt description on some levels, it is not entirely accurate because Bacon had illustrious family roots and much of his initial exposure to art came from the experiences shared in the homes of his aunts. He rarely discussed his family connections, possibly because they did not agree with his preferred image of himself as a self-made man and he would perhaps have hated to have to acknowledge that he had needed anybody (Peppiatt, 1996). He was also very skilled at making the acquaintance of people who could help him to establish himself as an artist. He seemed to strive for individuality but this striving was often a reaction to his circumstances. Jung would regard this as still being part of the collective because it is a reaction against it.

Smoke and Mirrors. According to Sir John Rothenstein, Nietzsche was one of the writers Bacon constantly re-read, and something he wrote in *The Genealogy of Morals* had a bearing on a remark of Bacon's: "I have deliberately tried to twist myself but I have not gone far enough" (Mellville, 1964, para. 11). Nietzsche wrote that "it is the self-tyranny and delight of the artist to give form to himself as a piece of difficult, refractory and suffering material" (Mellville, 1964, para. 11).

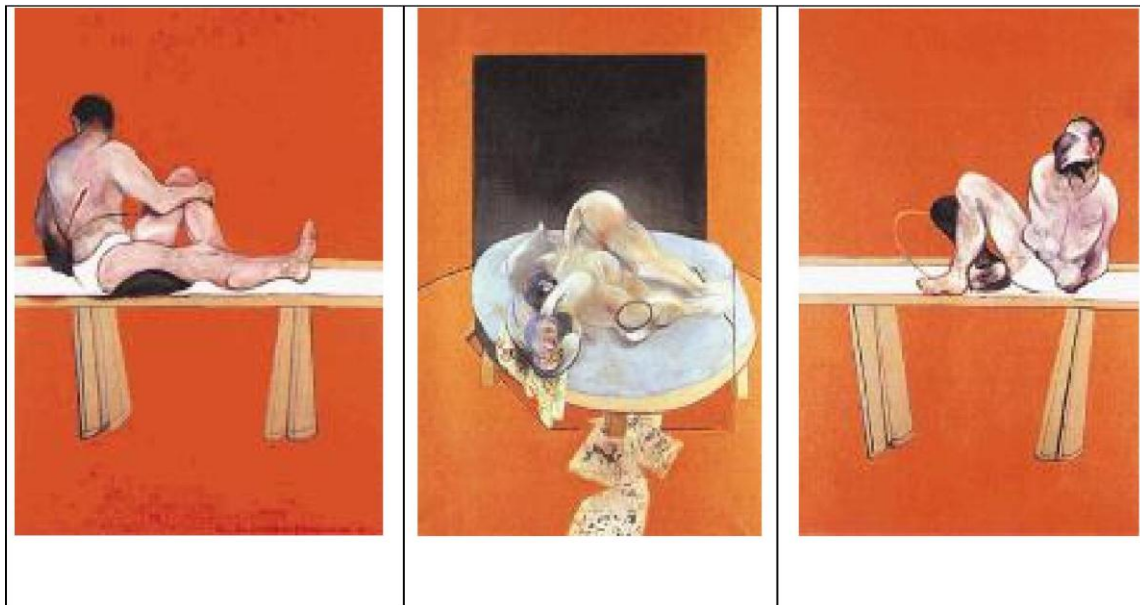


Figure 6. 38. *Triptych* (Bacon,1979). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon set no limits to his self-distortion. Whatever he was capable of doing, he did (Melville, 1964). In his daily life he was, within his chosen circle, respected, revered and even held in awe, but the authority figures in his paintings, while on one level representing the father figure he feared, were also self-portraits. Like these powerful figures and in common with many others (notoriously judges and politicians) who wielded power in their work during the day, he liked by night to be submissive. The melting women he painted were not only the 'detached, withholding mother' but also the women with whom he identified, the recipients of male sex

(Harrison, 2005). He was as extreme in twisting himself sexually as in all the other aspects of his life and art. He wore make-up and women's underwear and suffered physical beatings. On the surface in his daily life Bacon may have seemed like somewhat of an obscurantist, while in his paintings "he conveyed his inner world without compromise, but in code" (Harrison, 2008, p. 230).

What he hid was covered up by his tendency to self-edit. His 'self-editing' or managing of the image he presented of himself included destroying paintings that he felt had failed, the 'weaklings.' He altered transcripts of interviews, vetoed catalogue texts of which he did not approve and removed vital evidence from his image-bank (Harrison, 2005). Only his closest friends were allowed into his Reece Mews studio, except for the occasions on which he prepared it for the visit of a photographer, when unfinished canvases would be turned to face the wall. He was secretive about both his unconventional working procedures and his accumulation and absorption of images and even his friends were hardly ever invited to examine the hundreds of books and magazines piled on shelves, or the hoard of images overflowing from cardboard boxes and cluttering the floor (Harrison & Daniels, 2008).

He was similarly duplicitous in regard to his paintings' literary stimuli, preferring to attribute his work to chance and calling it an accident. There is nonetheless a strong connection between poetry and Bacon's art. A clear link between *Head I* 1948 (seen in chapter 5) and a Paul Eluard poem can be seen (Harrison, 2005). The poem *Rocher dans L Eau* begins with the words that are depicted in Bacon's themes: "Like a bird upright in an armature / The wind's head caught inside a shadowy cage" (Harrison, 2005, p. 230). T. S. Eliot's dark musings are also alluded to in the atmosphere of Bacon's work, but occasionally specific passages are evoked like

“‘Slitted below and gashed with eyes’, ‘This oval O cropped out with teeth’ and one of Bacon’s favourite Eliot stanzas was from *The Four Quartets*: ‘...the half-look/Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror’” (Harrison, 2005, p. 230).



Figure 6.39. Portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne Standing in a Street in Soho (Bacon, 1967). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

He had a library containing a wide variety of books, which he would scan and extract the essence of those that were meaningful to him (Harrison, 2005). On the surface he gave the impression of being quite casual and spontaneous, hence the constant references he made to chance, yet he was much more deliberate and premeditated in his paintings and lifestyle than he liked to appear. He did not let people into his world easily and when he did, he liked to control how they would be allowed to enter.

The Role of Chance. It can be argued that gambling is a process that requires the gambler to become proactive in the dynamics of chance – to ‘take it on’ rather than being a passive victim of its caprices. In understanding Bacon and the work he made, it is worth considering the subtle ways in which fortuitous, unpredictable, unmanageable elements were accommodated and exploited as part of his presented image. Bacon often referred to the role of chance in his life, giving the impression of being a dissolute person when he was in fact disciplined to an unusual extent. He may have felt that the element of chance enhanced the mystery in which he wrapped himself, making his art and gambling appear as hazardous to his life when both were highly controlled (Russell, 1971).

‘Chance’ is not simply a roll of the dice, it has implications for how one understands the world – an acceptance of uncertainty and tentativeness and a rejection of the positivist authority. That so many of the works were given the prefix, ‘Study’, is relevant here. The word indicates impermanence or tentativeness but using the word allowed for a response that was not centred exclusively on the depicted images but also on the (self-conscious) artist in progress, as it were (Harrison, 2005).

Bacon was anything but tentative and his painting style was rapid and assertive. He would impatiently transmit a sense of urgency and spontaneity onto canvas. The areas of the canvas he left unpainted were an exaggeration of a trend of many young artists in the early 1950s when it was considered interesting to depict things by not completely fulfilling an idea or pursuing it to an obvious conclusion. For Bacon this ‘leaving off’ is consistent with his concerns with the primacy of expressive paint over imitation and of course inseparable from the chance element in Gestalt Paintings of the 1950’s (Harrison, 2005).

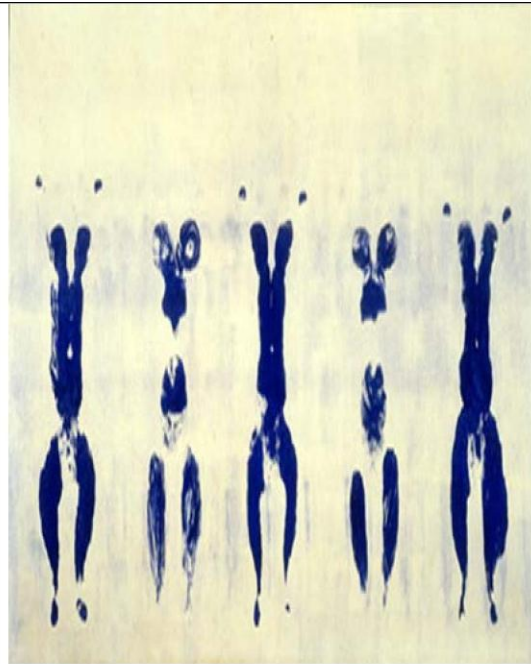


Figure 6.40. Example of Gestalt painting: *Anthropometries of the Blue Period* (Yves Klein, 1960).



Figure 6.41. *Seated Figure* (Bacon, 1989). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon provides another perspective of this elusiveness in his discussion with Sylvester (1975) where he revealed his aims in painting:

The living quality is what you have to get. In painting a portrait, the problem is to find a technique by which you can give over all the pulsations of a person ... Most people go to the most academic painters when they want to have their portraits made because for some reason they prefer a kind of coloured photograph of themselves instead of having themselves really trapped and caught. The sitter is someone of flesh and blood and what has to be caught is his or her emanation (p. 10).

He described his reconfiguration of human bodies as putting them “slightly out of focus to bring in their memory traces” and his transposition and interpolation of

images is evoked in the remark, “I can daydream for hours and pictures fall in just like slides” (Harrison, 2005, p. 59).



Figure 6.42. Lying Figure (Bacon, 1958). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

While Bacon hated to be pinned down (Peppiatt, 1996), the qualities he admired most in others were forthrightness, endurance, quick-wittedness, and readiness to take a risk. He was not interested in people who retreated from life or who looked at it from fortified positions. In much the same way that he liked to explore with and bring out the true qualities of the paint he used, he also liked his friends to “abound in their own sense, to test their natures to the farthest possible point. He liked powerful, instinctive natures and disliked, very much indeed, those whose speciality was a kind of embroidered hesitation” (Russell, 1971 p. 140). Bacon, like Jung did not approve of imitators. He lived as he pleased and managed to avoid all the usual institutions such as school, marriage, community, family, armed forces and a nine to five job. His interest in money was limited to gambling and champagne and bare necessities. He was more interested in the world of misfits and delinquents than in ‘normal’ people and yet although he did not fit into ordinary society he was the perfect guest at parties and

considered by most people to be an absolute gentleman. He was a good talker, had a good sense of humour and was friendly.



Figure 6.43. Bacon, drunk in Soho (Jackson, 1970). © James Jackson.



Figure 6.44. Portrait of Lucian Freud (Bacon, 1965). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

According to Bacon, his meanderings through the city's underworld were a release for his own inhibitions. He could let his hair down with other 'misfits' and rebel against his own privileged, but psychologically disastrous childhood where he had so often felt like an outcast. In urban London, however, where 'real life went on behind doors and lace-curtained windows' Bacon was like the subjects of most of his paintings, essentially solitary (Harrison, 2005). He painted lonely figures in rooms to perhaps describe his inner life. "While often gregarious when not sequestered in his studio, he remained for the most part private and even furtive as a nocturnal patron of clubs, bars and restaurants" (Harrison, 2005, p. 59).



Figure 6.45. Study for a Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1982). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

His success never went to his head and indeed he often said that if he were rich he would never have shown his pictures or even bothered to finish them. In fact he did destroy most of them, some coming to light only after his death. Bacon's paintings, too, had their own unique identity. Their appearance certainly left a lasting impression.



Figure 6.46. Self-Portrait (Bacon, 1970). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Of the character of his work Bacon said,

I don't think you can be interested in whether people understand your paintings or not. It's only due to your own nervous system that you can paint at all. Modern artists want the grin without the cat – the sensation of life without the boredom of conveyance. One of the things that is very interesting is that in the last fifty years people – all the movements – have been abstract so the thing is, how can I draw one more veil away from life and present, what is called the living sensation more nearly on the nervous system and more violently? (Farson, 1993, p. 107).

His paintings, among the most distinctive and idiosyncratic of the twentieth century, were the response to “the complex cultural contexts of a kind of Nietzschean superman who on one hand was indifferent to his reputation, but on the other determined to impose his highly individual vision on the world” (Harrison, 2006 p.8). Bacon, full of contradictions, probably did wear masks, but the overriding sense one gets of him from the many opinions reviewed was that he was a true original who would not be inhibited by convention. Jung himself emphasised the need for people to take responsibility for authentic living (Stein, 2005) and Bacon did indeed do this.

He was certainly not a person who could ever be gagged (Archimbaud, 1994; Farson, 1993; Peppiatt, 1996; Russell, 1971; Sylvester, 1975). If he had been lacking in substance or depth, the absence of which is associated with those who have overidentified with their personas, he would not have captured and held the imagination and attention of those he did. Nonetheless, while he was indisputably an original, it seems that the true Bacon cannot be captured, precisely because his ‘persona’ is of such a contradictory nature, with different screens sliding into place constantly. Ultimately what one is left with is just his ‘emanation’ – the grin without the cat!

6.3.3.1.2 The Anima and The Animus

Neumann (1959) described the development of the artist as the best of many maladjustments. His writing implies that creativity is the domain of the feminine and that a creative man has experienced a different development of the anima than a non-creative man. Von Franz (1964) elaborates on this when she says:

If an individual has wrestled seriously and long enough with the anima (or animus) problem, so that he, or she, is no longer partially identified with it, the unconscious again changes its dominant character and appears in a new symbolic form representing the self, the innermost nucleus of the personality. In the case of a man, it manifests itself as a masculine initiator and guardian, a wise old man, a spirit of nature and so forth" (p. 207).

The masculine principle of consciousness is personified by the archetype of the spiritual father.

The Spiritual Father. Neumann (1959) posits that the creation of meaningful art is based on the creation of new images originating from the foundational images of the unconscious (Neumann, 1959, p. 108). Images of piercing and penetration such as phallus, knife, spear, arrow and ray all pertain to the spiritual father. Feathers, birds, airplanes and all that refers to flying or height are part of this complex of symbols that emphasize the upper heavenly realms (Edinger, 1968). These images are derived in part from the archetypes of the feminine and masculine and in part from the individual's own life experience with members of the opposite sex, beginning with mother and father (Edinger, 1968). Bacon's relationship with his parents was a distorted one. His father seems to have disliked his peculiar son and their relationship was distant and hostile.

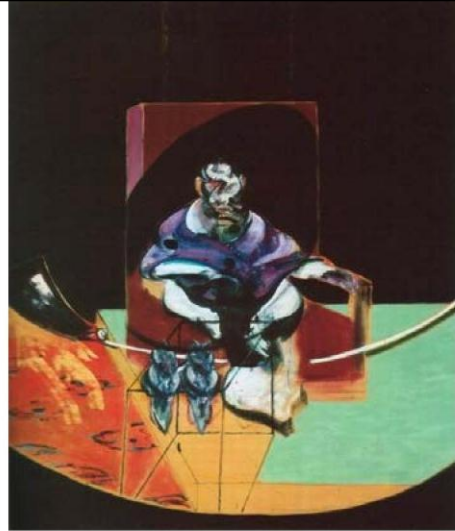


Figure 6.47. *Figure with Two Owls* (Bacon, 1965). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



Figure 6.48. *Owls* (Bacon, 1956). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

His father is both an absolute authority and an absolute bastard (Farson, 1993). It is not surprising, in this context, that in his paintings of Popes, Bacon suggests an ambiguity of response to the authority figure. His Popes could perhaps, therefore be viewed as symbolic representations of the masculine initiator. The Pope, especially to an Irishman of Bacon's generation, could be viewed as the ultimate authority figure. Bacon chose not just any Pope, but the extraordinarily devious and malicious Pope Innocent X, as painted by Velasquez (*Study after Velasquez*, 1953). The extraordinary psychic power of the Pope's silent scream is enhanced somehow by the fact that Innocent X, unquestionably one of the most confident men that ever lived, was the least likely to scream, even when alone (Harrison, 2005).

Wrestling with the Animus. Considering that many of his portraits were self-portraits, one wonders also at the extent to which Bacon identified with the authority figure. By intervening in and distorting that original identity, Bacon at once acknowledges the authority of the figure and subverts it (Harrison, 2005).



Figure 6.49. *Two Figures in a Room* (Bacon, 1959). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The same emotional and psychological ambiguity was again explored in *Figure in a Landscape* 1945 and *Painting* 1946 in which the men are seated or enthroned but with their faces shrouded under umbrellas, semi-obliterated and stripped of their individual identity (Harrison, 2005). It is interesting that the umbrella has traditionally been used symbolically in Surrealist painting to denote the phallus and masculinity (Harrison, 2005).



Figure 6.50. *Figure in a Landscape* (Bacon, 1945). © Tate London 2009.

In all the Pope paintings from the early 1950's, the isolation and distancing of the dehumanised authority figure is absolute and can be seen as an unequivocally hostile reaction to the Father imago. In the later, *Study for Portrait I* (1956) however, what stands out is that it is the only Pope not painted with bared teeth and glittering gums (Harrison, 2005). The mouth is closed but the lips are full and sensual. Unlike the earlier figures, this Pope has carefully articulated eyes.



Figure 6.51. *Study for Portrait I* (Bacon, 1956). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

One could argue that this more humanised representation is possibly a metamorphosis into the more complex natural father or, more likely, the father/lover on whom he admitted to having had a 'crush' (Harrison, 2005). He claimed also to have had a crush on the original Velazquez painting. Jung says humans beings are always looking for their other half – the half the gods took from them and when someone falls in love, they are said to have found a way of 'filling' their anima or animus archetype particularly well (Jung, 1959b, CW 9, part 2). It is thus not too farfetched to think that for Bacon the animus archetype, his other half, was first met in

projected form on canvas, a creative compensation for an unconscious overidentification with the anima (Storr, 1983).

Identification with the Anima. The adult creative person is one who succeeds in integrating both the masculine and feminine components of the personality by allowing enough expression to both aspects of the psyche. If a man denies his anima he negates the existence of an important part of his psyche and this denial can lead to problems in relationships with people of the opposite sex (Meyer et al., 2008 p.103). Bacon was homosexual and homosexuality, while not regarded as a pathology today, was considered a crime in the time he lived. This would have made life difficult for him but he did not acquiesce to the values of the collective, staying true to his own nature. His homosexuality could perhaps be understood as an over identification with the anima side of his psyche, an unconscious compensatory reaction to the overwhelming male presence of his father. Too much identification of the ego with the anima causes a man to outwardly manifest feminine qualities and Bacon who was physically very strong had an effete appearance. According to Jung, all individuals are really bisexual in nature (Boeree, 2006) and while Bacon preferred men, he was the kind of person who would have been open to exploring an affair with either gender if he felt drawn to do so.

The Syzygy. Jung would regard Bacon's creative energy as emanating from the anima and his high level of discipline from the animus. David Sylvester (1998b) described his personal experience of Bacon in a way that aptly captures the phenomenon of the syzygy and the way it manifested in Bacon's life. He said:

The two sexes met in Francis Bacon, more than in any other human being I have encountered. At moments he was one of the most feminine of men, at others one of the most masculine. He would switch between these roles as suddenly and as unexpectedly as the switching of a light. That duality did more than anything perhaps to make his presence so famously seductive and compelling and to make him so peculiarly wise and realistic in his observation of life (para. 13).



Figure 6.52. *Painting* (Bacon, 1950). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Some of Bacon's most moving portraits were of men and his paintings of women tended to receive less attention than they deserved, but these were equally revealing of his sexual orientation and the search for self-identity or individuation. In the 1920's, Bacon drew flappers and in April 1933 an exhibition was held at the Mayor Gallery, London that included Bacon's *Women in the Sunlight*. He destroyed these early paintings. With the exception of the stylised Neo-Classical or Picassoesque female forms that are present in his work up until 1934, Bacon painted no further women that were immediately identifiable as women until 1955. The gendering of many of these figures was either uncertain or predominantly female (Harrison, 2005). The Eumenides in *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944) are female furies, and Bacon's harpies are technically "half-

woman, a state with which he probably identified. After *Figure in a Landscape* (1945), Bacon's next three paintings all depicted indeterminate androgens" (Harrison, 2005, p. 226).

6.3.3.1.3 The Shadow

The shadow involves force and passivity, horror and beauty, power and impotence, straightness and perversion, infantilism, wisdom and foolishness (Meyer, et al., 2008). Jung's conceptualisation of the shadow makes him the psychoanalyst most in tune with masochism (Hayden, 2009).

Destrudo Ergo Sum. Masochism can be imagined as cultivation of the 'shadow', the darker, most unconscious part of the psyche which may be regarded not as a sickness, but as an essential part of the human psyche. According to Jung,

Vice too, if entered into sincerely as a means of finding and expressing the self, is not vice, for the fearless, honesty cuts that out. But when the individual is bound by an artificial barrier, or by collective laws and moralities that they have incorporated, then they have prevented themselves from finding, or even from seeing, that there is a real barrier of the self outside this artificial barrier. There is fear that if they break through this artificial barrier they will find themselves in limitless space. But within each person however, is the self-regulating self (Beebe, 1989, p. 113).

The shadow is the channel through which one reaches the deepest, most elemental layers of the psyche. Going through the channel, or breaking the ego defences down, one is 'reduced' and 'degraded.' Usually, one tries to bring the shadow under the ego's domination. Embracing the shadow, on the other hand, provides a fuller sense of self-knowledge, self-acceptance and a fuller sense of being alive (Bennet, 1966).



Figure 6.53. *Untitled. Figure on a Dais* (Bacon, 1958-1959). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon.

Masochistic submissions allow for surrendering fixed defence mechanisms, for relinquishing control to something or someone greater than oneself, for achieving freedom from the pervasive and relentless need to cultivate, promote and assert the self, for gaining some relief from having to make innumerable choices and decisions, for engaging in healthy fantasy enactments, and for the exploration, acknowledgement and acceptance of the ‘darker’ or ‘shadowed’ side of their personalities (Hayden, 2009). It appears that at a deep level Bacon had not experienced unconditional love or acceptance from his parents and possibly longed to give up, to ‘come clean’, as part of a general longing to be known or recognised; the prospect of surrender, an experience of being ‘in the moment’, totally in the present. One gets the impression of an urgency with which some buried part of his personality is screaming to be released and surrender is really a controlled dissolution of self-boundaries (Hayden, 2009). In this regard reference can again be made to the fact that Bacon spent a great deal of his life as an artist trying to paint the perfect scream. His own screams and shadows were perfectly sublimated in his paintings.

The Incarnate Old Harry. Bacon's parents had been intolerant of any frailties and their disappointment in and lack of empathy for Bacon would from an early age have seeped insidiously into his being. To cope he would have repressed this deep and atavistic sense of rejection. With the same cold cruelty, he could turn on others in an instant.



Figure 6.54. *Seated Figure* (Bacon, 1977). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

As Jung says, the shadow is very often disowned and ends up being projected, and when this happens people are inclined to blame others for what they unconsciously dislike most in themselves (Van der Post, 1975). Believing his father had rejected him as a weakling, Bacon had little time for weakness in others and no patience for human foibles or small vanities. He was easily bored and inclined towards inappropriate, intense displays of uncontrolled anger in much the same way that his father had been. He could be moody and was notorious for his calculated cruelty when he was in a bad mood. “Like a man whose threshold narrowed as he sensed the onslaught of boredom, Francis claimed his victims. Yet he could display his charm with the skill of a conjurer” (Farson, 1993, p. 66). As Jung states,

A man who is unconscious of himself acts in a blind, instinctive way and is in addition fooled by all the illusions that arise when he sees everything that he is not conscious of in himself coming to meet him from outside as projections upon his neighbour (Jung, 1945/1968, CW 13, p. 335).



Figure 6.55. *Dog* (Bacon, 1952). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon could, for example, behave impeccably at his own private viewings, but could be vicious at those of others. It was one of his weaknesses that he was grudging in his support for other artists. With his exact verbal emphasis, everyone found his commentary hilarious. Lady Caroline Blackwood remembered an instance where Bacon was being pestered by an irritating artist to come to his studio to look at his paintings and Bacon had said, “I don’t want to come to your studio . . . because I’ve seen your tie!” (Farson, 1993, p. 98). Everyone in the room around him roared with laughter; perhaps also with relief that they had not been the one on the receiving end.

Surrendering the Shadow. Jung certainly revealed how the individual imposed his quarrel with his own shadow onto his neighbour as an unconscious means of avoiding recognition of it as a reflection of one’s own distasteful feelings (Van der Post, 1975). When the person of the devil was consigned to the realm of mythology,

human targets were established as compensatory ‘dumping grounds’ for those difficult-to-admit inclinations. The Second World War was the ultimate manifestation of the ‘dark side’ of the ego of mankind. When Bacon showed *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* at the Lefevre Gallery in April 1945, he confronted the world with an image of itself that it was not yet ready to face. With the War only a month or two from its end, people were generally in a spirit of thanksgiving for perils honourably surmounted (Russell, 1971). They wanted to believe that the horrors were ended and that life would soon return to normal. Normal may well have meant an idyllic nostalgia for a lost England, but even an austere and rationed England, free from the threat of war and capricious death, was infinitely preferable to what they had survived.



Figure 6.56. *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* – detail (Bacon, 1944). © Tate London 2009.

What they got in the art gallery, however, were scenes of horror, so dystopian, so unbelievably awful that the mind snapped shut at the sight of them. The figures were half-human, half-demonical, animal, caged in claustrophobic, windowless and oddly proportioned spaces. They were clearly dangerous, toothed and reptilian, but also (and perhaps even more frightening) enigmatic and mindless (“The Estate of

Francis Bacon,” 2007). As Russell (1971) puts it, “an automated, unregulated gluttony, a ravaging undifferentiated capacity for hatred. Each was as if cornered and only waiting for the chance to drag the observer down to it’s level” (p. 11).

They were spectres of what people had hoped would be a feast and most people hoped they would just quietly be put away. In this the title should have helped, for Bacon made it clear that they were not spectators at ‘the crucifixion’ but at ‘a crucifixion’. They were the creatures that gather as ghouls round any scene of human degradation and 1945 was to see a whole parade of them (Russell, 1971, p. 11).



Figure 6.57. *Second Version of Triptych 1944* (Bacon, 1988). □ Tate London 2009.

“Nothing will ever be the same again, was what the *Three Figures* appeared to be saying” (Russell, 1971, p. 12). Recognising that the squeamish would ask, “Why paint such subjects?” Bacon replied, “Why not?” (Russell, 1971, p. 12). From the broader historical perspective, however, it is easy to see why the subjects were inevitable consequences of the ambivalent *Zeitgeist*. Synchronicity between the (social) aetiology and the (artistic) act seems to be a perfect synthesis. Jung’s observations on the acknowledgement of evil are apt here:

Good does not become better by being exaggerated, but worse, and a small evil becomes a big one through being disregarded and repressed. The shadow is very much a part of human nature, and it is only at night that no shadows exist (Jung, 1942/1958, CW 11, p. 286).

It is in the stark contradistinction between the optimistic side of the post-war mood and Bacon's output that the roles of Ego and Self can be gauged. The ego wrestles with the choices available and the masochistic choice prevails. The crucifixion is Bacon's and the whole of humanity, despite the longing for it to be otherwise. Ironically, by holding a mirror up to the degenerate times, Bacon proved himself to be one of the most moral artists of the day. "Far from titillating, he castigated. To appreciate his work, it helps to see him as a deeply moral artist" (Farson, 1993, p. 11).

6.3.3.1.4 The Ego

When Bacon was asked about happiness and love and why he only painted despair and pain, he replied,

Well. Happiness and love is a wonderful thing to paint also – I always hope I will be able to do that too. After all, it's only the reverse side of the shadow, isn't it? All artists are lovers, they're lovers of life, they want to see how they can set the trap so that life will come over more vividly and more violently. And how would they do that? Let us reason, why would one paint for oneself? Not to say how clever I am, but how can I trap this transient thing (Farson, 1993, p. 105).

Trapping the Transient thing. Bacon admitted that he saw the crucifixion scene as "a magnificent armature on which you can hang all types of feeling and sensation" and the imagery of the crucifixion features heavily in his work (Peppiatt, 1996, p. 215). He believed that the imagery of the crucifixion allowed him to examine certain areas of human behaviour in a unique way, as the armature of the theme had been accumulated by so many old masters ("Gemeentemuseum den Haag," 2001).



Figure 6.58. Francis Bacon (photo shoot by John Deakin for *Vogue* magazine).

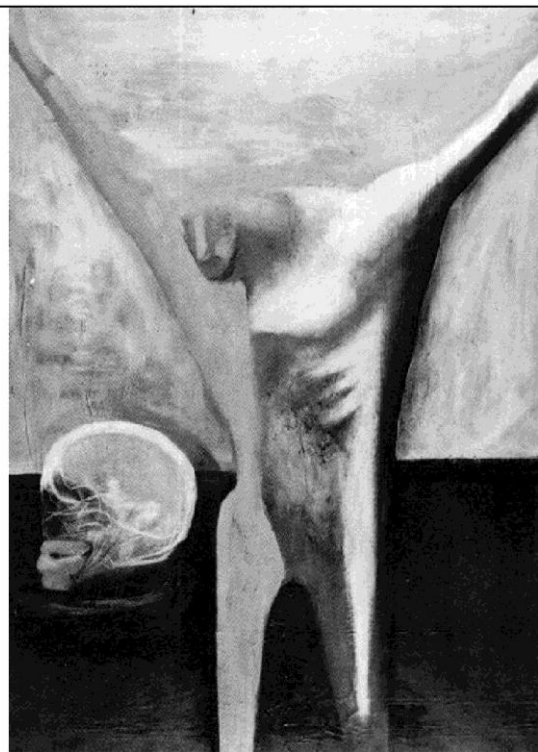


Figure 6.59. *The Crucifixion* (Bacon, 1933). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

John Russell wrote that the ‘crucifixion’ in Bacon's work is used to denote an environment in which physical harm is done to one or more persons and where others gather to watch (Russell, 1971). Bacon’s creativity in focusing on his despair in this way reflects an integration of the ego and shadow. He exploited the despair, turning it into exhilaration using the vitality, spontaneity and creativity derived from the impulses of the shadow. His art in fact had little to do with the violence, as so many assumed. The point is that he preferred the shadows cast by the fiercest light outside: “If you really love life you’re walking in the shadow of death all the time.....Death is the shadow of life and, the more one is obsessed with life the more one is obsessed with death” (Farson, 1993, p.12).

6.3.3.1.5 The Self

In Jungian psychology, Christ is seen as the nearest analogy of the self and its meaning. The self is a 'God-image.' Christ corresponds to only one half of the archetype with the other appearing in the Antichrist. The latter is just a manifestation of the self, except that it consists of its dark aspect. Both are Christian symbols, and they have the same meaning as the image of Christ crucified between two thieves (Storr, 1983).



Figure 6.60. *Crucifixion* (Bacon, 1933). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

This symbol tells us that the development and differentiation of consciousness leads to a more threatening awareness of the conflict between opposites and involves nothing less than a crucifixion of the ego, its agonizing suspension between irreconcilable polarities. The ego can not become totally extinct, however, for then the focus of consciousness would be destroyed and the result would be complete unconsciousness. In such cases, the ego is a suffering bystander who decides nothing

but must submit to a decision and surrender unconditionally (Storr, 1983). Jung (1959) says:

To confront a person with his shadow is to show him his own light. Once one has experienced a few times what it is like to stand judgmentally between the opposites, one begins to understand what is meant by the self. Anyone who perceives his shadow and his light simultaneously sees himself from two sides and thus gets in the middle (Jung, 1959/1964b, CW 10, p. 872).



Figure 6.61. Francis Bacon
(Photographed by Arnold Newman).
□ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.



*Figure 6.62. Study for the Human Body-
Man Turning on the Light* (Bacon,
1974). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon
2009.

To an extent, Bacon's interest in the crucifixion reflected a personal obsession – himself. “You’re working then about your own feelings and sensations, really,” he said. “You might say it’s almost nearer a self-portrait” (Sylvester, 1975, p. 46). It is thus conceivable that Bacon regarded himself as crucified. The most gregarious of men, he purged his angst and self-doubt in paint. He had the highest ambitions for his

art, saying that it could unlock the greatest and deepest things a man can feel. “He wanted to get near on canvas to the actual fact of being a human being, as he saw it, with no hope of resurrection” (Farson, 1993, p. 135). For this there needs to be a loss of self.

Loss of Self. One of the deepest things a man can feel is ‘a loss of self’, which is a type of death and Van Alphen (1992) argues that this is precisely what happens when one stands in front of the canvas:

Seeing a work by Francis Bacon hurts. It causes pain. Bacon's view of the self is, ultimately, uplifting. For his refusal to allow his figures to be defined by the ‘other’ results, paradoxically, in a loss of self that re-subjectifies the body. The self is secured by resisting gender-positions and by resisting any discourse on identity. And this resistance, seen as an ongoing bodily movement, *is* the self (p. 9).



Figure 6.63. Figure in Movement (Bacon, 1978). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

When Van Alphen (1992) talks about the loss of self that occurs when standing in front of Bacon's paintings he is essentially referring to the self / other relationship where "the subject depends for wholeness on the gaze of the other" (p. 115). In childhood, the mother's gaze is essential to the healthy development of the ego as the 'perceiver', of the self. Without the look of the other there is no relationship and therefore no sense of self (Van Alphen, 1992). Bacon could not get his mother to 'see' him and he makes the viewer feel the same indifference. His figures "are all represented as trapped in an entirely inner sensation of self" (Van Alphen, 1992, p. 119). They are completely 'self absorbed', meaning that the viewer cannot engage with them and thus experiences a loss of self (Van Alphen, 1992). Bacon's figures, "can . . . be read, first figuratively, as the confinement of the subject within his inner sensations, and second, more literally, as the demarcation of the subject's position, always alone on the border of the world" (Van Alphen, 1992, p. 119).

Van Alphen's (1992) discursive theory of subjectivity additionally explains how Bacon's figures undermine Western conventions of the role of vision in constituting subjectivity. The viewer's subjectivity, van Alphen (1992) says,

Is forced to engage in a confrontation with figures that block the very possibility of subject construction. But these works are not committed to this negative view for the sake of negativity. Their target is a specific element in subject formation in the Western world. They aim, that is, to respond through their specifically visual discourse to cultural discourses that are central to our culture (p. 163).

Bacon's images ultimately uplift the viewer, since the artist refuses to allow his figures to be defined by 'the other.' They have a self-perceptual independence (Van Alphen, 1992) that implies the freedom of not being defined by the collective.

6.3.3.2 Levels of the Psyche

These include the Personal Unconscious and the Collective Unconscious. Much has already been considered in the discussion of the Archetypes and the Complexes. What follows is a direct link to the paintings and the attitudes behind them.

6.3.3.2.1 The Personal Unconscious

People try to express their deepest inner yearnings and unconscious tendencies through archetypal images found in myths, art, dreams and fantasies (Crain, 1985). Bacon is one of these people and in order to produce a deeper memory of events, he encouraged 'accidents' whilst making the images. This was the reason why he could not be satisfied with abstraction, he needed the human form as subject. Like Proust, he was "striving to make himself and us aware of these 'memory traces' and 'excites himself' with provoking their reception on his canvases" (Francis, 1990, para. 48).

Bacon concentrated his energies on portraiture, often depicting the inhabitants of the bars and clubs of London's Soho neighbourhood. His subjects were always portrayed as violently distorted, presented not as sociable and charismatic types but as isolated souls imprisoned and tormented by existential dilemmas. Bacon considered that those who found his portraits shocking or offensive were themselves cocooned in fantasy in a world unable to confront uncomfortable truths. People like this are often those who have identified with their personas to such an extent that they lack individuality. They would thus have been unable to respond to anything that made them question the status quo or look at themselves in a different way.



Figure 6.64. *Self Portrait* (Bacon, 1973). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Russell's (1971) observations about portraiture provide some insight into why people were sometimes offended by Bacon's paintings. He said,

Portrait painting is one of the few human activities to which an undisputed magic attaches. Superstition, not fact, underlies it: superstition and the longing to see, just once in one's life, an unflawed image of oneself, a place in which all sins are forgiven, all minuses are turned to plus and the fundamental rightness of the nature in question is laid uppermost. Bacon's portraits were not at all like that. His sitters are not in their Sunday best, nor are they shown in rooms tidied for the occasion (p. 139).

Bacon projected what he saw in his subjects onto canvas and it is in this projection that the distorted other reveals his own reflection. As Jung observed, "Projections change the world into the replica of one's unknown face" (Van der Post, 1975, p. 9). Bacon's remarks are apt:

When I look at you across the table, I don't see you but I see a whole emanation, which has to do with personality and everything else. And to put that over in a painting, as I would like to be able to in a portrait, means that it would appear violent in paint. We nearly always live through screens - a screened existence. And I sometimes think, when people say my work looks violent, that perhaps I have from time to time been able to clear away one or two of the veils or screens (p. 12).

It seems clear that at least some of those screens were Bacon's own!

6.3.3.2.2 The Collective Unconscious

Bacon's art is not fundamentally an art of exaggeration: it is the exaggerations in ourselves, or in our neighbours, which we dread to recognise. Bacon's art reveals to us, often for the first time, and with the impact of prophecy, the true nature of the world we live in. And are the events, which Bacon sets before us more dreadful than those of which we read every day in the newspapers? (Russell, 1962, para. 12).

A social misfit, sexually marginalized and morally unconventional individual, Bacon nevertheless presented the world with a moral image of itself. It fell to him, marginal man, to generate the appropriate iconography for the atrocities that were being disclosed with the defeat of the Third Reich. At the time he painted *Head I*, in 1948, the Western powers were busy separating the depravities of Auschwitz from accounts of mass murder inside the U.S.S.R. (Harrison, 2005). Humanism was still the slogan of the left and in Bacon's disturbing painting he depicted what he thought of that humanism: a disintegrated face fused with the baying head of a baboon. Bacon wanted to paint the reaction individuals have in themselves when they see something terrible. He was painting what a human feels, not what they see (Jones, 2005).

His inspiration and choice of themes came from the depths of the unconscious and it could be said that the shadow was a popular and frequently treated theme because what he created affected in turn the unconscious of his public, wherein ultimately the secret of his effectiveness lay. "It is the figures of the unconscious that rise in him and appeal powerfully to people although they do not know from whence their fascination comes" (Jacobi, 1999, p. 127).



Figure 6.65. *Seated Figure* (Bacon, 1977). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon claimed to be ignorant of the ‘meaning’ of his paintings and refused to analyse or interpret them. To Michel Archimbaud (1992), he said the following:

The classic distinction today between the conscious and the unconscious is a useful one I think. It doesn't quite cover what I think about painting, but it has the advantage of not having to resort to a metaphysical explanation to talk about what cannot be explained in rational terms. The unknown is not relegated to the realm of the mystical or something similar. And that's very important to me because I loathe all explanations of that sort (F. Bacon, personal communication, April 1992).

But, as Barthes (1968) argues in *The Death of the Author*, this by no means prohibits useful and relevant interrogation of the form, style and content of his paintings. Clearly, the iconography and approach are at the very least provocative. Bacon though, would discuss neither his unconscious impulses nor the psychosexual analysis of his paintings. Whenever he sensed that an interview would turn in that direction, he would abruptly alter his body language, become alert, defensive, ready to terminate the probing with a peremptory and tetchy dismissal, such as “You’ll have to ask Freud,” (Harrison, 2005, p. 212). Nonetheless, he applied different criteria in his

appraisal of other artists. He said, on looking at a Rembrandt, “I feel I know very much more about Rembrandt than the sitter” (Harrison, 2005, p. 212).

He admitted that he was projecting onto canvas his nervous system and that “the greatest art always returns you to the vulnerability of the human situation” (Harrison, 2005, p. 212). He confessed that his crucifixions expressed “feelings and sensations that were nearer to a self portrait – you are working on all sorts of very private feelings about behaviour and about the way life is” (Harrison, 2005, p. 212). He was more forthcoming about what he did not intend. In denying his subject was horror, he compared his paintings with Grünewald’s *Isenheim Altarpiece*, (c.1515) which he found “so grand it takes away from the horror,” adding that “grand horror is so vitalizing” (Harrison, 2005, p. 212).



Figure 6.66. *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (Bacon, 1962). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Cleanth Brookes (1947) argues, in his discussion of the “heresy of paraphrase” (pp. 192-214), that the attempt to establish a direct translation of a sensation, idea or image from one medium to another must be largely futile. This raises the question of the degree to which one can attribute, in visual representation, particular notions regarding one’s psychical, spiritual or physical world. Bacon’s reluctance to commit the bathos of ‘explanation’ regarding his own work is typical of the creative artist and, far from suggesting ignorance of the connections, conveys a natural reluctance to short-circuit the aesthetically complex and effective means already made available. He may not have wanted or been able to talk about the meaning of his paintings, but, as Lucien Freud claimed: “Bacon talked a great deal about packing a lot of things into one single brushstroke” (Peppiatt, 2009, p. 395).

Bacon elaborates,

Art is something that lies long and far below what is called coherence and consciousness, and one hopes the greatest art is a kind of valve in which very many hidden things of human feeling and destiny are trapped – something that can’t be definitely and directly said. People find my work horrifying because I have sometimes used subject matter, which people think is sensational because one of the things I have wanted to do was to record the human cry, and that in itself is something sensational. And if I could really do it – and it’s one of the most difficult things to do in art, and I wouldn’t say that I’ve ever been able to do it, or perhaps anybody has yet been able to do it – it would of course be sensational. When I refer to the human cry I mean the whole coagulation of pain, despair (Farson, 1993 p. 106).

6.3.4 The Spiritual / Religious Dimension

Jung believed that each individual should find his or her own cultural way to religious expression (Meyer et al., 2008). He postulated that the breakthrough of archetypal images from the unconscious into the realm of consciousness was the basis of religious experience and often of artistic creativity (Jung, 1916/1960d, CW 8, para. 362, para. 420). Bacon did not believe in God, in morality, in love or in worldly

success, only in, as he put it, ‘the sensation of the moment’ (Farson, 1993, p. 11). He denied that human life had any ‘higher purpose’, or that art and nature connect individuals in some way to God. He was the perfect atheist, anti-metaphysical and anti-transcendent. Life was something he viewed simply as a matter of birth, copulation, death - end of story (Harrison, 2005).



Figure 6.67. A Piece of Waste Land (Bacon, 1982). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

And yet, while not religious in the conventional sense, Bacon displayed a strong openness to irrational experiences. This was his ‘religion.’ He often made reference to and use of ‘the creative accident’ and the role of chance in his life, which can be regarded as his method of surrendering himself to experiences that allowed for an alteration of consciousness. According to Jung, giving over control to an irrational process of emergence and synthesis in this way gives birth to the transcendent function, the essential core of individuality (Stein, 2005).

The Creative Accident. Jung also believed that images have a life of their own and that symbolic events develop according to their own logic (Jung, 1963). He saw art as a unifying mechanism through which human beings understand their experience and he explored its use as a healing agent. He defined this process as active imagination (Jung, 1961a). Essential to the process is the ability to switch back and forth between the flow of thought coming from the unconscious and conscious thought. The process is a type of introspection that generates visual images and involves concentrating on a fleeting dream or image that emerges and then noting the changes the image undergoes. It facilitates breaking through the defences of the conscious so that the unconscious can emerge (Bennet, 1966).

Bacon may not have been aware of Jung's conceptualisation of the process of 'active imagination', but his own manner of painting and use of the 'creative accident' can be equated with Jung's process of active imagination. Bacon described his experience as "a state when everything happens very quickly, a mixture of consciousness and unconsciousness," (Giacobetti, 2003, para. 18). His images assumed a life of their own and became more than merely an amalgam of opposites. The content of his artistic expressions, having emerged from the unconscious through an irrational process, were hence "deeply spiritual and would have been regarded by Jung as being "typically numinous" (Stein, 2005, p. 11). They became "a living, third thing" (Jung, 1957/1960c, CW 8, para. 90) and out of this process Bacon produced images of a potency rarely equalled since Picasso. That potency has been near impossible to define and has for many years confounded those critics who have tried to understand Bacon's work on a cognitive level (Russell, 1971).

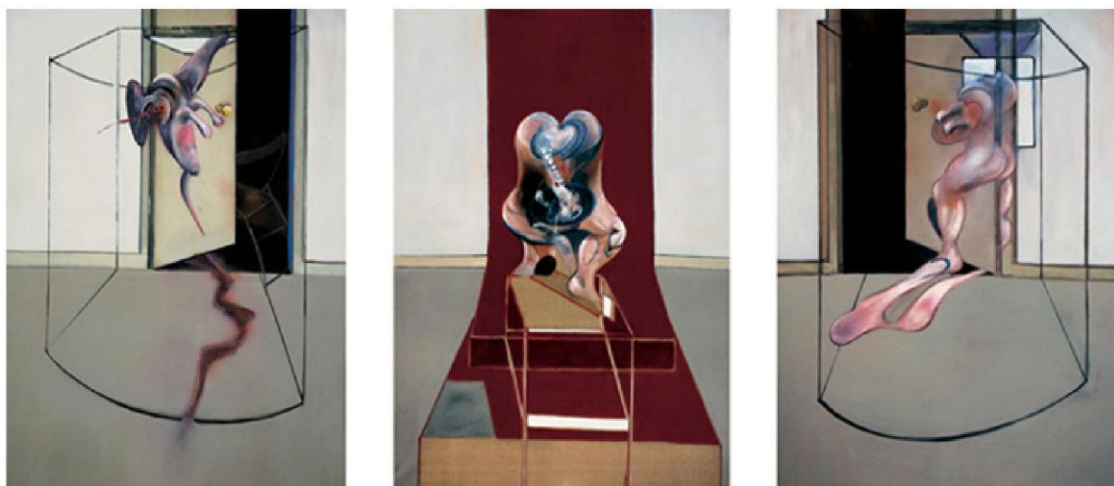


Figure 6.68. *Triptych inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus* (Bacon, 1981). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Jung would have attributed such difficulty with explanation to the fact that the archetypes themselves are deeply unconscious and unknowable (Steven, 2006) and it is only archetypal *images* that are capable of being known and coming to consciousness. This is where Bacon's genius comes through because he had an innate, instinctual ability to recognise and give form to these images, articulating a particular type of 'organisation' –that of the 'archetype-as-such' (McDowell, 2001). One could equate the irrationality of the experience as being numinous in nature since the images that welled up from within him “fell into his mind like slides” (Sylvester, 1975, p. 21). The experience was irrational, but the archetypal form found in the eye of the beholder and not in that which was beheld (Samuels, 1985). Bacon frequently spoke about how he wanted his images to happen by chance, but at the same time that that he wanted them to be ordered. According to Sylvester (1975) when Bacon used the word image he did so to refer to:

A picture he was making or had made, or one made by someone else, or a photograph; sometimes to mean a subject he had in mind or in front of him; sometimes to mean a complex of forms which had an especially powerful and suggestive resonance (p. 7).

He was unknowingly referring to the archetypal viewpoint, which encompasses not only personal experience, but also principles of organisation that structure that experience, including principles of balance and integration (McDowell, 2001). The translation of these principles of organisation is reflected in the sophisticated play between organic and geometric form in the paintings.



Figure 6.69. *Sphinx II* (Bacon, 1952). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon said, “Great art is deeply ordered” (Genn, n.d., The Accidents Category, para. 5). “I want a very ordered image but I want it to come about by chance” (Genn, n.d., The Order Category, para. 42). His assertion relates to the numinous experience, expressed in his ability to recognise and capture the universal form, and may also explain his need for privacy when painting – a suggestion that the act may have been something akin to a sacred process.

I know that in my own work,” said Bacon, “the best things are the things that just happened - images that were suddenly caught and that I hadn't anticipated. We don't know what the unconscious is, but every so often something wells up in us. It sounds pompous nowadays to talk about the unconscious, so maybe it's better to say ‘chance.’ I believe in a deeply ordered chaos and in the rules of chance (Kimmelman, 1989, para. 37).

The archetype is manifested principally in the fact that it determines human behaviour unconsciously but in accordance with laws and independently of the experience of the individual. This dynamic content of the unconscious has a compelling character for the individual who is directed by it and it is always accompanied by a strong emotional component. It is precisely because of his inherent ability to recognise and give form to archetypal images that his work was so extraordinary and that it affected people in the way that it did. The reaction he received from his audience was perhaps the shock one could expect from those whose minds were unprepared for the confrontation and encounter with the primordial.

Donald Kuspit (1975) attempted an explanation ...

I would like to characterize Bacon's pictures as aphoristic images, approximated by what Russell calls Bacon's pursuit of the single picture. By this I mean images concentrated into the sententiousness of the symbol, but which, because they can never be finally specified in meaning, effect a transformation of undisciplined emotion between themselves and the spectator... The sense of oblivion of being in Bacon's pictures is due to the fact that they are meant to be nothing but appearances abstractly charged with emotion, rather than images of any reality - images with any kind of objectivity, which occurs in them only accidentally. What is normally accidental or momentary, the release of pure - undisciplined - emotion, is made absolute in Bacon...For Bacon, art is a game of emotionally charging appearance rather than a question of presenting clear meanings, of whatever kind, and certainly not the political and religious, which are usually taken literally (para. 34).

The Search for Transcendence. The images painted by Bacon through the process of the creative accident were definitely compensatory in nature to the personal equation and prevailing attitude of the ego because they arose from the unconscious matrix. It is possible that they facilitated an expanding of Bacon's individuality in the direction of the self and offered new options for feeling and action (Stein, 2005).



Figure 6.70. *Landscape near Malabata, Tangier* (Bacon, 1963). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon's search for an understanding of his experiences of these processes can perhaps be seen in terms of his fascination with a passage in a little book given to him by close friend, Michel Leiris (Russell, 1971). The ringed passage written by Leiris traces back to its origins in Baudelaire and is a discussion of the 'paradox of beauty' and the notion of an ideal beauty. Leiris writes,

Beauty cannot come into being without the intervention of something accidental which drags the beauty clear from its glacial stagnation; it is at the price of degradation that the mummified one turns into the living many. What constitutes beauty is not the confrontation of opposites, but the mutual antagonism of these opposites and the active and vigorous manner in which they invade one another and emerge from the conflict marked as if by a wound or a depredation (Russell, 1971, p. 142).

For Bacon, with his lifelong interest in wounds, this passage and the one which immediately follows must have stirred him on some atavistic level because he ringed the passage with a thick, black pen.

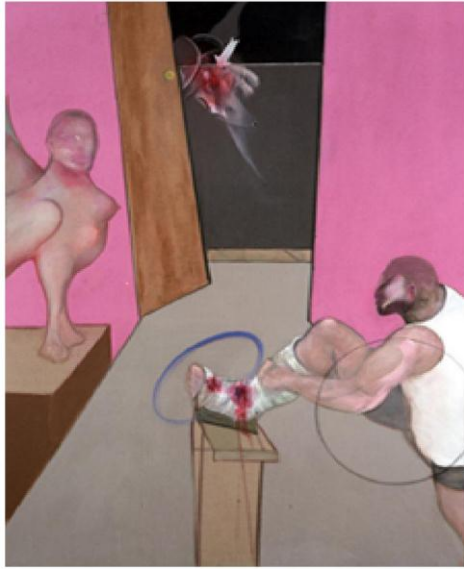


Figure 6.71. Oedipus and the Sphinx after Ingres (Bacon, 1983). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

We can call 'beautiful' only that which suggests the existence of an ideal order - suppraterrestrial, harmonious and logical – and yet bears within itself, like the brand of original sin, the drop of poison, the rogue element of incoherence, the grain of sand that will foul up the entire system. Beauty resulted, not from a conflagration of opposites, but from the equivocal struggle between them, an ambiguous coupling or, better still, a tangential coming together of the straight line and the curved line, a marriage between the rule and its exception (Russell, 1971, p. 143).



Figure 6.72. Sand Dune (Bacon, 1981). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The notion of symmetry in the concept of beauty is one that applies at many levels to Bacon. His paintings are what Leiris called “mythic translations of our inward structure which move us to the extent to which they throw light on ourselves while at the same time resolving our contradictions in a harmony not to be found elsewhere” (Russell, 1971, p. 143). Bacon’s interest in Leiris’s passages is significant because the unconventional liasons of which Leiris speaks are figured directly in paintings like the *Two Figures* of 1953 (seen in chapter 5, fig. 5.31). The poignancy of his distortions comes precisely from the fact that “the straight line is present, unseen, as the complement of the curved line, just as the rule is present, unseen, as consort to the exception” (Russell, 1971, p. 144). Somewhere behind even the most extreme of Bacon’s disruptions to the norms of beauty there is a counter-image, as Leiris says elsewhere in the passage quoted: “beauty is a function as much of the self-regenerative as of the self-destructive and the final impression of any major painting of Bacon’s is that of the rehabilitation of beauty” (Russell, 1971, p. 144). If this were not so, the work would be mere sensationalism, flat and cartoonish.



Figure 6.73. *Two Men Working in a Field* (Bacon, 1971). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

This surprising concept of beauty immediately brings to mind Jung's concept of the Mandala, the visual representation symbolizing the 'complete man'. "Images of this kind often represent attempts to see and put together apparently irreconcilable opposites and bridge over apparently hopeless splits" (Storr, 1986, p. 238). While Bacon's paintings are not mandalas in the formal sense, they can be regarded as symbolic expressions of psychic phenomena such as the numinous effect of an archetype. Jung believed that much of art contains archetypal themes and that the primordial image was the instinct's self-portrait or reflection of itself (Neumann, 1954). Thus, despite the seeming contrast between them, the instinctual plane of the drive and the pictorial plane of consciousness belong together, for 'man finds himself simultaneously driven to act and free to reflect' (Neumann, 1954). As well as being an image *an sich*, the archetype is at the same time a dynamism. But the pictorial plane, on which the archetype becomes visible to consciousness, is the plane of the symbol, and it is here that the activity of the unconscious manifests itself in so far as it is capable of reaching consciousness (Neumann, 1954).



Figure 6.74. Statue and Figures in a Street (Bacon, 1973). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

The manifestations of the unconscious are not only a spontaneous expression of unconscious processes but also reactions to the conscious situation of the individual and these reactions are of a compensatory nature. It is for this reason that while Bacon's images are a reflection of the primordial image, they are also depictions of his life story and capture the spirit of the time in a way that is unique (Neumann, 1954, p. 11). According to Rank (1932), the artist has an especially strong will and desires to remake the world to his or her image but also desires immortality which can only be achieved by identifying with his or her culture. In essence there is a continual battle between dependence and independence within the artist, which Rank (1932) claims:

Is really only an ideologised continuation of the individual struggle against the collective and yet it is this very fact of the purely psychical conflicts that marks the difference between the productive and the unproductive types, the artist and the neurotic, for the neurotic's creative power, like the most primitive artist's, is always tied to his own self and exhausts itself in it, whereas the productive type succeeds in changing this purely subjective creative process into an objective one, which means that through ideologising it he transfers it from his own self to his work (p. 372).

To assert one's individuality, to live as an independent being as Bacon did, involves risk and can be a source of fear. Many people therefore seek shelter from life's risks by conforming to the collective and its ideologies but this can lead to the death of the self (Rank, 1932). Throughout life then, a person is faced with a struggle for independence (which evokes life-fear) and surrender to the collective (which evokes death-fear). All people struggle to resolve the tension between the individual and the collective, between self-assertion and self-surrender, but the conflict is experienced acutely by the artist (Rank, 1932). This conflict appears to be nicely depicted in *Study of a Man and Woman Walking* (1988). In the painting it is unclear as to where one figure ends and the other begins.



Figure 6.75. *Study of a Man and Woman Walking* (Bacon, 1988). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

Bacon was undoubtedly an extremely creative individual. His fascination with death is linked to his creativity and can perhaps be interpreted as the fear of losing one's own identity in that of the group. There was not a day when he did not think about death and this is why he tried to accentuate and perpetuate the self through the construction of new realities in the realms of his art and his relationships.



Figure 6.76. *Study from the Human Body* (Bacon, 1981). © The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

6.4 End of the Line

Bacon regarded his chosen medium – the literary and lens-based imagery - as ‘the most artificial of the arts’, but strove instinctually and often irrationally to achieve a factual realism, comparing art with ‘a long affair with objects, images, appearances, sensations ... the passions’ (Harrison, 2006). James Thrall Soby described his endeavours as recording “our epoch’s hysteria ... the drama of our contemporary existence,” and Bacon, recalling his first hero, Picasso, had “sucked in the psyche of our time” (Harrison, 2005, p. 232).



Figure 6.77. Triptych (right panel detail) (Bacon, 1973). □ The Estate of Francis Bacon 2009.

He was selfish, as great artists often are and need to be, but he was never inadequate in the sense of shortcomings. His faults were fearful and in his perverse way he manipulated them at the expense of those around him. A savage single-mindedness commandeered his life in the name of art – and excused it (Farson, 1993).

Bacon's comments to Michael Peppiatt provide a useful conclusion to this discussion. It seems fitting too that he should have the final say.

Very few people find their real instincts. Every now and then there's an artist who does and who makes something new ... But it's very rare you have to be able to be really free to find yourself in that way, without any moral or religious constraints. After all, life is nothing but a series of sensations, so one may as well try and make oneself extraordinary, extraordinary and brilliant, even if it means becoming a brilliant fool like me and having the kind of disastrous life that I have had...That is it! (F. Bacon, personal communication, Westview Press, 1996).

6.5 Conclusion

It would be presumptuous to assume that a synthesis of a psychological philosophy as rich and complex as Jung's and a life as multifaceted and maverick as Bacon's could come even close to closure. It is to be hoped, however, that the observations above form some kind of a nexus between the two and may shed some light on the interaction between a conceptual framework and a lived existence. The shortcomings and lacunae are manifold and inevitable given the enormous scope that each presents. The following chapter covers some of these and makes some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Chapter Preview

This final chapter provides an overview of the value and limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research. The researcher's personal reflections are included. The limitations are considered in terms of their application to Jung's psychoanalytical theory, the psychobiographical approach and the psychobiographical subject.

7.2 Aims of the Research Revisited

The primary aim of the research was to explore and describe the life of the artist Francis Bacon from a Jungian perspective and in so doing develop a useful psychobiography of the man. A useful psychobiography is one in which an understanding of the subject is gained through the use of a theoretical psychological approach that illuminates aspects of the life and which in turn is revealed in the way in which it facilitates this illumination. While the purpose was to generalise the results of the study to aspects of the theory used, and not to the larger population (Yin, 1994) the way in which the theory was applied can be generalised to the larger population and in this respect, the aims of the research have been met. The psychobiographical approach did indeed facilitate the analysis of Bacon's psychological development and allowed for consideration of the underlying dynamics of his personality. The lifespan perspective of the study yielded historical biographical information on Bacon's life

and this was presented chronologically in terms of Jung's developmental shifts and anchored within the framework of these shifts (with key Jungian concepts) while the findings that emerged within that framework were analysed according to Jung's dimensions of being human and structural components of the psyche. The information was further arranged in a way that was parallel with the theory and to the work so as to prevent the researcher from making inferences that did not seem at least plausible. The intention was to place the information at the disposal of the reader and to allow for the widest and most informed impressions. These findings were extensively discussed in Chapters five and six and need not be repeated here. It is for this reason that the summary of the research findings will be a brief one.

7.3 Summary of the Research Findings

Bacon was indeed a unique individual. His early family life and the upheavals of World War II clearly had a significant impact on him. He seems to have sublimated his difficult experiences in his art and it is as though he painted to get a sense of himself that he had not sufficiently developed in childhood. He revelled in re-creating himself and his projections and reflections provide the viewer/receiver with a fertile source of direct and arcane insight into a complex personality. Simultaneously, his work was a mirror to the dystopian and hidden side of his time. His viewers reacted to not just the subject matter but also to the revelation he presented of the collective psyche of mid-century Europe.

The First Half of Life. Fellow British artist, David Hockney made the point that one should never believe anything an artist says, but rather look at what he does (D.

Hockney, personal communication, June 30, 2009). It is in this spirit perhaps that one should consider Bacon's early declaration that he wished 'to do nothing', because, while he certainly appeared to drift aimlessly and to display signs of dissolution, he did advance up the social ladder and he did make early, significant inroads into the contemporary art world – never an easy business, even among the conscientious. He may not have married or established a conventional family, but he did have his coterie of friends who were like a family of sorts. During the time that Jung would have described as the mid-life crisis, he blossomed to make the first of his most impressive work and to establish himself as virtually *nonpariel* among late 20th Century painters.

The Middle Life. It is often the case that creative people change their mode of creativity during the Middle Life phase, and it seems that Bacon was no exception. After going through a period of existential crisis and being unable to work for a period while he devoted himself to gambling and drinking, he abandoned a fleeting desire to become a sculptor and resumed his painting to increasing fame and recognition. He was never conventional though and did not follow the usual developmental paths. He had a few tumultuous relationships with men who resembled his father and it was only in old age that he settled down with a lover who was also a friend.

The Second Half of Life. In his old age he became reclusive and settled down with his lover, John Edwards. In a sense, he became to John the father that he had never himself had. He often thought of death and seems to have made peace with the prospect of dying, which he did, somewhat surprisingly, in the 'arms of the church', on the morning of 28 April 1992 in Madrid. Since his death there have been numerous

retrospectives of his work and each decade sees his life and work increasingly apotheosized. This is not surprising as these astonishing and primordial images continue to impact on the way in which one understands oneself in the existential void of the 21st Century. The sense of contradiction, the delightful or provocative accommodation of opposites, the restless, shiny eyes and wicked humour, the beauty among the beast, these are the overriding senses one gets of the elusive, obscurantist, prevaricating, cheating genius that makes up some of the whole man. He, more than most, remains an enigma, but if this study comes close to conveying and perhaps even elucidating that mystery, then it is likely that the use of the hermetic Carl Jung would be a primary reason.

7.4 Value of the Study

The study can be regarded as valuable because, while there is a plethora of biographical, critical and stylistic literature on the artist, there appear to be no psychobiographical studies and certainly none using Jung's psychoanalytical theory. Indeed, it would seem that the study is the first in South African Universities to use Jung in a psychobiographical study. It also contributes to the growing body of research in psychobiography currently being developed in South African institutions.

Jung has often been criticized for his lack of a coherent, clearly structured system of thought. According to Frager and Fadiman (2005)

His writing seems sometimes to go off on reflective tangents, forsaking logic, formal structure and system. He can be infuriating by using varying definitions for the same term. He was aware of this difficulty in his writing but did not see it as a drawback (p. 56).

Jung believed that life rarely follows the logical, coherent pattern that has become the standard for scientific and academic writing, and felt that his own style may be closer to the rich complexity of psychological reality. Jung deliberately developed a loose, open system, one that could admit new information without distorting it to fit a closed theoretical framework. He never believed that he knew all the answers or that new information would merely confirm his theories (Frager & Fadiman, 2005). Consequently his theorizing “lacks a tight, logical structure that categorizes all life in terms of a small number of theoretical constructs” (Frager & Fadiman, 2005, p. 560).

It has been argued that Jung’s work is still extremely relevant today and that his writings are in line with the postmodern critiques of contemporary culture (Hauke, 2000). Also, Jung's non-objectivist, yet empirically based epistemology puts him in the psychological traditional of William James (Kotsch, 2000). The study therefore demonstrates that while Jung is indeed a very complex and sometimes unstructured theorist, his theory can nonetheless be used in a way that is practical and informative, especially when it comes to subjects who challenge convention. The study additionally provides an example of how a theory that is flexible – albeit difficult to apply - can be an appropriate means of understanding complicated people. Jung’s description of the evolution of the personality in developmental shifts allows for applicability and coherence while at the same time accommodating even the most maverick of non-conventional lives.

7.5 The Limitations of this Research

These are considered in terms of the conceptual model of Jung, the psychobiographical approach and the psychobiographical subject.

7.5.1 The Conceptual Model of Jung

The same characteristics of Jung's psychology that make it so appropriate to this research can also be seen as liabilities. The lack of a formal structure in Jung's thinking made it difficult to apply theory in such a way that it would practically and realistically explicate the life under scrutiny. There was always a danger of a selective use of aspects of the theory ('cherry picking') in order to make the theory 'fit the facts'. To ensure that there was a high level of rigour in the application, considerable attention needed to be focussed on establishing a working framework that would provide a coherent and logical means of grounding the information and analysis in Jung's theories. It was not always clear what parts of Jung's prolific writing to incorporate and what not to incorporate and the decisions required an ongoing process of internal evaluation. Additionally, the metaphorical and elusive nature of some of Jung's concepts sometimes proved obdurate when it came to translation into real-life examples. Conceptual areas that are open to a wide interpretation meant inevitably that some inferences are favoured and others not. Jung would probably have regarded this openness to interpretation as a good thing because for him most things were potentially of equal value (Jung, 1978a), but this lack of a clear boundary can make formal application of the theory problematical and this is likely to be a reason why so many researchers shy away from using Jung.

It is beyond the limits of this research to explore the critical history of Jungian theory but it is necessary to record that Jung is controversial and there has been a long tradition of polemic between die-hard Jungians, 'reformist' thinkers who nevertheless hold Jungian principles intact and those who hold principled objections to some of the style and content of his thinking. Anthony Storr (1973) is an example of the latter and says:

Almost everyone who has attempted a critical assessment of Jung has come to the conclusion that his thinking was confused, that he contradicts himself, uses words in differing senses and often makes use of 'blanket' concepts which include so much under a single heading that they actually explain less than at first appears (p. 79).

This is mordant criticism and demands at least a response from the researcher lest the particular objection be generalised to the whole of Jungian thinking. It is inevitable that in any humanist discourse there will be elements of idiosyncrasy, opacity, poetics and open-textured concepts. It is a part of the researcher's hermeneutic to accommodate such elements in a way that makes the most use of their insight or connection. Internal validities and external applications do not necessarily have a direct impact on each other. A theory can be 'wrong' and yet helpful. Storr's criticism is in fact a clear validation of the generative nature of Jung's concepts, 'helpful' despite being at times 'confused'.

This concern impacts directly on what might be levelled as a limitation to the discursive and non-verifiable nature of descriptive and inferential research. There is an obstinate opinion amongst empirically-inclined academics to regard such research as being at best suspect and at worst plain wrong. It is important to mention that while one may acknowledge the obvious limitations of a discursive approach to a lived

existence and a poetical and hermetic psychology, this does in no way suggest that the research is compromised in its capacity to reveal, to explicate and to generate insight. The ultimate yardstick will not be a quantifiable statistic, but a description and a theory so rich and reflexive that the receiver must say, not 'how consistent!' or 'how true!' but 'how apt!'.

7.5.2 The Psychobiographical Approach

The value of a psychobiographical study and its limitations are covered in Chapter Two, so this discussion will be brief.

While the use of psychobiographical data enables creative lives to be seen in their social and historical contexts (something that is all too easily neglected in other types of creativity research) the most obvious problem for the approach is that it relies on the quality and accuracy of data available and when there is no clear information or information is contradictory, then one falls back on generalisations (King & Anderson, 2002).

Bacon was known to have been very good at self-editing and while this tendency is revealing in itself, it causes one to question the validity of the accounts that were given of him, many based on impressions he gave of himself. It is likely to be a universal limitation to biographical research of the famous that the subject is overwhelmingly understood through the experience of other people, the mass media and, frequently, themselves. Fame must surely involve the hazard of perennial misrepresentation. One might get better results researching a nonentity. Whether this is a reasonable conclusion is, however, problematical because with prominent people,

there is the choice – the range – of opinion. There is much more likelihood of a balance of diametrical views, revelatory prejudices and unsentimental observation than in the case of the nonentity and his limited (and probably even more inaccurate) range of witnesses. Bacon has been written about by a vast number of people, including critics, friends, art historians, gallery directors, researchers, television interviewers, supporters and antagonists from across the globe and spanning three-quarters of a century. The possibilities for a reliable triangulation and an accurate account are enormously improved, despite the impressions all arising from encounters that are by no means analytical in the causal or statistical sense. The more sources and the more varied they are, the more likely it is that the accounts are valid.

The longitudinal nature of psychobiographical research methodology means that the virtues and evils of the approach are manifested in the study. The capacity to correlate and observe over a lifetime has been a decided merit, but it should be pointed out that cross-sectional or experimental research related to particular causal relationships in the artist's life would also be likely to yield high-quality results.

7.5.3 The Psychobiographical Subject

Despite the argument for a high degree of internal validity in the documentation of Bacon's life, there remains an ironical element. Out of the prodigious amounts of information on the artist written by critics and journalists or presented by television producers and despite the contrariness touched on above, the accounts of Bacon from different sources were often suspiciously consistent with each other. Such clear confluences of information and opinion in a range of sources point to the likelihood

that Bacon was the primary manager of his own information, so what presents as a convincing authentication of a situation or history or viewpoint may boil down to a careful editing of information and careful management of his exposure to the public. The information that came from his close friends and people who felt that they could write about him only after his death indicates that there was a lot more to Bacon that may still eventually be revealed. Only time will tell.

Most of the accounts of Bacon came from his closest friends who were also fiercely protective of him. This meant that it was important to sort out information on the artist that was not part of his usual public relations orchestration. Even the critics seem to speak in one voice! However, the sheer quantity of diverse information did permit what is probably an accurate – though obviously selective - profile of his life. But where the researcher may be too cynical regarding the absolute truth of anything reported, the study benefits from having Bacon's own, authentic voice run through the narrative in the form of the paintings. These speak clearly and unequivocally and are ultimately the corroboration or refutation of what the public might say. It is on this premise of presentation *in situ* that the works are included – as a means for the reader to formulate an informed but *personal* view. There were few references made by close friends that provided unique information and Bacon's 'self editing' and secrecy meant that there was not a lot of information regarding, particularly, his early life.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Implicit in the discussion of the longitudinal nature of psychobiography is the suggestion that there may be merit in intensive study of very particular cross-sections

of the artist's career. This also raises the issue of choices of conceptual or psychoanalytical models. This study, for example, could have been conducted very effectively by integrating Jung with other conceptual models such as Object Relations, which would have facilitated a deeper probing into Bacon's relationship with his 'mother and his detritus' or photographs perhaps as 'transitional objects.'

According to Winnicott, the mother is the mirror to the child and when she is an automaton or other environmentally deficient conditions exist, then an infant cannot find itself in the mother's reflection and the sense of self is distorted (Lipthrott, 2008). It is no wonder then that portraits and mirrors were often the subjects of Bacon's dialectic and why this then would form an interesting area for further research if one considers Bacon's paintings to be refractions or mirrors of the self. The polarities that are evident in Bacon's life and his search for 'containment' resonate with the idea of the primal split where the child is catapulted from 'heaven' too early (Cashdan, 1988). Indeed Bacon as hedonistic 'Puer' resonates with the notion of trying to unconsciously return to the Eden of childhood where there is a sense of omnipotence associated with the final sub-phase of the separation-individuation process (Cashdan, 1988). This also brings to mind Bowlby's (1973) theory of attachment, another conceptual model that could perhaps also lend itself well to an analysis of Bacon's relationships. Jung's thinking regarding the balancing or transcending of polarities has counterparts in other theories too including those of Alfred Adler (1938), Andreas Angyal (1941), Gardner Murphy (1947) and Rollo May (1969), all of whom make reference to balancing two opposing tendencies, one towards individual development and the other towards the development of compassion or social interest (Frager & Fadiman, 2005). It seems evident that a more extensive study would need to be done to really do justice to both Jung and Bacon and an integration of various theoretical

approaches could facilitate this process.

According to Ernst Kris who has spent his life studying art, psychology and archeology, psychoanalysis has helped to demonstrate that artists' works were influenced by their past and that certain themes existed that were common to the human experience. However, he claims that inquiry into these themes has been limited and that researchers should also ask questions such as: "how the themes have changed over time due to cultural or socio-economic conditions and which themes had become more or less common" (Kris, 1952, pp. 64-86). These questions remain powerful ones for future psychological studies.

James Hillman, a maverick depth psychologist, formed an alliance with writer Michael Ventura and together they created a critique that displays the desperate need to bring back the artists not only to psychology but also to culture (Frager & Fadiman, 2005). According to Hillman (1992) "We have had 100 years of therapy and the world is getting worse" (p. 2). It is his belief that members of the field of psychology do not adequately discuss the deeply personal, erratic and creative and he conspicuously uses a literary rather than an academic approach to make his points. His work helps portray what has been lost through inadequate understanding of the arts (Hillman, 1989; 1992).

South Africa, for example, has a rich history of art and art personalities that have played a role in articulating, questioning and transforming the country. Every facet of society has been characterised or reflected by creative individuals, from the rock paintings of the San to the Resistance Artists of the late 20th Century. It seems obvious that a developing sophistication in the study of South African art should include psychobiographical study, especially in those instances where artists are

positioned at pivotal points in the evolving social Zeitgeist. In the last decades, South Africa has enjoyed the increasing attention of the international art world and individual artists have achieved enormous prominence. It is nevertheless true that South African academics tend to look first elsewhere for inspiration rather than at home. A body of knowledge and thorough insight into local genius would be of great benefit to the development of a tradition of domestic research.

7.7 Researcher's Reflections

It is probably inevitable that having spent such a lot of time and energy in trying to get into the skin of Francis Bacon, the satiated researcher would look up and wonder, after all, who was he, *really*? Bacon was an exceptionally elusive character but it is not unlikely that any deep probing into any life will result in the same sense of ultimate inadequacy. This may be the frustration of the biographer, but it is simultaneously the triumph of the human spirit. If the sense of not quite getting him is generated by the slippery and equivocal Bacon himself, then so much the better because it is likely that the same sense of elusiveness pervaded the artist's sense of himself all his life. He may very well have been one of the greatest magicians after all and perhaps everything is mere conjecture (smoke and mirrors). Thus, the ultimate caveat for the reader is the reminder that people understand each other, if at all, only partially and in those 'horizons of meaning' (Gadamer, 1976) that they permit each other. The explanations and explications in this study can hope only to be internally valid and cogent within the confines of a particular intellectual language. The psychologist can speculate and construe and find connection and convince but must

acknowledge that the conviction is a *psychological* conviction and as such can never embrace the holistic and perennially perplexing phenomenon that is a man.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided a reflexive discourse on the value of the study as well as its limitations in the areas of Jung's theory, the psychobiographical approach and the psychobiographical subject. Recommendations for future research were considered and the researcher's personal reflections acknowledged.

Finally, Proust, with his senses tuned to the resonances of the past, commented on memory: "People do not die immediately for us, but remain bathed in a sort of aura of life ... It is as though they were traveling abroad" (Peppiatt, 2009, p. 393), but Bacon (n.d.) deserves the last word: "The life I've lived happens to be more profoundly curious than my work. Then sometimes, when I think about it, I'd prefer everything about my life to blow up after I die and disappear" (p. 2).

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APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF FRANCIS BACON'S LIFE AND MAJOR WORKS

THE FIRST HALF OF LIFE (1909 – 1949)

YEAR	LIFE CHILDHOOD (BIRTH - ADOLESCENCE) 1909-1921	WORK
1909	Francis Bacon was born on 28 October. One of five children. Father: Anthony Edward Mortimer Bacon - retired Army captain, horse breeder. Mother: Christina Winifred Loxley Bacon - came from a Sheffield family that established its fortune in steel.	Bacon's education: Suffered from asthma and other ailments thus rarely went to school. Taught by private tutors. Received no formal art training.
1914	War breaks out in 1914 and the family moves to London, then back and forth between England and Ireland. The family return to Ireland after World war I – Bacon is sent to live with his maternal grandparents where he is exposed to a variety of people. Dresses up for a fancy dress party in a dress, high heels and lipstick and long cigarette holder. Emerging homosexuality and effeminate manner enrage his father and drive them further apart.	Decorative drawings of 1920's ladies in cloche hats and cigarette holders - done for his mother who ignores them.
YEAR	LIFE YOUTH AND EARLY YEARS (PUBERTY TO AGE 35) 1922-1949	WORK
1925	Bacon's closest companion is Jessie Lightfoot, his nanny.	Works on his father's farm.
1926	Bacon's father catches him trying on his mother's underwear and sends him away from home. Lives first in London, then Berlin and Paris. An exhibition of Picasso's drawings prompted him to paint. Berlin gave him a sense of total freedom, which he begins to transpose in poetic terms in his work. Becomes enamoured with the writings of Nietzsche.	He begins a life of drifting. Lives on 3 pounds monthly allowance from mother's estate
1927	Harcourt-Smith takes Bacon to Berlin and then leaves him there. Realises that certain types of men are attracted to him.	Bacon survives doing odd jobs, dodging rent and resorting to petty theft. Works for a telephone company – sends poison letter to the owner by accident.
1929	Returned to London	Gouache, 1929
1930	Designs furniture and rugs. Begins using oils to paint.	Furniture and rugs shown in <i>The 1930 Look in British Decoration. Self Portrait</i> , 1930.
1932	Painted and exhibited his work in various group shows throughout the 1930s.	<i>Portrait</i> , 1932
1933	Included in a group exhibition at Meyer Gallery.	<i>Composition</i> , 1933; <i>Crucifixion</i> , 1933, <i>Interior of a Room</i> , 1933
1934	First solo exhibition at Sunderland House – Transitions Gallery.	His first solo show, <i>Paintings by Francis Bacon</i> , of seven of his oil paintings and five or six gouaches
1936	International Surrealist Exhibition in London snubs his work	<i>Figures in a Garden</i> , 1936. Becomes discouraged. Stops painting.
1937	Group exhibition at Thomas Agnew and Sons, London.	Bacon destroys most of his early paintings.

1934 - 1943	Bacon's asthma rules him out as a soldier and he then enrolls in the ARP rescue service only to be discharged when it was clear that he was not well enough to continue.	Very little painting done after solo exhibition. Paints <i>Figure Getting Out of a Car</i> (c. 1939 - 1940)
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THE MID-LIFE CRISIS (APPROXIMATE AGE 35-45 YEARS) 1944- 1950'S

YEAR	LIFE	WORK
1944	Resumes painting intensively again as a result of the wartime experience. Strongly influenced by Pablo Picasso's work. Produces his most original works.	<i>Three Studies for Figures at the base of a Crucifixion</i> I, II and III, 1944; <i>Untitled</i> , 1944; <i>Second Version of Triptych</i> I, II and III, 1944
1945	Bacon's work starts to be influenced by Surrealism.	Exhibits <i>Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion</i> (London, Tate Gallery) and causes a sensation; <i>Figure in a Landscape</i> , 1945
1946	Produces his magnum opus – his 'most unconscious' work.	<i>Painting</i> , 1946; <i>Figure Study I and II</i> , 1946; <i>Revised Car</i> , 1946
1949	First major show at Hanover Gallery, London. Painting style matures and reflects images of friends, lovers, or images of people found in movie stills, reproductions of historic paintings and medical photos.	<i>Head</i> I, II, III, IV, V, VI, 1949 <i>Man at Curtain</i> , 1949; <i>Study from the Human Body</i> , 1949
1950	Draws on sources such as Velazquez's 'Portrait of Pope Innocent X' and Vincent Van Gogh's 'The painter on the road to Tarascon'.	<i>Two Figures in the Grass</i> , 1950-53; <i>Painting</i> , 1950 ; <i>Study after Velazquez I</i> , 1950; <i>Figure in Frame</i> , 1950; <i>Fragment of a Crucifixion</i> , 1950; <i>Study for Nude Figure</i> , 1950
1951	Existential Crisis and change in creative mode. Nanny Lightfoot's death.	<i>Head</i> , 1951; <i>Pope</i> I, II and III, 1951; <i>Pope</i> III (Destroyed), 1951; <i>Portrait of Lucian Freud</i> , 1951.

THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE (1949 ONWARDS)

YEAR	LIFE THE MIDDLE LIFE (AGE 40 TO 60) 1949 –1969	WORK
1952	Bacon meets his first great love Peter Lacey, a test pilot who had flown combat missions during the Battle of Britain. Begins a stormy relationship.	<i>Landscape after Van Gogh</i> , 1952; <i>Man Kneeling in Grass</i> , 1952; <i>Nude</i> , 1952; <i>Sphinx</i> II, 1952; <i>Study for a Figure in Landscape</i> , 1952; <i>Study for a Portrait of a Man in Blue</i> , 1952; <i>Study for a Portrait</i> , 1952; <i>Study for Portrait</i> VI, 1952; <i>Study for the Head of a Screaming Pope</i> , 1952; <i>Crouching Nude on a Rail</i> , 1952; <i>Dog</i> I and II, 1952; <i>Study for a Crouching Nude</i> , 1952
1953	First solo exhibition outside England at Durlacher Brothers, New York.	<i>Study After Velazquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X</i> , 1953; <i>Study for Figure</i> II, 1953-55; <i>Man with Dog</i> , 1953; <i>Study for Portrait</i> I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII, 1953; <i>Study of a Baboon</i> , 1953; <i>The End of the Line</i> , 1953; <i>Two Figures</i> , 1953; <i>Study of Figure in a Room</i> , 1953; <i>Three studies of the Human Head</i> I, II and III, 1953
1954	In 1954 his work was featured in the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, which he failed to attend even though he was in Rome.	<i>Study for Head of Cardinal with Glasses</i> , 1954-55; <i>Figure with Meat</i> , 1954; <i>Sphinx</i> , 1954; <i>Sphinx</i> III, 1954; <i>Untitled</i> , 1954; <i>Two Figures in the Grass</i> , 1954; <i>Man in Blue</i> I, IV and VII, 1954
1955	First retrospective: Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. P. Lacy dies.	<i>Man Drinking</i> (Portrait of David Sylvester), 1955
1957	1957 Bacon's painting was undergoing a transformation in handling and colour. Exhibition at the Hanover Gallery.	Presented six paintings inspired by Van Gogh's <i>The Painter on the Route to Tarascon</i> , 1888.
1962	Tate Gallery, London organizes a retrospective that travels to Mannheim, Turin, Zurich and Amsterdam.	<i>Three Studies for a Crucifixion</i> I, II, and III, 1962
1963	Show at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.	<i>Man and Child</i> , 1963; <i>Portrait of Henrietta Moraes</i> , 1963; <i>Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe</i> , 1963
1964	Bacon begins a friendship with East-ender George Dyer, whom he met while the latter was burgling his apartment.	Considers taking up sculpting.
1965-1967	Uses Edward Muybridge and John Deakin's photographs to paint portraits of friends.	<i>Three Studies of Isabel Rawsthorne on Light Ground</i> , 1965; <i>After Muybridge – Women emptying a bowl of water and paralytic child on all fours</i> , 1965; <i>Portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne Standing in a Soho Street</i> , 1967; <i>Triptych inspired by T.S. Elliot's Poem "Sweeney Agonistes"</i> I, II and III, 1967

1968	Bacon pours his energy and emotions into his art basing it on specific incidents.	<i>Portrait of George Dyer in a Mirror</i> , 1968; <i>Two Studies of George Dyer with Dog</i> , 1968.
YEAR	LIFE OLD AGE (AGE 60 YEARS ONWARDS) 1969 – 1992	WORK
1970	Bacon's art becomes more personal, inward looking and preoccupied with themes and motifs of death	<i>Triptych – Studies from the Human Body</i> , 1970
1971	Grand Palais Paris show. George Dyer commits suicide.	<i>Lying Figure in a Mirror</i> , 1971. <i>In Memory of George Dyer</i> , 1971
1972-1973	Bacon portrays Dyer's last moments in what were referred to as the black triptychs.	<i>Three Studies of Figures on Beds</i> , 1972 <i>Triptych–August</i> , 1972 (based on George Dyer's death) <i>Self Portrait</i> , 1973
1974-1976	Meets John Edwards, a young handsome East-ender with whom he formed an enduring and stable relationship Metropolitan Museum of Art , New York.	<i>Seated Figure</i> , 1974; <i>Triptych March</i> , 1974; <i>Triptych May-June</i> , 1974; <i>Sleeping Figure</i> , 1974; <i>Triptych 1976</i>
1978	Lives in Paris. Renews and deepens friendships with Michel Leiris, Nadine Haim and Jacques Dupin.	<i>Study for Portrait (Michel Leiris)</i> , 1978; <i>Landscape</i> , 1978.
1980's	Bacon's simplified his pictorial language and entered a period of calmness.	<i>Study of the Human Body</i> , 1982; <i>Three Studies for a Portrait of John Edwards</i> , 1984; <i>Study for Self-Portrait, Triptych</i> , 1985-6; <i>Blood on the Floor–Painting</i> , 1986
YEAR	LIFE DEATH AND BEYOND 1992 ONWARDS	WORK
1992	Bacon died on 28 April in Madrid in a Catholic convent.	Estate bequeathed to John Edwards.
1996	More retrospectives. Bacon was a ruthless editor of his own work. He destroyed paintings throughout his life.	Excavators discovered 98 slashed canvases in his studio. His entire oeuvre consists of only 600 or so paintings.
2000	Bacon's dealer Marlborough International Fine Art was alleged by the Bacon estate to have grossly undervalued many of the paintings the artist was obliged to sell them before reselling them for several times the price they paid the artist himself.	Marlborough International is sued by the Bacon Estate.
2001	Bacon's London living and working space as he left it at 7 Reece Mews is documented.	The studio is painstakingly packed up and shipped to Dublin's Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art for an exhibition.
2002	The claim against Marlborough was settled in 2002.	Marlborough agrees to release to the Bacon Estate all documents in its possession that belonged to Bacon.
2003-2008	Various exhibitions were show around the world	<i>Triptych, 1976</i> , which has come to be considered a landmark of the 20 th -century sold at Sotheby's contemporary art sale for \$86.28 million to a Russian billionaire. It was the highest price ever paid for a post-war work of art at auction and was a record for the artist. Tate Britain Gallery holds a major retrospective recorded as the largest one of Bacon's work ever mounted.
2011	Bacon's work continues to attract audiences all over the world.	Various books, movies and papers about the artist continue to be produced – including this research study.

APPENDIX B

DETAILED LIST OF FIGURES

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Figure 5.3. Bacon, F. (1966). *Portrait of George Dyer talking* [Oil on canvas 500 × 679cm]. Private Collection, New York. Retrieved from <http://www.alexalienart.com/>. Copyright 2007 by The Estate of Francis Bacon.

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Figure 6.38. Bacon, F. (1979). *Triptych* [Oil on canvas, 198.1 x 147.3 cm]. Private collection. Retrieved from <http://www.tate.org.uk/>. Copyright 2009 by The Estate of Francis Bacon.

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