IMAGE-MAKING AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MYTH

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that 'Image-Making and Contemporary Social Myth' is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY

In our Post-Modern milieu there has been a renewed attempt in art to communicate with the viewer. My hypothesis is that particular images provoke empathic responses in the viewer. Iconographical and formal characteristics in images which provoke empathy are discussed and Lipps' (1905) and Worringer's (1908) theories of empathy are examined. The psychological profile of a viewer is considered in the light of Freud's familial model of the human psyche with its emphasis on sexual instincts. The theoretical framework within which my hypothesis operates is based upon Bryson, Holly and Moxey's (1991) interventionist response to visual interpretation. They foreground the viewer's historicity in the viewing of an image and their approach is contrasted with that of the perceptualists (Wollheim, Gombrich and others) who maintain that the historicity of the viewer is unimportant. Finally it is argued that art can have a transforming potential if the artist provokes empathy in the viewer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREFACE

During my undergraduate studies, I became interested in the interaction between the audience and the artwork. This concern, combined with an awareness of the myths and taboos surrounding men and women in our society, led to an interest in the concept of empathic viewing, where the viewer projects his personality onto the image.

The concept of empathy as defined by Theodore Lipps (1905) and Wilhelm Worringer (1908) is discussed and compared in so far as they have relevance to this dissertation. Selected artists were discussed in terms of the central concepts of the dissertation. The work produced within the practical component of the research is referred to throughout the dissertation and examined in greater depth in Chapter Five.

The illustrations have been divided into two sections. The first section comprises all the illustrations referred to in the dissertation. The illustrations are presented in which order they appear in the text. The second section comprises the main body of work created in the practical component, and is presented in chronological order. Information about each image accompanies underneath each illustration in the first section. This information is not duplicated in the second section which presents the images in chronological order, and is meant to be regarded as a visual overview of the paintings produced for the practical component.

I am conscious that the scope of research is extensive and varied, therefore I have selected only that material which I regarded as particularly relevant to my specific concerns. I have given prominence to certain writers and texts over others, and the material chosen is appropriate to the aims and research of my practical work. At the same time it should be made clear that I do not profess, nor do I find it necessary for the production of my artworks, to have a specialised knowledge of the various disciplines postulated in this dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

The hypothesis put forward in this dissertation is that an artist is able through the manipulation of iconography, composition and spatial devices, to generate an empathic response in a viewer. The concept of empathy is therefore important to the dissertation and the theories of empathy as defined by Lipps (1905) and Worringer (1908) are evaluated because of their importance within the context of twentieth century painting.[1] Worringer's (1881 - 1965) attempt to define a universal psychology of style in his influential book *Abstraction and empathy: a contribution to the psychology of style* (1908) is discussed in Chapter 1 and compared to Lipps' (1851-1914) approach. Lipps was an important influence on Worringer and Worringer borrowed from him the term *Einfühlung* which can be translated as 'feeling into an object'. The concept of empathy used in this dissertation however, is closer to that outlined in the *Oxford Dictionary*, as the power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) an object of contemplation (Oxford 1989: 184). The essential difference between the meaning of the German term and its English equivalent is that the English term comprehends in its semantic field, something of the personality of the subject in the throes of an empathic experience. It is the emphasis on the personality of the

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viewer of the object, rather than the artist's creative experience which is crucial to this dissertation. Whereas Lipps concedes most importance to the empathic response of the viewer to a work of art, Worringer emphasises the empathic response of the artist when he attempts to account for the different styles of art through the ages. Worringer continually refers to the volition of the artist and makes it the primary factor in all artistic creation. According to him:

> It is the primary factor in all artistic creation and, in its innermost essence, every work of art is simply an objectification of this *a priori* existent absolute artistic volition. (Worringer 1908: 9)

Worringer separates artistic volition into a positive or a negative experience of the world. According to him, a positive and empathic response results in the creation of naturalistic forms through the artist's volition. He states that:

> The need for empathy can be looked upon as a presupposition of artistic volition only where this artistic volition inclines towards the truths of organic life ... . (Worringer 1908: 14)

Worringer defines the 'truths of organic life' as naturalism in art. For Worringer, positive empathy results in the creation of naturalistic images which contrast with the alienated artist who resorts to abstraction in an attempt to impose some order on a universe which he perceives as chaotic. Whereas the urge to empathy is a happy pantheistic relationship of

confidence between man and the phenomena of the external world, the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a great inner unrest inspired in man by the phenomena of the outside world (Worringer 1908: 15). Aspects of Lipps' concept of empathy, namely that it is the viewer's empathic response that is highlighted, instead of the more influential ideas of Worringer, will be discussed in Chapter 1 (pp. 19-53).

If empathy is understood as an experience in which the viewer's personality, thoughts and insights, when viewing an object, are the most important part of the experience, then empathy coincides theoretically with a semiological approach to visual interpretation. It is only through a shared system of signs that a viewer is able to recognise and reinterpret an image within the context of his own experience. The semiotics of visual interpretation falls within the wider category of interventionism, an art historical position which argues that representation is always a matter of convention, not of essence. According to such a view, the work of art is wholly defined by its historical conditions of origin and reception. The term 'interventionism' is borrowed from art historians Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (1991) whose book *Visual theory: painting and interpretation* is based on lectures delivered at a conference: 'Theory and Interpretation in the Visual Arts' held at the Hobart and William Smith Colleges, July and August 1987.[2] Interventionism is a way of interpreting art which is diametrically opposed to that of the perceptualists. Perceptualists

view art as a purely visual and sensory experience independent of the meaning and milieu in which it is viewed. By reference to perceptual and/or phenomenological assumptions putatively shared by all human beings, this approach is designed to be independent of issues of historical variation. Consequently, artistic truth is often construed as being trans-historical (Bryson et al. 1991: 1).

A trans-historical approach to visual interpretation corresponds to Worringer's attempt to outline a psychology of style which applies to different cultures throughout the history of art. The empathic experience that Worringer alludes to, is the same for all artists within a particular type of culture. The empathic experience is evoked when the culture and its artists have a positive response to the external world and abstraction results from a negative response.[3] Bryson refutes such an approach which, he maintains, is intent on imposing an art historical interpretation on different cultures. He says:

> One observes here the confluence of several forces, all interested in rendering invisible the fact of historical and cultural difference: a 'universal psychology', which ends up making us all the same; an art historical formalism that eliminates contextual differences of history and culture in order to produce the homogeneity of all art ... . (Bryson 1991b: 100)

The definition of the empathic experience of art in this dissertation does not include universal criteria. Whereas Worringer's reference to empathy was a result of this attempt to account for different art styles through the ages, my interest in the empathic experience is confined to analysing the dynamics of viewer responses to visual images. I attempt to re-engage the viewer in what has become a marginalised area of discourse. The empathic experience of a visual image is the result of the rekindling of an area of semiological communication which has atrophied during the rise of Modernism.[4] The formalist orientation of Modernism during the past century resulted in a new regard for the raison d'être of art itself. Suzi Gablik noted that:

> Those who defended modernism claim that art need not serve any purpose but should create its own reality ... Abstract art brought into being not only a new aesthetic style, but also a change of understanding regarding the very *raison d'être* of art itself. (Gablik 1984: 20)

She goes on to say that aesthetic experience became an end in itself, worth having on its own account. Art cut itself loose from its 'social moorings' (Gablik 1984: 20). The dehumanisation of art which has occurred during this century has resulted in both the marginalisation of the artist and the art object in society. Along with this dehumanisation of art arose an indelible belief in the freedom of the artist to express himself through his medium, at the expense of a bewildered audience. During the past twenty years there has

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been a reassessment of these ideas in favour of a new interest in communicating with an imagined art audience. This renewed interest in communication and consequently in social values is a movement away from what could be seen as a dissident attitude to the creative process.[5] It is within this context that the subject of audience empathy is especially topical and of value within the present art milieu.

The solution for the artist to years of alienation from the mainstream of society, does not simply lie in the return to representation and figuration. The danger of highlighting communication as a goal during the making of art, is the possibility that it may inhibit and confine the creative process. However, as Bryson points out, this need not occur. He says:

> The painter assumes the society's codes of recognition, and performs his or her activity within their constraints, but the codes permit the elaboration of new combinations of the sign, further evolution in the discursive formation. The result of painting's signifying *work*, these are then recirculated into society as fresh and renewing currents of discourse. (Bryson 1991a: 70)

The primary mode of visual communication between the artist and viewer here is through the use of a representational and figurative style of painting. It follows therefore, that the artists chosen for discussion in this dissertation all use representation and figuration in their images. Because of the possible scope of the research I confined myself to a selection of works by

particular twentieth century artists including a photographer. Artists from the past are referred to in order to clarify a point or to expand on an argument. For me, a discussion of the work of Suzanne Valadon (1865-1938), Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Balthazar Klossovski de Rola, known as Balthus (1908-), Paula Rego (1935-), Cindy Sherman (1954-), David Salle (1951-) and Eric Fischl (1948-) is necessary in order to demonstrate the developments of empathic viewing experiences. The selection of these artists above others was not done arbitrarily. It was based on the strong iconographical and visual connections which I recognised between their work and my pictures. My more resolved images seemed to contain many of the elements that appear in the paintings and photographs of the artists mentioned above. It could be argued that these observations are purely subjective and have no empirical basis, but during the course of my investigations into images the similarities between their images and mine seemed to be compelling. In all the paintings analysed as well as my own, there is common ground. This common ground has to do with structuring of the compositions and the provocative attitude exhibited by the artist to the human form where he chooses to depict situations which engage the viewer in a mental dialogue. I have categorised formal and iconographical characteristics common to their paintings and mine and I suggest they are instrumental in provoking an empathic response in the viewer.

The continued connection between the empathic experience and representational images might lead to the inference that abstract images are incapable of provoking similar responses in the viewer. Bryson's argument in favour of a semiotic interpretation of images incorporates the same inference. Stephan Melville notes that a feature of Bryson's work is that it repeatedly cuts Modernism out of its field of view and that it seems to address painting as either representational or figurative (Melville 1991: 78).[6] It is not within the scope of this dissertation to investigate the potential of abstract forms to arouse empathy in the viewer.[7] However, the accent on spectator response in this dissertation incorporates the assumption that representational and figurative images mimic the external world and create a shared semiological system with the viewer. Therefore, mimesis facilitates recognition and comprehension of the image allowing the concept of empathy here to apply to representational images only. Communicating a message, whether auditory or visual, does not inevitably involve the experience of empathy. Road signs, illustrations, diagrams and maps are all modes of visual communication which are instructive and are not meant to appeal to the emotions. Therefore communicating with the viewer is not the only criterion for empathic viewing. The image must provoke the viewer to 'project his personality into the object of contemplation', and it is the way the image is presented and what is depicted, that has the potential to provoke empathy in the viewer. In Chapters 2, 3 and 4, I have attempted to

outline the formal and iconographical evidence in selected images which provokes the viewer in this way.

It is impossible to measure the degree of duration of empathic responses to images or prescribe exactly what these responses will be. A way of defining an empathic interest in an image is to investigate the psychological act of looking at an image. In Chapter 2 the reader is introduced to two different 'looking' experiences, that of the voyeur and that of the flâneur, in order to clarify the degree of involvement which the viewer can have with a scene before him. By defining what constitutes empathic 'looking', an attempt is made to determine what it is in an image which provokes this type of experience. The imagined viewer referred to above, is not necessarily schooled in visual literacy and for the purposes of this discussion is a member of a western culture which is based upon Judeo-Christian traditions.[8] This heritage imposes narrowly defined sexual norms on its inheritors and therefore images of the naked body which constitute an important part of my research, are especially provocative within this context. In Chapter 4, certain issues surrounding nudity are discussed as well as the effect of contemporary or historical costume on the empathic response of the viewer.[9]

Socio-cultural factors are not the only influence which affect the viewing experience of the spectator. The experience of empathy includes particular psychological factors which come

into operation when the viewer is confronted with an image. The viewer's sexual experience as a background to his responses to images is taken as important and is a central assumption of this dissertation. The theoretical underpinning of this assumption lies in the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who theorised about the importance of early sexual experiences on the functioning of the unconscious in later years. An example of this is reflected in Freud's explanation of neurosis in women. He saw this occurring when, at a young age they were made aware of their own lack of a penis.[10] The notion that the unconscious affects conscious responses to situations is commented on by Matthew Erdelyi who, in a discussion of Freud's concepts of projection noted that it referred to the attribution of some unacceptable feeling or impulse of one's own, to another person or outside agency. (Erdelyi 1985: 262) The description of 'attributing one's own feelings to an outside agency' and the definition of the empathic response as a 'projection of one's personality into the object of contemplation' demonstrates the similarity between the two ideas. The combination of Freud's sexually-orientated explanation of the function of the unconscious and his theory of projection informs the reasoning behind the concept of empathy in this dissertation. I suggest that the imagined viewer of an image unconsciously projects sexually-orientated thoughts together with his conscious comprehension, which ultimately determines his response to the image.

In Chapter 5 the Freudian psychological model of the imagined viewer in the dissertation is compared to the Jungian approach to creating images in the early paintings of the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986) in the practical component of this research. The main source of imagery in this series is based on some of Carl Jung's archetypes like the Mother and the Trickster.[11] In the **Table Series** (1989-1992) the Jungian imagery was abandoned in favour of a more personal and autobiographically-orientated approach to painting. The Freudian influences became clear through the written research rather than the painting process and it is the complexities of this creative experience that are analysed in the last chapter.

The notion of empathy often infers a qualitative judgement when applied to the object of empathy itself. Lipps attempted to grapple with this problem in relationship to aesthetic criteria when he divided the concept of empathy into a positive and negative experience. He explained that aesthetically pleasing objects aroused feelings of positive empathy in the viewer and conversely, feelings of displeasure aroused negative empathic responses in the viewer. Worringer attacked Lipps' theory of positive empathy because it failed to take into account different artistic styles and emphasised the aesthetic value of Greco-Roman and modern Occidental art only. Worringer attempted to overcome this qualitative approach to the empathic experience by explaining the relationship between the artist and his world and showing how this resulted in abstract or naturalistic forms.

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Although it was not Worringer's intention, the association of the empathic experience with a positive outlook resulting in naturalistic forms and conversely, negative attitudes with abstract forms, continues to possess a qualitative meaning. The style of naturalism which results from an empathic response by the artist has positive aesthetic overtones and abstraction has negative overtones.

The association between empathy and a positive or negative evaluation of the object of empathy is also inferred by Rudolf Arnheim. For Arnheim the empathic experience lies in the 'animation' of the viewer by the image and Arnheim relies on the ability of the image to activate this animation. He gives the example of Catherine of Sienna's reaction to a Giotto mosaic - she was overcome by the image of a storm-tossed boat and collapsed on the floor. He states that, 'undeniably the substance of this encounter is not in what Catherine did to the boat, but in what the boat did to Catherine' (Arnheim 1986: 55). It is obvious that for Arnheim, the 'genuine' work of art provokes empathic responses in the viewer, even to such a degree as to bring about response such as that of Catherine of Siera. For him the 'genuine' image must provoke such a response rather than the provocation coming from the historicity of the viewer himself. Yet surely the inanimate nature of an image precludes projection and it is rather the viewer's experiences which inform the viewer's response? It is obvious from this account that Arnheim's approach to visual analysis falls into the perceptualist rather than

the interventionist camp which places greater importance on the concepts and ideas of the viewer in their understanding of an image than the purely ocular emphasis of the perceptualists who insist on the universality of the perceptual encounter.[12]

By using an interventionist approach to images in this dissertation I avoid the issues of 'positive' and 'negative' aesthetic responses, as a means of defining what is genuine or invalid art. I am able to abandon the previous associations of empathy with its implied connotations of value. An empathic approach then can be applied to posters, photographs, advertisements, postcards and illustrations. The movement away from the field of fine arts into the popular arts is in keeping with a Post-Modern attempt to grapple with the problem of mass communication and the contemporary audience.

The paradox of applying fine art concepts to the field of mass media and popular art reflects the ironical stance implicit throughout the practical and written research. In the practical component of this dissertation the sense of irony is evident in the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986), where children's fairy tales are used to comment on sexual stereotyping in men and women. In the **Table Series** (1989-1992) 'pin-up' calender girl poses are used to comment on female abuse and domestic objects become symbols of violence and oppression. An ambiguous of approach to art is evident in the attempt to engage the empathy of the viewer

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while simultaneously alienating him by the use of provocative imagery. In this dissertation I make paradoxicaluse of the male gender for the viewer/artist as I comment on feminist issues and investigate viewing experiences, I place the unsuspecting viewer in the perverse position of being a sadomasochist or voyeur. Such an ironic stance reflects a refusal to ground the ideas in the research in prescription and injunction. The complexities in understanding viewer responses to an image are made explicit by this means.

ENDNOTES

1. See Chapter 1, footnotes 2 and 3 for background information of the theories of Lipps (1905) and Worringer (1908).

2. Bryson, Holly and Moxey (1991) attempt to present a variety of approaches to visual interpretation. Included in their book are deconctructivist applications to the field of art as proposed by Rosalind Krauss and Wollheim's perceptualist approach to looking. Nochlin's interventionism is considered and Bryson's own position lies in a semiological orientation to visual interpretation.

3. See Chapter 1, footnote 4 for a discussion of the term 'abstraction'.

4. Modernism is the name given to the trend in art during the past hundred years where there seems to have been a general movement towards a dissident and innovative approach to creating art. The individuality of the artist and his freedom to create has

been greatly prized although this has led to the alienation of the general public when confronted with the artist's often esoteric work.

5. Evidence of an interest in communicating with the audience stems back to the nineteen sixties when the Pop artists used popular imagery as a reaction against the abstraction of Abstract Expressionists and Post-Painterly Abstractionists. During the seventies there was a proliferation of art movements chronicled by Edward Lucie-Smith in his book *Art in the seventies* (1980). A general return to figuration, expression, representation and symbolism in many of these movements is an indication of their renewed interest in the spectator. Art was seen as a vehicle for social change in the homo-erotic pictures by Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1991) and the feminist images of Judy Chicago (1939-). The use of materials underwent a democratisation with the introduction by Chicago of embroidery and ceramic painting into the field of fine art and the use of fabric and tapestry in the work of Miriam Shapiro (1923-) and Ann Sutton (1935-). The attempt to communicate with the viewer is of special relevence to this research with its emphasis on viewer empathy.

6. Melville makes these observations in an essay entitled 'Reflections on Bryson', in *Visual theory: painting and interpretation* edited by Bryson, Holly and Moxey (1991: 74-78).

7. The issue of abstraction provoking empathic responses in the spectator has been dealt with in the literature by Wassily Kandinsky in his treatise *On the spiritual in art* (1912), Robert Rosenblum in *Romanticism and the Northern tradition* (1975), clement Greenberg in *Art and culture* (1961), Dore Ashton in *A reading of modern art* (1971) and Barbara Rose in *American art since 1900* (1967). An example of the rhetoric used for describing the effects of abstraction is evident in the writing of Ashton who says about the work of Mark Rothko: 'Rothko's paintings are agents. They are agents of

reciprocity. There is a light concealed within them, but it is light that is like a flower ... Rothko's paintings are like living organisms; they have a pulse, even a soul ... (Ashton 1971: 21). Rosenblum comments on Barnett Newman's **Stations of the Cross Series** (1958) when he says; 'Here the ultimates pertain to death and resurrection, evoked by the primal duality of black and white , and of taut linear forces that, like paths of feeling, quiver and strain against a field of raw canvas, translating the sequence of Christ's martyrdom into irreducible abstract metaphors, and totally transforming the corporeal Passion into a spiritual one' (Rosenblum 1975: 212). The rhetorical style present in the writings of Modernist commentators seems to embrace a flowery metaphorical language in their attempts to grapple with the meaning of the images they are writing about. It appears that their metaphorical discourse serves to embellish a depleted semiological system in order to embue it with more substance.

8. The general attitude to nudity and sex in the Judeo-Christian culture is one of shame and secrecy. See Chapter 3, footnote 17 and the introduction of Chapter 4 for different approaches to nudity

9. Ted Polhemus notes the importance of clothes as signifier of the status of the wearer. This applies to body decoration as well. He says; 'Perhaps the most important contribution of body decoration to tribal life is the part it plays whenever new members are initiatied into the group ... Differences and similarities of adornment serve as a means of mapping out the structure of relationships and the rules of organization of a social system ...' (Polhemus 1988). The particularity of signs worn is only identifiable to the group within which its signifying function is understood. A viewer of a historical image would therefore lose much of the meaning accorded historical scenes and prevent him from empathising fully with the image. See Chapter 4, footnote 16, for more about the connection between clothing and the status of the wearer.

10. Similarly men fear women because of their projected fear of castration. Freud says; 'Man fears that his strength will be taken from him by woman, dreads becoming infected with her femininity and them proving himself a weakling. The effect of coitus in discharging tensions and inducing flaccidity may be a prototype of what these fears represent; and realization of the influence gained by the woman over a man as a result of sexual relations, and the favours she extorts by this means, may all conduce to justify the growth of these fears' (Freud 1931: 29). The paradoxical position of women is clear in relation to the sexual act. First she is the passive female accepting his advances and then she is placed in a position of power as a result of the sexual act. The ambiguous position of women in society is discussed in the dissertation and alluded to in the paintings.

11. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of Jung's archetypes.

12. The interventionist approach to visual interpretation would take into account the problem of looking at historical paintings in a contemporary milieu. Much of the original meaning of the painting would be lost to the modern spectator who in turn would impose his own interpretation coloured by his experience of reality. According to Gadamer (1975), this hermeneutical undertaking would be appropriate as it includes what he terms 'a fusion of horizons'. See Chapter 1 for an elaboration of the concept of hermeneutics.

CHAPTER ONE

APPROACHES TO THE VIEWING AND UNDERSTANDING OF ART AND THE CREATION OF EMPATHY

The term 'empathy' was introduced into the English language early in this century. Cornell psychologist, Edward B Titchener, is credited with first using the word as a translation of the German word *Einfühlung* when referring to the theories of the German psychologist Theodore Lipps.[1] Lipps coined the term to describe the state of aesthetic empathy in which a perceiver loses self-awareness as his identity becomes fused with the object he is observing.[2] Lipps refers to the state of aesthetic empathy thus:

> The work of art leads me and forces me, the observer, to step out of and beyond myself ... immersing me and confining me wholly in an ideal world. (Lipps 1905: 412)

The concept of empathy discussed in this dissertation, applies primarily to the response of the observer of a work of art, which is the type of empathic response to which Lipps refers. The observer's experience of the work of art in terms of formal and iconographic elements which

may provoke an empathic response to the image, have been the main concern of my research.

In terms of Worringer's psychological theory for the diversity of art styles, there is a causal connection on the one hand between empathy and a happy pantheistic relationship of confidence between man and the phenomena of the external world.[3] Conversely the urge to abstraction is the outcome of a greater inner unrest man feels and is inspired by the phenomena of the outside world.[4]

By attempting to apply a psychological paradigm to the creation of art, Worringer endeavoured to explain the range of art styles evident in different cultures. He believed that Lipps' emphasis on naturalism nullified other forms of aesthetic experiences, such as the urge to abstraction (Worringer 1908: 48). He used many of Lipps' theories to elaborate his own concepts of empathy and abstraction but rejected Lipps' assertion that aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment. Worringer explained such an approach to viewing art as being based only on naturalism.[5] Worringer criticises Lipps' theory of objectified self-enjoyment:

> This theory of empathy leaves us helpless in the face of the artistic creations of
> many ages and peoples. It is of no assistance to us, for instance, in the

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understanding of that vast complex of works of art that pass beyond the narrow framework of Graeco-Roman and modern Occidental art. (Worringer 1908: 8)

Despite Worringer's critique, because the empathic experience of the viewer is most significant in this dissertation, it is necessary to elaborate on aspects of the theory of empathy as defined by Lipps. He makes more of that aspect of the dialogue between art and spectator than does Worringer. Lipps, using the first person to describe the response of the viewer to an object, elaborates thus:

> The more I give myself to the object, the more also have I submitted myself to the stimulus, and the more deeply I am absorbed by the activity evoked in me ... It may be described as sympathy, and in fact positive empathy may also be called sympathetic empathy. Negative empathy, on the other hand, is the experience of a stimulus hostile to me, directed against me. (Lipps 1905: 408)

For Lipps *'Einfühlung'* means the feeling the viewer experiences when he gives himself up wholly to what has been represented in the sense of sharing in what is represented in the work of art. The concept of linking positive empathy with beauty and negative empathy with ugliness is crucial to Lipps' argument:

> Only in so far as this empathy exists, are forms beautiful ... . Conversely, form is ugly when I am unable to do this, when I feel myself inwardly unfree,

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inhibited, subjected to constraint in the form, or in its contemplation. (Lipps 1905: 7)

Lipps therefore, places himself in the role of viewer rather than creator when he talks about his responses to an object, and it is the viewer's response to images which is emphasised in this dissertation. The division of the empathic experience into a positive and negative response is an important aspect of my definition of empathy; a spectator may be drawn to or repulsed by the image, both of which reactions constitute an empathic response. In this sense, my concept of empathy coincides with Lipps' definition, but not as a criterion of beauty and ugliness. Rather, I borrow his terminology to describe a range of empathic responses to an image, moving from what Lipps terms 'sympathetic' empathy to the revulsion and distaste of negative empathy. Worringer's emphasis on artistic volition and the artist's impulse towards abstraction or empathy, in contrast to Lipps' viewer-orientated concept of empathy, will have little bearing on the discussion. However, Worringer's concept of naturalism will be referred to later.

The reason for my decision to reinterpret Lipps' version of the criteria for positive (beautiful) and negative (ugly) aesthetic experiences is that the paradoxical nature of these contrasting categories is innate to the concept of empathy in this dissertation. According to

Karl Morrison, the method of associating ideas underlies the concept of participation, and by making ugly and beautiful mutually exclusive terms of difference, he notes that many critics brushed aside their potential to be used as terms of association. Morrison refers pointedly to Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), who, he maintains does just this when he reduces beautiful and ugly to mutually exclusive terms of contrast. Morrison argues that Croce, in following David Hume's (1711-1776) substitution of causal relations for contrast, in Hume's argument about the nature of knowledge, states that all inferences from the existence of one object to another are non-demonstrative and based on the relation of cause and effect (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 1967:74-90).[6] To speak of causes and effects is to speak of action, of a relationship that an outside observer can detect between an agent and something acted upon (Morrison 1988).[7] However, contrast, as Morrison points out, is an empirical category, and when it is used to associate and to combine, it transcends experience:

> In theories of the sublime, or of the manifestation of beauty in ugliness, and in rituals of exaltation reversed into death or of abasement reversed into life, contrast is not an act but a state, not a phenomenon but a process, not a calculated antithesis, but an innate sympathy. (Morrison 1988: 38)

The concepts of negative and positive empathy which will be used as terms of association, that is, an 'innate sympathy' between a positive and negative empathic experience, can be a

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fruitful area of research, because both require the viewer to project his personality onto the object of contemplation. Empathy then can imply both the positive and negative empathic response from now on.

The projection of one's personality into an image/object, in the process of an empathic experience, automatically includes the viewer's experiences and memories in the course of that act. The acknowledgement of the importance of the historicity of the viewer and the multitude of interpretations individuals bring to the viewing of images conforms to what Bryson, Holly and Moxey term the 'interventionist' method of art interpretation. They suggest that there are two possible approaches to art. Either the work of art cannot be grounded in perception or in the phenomenological experience of the world but is wholly defined by its historical conditions of origin and reception. This is the 'interventionist approach'.[8] Or, a different view is that art interpretation is independent of issues of historical variation. Then there is an emphasis on the perceptual and/or phenomenological assumptions shared by all human beings, as a means of approaching visual representation. This is termed the perceptualist approach (Bryson et al.1991: 1). The terms formulated by Bryson, Holly and Moxey, articulate the main issues of visual interpretation relevant to my own hypothesis about empathic viewing of art works, namely that the viewer, by projecting

his personality into the object of contemplation, inevitably recalls his own memories and experiences in doing so.

Perceptualists such as Ernst Gombrich and Richard Wollheim, who emphasise the visual experience and the inward perceptual activity of viewing art, consider that the shared experience of reality plays a qualifying role in the interpretation of images.[9] Wollheim holds that:

> The spectator's experience is irrelevant to the understanding of the picture if it comes about solely through hearsay, or through having independent knowledge of what the artist intended. Of course, such knowledge can ... serve as background information in shaping or forming how the spectator sees the painting. But ... it oversteps its legitimate role when it leads the spectator to see or think things about the painting that he does not see when he looks at it. (Wollheim 1991: 102)

I, however, have chosen to place greater emphasis on the psychological base from which the viewer proceeds in the interpretation of images.

The concept of empathy includes the projection of one's personality onto an object and therefore the ideas, memories and beliefs of that individual rather than the purely aesthetic

experience of the object must be considered. In terms of the interventionist approach to visual interpretation and the empathic experience, allowance is made for the social background and beliefs of the viewer to be a significant factor in interpretation. According to Bryson, image-making and viewing which are described as happening entirely in terms of secret and private events, perceptions and sensations occurring in invisible recesses of the painters and viewers mind, are not as valid when applying the concept of empathy with its reliance on the memories and experiences of the viewer. Refuting the perceptualists arguments, Bryson argues that:

> My ability to recognize an image neither involves, *nor makes necessary inference towards*, the isolated perceptual field of the image's creator. It is, rather, an ability which presupposes competence within social, that is, socially constructed codes of recognition. And the crucial difference between the term 'perception' and the term 'recognition' is that the latter is *social*.(Bryson et al. 1991a: 65)

Further criticism of the perceptualist/formalist approach to viewing art is echoed by the critic Peter Fuller. Fuller points out that there is a strong connection between socially shared

symbolic orders and the creation of a work of art. When there is a break in this connection the result is deaestheticised work:

> For I have always argued that if there is a continuity between human aesthetic experience and 'natural' (or biological) life, there is also a rupture: and this has much to do with man's unique capacity for the elaboration of socially shared symbolic orders, for *culture* ... But the waning of religious belief dismantled the socially shared symbolic order; and the rise of industrial production deaestheticised work itself. (Fuller 1985: 10)

Emphasis on the social aspects of man's individuality is echoed by the art historian Ernst Fischer, who points out that man desires to be more than an individual in the pursuit of wholeness:

> He feels that he can attain wholeness only if he takes possession of the experiences of others that might potentially be his own. (Fischer 1963: 8)

Fischer elaborates his theory with the statement that art is the indispensable means for merging the individual with the whole, as it reflects his infinite capacity for association and the sharing of experiences and ideas (Fischer 1963: 8). Both Fuller and Fisher underscore the socially shared aspects of art production with its emphasis on communication. In the light of Bryson's statements it seems that the work of art should go beyond perceptualist ocular

sensations and engage the viewer on an intellectual level. As a member of society, the viewer should be able to engage in a meaningful mental dialogue about the experience of others, through the medium of art.

The tendency to give value to the interpretative confrontation between the spectator and a work of art, is the criterion of Linda Nochlin's approach to visual interpretation. Nochlin states that the ideological character inherent in images becomes an important issue in the viewing of art, as the work of art becomes subject to new interpretations, depending on the viewer and the work's place in space and time (Nochlin 1991: 1-43).[10] For Nochlin there is no unchanging or eternal essence of art because art of the past must always be subject to reinterpretation. Interpretation by the viewer is dependent on the ideas and outlook of the viewer. The relationship of the viewer and the image becomes interwoven and complex as the work of art takes on multiple meanings depending on who is viewing it (Nochlin 1991: 2).

Bryson and his fellow critics' emphasis on socially constructed codes, Fuller's references to socially shared symbolic orders, Fischer's concept of man's search for wholeness through the possession of the experiences of others, and Nochlin's emphasis on the viewer's ideas, all

have one point in common: credence to the socially constructed nature of the human experience is important. Interest in humanity forms the basis of the experience of empathy.[11] Without the ability to project one's feelings beyond the boundaries of self, the empathic experience must cease to operate. Empathy is socially constructed. The emphasis on social issues rather than aesthetic ones, conforms to the interventionist regard for historical influences.

Thus far, the emphasis has been on the viewer's experience of the image. However, artistic intention plays an important role in facilitating interpretation of the image. Representational painting requires a set of interpretative criteria different to those needed for abstract painting, and it would be difficult, for instance, to discuss ideological issues in a painting by Mark Rothko (1903-1970), although one could perhaps discuss the ideological milieu in which these abstract paintings were made.[12] It could be said that the artistic intentions of the artist determine the style and imagery the artist chooses. To create a particular and, from his point of view, desired, response in the viewer, the artist manipulates the style and imagery at his disposal in terms of what he imagines will stimulate the viewer to a predetermined reaction. For Eric Fischl, a Canadian artist living in America, the movement away from abstraction

to representation was an important one for communicating with an audience. In an interview with Constance Glenn, Fischl says:

> I gave up abstraction when I realized that I had accumulated a truckload of private meanings, private paintings ... . My desire was to definitely put the narrative before the formal. In fact, the thing that I set out to do was to try to put my work in the centre of people's lives. (Glenn & Barnes 1986: 12)

It is through the use of representation that the artist speaks a common language with a viewer versed in that communal reality. Adhering to an interventionist approach to viewing art, Bryson echoes this view when he says:

> And when people look at representational painting and recognize what they see, their recognition does not unfold in the solitary recesses of the sensorium but through their activation of codes of recognition that are learnt by interaction with others, in the acquisition of human culture. (Bryson et al. 1991a: 65)

To communicate a message to the audience and to emphasise spectator experience, rather than the artist's private meanings of the work of art, is a reaction against the formalist concerns of Modernism which culminated in a proliferation of highly esoteric works of art.[13] The Post-Modernist swing towards communicating an idea to the audience has, perhaps led to the prominence of art critics like Fuller and Bryson, who through their writings have encouraged

a movement towards symbolisation, imaginative metamorphosis and representation. Gablik expands this idea when she exhorts the reader to look at art once again in terms of purpose rather than style. This is one of the means of transforming personal vision into social responsibility (Gablik 1984: 128). The emphasis on purpose and social responsibility in art, inevitably invites spectator involvement and participation in the work of art.[14]

According to the sociologist Raymond Williams, everyone of us has to learn to see. The growth of every human being is a slow process of learning the 'rules of seeing', within a given cultural context. Without these rules we could not in any ordinary sense see the world around us. There is no reality to which we merely open our eyes. The information that we receive through our senses has to be interpreted according to certain human values before what we ordinarily call 'reality' forms (Williams 1975: 140).[15]

If there is a dialogue between human understanding and the reality interpreted, and it is a mutually developing interaction, then it should be possible for artist and spectator to rely on the mutuality of their hermeneutic. But to reach a consensus on the explication of some

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images and their contexts, more is required of both artist and spectator. Georgie Warnke commenting on Hans-Georg Gadamer's account of knowledge says:

> We never come upon situations, issues or facts without already placing them within some context, connecting them with some other situations, issues or facts and, in short interpreting them in one way or another. The parameters of these interpretations moreover, derive from our circumstances and experiences [which are] ... already informed by the history of the society and culture to which we belong. (Warnke 1987: 168)

What the artist does, then, is to consider the parameters of the spectator's possible interpretative field when he prepares the work of art for an empathic reading by the spectator. If, as Bryson says, that in place of:

> ... the transcendental comparison between the image and perceptual private worlds, stand the socially generated codes of recognition ... . The social formation isn't, then, something which supervenes or appropriates or utilises the image so to speak *after* it has been made: rather painting, as an activity of the sign, unfolds within the social formation from the beginning. (Bryson 1991a: 65)

So the artist builds into his work the means by which he can use the influential factors of social formation to reach his spectator, provoke an empathic response and fulfil the obligation he has as a Post-Modern artist who undertakes his social responsibilities. An approach to

viewing and interpreting an art object in such a way is directly opposed to a perceptualist interpretation and can result in the marginalisation of the artist in society. The idea of viewing and painting as being simply inward perceptual activities, can fail to emphasise the interdependence of the artist and audience, and the necessity of abiding by and utilising a common set of visual communication rules. The art object which does not reflect the interpreter's social context is regarded as being superficial.

Conversely, when painting is seen as an art of the sign, there is no marginalisation of art or artist, because painting becomes part of the same circulation of signs which permeates the rest of the social structure (Bryson 1991a: 66). Perceptualist responses to art make ocular accuracy a significant factor; other dimensions in the interpretation and significance of the work of art can then be lacking. Consequently art can become part of the banality of culture, a trivial occupation for the artist who is not integrated into the society within which he operates. Whereas in earlier centuries in the western tradition of culture the artist was assured of a privileged position in his society because of the connection between the sacred and art (and the sacred was at the heart of the social fabric), a secular and technocratic society has no use for the divine 'furor' of the artist or the notion of his being like God, a second 'creator'.[16]

However, as has been pointed out, the artist can never be sure that what he is attempting to say in the work is being communicated to the viewer in the way intended. The artist may hope to provoke the audience into empathising with the image, that is, the viewer should find a point of connection, either intellectually or emotionally with the image, and want to explore futher, wonder or mull over what he has seen and experienced. It is this point of connection that is a prime consideration in my work. As the creator I am always aware of the spectator's need to interpret, and I attempt to create the possibilities for an empathic experience with the images in the paintings, through the use of certain compositional, iconographic and spatial devices. My awareness of the endless possibilities of interpretation by the spectator when looking at my paintings, allows my work to be placed in the interventionst philosophical camp when interpreting the meaning of the paintings.

During the creative process, my position as creator is determined by my response as a viewer, along with the self-critical response of an artist, who has to deal with formal issues in the painting. My position as an artist and viewer is an organic one, as I have constantly to exchange points of view during the creation of my work in pursuit of my aim to create an empathic response in potential viewers.

In the study of interpretation or hermeneutics, thinkers attempt, among other things, to come to grips with the question of whether there can be in principle, a 'correct' interpretation of the text or image. Those like Eric Hirsch believe that there is not only the possibility of valid interpretation, but even more importantly of correct interpretation. He maintains that there is a 'correct' interpretation, which is the job of literary scholarship to attain (Hirsch 1976: 98). Gadamer contests this view on the grounds that understanding is always from the point of view of the person who understands (Gadamer 1975: 100). He claims that one's own present and historicity invariably enter the hermeneutic act and therefore colour the understanding itself. He refers to interpretation as a 'fusion of horizons', the horizons of past and present, of author and reader. This is because the consciousness of the contemporary reader or historian is itself historical, grounded in time. He makes the important observation that prejudices are not necessarily unjustified and erroneous. They do not inevitably distort the truth. Rather, the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience.

To put it another way, he sees prejudices as conditions of understanding. There are prejudices which are conditions but there are also false judgements. A good historian will make these prejudices conscious; he will also remain open to the past or the text, allowing

for the possibility of the initial prejudices to be modified by what is actually contained in the text.

By the same token I would like to argue that an artist or author cannot predict if the audience will understand the so-called meaning of a text or image, were such a thing as an original meaning to exist. The historicity of the viewer or interpreter stands as a barrier in all interpretative activity to a 'correct' interpretation. If, however, the artist is content to allow the viewer the opportunity of an empathic response, he and the viewer are enabled to enter into a fruitful dialogue. It would be presumptuous to expect a text or image to radically transform or alter the viewer's perception of the world in a historical vacuum.

But the intention, not only of communicating, but also of affecting the audience at whom the work of art is directed, is one of the ways open for the artist to preclude his own marginalisation in society and more especially that of his work. By participating in, and using the system of signs shared by viewers and artists, the work of art can become central to the community's cultural life. Such is the intention of Fischl who makes it a central tenet of his philosophy: he wanted to put his work back into the centre of people's lives. He did this by shifting from abstraction to representation. That is, he chose a painting style which

can be interpreted according to a shared system of signs, to communicate his particular view of reality (Glenn & Barnes 1986: 12). In my paintings I have chosen to use a representational style for similar reasons.

The use of representation in art itself, incorporates a myriad styles of painting. The paleolithic bison at Lascaux, the stylized figures on Greek amphoras, Christian icons, Persian miniatures and Chinese woodcuts all fall within the broad category of 'representational' art. Given the plethora of stylistic, cultural expressions and the impossibility of categorising them, it might be more profitable to define the type of audience targeted by the artist when using a representational style in a particular way. In terms of the interventionist approach to viewing art, interpretation depends upon the historicity of the viewer. It would be impossible, therefore, for an artist to attempt to create viewer-centred art for every possible cultural type. Such an artist, with his or her own historicity, could therefore use the visual codes which are known to be easily read by viewers from his own society. It also follows that interventionist artists have the possibilities of creating images that either conform to or reject the visual traditions of their own societies.

In the Western painting tradition of the last one hundred years, representational painting ranges in style from naturalistic to impressionist, expressionistic distortion to photo-realistic. The Impressionists, Symbolists, Expressionists, Pop artists, some Surrealists and Photo-Realists, all use the representational mode very differently. A spectator of any work of art might understandably have difficulty in reading the text of an artwork of the twentieth century because his presumed knowledge of the encoded messages in the representational works of art is continually modified in each successive revision of these codes by artists. Bearing this in mind, any attempt to outline the characteristics of a representational style that would perhaps facilitate greater audience empathy must result in a necessarily unsatisfactory definition.

Some elements used in the construction and making of paintings serve to draw the viewer into the painting. One could posit the thesis that the represented image's similarity to the viewer's perception of reality would encourage him to pay attention to the work of art. One of these elements would be the creation of an illusionistic three-dimensional space on a flat painting surface which could create an illusion of reality as known and understood by the viewer.

Another means of ensuring the viewer's participation in the artist's perception of reality would be to represent images from his world in a way that would coincide with the viewer's own experience. This does not necessarily mean that images have to be painted in the Photo-Realist style of Audrey Flack (1931-) or with the icy clarity of Neo-Classicists like David (1748-1825).[17] Instead, it is easier to describe what images should not look like. Extreme distortion, for example, through the use of line and colour, may serve to alienate the unenlightened viewer, rather than involve him in the drama of the painting. Therefore the use of representation, and the manipulation of imagery, composition and space, may or may not heighten the impact of the painting on the viewer's consciousness. It is only when the viewer's attention is aroused, that the potential to empathise with or to reject the image is possible.

Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' becomess relevant to my argument here. In order to facilitate a fusion of horizons of viewer and artist, I have chosen to paint humans interacting with each other or with various symbolic or utilitarian objects, from a contemporary milieu, in a style which is recognisable to the viewer as representational, and by using images that he could relate to because of their contemporaneity.

However, the creation of representational images, showing scenes from the viewer's milieu, is not necessarily enough to create feelings of empathy in the viewer. The viewer may look upon such a scene without any interest or involvement in the same way that he may disinterestedly view any passing scene in the street. In order that the viewer become psychologically involved with the image, one consideration is that the viewer become intrigued by the sense of drama in the image. When the drama is clothed in the contemporary clichés of consumerism, the viewer is more easily drawn into the work.

The open-ended and dramatically interrupted scenes painted by Fischl give the viewer the impression that he has tuned in to a moment of drama, almost like viewing a soap opera on television. Klaus Honnef remarks that:

> ... Fischl sets the stage in each painting as if it were a dramatic theatre play, with heavy shadows and plenty of contrast ... . The world has become a stage where people act out their role with an attitude of excessive self-love and exhibitionism, not cheerfully but as if there were nothing they could do to forestall the impending disaster. (Honnef 1986: 189)

Charles Jencks, the Post-Modern commentator, notes that there is a media style in Fischl's work. This can be seen in his use of conventional images together with psychological detail that enhances the soap operatic quality of the painting. Fischl's figures are frozen in action

in the middle of provocative situations, rather like stills from film clippings. In **Bad Boy** (1987 fig. 12) the viewer is forced to observe a scene from over the shoulder of the boy in the image. In this way, the viewer becomes an accomplice, who with the boy, looks on at the woman lying on the bed with her legs splayed apart.[18] The feeling of an interrupted drama is suggested by the sense of mystery evoked in the viewer and the curiosity aroused by the strangeness of the image. The viewer is possibly forced to wonder what the protagonists in the image are going to do (Jencks 1987: 89).

I have attempted to create in my work a dramatic quality, which by its suggestion of unfinished narrative, intrigues and involves the viewer psychologically with the image. An example of this can be seen in in my painting **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1) where the image of the tiny naked dancing men juxtaposed with the image of myself crawling along a table, is meant to provoke that same sense of an ongoing drama. The actions of the protagonists in the painting are not very clear and this is where there is a sense of mystery. By not providing a visual explanation, the work intrigues the viewer.

In my painting **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2), the weeping face of the kneeling figure in the foreground is contrasted with the smiling faces on the crockery. The men in the background

are smashing the crockery and a figure of a naked woman lies prone on the table. It is images like these, with their open-ended narrative quality, that require the viewer to interpret them according to his own experiences. The faces on the crockery and the figures are self-portraits. The use of my face alludes to the personal yet universal quality of the experiences in the images. The self-portraits, therefore, become both a visual and metaphorical allusion to the creative and therefore, metamorphosing self.

It is important that my paintings created in the **Table Series** (1989-1992), are interpreted and understood within the context of an interventionist approach to viewing the images. Because the ideas, morals, memories and experiences of the viewer are seen here as being important in the interpretation of the paintings, it is logical to assume that this emotional and psychological involvement with the image will create either a negative or positive empathic response in the viewer.

The photographs of the American photographer Cindy Sherman exhibit the dramatic quality that provokes the viewer to question what the image is about. The resultant mental dialogue

is important in involving the viewer more closely with the image. In an interview with Sandy Nairne she states her intentions about the images she chooses in her work:

> I'm trying to give a lot of elements or clues that a viewer can pick up on, and whether they will relate to the lighting or the costume, or the character, or the mood of the picture, hopefully it will spark something in their subconscious.

> I was trying to make a content that was more alluring, but then as soon as you looked at it, it would kind of bite you back like something that would make you feel guilty for feeling that way ... . (Nairne 1987: 132)

The emphasis on communicating with the spectator through representational images can be seen in the work of the Portugese artist Paula Rego, who lives and works in Britain. Rego stated about her work that her paintings are stories and not narratives in that they have no past or future. For Rego, the viewers must draw their own conclusions about the narrative (Paula Rego 1988: 48). Her emphasis on story telling and her reliance on the audience to interpret her work indicates an interest in communicating with an audience. From the above it is clear that Sherman and Rego are aware of the type of reaction they want to try and elicit from the viewer. Sherman's use of the words 'alluring' and 'bites back', indicates that she would like the viewer to react in a certain way and gain a specific type of experience when viewing her work. In order to allow the viewer to respond to her images she uses certain

devices which relate to their experiences. These include sexual stereotypes drawn from the media of movies and television. By deliberately using recognisable images in a certain way, Sherman attempts to create an empathic response between the viewer and the image.

In her **Untitled # 90** (1981 fig. 3), she uses a high viewpoint in her close-up of a girl in a demure blouse. The anxious face of the perspiring girl, contrasts strangely with the prudish skirt and blouse. The viewer is perhaps forced to speculate about the image and so this psychological involvement is important in establishing an empathic response to the image.[19]

The reliance on spectator participation for the extraction of levels of meaning in Sherman's work, correlates with the interventionist approach to interpreting images. She parodies well-known film stills in order to comment on stereotypical images of women in the media. It is her reliance on the existing knowledge of the spectator which allows her photographs to operate on levels beyond the image itself.

Another device that would perhaps draw the viewer into the image is the use of indeterminate, private spaces, where there are only one or two protagonists. Most of the paintings and photographs discussed so far either take place in darkly lit spaces or

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unstructured spaces, where the viewer is unsure of the spatial orientation of the subjects in the picture. For example, in **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1) and **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) there are no more than four protagonists in the painting, which heightens the feelings of privacy and mystery in the viewer.

In this Chapter, I have outlined the various theoretical approaches to viewing and interpreting art in order to clarify my own standpoint. In the following Chapters, these ideas will be elaborated upon.

ENDNOTES

1. E Titchener, an Englishman who represented the German tradition in America, is credited with first using the term 'empathy' in English as a translation of the German word *'Einfühlung'*. Titchener outlined for American readers the theories of Lipps who envisioned a state of aesthetic empathy in which the perceiver loses self-awareness as his identity becomes fused with the object he is observing (Boring 1957: 12).

2. Lipps first used the term *'Einfühlung'* in a paper titled 'Empathy and aesthetic pleasure' published in *Die zunkunft* vol. LIV (1905). A translation of this article by Karl Aschenbrenner in *Aesthetic theories: studies in the philosophy of art*, edited by Aschenbrenner and Isenberg (1965) was used for this dissertation. The sections on

Lipps that were quoted by Worringer in his treatise *Abstraction and empathy: towards a psychology of style* (1908), were translated by Michael Bullock (1948). Worringer's treatise *Abstraction and empathy* was translated by Bullock in 1948. So Worringer's remarks and Lipps are mediated through a translation.

3. Worringer first published his dissertation *'Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie'* in 1908. It turned out to be one of the most influential documents in art theory of the new century, as it offered an aesthetic and psychological foundation for the new approach by which modern art was about to proceed (Arnheim 1986: 50).

4. The term 'abstraction' will refer to paintings where the colours, shapes, lines and textures create configurations not found in the real world. Spectators of such images would not be able to identify the images by any name, although they might be reminded of similar things found in the world. The term will be used to describe the non-objective abstraction of Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Mondrian (1872-1944), where there is no reference at all to the object. This is in contrast to the abstraction of Picasso (1881-1973) and Braque (1882-1963) in Cubism where there is almost always a reference to the real world, even in the Hermetic phase (1911), where they present letters and words to remind the spectator of the connection between the painting and external reality. The term 'naturalism' will refer to images in painting that imitate those found in nature. Worringer saw the urge to abstraction manifesting itself in the art of Indo-Germanic art, some periods of Egyptian art, early Hellenic art, African art, late Roman, early Christian art and some Oriental art. At the same time the tendency towards an empathic relationship to one's environment could be seen, for example, in the naturalism of Classical Greece and the Italian Renaissance (Worringer 1908).

5. The term 'naturalism' refers to images in painting that imitate those found in nature. Worringer differentiates between naturalism and purely imitative art. According to him, naturalism is the approximation of the organic and true to life because the artist, in the course of his empathy with nature, attempts to give satisfaction to this feeling and so creates something which he sees as being organically alive rather than merely copied (Worringer 1908: 27).

6. See 'Hume' in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1967: 74-90), vol. 4.

7. Hume showed that all inferences from the existence of one object to another are not even directly demonstrative, for neither any specific causal relation, nor the proposition that every event has a cause, nor even the claim that the unobserved resembles the observed, can be known either by intuition or demonstration. (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 1967: 80).

8. Bryson, Moxey and Holly collated lectures delivered in their book *Visual theory: painting and interpretation*, (1991). Bryson in his article 'Semiology and visual representation' presents a strong case for the interventionist viewpoint. He stresses (echoing Moxey) the importance of cultural attitudes in the development of a work of art. Socially constructed meanings in language are considered important (Bryson et al. 1991: 12). Although the three critics make it clear that the reader decide about the role of language and art as a conveyor of socially constructed meanings, it seems that they favour the interventionist approach to visual interpretation which is expounded in this dissertation.

9. An example of the importance of viewer interpretation is made in Charles Bernheimer's essay 'The uncanny lure of Manet's Olympia' (1989), where Bernheimer points out the importance of understanding the complex symbolism in the picture. He writes in detail about the signification of the negress with lasciviousness and the cat's association with erectile tissue, both male and female. He notes that by interpreting the dark female figure in purely formalist and perceptualist terms, the controversial aspects of the image are lost to the viewer. He says, ' So the black maid is not, as Zola and the formalists would have it, simply a darkly colored counterpart to Olympia's whiteness. In 1865 she may well have aroused in many male viewer's the fantasy of a dark, threatening, anomalous sexuality lurking just underneath Olympia's hand' (Bernheimer 1989: 23). By applying an interventionist approach to visual analysis the richness of the original meaning enhances one's experience of the image. The nude Olympia, however, provoked stronger empathic responses when she was first displayed. Because of the historical clues in the image alluding to fashion of the time, her hairstyle and choker, a contemporary male viewer would probably not react as negatively as men did at the time because of an inability to 'read' the clues in the image. They also have been exposed to far more daring poses in the media. Aspects of nudity and fashion are discussed in Chapter 5.

10. In her essay 'Women, Art and Power' Nochlin emphasises that one of the most urgent functions of patriarchal ideology is to mask the power relationships that structure society, in an effort to make them appear natural and eternally true. She points out that women are represented in art in a way that uphholds assumptions about man's superiority and power over women (Nochlin 1991: 1). It is Nochlin's concern with feminist issues and emphasis on political issues in the interpretation of images that places her firmly in the interventionist 'camp'.

11. Referring to the philosophy of Brecht (1898-1956), Fischer discusses an alternative to creating an empathic response in the audience. He says: 'The work of art must grip the audience not through passive identification but through an appeal to reason which demands action and decision ... so as to make the spectator do something more productive than merely watch ...' (Fischer 1963: 10). Fischer refers to Brecht's desire to subvert the audience's expectations by destroying traditional art forms and forcing new interpretations on the viewer. The result could be in alienation or disinterest in the viewer, rather than action and decisiveness.

12. Rothko's preoccupation with the demands of paint on canvas in conjunction with the emphasis on self-expression, led to to the creation of a coextensive figure and field, common in Abstract Expressionism. The flattening out of space and the rejection of figure-ground relationships is the antithesis of representational styles of painting. For, whatever style of painting is depicted in a representational image, the figure always remains seperate from its ground. The creation of indeterminate background spaces as a means of creating an atmosphere of intimacy in my paintings, is an important aspect of this dissertation yet it is inferred from my emphasis on figure-ground relationships that the abstract spaces of Rothko do not effect the viewer in the same way. According to Rosenblum, '... Rothko evolved the archetypal statement of his abstract paintings - those hovering tiers of dense atmospheric colour or darkness - from a landscape imagery of mythic, cosmological character ...' (Rosenblum 1975: 213). Rosenblum's realisation that there is an atmosphere in Rothko's paintings and spiritual overtones points to the 'ability' of abstract images to arouse associations in the viewer. However, the use of abstraction as metaphor to provoke associations, is different to the more direct effect of the empathic experience of an image on the viewer.

13. The emphasis on the purely formal aspects of painting which had it's seeds in the nineteenth century Impressionist movement and later the paintings of Seurat, Cezanne, the Cubists and Constructivists, was upheld in the nineteen sixties by Clement Greenberg and others. The American critic vigorously promoted the formal and materialist notions of painting to the detriment of issues such as symbolism, meaning and iconography. The Post-Modern reaction against Modernist formal concerns manifested itself in a return to representation and autobiographical paintings in the seventies and eighties by artists in North America and Europe.

14. The type of social responsibility seen in the feminist work of Jenny Holzer (1950-) and Barbara Kruger (1945-), may serve to alienate rather than involve the spectator. Their work, which relies on the use of language and words, tends to share the esotericism of the art ideologies they are rejecting. Refer to Chapter 4 for Rosemary Betterton's remarks about the effects of modernist art forms on the viewer.

15. Expanding on the issue of acquiring knowledge and language, Fischer assumes that there was a connection between the development of language and the creation of tools and work. Whereas animals have little to communicate to each other, it is only through work that living beings have much to say to one another. 'Language came into being together with tools'(Fischer 1963: 23). The emphasis on the communal aspect of work, highlights the importance of the social construction of communication for the continued existence and development of society. It is through the creation of empathy that the dialogic nature of visual communication is achieved and personal or social transformation is able to take place.

16. As a mechanism to ensure that art has validity in the society in which the artist works, he needs to embrace his social responsibility now without the trappings of the sacred, which are his undeniable cultural inheritance, because social reponsibility has become a legitimating consideration for the artist. It is the means by which he can wrench art from its liminal status to a central place in the cultural life of his society. In such a position the work of art can function as a medium for metamorphosis and be a valuable process of symbolisation.

17. The term 'realism' has different meanings in art. When spelled with a lower case r, it refers to a style of creating representational images as mentioned in the text. Nochlin defines Realism with a capital R, as an historical movement in painting from about 1840 until 1870-1880. Its proponents aimed to give a truthful, objective and impartial representation of the real world, based on meticulous observation of contemporary life (Nochlin 1971a: 13). Socialist Realism was the name of the officially sanctioned painting genre of Soviet Russia. With its examples of the implementation of propaganda, a part of daily reality through the means of art, the possibility of a didactic use of the shared codes of perception is revealed. See Conclusion, footnote 7, for a description of an example of Social Realist art.

18. The media style of Fischl relates to pornography as well as television. In **Bad Boy** (1987 fig. 12), the women on the bed seems to be based upon the type of pose popular in pornographic magazines. The matter-of-fact presentation of the women subverts the emotive language of pornography.

19. Empathic responses to some of Sherman's photographs rely heavily on the spectator's recognition of the mildly erotic film stills often used to advertise movies. According to Lucie-Smith the untitled self-portraits can be seen as an implied critique of conventional depictions of women as stereotypical sex objects (Lucie-Smith 1991: 261). The psychological content of Sherman's self-portraits in different guises, becomes especially important in Johnson's article 'Cindy Sherman and the anti-self: an interpretation of her imagery'. He sees a long-term development in her work ranging from an early charting of her sub-conscious of her film stills to a descent into neurotic disordered personalities, and finally the collapse of sanity evident in her 'animal' self-portraits (Johnson 1987: 47-53).

CHAPTER TWO

VOYEURISM AND THE FLÂNEUR

The artist's shared system of signs is important for communicating with the viewer but it does not necessarily provoke a strong empathic response. Unless the artist consciously attempts to create Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons', the viewer's experience of the work of art may be marginalised. A painting of a horse for example, will provoke a different empathic response in different viewers, depending on the historicity of the viewer. A horserider or breeder is more likely to respond positively to the image than a disinterested onlooker. On the other hand, the human form is of wider interest to potential viewers because of the inherent familiarity of its appearance. Everyone has a body which interacts with other bodies. The human form is therefore able to provoke empathic responses in the viewer, ranging from the mildly interested to a strong negative or positive response to the image.

One of the ways that an image may evoke feelings of empathy, is by the placing of the viewer in the position of voyeur.[1] That is, the image and the compositional devices in the painting should create a feeling that the viewer is looking in on a private world. Ann Kaplan

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expands on this definition. She sees the voyeur as the proverbial Peeping Tom, the man who achieves sexual arousal while secretly viewing a half-dressed, undressed or undressing woman. She notes that in no way does the voyeur try to accost or alert the woman to his presence. The typical voyeuristic scenario requires that the woman be unaware she is being watched. She says:

> Voyeurs prefer to masturbate while watching one or more women undress or masturbate or have sexual intercourse, than to themselves engage in sexual intercourse. (Kaplan 1991: 30)

From the above it is clear that the voyeur is the passive participant in sexual pleasures which he experiences vicariously through the observation of sexual activity. Laura Mulvey in her essay 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', refers to voyeurism as a type of scopophilia, that is, taking other people as objects and subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze (Mulvey 1975: 363).[2] Such scopophilic pleasure of looking at other people is an integral part of the voyeuristic experience. Therefore the scopophilic pleasure experienced by the voyeur is the viewing of the human form performing sexually. One could surmise from this, that if one gains pleasure from looking at the human form, one will empathise more strongly with images depicting the human body.

The pleasure of viewing people need not necessarily apply to only the voyeur. In opposition to the private and sexually-orientated world of the voyeur, is the public world of the flâneur. According to Griselda Pollock (1988: 67), the flâneur is the impassive stroller who moves about public arenas of the city, observing but never interacting. She distinguishes between the public spaces frequented by the flâneur and the private spaces inhabited by women as evident in the paintings of Berthe Morisot (1841- 1895) and Mary Cassatt (1844-1926).[3] Robert Herbert gives a wider account of the activities and psychology of the flâneur:

> The flâneur promenaded on the boulevards where he displayed himself while reconnoitring all that went on ... . The flâneur's apparently idle strolling was the essence of his character, for he guarded his freedom of action (in an interior such as a salon or restaurant he could be pinned down), while looking around so keenly that he was the best-informed person in Paris ... . Aloof from direct involvement, always detached and unruffled, the flâneur rather consciously emulated the British aristocrat and gentleman. (Herbert 1988: 34)

Both the voyeur and flâneur take pleasure in viewing activities of other people. However, the flâneur's arena of activities is public places, in contrast to the private and illicit activities of the voyeur.[4]

It is this contrast of public and private areas and activities that, by implication, defines the psychological processes that take place during the scopophilic activities of the voyeur and

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flâneur. Because the flâneur's viewing occurs in public, there is nothing shameful or illicit about his activities. Therefore, the gaze of the flâneur, although curious and intense, will not have feelings of shame and secrecy that characterise the gaze of the voyeur. The flâneur, absorbed in a matrix of public sights, approaches his subject differently to the voyeur. Because the scenes in front of him are diverse and complex, his gaze may tend to be more precursory and haphazard than that of the voyeur, who concentrates on a specific, isolated and private event. The voyeur will have manoeuvred himself into a position for the purpose of watching a private act, therefore his gaze is likely to be more anticipatory, curious, attentive and calculated, than that of the flâneur who is watching the passing show.[5]

The impression of viewing an image as if it were a scene such as that viewed by a voyeur can be created through the use of specific compositional, spatial and iconographical devices. One such device is the enveloping of the viewer/voyeur in darkness. Mulvey notes that the experience of cinema, with its dark environment recreates the possibility of voyeuristic viewing. The cinema isolates the viewers from each other, and its narrative conventions give spectators the illusion that they are looking in on a private world. She points out the conventions of filming the human form.

Scale, space, stories are all anthropomorphic. Here, curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the person in the world. (Mulvey 1975: 365)

She notes that the camera becomes the mechanism for producing the illusion of Renaissance space, flowing movement compatible with the human eye, an ideology of representation that evolves around the perception of the subject. The camera creates a convincing world in which the spectator's surrogate can perform with verisimilitude (Mulvey 1975: 367).[6]

The same conditions for voyeuristic viewing may be applied to two-dimensional images. The viewer of an image may feel as if he is looking onto a private world, like a voyeur, if the image is structured within a three-dimensional pictorial space, that is, the images should mirror the viewer's recognition of human forms in their surroundings. According to Arnheim, whenever a viewer concentrates on a picture that conveys some depth, the pictorial three-dimensional space can be said to reach out of the frame and involve the viewer in its continuity (1982: 194).[7] The involvement of the spectator with the continuity of the space of the image, as well as the drama of the narrative, can be compared to Mulvey's description of the voyeuristic experience of the cinema-viewer. The involvement with the image is an

important aspect of voyeuristic viewing which heightens the viewer's identification with the image and titillates him psychologically and sexually.

Arnheim's contention that a three-dimensional space seems to 'reach out' to involve the viewer with the space of the action in the painting, may be tested on Rego's **The Cadet and his Sister** (1988 fig. 5). The avenue behind the couple seems to be a continuation of the spectator's space and disappears into the distance. This fact alone does not create the feeling that the viewer is looking on into a private world. Together with the spectator's visual projection into the space of the painting, the boundaries which surround the two figures create an impression of isolation and privacy which enhances the voyeuristic experiences of the viewer. In my painting **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1) the table has been tilted and the perspective of the columns on the wedding cake has been inverted. This creates a feeling of instability and expectancy that the food and objects on the table might land at the viewer's feet. In this way the spectator is enticed into the drama of the narrative through the means of perspective.

In **Tea Party 1** and **Tea Party 2** (1990 figs. 2 and 6) I have surrounded the action with a veil of darkness. Nothing is visible beyond the edges of the tables and in the second version, the objects on the table merge into the darkness. The apprehension of surrounding darkness is

an experience equivalent to that of an audience in a cinema, where the voyeuristic viewer is able to look on in the privacy of darkness. Although the effect of this type of cinematic experience can never be reproduced by a two-dimensional image, it is still possible to experience the darkness of psychologically-private spaces, necessary for voyeuristic viewing.

The dark background, whose spaces seem to seep beyond the picture frame and into the viewer's space, can be seen in Le Chambre (1952-1954 fig. 7) by Balthus. If one compares this painting to his earlier Nu Jouant avec un Chat (1949 fig. 8) a similarity can be noted between the subjects. Both paintings are of adolescent girls sprawled across chairs, with their heads thrown back and their legs spread apart. They are both in an interior with another figure and a cat.[8] In Le Chambre (1952-1954 fig.7) the room is bathed in darkness and the only source of light comes from a window behind a curtain which is pulled aside by a strange dwarf-like figure.[9] In Nu Jouant avec un Chat an overall bright light permeates the scene. It lacks the sense of mystery of Le Chambre. The dark private space used to evoke a sense of the mysterious, can also be seen in the work of Sherman. In her colour photographs, Untitled # 90 and Untitled # 92 (1981 figs. 3 and 9) both figures of the women seem to emerge from the surrounding darkness. Their faces and expressions are highlighted while background detail fades into darkness. Surrounding darkness as a prerequisite for heightening

the impression of privacy and mystery in the paintings, is a stratagem used in the **Table Series** of my paintings.[10]

Then perception of illusionistic spaces within which there is mimesis of the natural world seems to be an essential component of the empathic experience. Worringer states that the empathic response of the artist to his surroundings results in an urge to create naturalistic images, although not necessarily images which blindly copy the model.[11] He says:

> The need for empathy can be looked upon as a presupposition of artistic volition only where this artistic volition inclines toward the truths of organic life,that is naturalism in the higher sense. (Worringer 1908: 14)

> ... What is naturalism? The answer is: approximation to the organic and the true to life, but not because the artist desired to depict a natural object true to life in its corporeality, ... but because the feeling for the beauty of organic form that is true to life had been aroused and because the artist desired to give satisfaction to this feeling, which dominated the absolute artistic volition. (Worringer 1908: 27)

The paradoxical truth of the findings of the research done for this dissertation is that both the artist's and viewer's empathic experiences of art rely on the visual cognition of the world. For Worringer, the empathic experience of cognition results in the creation of 'organically alive' images. Conversely, according to the criteria outlined in this dissertation, the

appearance of the natural world in images is essential to the viewer's empathic experience of the work of art. In the same way that pornographic art could never be abstract as it depends upon the recognition of its forms to titillate the viewer, the representational image is essential for provoking empathic responses to its subject matter. It is in this connection between the experience of empathy and naturalism that my concept of empathy comes closest to Worringer's.

The sensitivity of the artist to the response of the viewer has already been referred to in abstracts from interviews with Rego, Fischl and Sherman. These (and other) artists produce work with the viewer's response as a guide to their choice of subject and manipulation of the image. Their concern with viewer response has made their use of naturalism and three-dimensional space inevitable. It is their use of naturalism and three-dimensional spaces in paintings that is partly responsible for voyeuristic viewing of the image.[12]

A compositional device which may enhance the impression of voyeuristic viewing and thereby arouse feelings of empathy in the viewer, is to limit the number of protagonists in the image and to place them in the foreground spaces, in a private setting. An image showing many people interferes with the sense of privacy in the picture, and by placing the action in the middleground, the artist distances the viewer, who then becomes more the objective observer

than the intimate voyeur. Privacy and a sense of voyeurism is evident in The Family (1988 fig. 10) by Rego. In the painting two girls hold a man down in order to undress him. Another girl stands watching and rubs her hands in gleeful anticipation. The composition of the figures and objects in the painting further heightens the feeling of voyeurism when looking at the image. The table in the right-hand corner is cut off by the picture edge and, by implication, moves into the viewer's space.[13] The back of one of the girls is to the viewer, who thus becomes a psychological participant in the action. As a result there is no special status accorded to the viewer who is placed in the same space as the others, on the periphery of the room. Therefore the illusionistic spaces, the intimate setting and the arrangement of objects and figures combine to create the impression that one is watching and participating psychologically in a forbidden act.

If one compares this work to an earlier painting by Rego called The Bride (1985 fig. 11), the feelings of psychological participation necessary for voyeuristic viewing are not evident. The figures are distorted, and so do not conform to the viewer's perception of reality in any way. They are arranged on top of each other against a flat background, in opposition to Arnheim's concept that pictorial three-dimensional space seems to involve the viewer in its continuity. The work is crowded with figures, negating any sense of privacy, and so does

not evoke the same empathic response that **The Family** (1988 fig. 10) does with its illusionistic space and narrative character.

In Fiscal's **Bad Boy** (1987 fig. 12) the figure of the boy has his back to the viewer; this forces the viewer to adopt an over-the-shoulder view of the woman.[14] In this way Fiscal places the viewer within an illusionary extended space, and by implication, the viewer becomes a participant and fellow voyeur with the boy in the painting.[15] The use of voyeuristic viewpoints was favoured by Degas in his paintings of females bathing. Betterton (1985: 228) notes that Degas placed his nudes in the foreground of the painting so that they filled the picture format. The result is that it is as if they are being viewed through a small aperture, like a keyhole, because parts of the figure are sometimes obscured by intruding edges.[16]

Betterton contrasts such a compositional technique with that of Valadon's paintings of females bathing. She notes that Valadon, unlike Degas, uses a more distant viewpoint which is placed artificially high on the picture plane. The effect is to flatten and to distort space so that the spectator is offered no ideal viewing position from which to look at the nude figure of the woman (Betterton 1985: 229). In Valadon's painting, **La Grande-Mére et la jeune Fille entrant dans la Baignoire** (1908 fig. 13), this type of composition is evident as the viewer

looks down upon the back of the naked woman who is placed in the middleground of the picture. In contrast, the composition of Degas' **The Tub** (1886 fig. 14) places the nude in the foreground of the drawing which allows the viewer a more intimate view of her body and her activities (Betterton 1985: 228). Betterton makes these distinctions in order to point out the voyeuristic treatment of the female nude by male artists. However, this distinction is no longer valid if one takes into account the matter-of-fact nudes done by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) and, more recently, Phillip Pearlstein (1924-).[17]

The use of figures in the foreground can be seen in my paintings **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig.2), **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1), **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig. 6) and **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig.15). The figure of the weeping woman in **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2), is intended to draw the viewer into the drama of the narrative. She is placed on the table edge and seems to totter into the spectator's space and, in this way, becomes the bridge between the viewer and the action behind her. The table is tilted forward in order to heighten the sense of violence and anxiety in the image. In **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig. 6) the figure of the woman is placed in the foreground in order to involve the viewer more closely with the drama of the action in the painting. The woman crouches in the foreground and contemplates her image in a mirror.[18] As in the paintings of Degas, apparent proximity which appears to engage the gaze of the viewer, immediately places the viewer in a more intimate relationship with the

image. This heightens the feeling of voyeurism and therefore empathy with the image. The Groom's Table (1991 fig. 1) has a figure in the foreground who seems to have crawled out of the viewer's space and into the space of the painting. The table is cut off by the picture edge, implying that it exists in the viewer's space and, by extension, gives credence to the action in the painting. In Riding Bareback (1991 fig. 15) the table surface is tilted forward, in order to create a sense of instability in the painting, as well as to give the viewer a sense that the figures and the objects are about to tumble out of the image.

My use of these compositional devices to create a psychological closeness between the viewer and the image, my exploitation of the surrounding dark spaces and the private nature of the activity, encourages the viewer to contemplate the images within the psychological orientation of a voyeur, rather than with the impersonal, precursory gaze of the flâneur. In all of these paintings there is an intense consciousness of the viewpoint and psychological attitude of the spectator. However, the use of close-up angles of the human body and the distortion of spaces as a means of heightening the viewer's involvement, are not the only requirements for spectator involvement with the actions in the image. To facilitate the audience's psychological involvement with the actions in a painting, it is necessary for them to become engrossed in the drama of the narrative. The structure of the narrative in the paintings should

not be resolved or self-evident, but should titillate the viewer so that he wonders about the outcome of a particular scene.

The establishment of a dramatic atmosphere in an image is evident when one compares Degas' **The Tub** (1886 fig. 14) with Fiscal's **Sleepwalker** (1979 fig. 16), a painting of a naked boy in a contemporary child's pool. In both paintings there is only one protagonist, yet it is the structure of Fiscal's work that begs further explanations. Instead of cropping the figure severely, he presents the entire figure isolated against the blue of the pool in the foreground of the image. The figure is of an adolescent boy masturbating in the pool.[19] It is the shocking nature of this outdoor scene and the implied ordinariness of the setting marked by the presence of the pool chairs, that provokes the viewer to speculate about this particular scenario. In **The Family** (1988 fig. 10) Rego presents the scene of women violating a man which provokes the viewer to question the outcome of such actions. Similarly, in Sherman's photographs, the scenarios she composes of women looking fearful, anxious or angry, force the viewer to question why this is so.

The introduction of more than one protagonist in a painting, adds to the feeling of suspense in dramatic narratives, because the levels of interaction in the painting become more complex and rich. In Fiscal's **Bad Boy** (1987 fig. 12), aside from the nude figure of a woman, there

is a young adolescent boy who is stealing money from her bag. The psychological involvement with the action of a painting which places the viewer in the position of voyeur, creates feelings of empathy in the viewer. So, for instance, the dramatic implications of the enigmatic activities in my **Table Series** (1989-1992), whether they be of a woman lying on a table surrounded by food with candles piercing her form, or small men cavorting naked in front of a large woman, exhort the viewer to ask what else is going on in order to solve the puzzle of the narrative. That my paintings are not self-explanatory is a purposeful move on my part. For the paintings to maintain a feeling of suspense, I had continually to re-invent the drama of the narrative for myself.

The **Table Series** (1989-1992) evolved out of a series of paintings in which I posed as the model on a patterned surface which could be carpet or tablecloth. The space on a table is private, in both a physical and a metaphorical sense. Any table-top, no matter what size, has definite limits and edges and is clearly separate from surrounding spaces. The self-contained quality of the table-top can be interpreted as a private defined space. The table itself becomes a site for private and public activities because sitting at a table or partaking of an activity around a table implies an intimacy between the participants which is contained within the space of the table. The placing of participants in the intimate space of a table forces them

into a more intimate interaction with each other. The spaces on, under or around tables came to mean a private space within the iconography of my **Table Series** (1989-1992).

Private spaces are important for the voyeuristic viewing of an image. Earlier in the Chapter I have discussed the sense of intimacy that is created in paintings through the sense of enfolding darkness, or through the limitation of the number of protagonists in the painting. However, another way in which the feeling of privacy in a painting may be enhanced, is to place the action within a private rather than a public space. For example, the protagonists could be surrounded by the walls of a room, or isolated from the outside, public world in some way. If, as in Rego's **The Cadet and his Sister** (1988 fig. 5) and in **The Departure** (1988 fig. 17) the figures are placed outdoors, there still could be a sense that the figures are in a separate and contained space through the use of certain compositional devices. In **The Cadet and his Sister** the figures are placed in a maze with walls around them and in **The Departure** they are placed on a roof, bounded by parapets. Privacy is assumed in the **Table Series** (1989-1992) because of the use of a table-top as a site for different activities. Use of private spaces in a painting enhances the voyeuristic viewing of the image, in that it replicates the sense of intimacy and privacy necessary for the voyeuristic experience. The viewing of a scene through the eyes of the voyeur enhances the feeling of empathy with the image.

Voyeurism is considered a perversion and is tabooed in our society. Being incriminated as a Peeping Tom is a punishable offence and therefore the activity is surrounded by secrecy and guilt. By placing the unsuspecting viewer in the shameful position of voyeur is to foist upon his psyche feelings of titillation and prohibition, which would inevitably create an empathic response to the image.

ENDNOTES

1. The definition for 'voyeur' in terms of the Oxford Dictionary is 'one who obtains sexual gratification from looking at other's sexual actions or organs', and this is sufficiently clear for my purposes (Oxford 1989: 778).

2. John Berger comments on the relationship between the observer and the object, 'In the art-form of the European nude the painters and spectator owners were usually men and the persons treated as objects, usually women. This unequal relationship is so deeply embedded in our culture that it still structures the consciousness of many women' (Berger 1972: 63). As a result the sex of the voyeur may be taken to be mainly males, although there is no evidence in the literature that voyeurism is exclusively a male perversion. Women have the same potential to be titillated by a sexually provocative image and therefore equally able to be placed in a position of voyeur.

3. Pollock notes that the paintings of Morisot and Cassatt are always located in private areas or public spaces. She lists the following locations as ones found in their paintings: dining rooms, drawing rooms, bedrooms, balconies/verandas and private gardens. She

points out that very little of typical Impressionist iconography actually reappears in the works of art made by women. They do not represent the territory which their colleagues who were men, so freely occupied and made use of in their works, for instance, bars, cafes, backstage and night clubs (Pollock 1988: 56). It is ironical to note that the spaces inhabited by females are the type of intimate spaces necessary for voyeuristic viewing. However Cassatt's and Morisot's interpretations of domestic scenes lack the sexual innuendo needed for voyeuristic viewing of the image.

4. There is a parallel between the active male observer and the passive female object and Berger's definition of the male and female presence in society. Berger attributes the maleness of an onlooker to the power he embodies. He says, 'The promised power may be moral, physical, temperamental, economic, social, sexual - but its object is always exterior to the man ... . By contrast, a woman's presence ... defines what can be done to her ... . To be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men' (Berger 1972: 46). Berger clearly indicates the unequal relationship between male and female, by defining man as the doer (viewer) and the female as an object 'owned' by men. In the **Table Series** (1989-1992) there is an attempt to undermine the inferred power of the male by making him look ridiculous. In **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig. 15) the men are naked and stunted and in **Terrible Twins** (1991 fig.35) he is given a muzzle.

5. The depiction of the Peeping Tom partaking in his voyeuristic activities, is a common theme in the history of art. Whereas the 'voyeur' referred to in the research is the unseen viewer of the painting, the actual voyeuristic activity of spying on a private, usually sexual, activity was common in certain themes. **'Susannah and the Elders'** (c.1555) by Tintoretto (1518-194), and **'Bathsheba being spied on by David'** (c. 1520), School of Antwerp, are two typical examples. In these paintings the voyeur is

usually shown hiding in the background and the observer of the painting becomes either an objective viewer of the scene or a 'colluding' voyeur.

6.   Kaplan discusses the cinematographic devices used by feminist directors like Rainer, Mulvey and Duras who attempt to undermine the effect of a continuous reality between the screen and the viewer. The ideological reasoning behind their efforts is to destroy what they see as a patriarchal orientation in cinematography. Kaplan cites the example of Duras who in her film *Natalie Granger* (1972), relies on editing and montage to undermine audience expectations. She does this by moving back and forth between past and present time and inserts memories or fantasies at various points (Kaplan 1983: 95).

7.   Marshall McLuhan mentions the use of the vanishing point in Renaissance art where he sees the viewer systematically being placed outside the frame of experience (McLuhan & Fiore 1967). This view contrasts with Arnheim's (1982) idea that a central vanishing point involves the viewer in its continuity and Bill Nichol's (1981) view that the vanishing point inverted 'moves' into the spectator's space.

8.   Guy Davenport sees the cat in Balthus's paintings as his symbol of the animal in our nature. He sees the cat as a sensual, cunning, sly, rapacious creature easily tamed but never giving up its wildness, to which it reverts in fear (Davenport 1989: 7). The animal as a symbol of aspects of our psyche stems back to the concept of the totem whose powers resided in animals.

9.   According to Davenport, the stunted figure in **Le Chambre** (1952-54 fig. 7) allows Balthus to use caricature in his work beside traditional academic rendering. He gives Velasquez as an example of an artist who uses caricature in nature by placing midgets and dwarves next to his kings and queens (Davenport 1989: 74). In the **Table Series** (1989-1992) men are transformed into dwarf-like figures in order to strip them of their

power. See Chapter 5 footnote 16 for Bruno Bettelheim's explanation of the meaning of dwarves in the fairy tales.

10. The surrounding darkness in the work of Sherman and in my paintings in the **Table Series** (1989-1992) acquires a new meaning within the context of Berger's analysis of Rubens' (1577-1640) portrait of his second wife Hélène Fourment. He says,'Beneath the fur that she holds across herself, the upper part of her body and legs can never meet ... At the same time this hidden sexual centre is connected by means of a fur coat to all the surrounding darkness in the picture, so that she is turning both around and within the dark which has been made a metaphor for her sex' (Berger 1972: 61). The parallel between the female sex and darkness is fitting within the context of this dissertation, where there is a continued reference to the voyeuristic, and therefore sexual, nature of the background darkness in my paintings.

11. Worringer defined the style of naturalism as that of the art of Classical Greece and the Renaissance where the artist copies nature as a result of his empathy with his surroundings. The opposite of naturalism is abstraction (whether organic or geometric) where the artist is alienated from his surroundings and in this way attempts to impose some order on his world (Worringer 1908). Refer to Chapter 1, footnote 5 for a discussion of his differentiation between naturalism and purely imitative art.

12. The terms 'naturalism' and 'realism' in art are often used to describe the same phenomenon - a style of painting that imitates the spaces, shapes, textures, tonalities and colours found in nature. However there are subtle and complex differences between the terms, a discussion of which does not belong within the scope of this research. Refer to Chapter 1, footnote 17 for a wider definition of realism.

13. The use of 'cut-off' composition where objects or people in an image are bisected by the edge of the canvas or paper surface, was a device 'discovered' by the Impressionists during the nineteenth century. They used this compositional device in order to create an impression of immediacy in their paintings. The source of this type of composition is ascribed to the invention of photography, where 'badly' composed photographs 'decapitate' or 'amputate' the extremities of the subject. The effect of this type of composition is to heighten the sense of immediacy, and implies a visual continuation of the image beyond the picture frame. The use of 'cut-off' composition in Sherman's and my own work operates in a similar way. By creating a sense of immediacy there is the suggestion that the artist is attempting to involve the viewer more closely with the image.

14. Davenport points out that in art we have no image of the autistically interior, dreaming, reading erotic, self-sufficient child who is evident in Balthus' paintings (Davenport 1989). However, the images of Fiscal's **Sleepwalker** (1979 fig. 16) and **Bad Boy** (1987 fig. 12), seem to be inhabited by children of an equally dreamlike and erotic consciousness. It is interesting to compare their depiction of children with Rego's children who seem devious, adult-like and rather aggressive. The depiction of children indulging in 'adult' activities usually forbidden to them, is equally tantalizing for the viewer. Such titillation activates either a positive or negative empathic response to the image. A negative empathic response to the paintings of Balthus is recorded by Nochlin who objected to his erotic paintings of young girls. She asks,'Why must I accept a discourse that consistently mystifies my sexuality by constituting the image of the vulnerable and seductive adolescent as a universally erotic one ? ' (Nochlin 1991: 41). Refer to Chapter 4, footnote 9 for further information about Nochlin's response to Balthus' images.

15. Donald Kuspit discusses the complexities of the concept of voyeurism when applied to the work of Fiscal. Kuspit sees Fiscal's paintings showing the adolescent child's point of view of the adult world, and how this voyeuristic activity is dulled by Fiscal's treatment of his subjects. He notes that the child in Fiscal's paintings, '... engages in them (activities) because they seem there to be engaged in, but his estimate of them is unclear. For all his erotic activity, his relationship to eros is still voyeuristic, peculiarly passive if not disengaged. The dispassionate air that hovers over the works confirms their voyeuristic involution, while forcefully objectifying them' (Kuspit 1988a: 283). See Chapter 1, footnote 18 for an analysis of the way Fiscal uses pornography in his paintings.

16. Adler notes the different compositions used by Degas to depict working class women as opposed to society women. His canvases of lower class women seem to have a greater sense of intimacy and the surfaces are more tactile than the more refined and objective viewpoints used for portraits of the females in his family or friends. Adler hints at the notion that the lower class women were subjected to voyeuristic scrutiny because of their implied subservience to their observer/owners (Adler 1990: 143).

17. The nudes of Lautrec (1864-1901) and Pearlstein (1924-), seem to have the same sense of objectivity and analytical rendering that is present in the nudes of Valadon. Lautrec's images of prostitutes in brothels are presented to the viewer in all their sordid glory. Lautrec makes no attempt to beautify or idealise the women, but instead he seems to take pleasure in depicting their pathetic condition. Pearlstein uses overweight, flabby women as his models. He highlights their physical flaws by using many lights to throw multiple shadows. The complexity of lighting and his penchant for depicting patterned fabrics on or near the model are all treated in a painstakingly realistic style. The effect is one of a coldly-lit image where the nude becomes merely another object in the painting.

18. Dijkstra sees the mirror as a favourite tool of painters wanting to depict female self-involvement in turn-of-the-century paintings. It became the central symbol of female narcissism (Dijkstra 1986: 140). The use of the mirror to reflect the face of the nude in the foreground of my painting **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig. 6), should rather be seen as a formal means of reflecting the face of Frida Kahlo, than having any symbolic meaning.

19. Donald Kuspit differentiates between public and intimate spaces in Fiscal's work. He does not see the two types of spaces as opposites but that each contains an element of the other. He says, 'The depicting of supposedly private space, such as balconies, bedrooms, in such a grand manner makes it continuous with public space' (Kuspit 1988: 280). The 'grand spaces' he refers to are the bizarre perspectives he uses which seem to place his subjects in the distance although they are in the finite space of a bedroom. The distancing of the image from the viewer serves to dilute the erotic content of the painting. Fiscal's use of bizarre perspectives is the inverse of Sherman's (and my own) tendency to crop the bodies of figures in the foreground.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGES OF PAIN AND PLEASURE AND THE SADOMASOCHISTIC VIEWER

Freud's theories of instinctual drives and their influence on the unconscious, are especially significant in any discussion of sexual issues and the unconscious. His psychology is basically a conflict psychology, an example of which is his observation that the roots of sadism can be detected in normal sexual behaviour. He states that:

> The sexuality of most human beings contains an element of *aggressiveness* - a desire to subjugate; the biological significance of it seems to lie in the need for overcoming the resistance of the sexual object by means other than the process of wooing. Thus sadism would correspond to an aggressive component of the sexual instinct which has become independent and exaggerated and, by displacement, has usurped the leading positions. (Freud 1905: 23)

He points out that throughout the history of civilization, there has been beyond any doubt an intimate connection between cruelty and the sexual instinct. He ascribes this aggressive element in human behaviour to the relics of cannibalistic desires.[1] A manifestation of this cruelty can be seen in the universal patterns of male domination and female submissiveness

amongst the sexes. In this chapter, I attempt to show the universality of domination and submission patterns in selected images and how they create empathic responses in an audience who unconsciously identify with scenes reflecting these patterns of behaviour.[2] The tendency to relate images to one's own experiences has scientific support in the field of psychodiagnostics. Hermann Rorschach (1884 -1922), formulated a psychological diagnostic test based upon the interpretation of abstract images (Rorschach blots), by patients. This form of interpretation test is a diagnostic test based on perception, and its creator placed great importance on the subjective experiences of the patient in interpreting the forms.[3] The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) also relies on personality projection in the testing of personality disorders. Henry A. Murray (1893-) developed this projective technique in 1935, which consists of a number of black and white pictures of various settings which the patient is asked to talk about. The stories are analysed in terms of the themes which the person introduces into each narrative. These themes are, according to Murray's theory of personality, assumed to reflect deep needs, desires, fears and conflicts. The projection of one's personality onto an object of contemplation can, therefore, be regarded as an indicator of psychological influences operating during the perceptual process. This fact is important to the central assumption of my definition of empathy which stresses the influences of gender behaviour in the interpretation of images.

Patterns of submission and domination are discussed by Kaplan who considers them as a crucial part of both male and female sexuality as constructed in Western civilization. In an erotic fantasy the women imagines herself as either a passive recipient of male desire or, at one remove, as watching a women who is the passive recipient of male desires and sexual actions (Kaplan 1983: 26). According to Gerald Schoenewolf in the mating behaviour of the human species the male has generally been dominant. Physically positioned on top of the female, he penetrates her, aggressively thrusting his penis again and again to produce orgasm in the female and in himself. Should the female become the aggressor, in many cases therapists have found that the male cannot perform adequately (Schoenewolf 1989: 115).[4] The passivity of the female in contrast to the forcefulness of the male is noted by the Austrian psychoanalyst, Helene Deutsch. Her neo-Freudian views on female sexuality emphasise the innate passivity of females. The main issue in Deutsch's psychology, is that the woman renounces her aggression for the sake of being loved. She interprets the strong tendency towards passivity as resulting in an intensification of masochism (Deutsch 1944: 220-221).[5]

Patterns of domination and submission are also a part of the homosexual sexual experience. A member of Samois, a lesbian, feminist, sadomasochistic organisation, says:

> It's important to me that I can explore both sides of eroticism, the giving and the receiving. I am and have been both a sadist and a masochist, in all meanings of

those words, and I want to know and work with all of who I am. (Lucy 1981: 36)

It seems that domination and submission are universal aspects of Western sexuality, affecting heterosexuals and homosexuals, males and females. Socialisation of males and females into these patterns might account for images in which scenes of domination and submission are seductive and fascinating for the viewer according to his experience as a sexual being. According to Roy Baumeister, eroticisation of pain, whether physical or psychological, plays an important role in the functioning of the subconscious mind or what Baumeister terms the 'self'. He discusses the masochist and the sadist separately as he sees these two sexual orientations as having different psychological characteristics. He considers masochism as an attempt to remove the main features of the self (Baumeister 1989: 26). This negation of the self is achieved by the acceptance of pain, without protest or reason, as the submissive partner submits to a dominant one.[6] Another way to achieve this escape from self is to allow oneself to be physically bound or gagged so that any action is decided by the commands and whims of the dominant partner. In this way the self ceases to be a decision maker (Baumeister 1989: 31). This description of masochism is meant to illuminate the psychological process which occurs during bondage. Masochism is an extreme form of submission and sadism an extreme form of domination in the sexual act.[7]

Sadomasochism, to use these terms as one concept, involves sexual activities associated with the giving or receiving of pain and humiliation. According to Edgar Gregerson, this sexual sense is rare in primitive societies, or else it is restricted to such activities as biting and scratching. However, he notes that the Western world has a long tradition of flagellation and similar acts associated with Christian penance.[8] Gregerson writes as follows, 'The West today has seen the secularisation of sadomasochism, once looked upon as an exemplary religious experience' (Gregerson 1985: 67). He theorises that the reason people become involved in sadomasochistic acts has to do with restrictions on expressions of aggressiveness. He notes that in societies where fairly high levels of aggression are tolerated, people tend not to become sadomasochistic in their sexual behaviour.[9] Sadomasochism as an eroticisation of anger and aggression, occurs when there are no other outlets for these impulses.

Because my research into empathic experiences and responses ascribes to an interventionist approach to viewing paintings, it is intended that viewers will draw upon their experience of domination and submission, to interpret and empathise with images presented. The viewer of images of pain or pleasure could be seen in the role of sadist, masochist, or both, in the manner of the voyeur previously discussed (see Chapter 2). The masochistic or sadistic self as defined by Baumeister may become involved in the psychodrama of images in a similar way to the voyeur's involvement. Both types of viewers may look upon the image with an

empathic, purposeful, intentional gaze rather than the disinterested, casual glance of the flâneur.

For a painting to reflect back a fantasy to the sadomasochistic viewer, it must be representational. That is, the images in painting should be recognisable to the viewer and must reflect back at least a partly familiar reality for the painting to have any meaning for the viewer. It is not necessary for the image to imitate nature in the manner of a camera with its trompe l'oeil realism, but the forms should still reflect the colours, shapes and spaces of the 'real' world to some degree. The distortions of expressionism or abstraction, whether non-objective or pure, will not create the same responses that representational styles do.[10] The viewer will be less inclined to project his fantasies onto images that are far removed from everyday reality. My paintings in the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986) and the **Table Series** (1989-1992) are painted in a representational style where it is possible to recognise the drama happening in the narrative . Although the forms are recognisable, colours, spaces, scale and light have been manipulated in order to heighten the sense of drama in the paintings.

In **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19) the figure of the woman is seen from a high viewpoint which implies domination. She is in pain caused by the candles sticking into her body and

hot wax burning her skin. A portrait of myself appears on the sliced cake, as part of the food on the table. The boundaries between food and flesh, receptacle and body are indeterminate.[11] Although I filled the picture with signs of celebration and feasting, the effect is one of discomfort and chaos. The pain of having one's body penetrated by sharp objects is a familiar female experience. Combined with the humiliation of being naked when one should be clothed, the image is meant to provoke memories of pain and embarrassment in a female viewer. Memories of submission and pain are a universal female experience, and reminders of such experiences are bound to evoke empathic responses.

Baumeister points out that a further flight from self occurs when the masochist is bound or gagged and the masochist's actions are decided by the commands and whims of the dominant partner. In this way, the self ceases to be a decision-maker (Baumeister 1989: 66). An image of these perversions is evoked by me in **Happy Birthday** (1991 fig.18) where the figure of a woman, tied up and gagged, should evoke a positive or negative empathic response because the viewer is placed in the role of sadomasochist. The table has now become the site of her bondage which is physical rather than metaphorical. Like the masochist, she is unable to move or act; any sense of self is destroyed.[12] She is replicated in other parts of the picture, in the food, and as a piece of crockery. The faces appearing

on the cake are gagged by decorations, and the dish is weighed down by the weight of the cake. These are metaphors of her submission.

Like the voyeuristic cinema viewer, who projects his fantasies onto the screen, the masochistic viewer participates in sexual pursuits which resemble his fantasies. According to Baumeister, masochism resembles an engrossing game or drama, in which normal identities are suspended by the players or actors (Baumeister 1989: 26). The projection of the masochist's fantasies in pursuit of his perversion, and the empathic experience of the viewer, both rely on the element of drama. The tendency to suspend one's identity and empathise with another role, facilitates the masochist and the viewer's involvement with images of arrested dramatic moments of violence, domination, pleasure or pain.[13]

The sense of viewing dramatic events as they happen and experiencing them masochistically, is evident in Rego's **The Cadet and his Sister** (1988 fig. 5). In this painting a woman kneels to tie her brother's shoe laces. Domination is suggested by the large figure of the woman and the submissive lowering of the eyes of the boy. This gesture, far from emphasising a female's submissive role, enhances the sense of her domination in the image; there is almost the feeling of a mother-child relationship. The theme of domination and submission is also present in Rego's painting **The Departure** (1988 fig. 17) where a man submits to a woman

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by allowing her to brush his hair. The eyes of the man are lowered while the woman takes the more active role in the drama of the narrative. According to Rego who continually places her males in passive situations,' ... life is full of men making a grand gesture and falling on their arse ... (sic)', (Paula Rego 1988: 48).[14] A similar image of submissive behaviour can be seen in my painting, **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig. 15), where I place the woman in a submissive posture while being ridden by a man. The man smiles cheekily at the viewer while the women's face remains impassive. The sadomasochistic viewer would relate strongly to such a scene, where a drama is being enacted and where the tension between protagonists in the painting is apparent.

The threat of violence and domination is evident in Rego's **The Family** (1988 fig. 10). The image of a man being held against his will by a girl, while another begins to undress him, contains elements of physical and psychological violence and inevitably encourages the viewer to wonder about the outcome of the narrative.[15] The sense of an arrested dramatic moment is an important element in this type of image, as the viewer inevitably becomes psychologically involved in the mysterious narrative of the painting. A similar type of drama unfolds in my **Table Series** (1989-1992). In **Sabbath Bride 2** (1989 fig. 20) a naked woman sprawls on a table. The table had been set according to such man-made edicts and rituals as the lighting of candles to herald the Sabbath.[16] It is a holy day of prayer and rest, but this

bride is neither praying nor resting as she violates the symbols of the Sabbath with her sexually suggestive pose, violently pushing the holy candles off the table. Her nudity and her inviting gaze become insulting within the context of orthodox Judaism, which shuns public nudity and stresses modesty.[17]

Stolorow and Lachman emphasise that the masochist's desire for pain reflects a need to be the centre of attention. The mirror or audience meets this desire as is evident in their observation that:[18]

> ... the mirror or audience may draw attention to the transformed self during the masochistic episode, thus facilitating the escape from normal identity. (Stolorow & Lachman 1980: 196)

The presence of onlookers, whether it be a reflected image of the participants or other spectators, can be associated with the need of an actor to communicate with his audience. Masochism and acting both require that the individual project himself into a new role. The projection of one's personality is an empathic experience common to the actor and the masochist. It is the association of the need to communicate and comprehend, and the empathic experience, which highlights the importance of the element of drama in order to involve the viewer psychologically with an image.

The need for a mirror supports Mulvey's idea that the function of film is to mirror human perception. She points out that camera technology, camera movements and invisible editing all tend to blur the limits of screen space and reality (Mulvey 1975: 368). The (male) viewer experiences a three-dimensional space corresponding to that of mirror recognition, in which the alienated subject gives expression to the viewer's imaginary existence. It becomes clear that both Mulvey's voyeuristic male cinema viewer and the masochistic viewer have their fantasies reflected back to them. Whether the mirror is real or simulated as in film, it is needed to give credence to a transformed self. The image of the mirror is used in Tea Party 2 (1990 fig. 6) where the mirror reflects the portrait of the gazing female back to the viewer. By becoming part of this private activity, the sense of intimacy with the image is enhanced. Intimacy in an image is an important aspect of the voyeuristic experience and becomes central to the sadomasochistic viewer because of the atmosphere of secrecy and taboo surrounding this perversion.

The connection between taboo and drama is established by Freud who theorised that taboos are formed when rules are made to control a specific situation, which in the case of primitive man, was the use of ritual killing. According to Freud taboos evolved as the killing of humans for rituals was replaced by the sacrifice of plants and animals. The acting out of rituals of this nature became a way in which man came to terms with aspects of the unknown

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(Freud 1913: 43). The connection between drama and rituals is evidenced by the strong dramatic nature of rituals in primitive festivals and the fact that the development of drama originally arose out of rituals for the god Dionysus. A further influence of drama on the behaviour of man, can be seen in the use of psychodrama which developed out of Freudian psychoanalysis. According to Dr. J.L. Moreno the function of the psychodramatic role is to enter the unconscious from the social world and bring shape and order into it (Moreno 1946: 132). Dramatic action involves the empathic response of the actor to his role in an unfolding drama. Similarly, the viewer of an image which depicts an arrested dramatic moment, would attempt to comprehend the image as part of an unfolding series of events, as a result of his human need to shape and bring order to the world. The grappling with the meaning of the image engages the viewer in an empathic relationship with the image.

By capturing the empathy of the audience, dramatic action is able to blur the psychic spaces between reality and fantasy in the image. In a similar way, the artist is able to blur the physical and illusionistic spaces between the image and the viewer. Aside from using dark engulfing spaces the artist is able to unfurl the space of the painting by extending the perspective of the pictorial space of the painting into the viewer's space.[19] According to

Bill Nichols, speaking of Renaissance paintings, the illusionism of perspective includes the space that the viewer occupies:

> The compelling illusionism of this kind of [Renaissance] painting rests heavily upon the dual pivots of linear perspective: the vanishing point toward which the image itself recedes and the point of origin, before the canvas, from which this perspective arose. The plane of the canvas corresponds to the conjunction of two pyramids brought together at their bases. The pinnacle of one pyramid corresponds to the imaginary vanishing point, the other to the imaginary subject whose place we propose to fill, a place we are nominated to assume. (Nichols 1981: 53)

The inclusion of the viewer in the space of the painting, is demonstrated in Rego's **The Cadet and his Sister** (1988 fig. 5) where the eye is drawn down an avenue into an illusionistic distance. In **Terrible Twins** (1991 fig. 35) a similar device is used; the action on the table is viewed from a position below the edge of the table, which extends into the exaggerated perspective of the room. Although **The Cadet and his Sister** and the **Terrible Twins**, do not share dark private spaces, a feeling of privacy and mystery is created through other means. In **The Cadet and his Sister** the feeling of intimacy is created by the enclosure in which they appear to be sitting. The wall surrounding the pair seems to give the sense of privacy even though the scene is bathed in light. In **Terrible Twins** the whole scene is lit up, but the surrounding walls of the room which seem to close in on the protagonists, limit

the space and encourage the sadomasochistic viewer to participate in the closeness of the interior. The viewer is presented with an oblique view of the suffering man ridden by two merry women who seem oblivious to his discomfort.

The themes of pain and celebration in my paintings may seem to be paradoxical, yet they each contain elements of the other. In this context Georges Bataille says:

> The ambiguity of this human life is really that of mad laughter and of sobbing tears. It comes from the difficulty of harmonizing reason's calculations with these tears ... . With this horrible laugh ... .(Bataille 1988: 20)

The contrast between celebration and violence has had a precedent in paintings of Dionysian feasts, in which participants are sent into a frenzy by their drunken orgies.[20] Bataille points out that the frenzy of the maenads reached such a pitch that only the tearing apart of living children, their own children, seems to have appeased their fury (Bataille 1988: 74). It is the juxtaposition of pain and pleasure, celebration and violence that is central to Bataille's hypothesis. He sees a strong connection between violence and the sacred, between eroticism and death.[21] He states that:

> "Violence" overwhelms us *strangely* in each case: each time, what happens is *foreign* to the received order of things, to which this violence each time stands in opposition. There is an indecency about death, no doubt distinct from what

is incongruous about the sexual act. Death is associated with tears; and sometimes sexual desire is associated with laughter. But laughter is not so much the contrary of tears as it may seem: the object of laughter and the object of tears are always related to some kind of violence which interrupts the regular order of things, the usual course of events. (Bataille 1988: 32)

A preoccupation with violence, whether the violence of laughter or tears, can be seen in my **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig. 15) where a mischievous boy/man rides and therefore dominates the body of the woman/artist. The violence of domination is perhaps negated by the atmosphere of comedy in the image, yet the scene of domination and submission may absorb the sadomasochistic viewer. Sometimes the violence in pictures is psychological rather than physical. In Fischl's **Bad Boy** (1987 fig. 12) a naked woman lies with her legs splayed out on a bed in front of a young boy. This scenario, with its allusions to incest and paedophilia, creates an insidiously violent atmosphere, into which the sadomasochistic viewer can escape. In my painting **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2), the woman in the foreground is weeping while the face on the broken plate mockingly smiles at the viewer. Men are smashing crockery while the naked form of a woman lies prone in the middle of the chaos. The cruelty in this painting is more emotional than physical and the violence is suggested by the broken crockery and the tears. The men grasp a teapot in their hands and explore all its openings with their bodies. Satirical laughter on the part of the artist is intimated by the 'human' plates and cups with their comic expressions. Because the paradox of pain and pleasure, simultaneously expressed

by laughter and tears, is an important aspect of Western sexuality, it can be translated as patterns of domination and submission in imagery.

The psychological involvement with the depicted action in painting is further enhanced by the inclusion of other figures in the image. The number of possible scenarios one could imagine, multiplies when there is evidence of other 'relationships' in the painting. In **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1) the inclusion of a number of male figures with the central figure of a woman crawling along the table, heightens the sense of drama in the painting. The men in **The Groom's Table** (1990 fig 1) are laughing and drinking, perhaps rejoicing in the thought that the bride will see that their food is cooked, clothes washed and children reared. The bride crawls on all fours along a table of objects, herself submissively reduced to the status of an object. Violence is expressed through the tilting table and the broken wedding cake. Again there is a paradoxical juxtaposition between celebration and destruction. The wedding cake, a symbol of joy and celebration is exploded apart by the leaping figure of the bride. The bride, the traditional symbol of chastity and purity, has become the whore and entertainer of bachelors at a stag party. The women in the painting are placed in the role of virgin and whore which reflects the impossible position of woman in a society that frequently insists on confining her to either one or other of these roles.[22]

Sadomasochism and voyeurism are ways of achieving erotic gratification in sexual encounters.[23] Erotic gratification is a universal human experience which occurs, or is simulated, in private rather than public spaces. It is this connection between eroticism, privacy and intimacy that enables the viewer to recognise and empathise with similar scenes, even those depicted in a static two-dimensional image. Therefore paintings which place the viewer in the role of voyeur or sadomasochist, serve to enhance and emphasise the subconscious connection between the self and the image that leads to the creation of empathy with the image.

ENDNOTES

1.   See footnote 11 of this Chapter.

2.   Sociologists such as Bataille (1988), Kaplan (1987), Seymour-Smith (1975),
      Schoenewolf (1989) and Gregerson (1985) all discuss the tendency of men and women
      to behave in this manner. Psychiatrists Freud (1905) and Baumeister (1989) refer to
      similar patterns as reflected in sadomasochistic activities and the cinematographer
      Mulvey (1975) assumes this behaviour pattern when she discusses the voyeuristic,
      determining gaze of the male viewer over female subjects.

3.   The Rorschach test is a means by which the personality or the test subject is revealed through scoring categories such as location, determinant and form-level. Clinicians such as Beck, Klafer and Piotrowski, continued Rorschach's work but emphasised the perceptual testing at the expense of the content analysis of the tests. Recently clinicians have evaluated the literature on the Rorschach test and opinion now favours content, rather than perceptual categories and the most significant part of the test. Clinicians in earlier tests relied extensively on content to interpret test records (Aronow & Reznikoff 1983: 1). The significance of this assumption is the tendency of people to project their experiences onto images, which is important for the concept of empathy in this research.

4.   Margret Mead was also critical of the trend in modern civilization toward minimising the differences between the sexes for the sake of obtaining a kind of misguided egalitarianism. She felt that women's receptivity and man's activity were essential to a healthy society (Mead 1949: 116).

5.   Karen Horney criticised Deutsch's emphasis on the passivity and masochistic tendencies of females. She rejected Freud's over-emphasis on certain infantile events at the expense of others and Deutsch's concept that the sex-life of the vast majority of women is pathologic. The word they both struggled over was 'masochism'. For Deutsch, the term did not have pejorative overtones and she centred her account of femininity around the concepts of what she called masochism and narcissism (most erotic types derive from the interplay of narcissism and masochism). In the context of the seventies, these terms seemed to carry with them implications of women's inescapable inferiority, which Horney (1926: 224) rejected in her writings as early as 1922.

6.   The view that females are naturally masochistic was first put forward by Freud who saw that the women of his day were passive and submissive and therefore concluded

that because these traits were apparent in the behaviour of masochists, that women were by nature masochistic. This view is vigorously opposed by feminists who are worried that injustices such as wife-beating and rape will persist if people accept the view that women desire to be victims because of an innate masochism (Baumeister 1989: 7). Refer to footnote 5 of this Chapter for further debate on the issue of masochism in females during this century.

7.   Freud differentiates between normal sexual life and perversions in the following way: Perversions are seen as sexual activities which either (a) extend, in an anatomical sense, beyond the regions of the body that are designed for sexual union, or (b) linger over the intermediate relations to the sexual object which should normally be traversed rapidly on the path towards the final sexual aim (Freud 1905: 16). It is clear that there are degrees of sadomasochistic behaviour in 'normal' sexual behaviour which includes elements of submission and domination found in sadomasochism.

8.   The connection between religious fervour, pain and eroticism was researched at length by Georges Bataille (1897-1962), who was a librarian by profession as well as a philosopher, novelist and critic. He was a founder of the College of Sociology. He completed the *Tears of Eros* in 1962 and it was blacklisted by the French government. His area of research, the themes of eroticism and death in religion and sadomasochistic practices, is relevant to the dissertation as it emphasises the erotic attraction that images of sadism hold for the onlooker. His sacrilegious insinuation that there is a link between sexual and religious fervour is possibly the reason his book was blacklisted in France. The paradoxical nature of religion and eroticism is an important theme in the **Table Series** (1989-1992) where there is the frequent juxtaposition of religious paraphernalia and the semi-nude figure.

9. Gregerson compares cultural diversity in expressions of hostility among Italians and English. Whereas Italian culture tends to tolerate an openness about anger the English tend to suppress overt expressions of aggression. Because the highest incidence of sadomasochism is in northern European societies (Dutch, German, British) Gregerson notes that there is the tendency in these societies to play down overt aggression as well (Gregerson 1985: 303). The differing approaches to expressing hostility could, within the interventionist context, affect the way scenes of pain and pleasure are interpreted, as it depends from which society the viewer comes from.

10. See Betterton's remarks in Chapter 4 about the effects of Modernist art practices on the audience.

11. The connection between sexual and gastronomic appetites is referred to by Freud when he says, 'According to some authorities this (libido) aggressive element of the sexual instinct is in reality a relic of cannibalistic desires ...' (Freud 1905: 25) [my brackets]. He sees this connection as manifesting in sadistic sexual activities but admits that the explanation for this perversion is possibly due to a number of mental impulses.

12. Bram Dijkstra isolates the theme of the passive female as important for the voyeuristic tendencies of the turn-of-the-century male audience, 'Because woman was incapable of independent action ... it was only natural to take her by force, since by her very behaviour she seemed forever to be pleading to be taken by force'(Dijkstra 1986: 100). In **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) and **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19) passivity is indicated by the closed eyes of the women in the images, thereby reinforcing the voyeuristic experience of the observer.

13. The concept of an arrested dramatic moment is connected to the term 'media style' which was coined by the art critic Jencks in his book on Post-Modernism. He uses the term to refer to the work of Fischl where he notes that Fischl's paintings are influenced

by the media and especially the arrested dramatic moment which is a feature of soap operas on television (Jencks 1987: 87). The influence of the media in re-establishing a narrative convention in art is perhaps a way of re-engaging the viewer with the static visual image.

14. Rego in an interview with John McEwen (Paula Rego 1988: 48). The truth of Rego's comment is evident in her paintings where she depicts males in passive roles unable to make any 'grand gestures' and submitting themselves to female care or abuse.

15. In Rego's paintings the female is often dominant. Dijkstra notes that visual manifestations of the theme of domination and submission were common to many turn-of-the-century paintings, where many artists painted the dominant male about to attack a helpless female. Dijkstra cites an example of this genre by referring to a painting by Jamin (1853 - 1903). Entitled **Brenn and his Share of the Booty** (1893), Jamin presents the spectator with a titillating image of the lordly barbarian surveying his booty which includes a handful of naked and bound women in various stages of panic (Dijkstra 1986: 110). These types of images gave credence to the commonly held notion that males are the dominant sex and that females are passive. This polarisation of ideas has been rejected with the advent of feminism which insists on equality between the sexes, as revealed in Rego's work. According to Sarah Kent, in her article 'Rego's girls', the difference between them and Balthus's adolescents are that Rego's girls are wilful protagonists rather than projections of male fantasy (Kent 1989: 162). In this fashion Rego undermines the viewer's expectations and creates what Kuspit terms as 'shifts of consciousness' which he believes to be an aspect of good activist art (Kuspit 1988b: 111-117). See Conclusion for an elaboration of Kuspit's ideas.

16. The ritualistic observance of keeping the Sabbath is the only purely ritual observance commanded in the Ten Commandments, 'Six days shall you labour, and do all your work; but on the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any manner of work ... for the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it' (Exodus 20: 9-11). However, although this is a biblical requirement of Jews stated in the Torah (Bible), the laws of observing the Sabbath (halakhot) were laid down by the Prophets of Israel and rabbis throughout the ages in the Talmud. The Talmud was built upon the concepts and oral instructions of the oral Torah, which commented on and expanded on the ideas expressed in the written Torah, of which Exodus was a part (Donin 1972: 139).

17. The Talmud instructs all members of the family to practice modesty in dress. Immodest dress for a women consists in exposing parts of herself that are generally kept covered (Donin 1972: 139).

18. An aspect of the connection between mirrors and sexuality is commented upon by Whitney Chadwick, in her analysis of the paintings of Cassatt (1844-1926). She sees the role of the mirror as important in inculcating the idea that femininity is something mediated through observation (Chadwick 1990: 221). In **Mother and Child** (1905), the mother holds up a mirror to observe her little girl's image, while their femininity is reflected by a background mirror. However the mirror in my painting **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig. 6), has a compositional rather than symbolic function.

19. See Chapter 2, footnote 13 for further discussion on compositional devices which extend the pictorial space of the painting into the viewer's space.

20. The term Dionysian takes on a slightly different meaning when used in contrast to the Apollonian. These terms were used by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) in his book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). He distinguishes between two tendencies in human nature

- the genius of restraint, harmony and measure that found expression in Greek sculpture and architecture (Appollonian) and the cruel longing to exceed all norms that found an outlet in the drunken frenzy of the Dionysian festivals (Encyclopedia of Philosophy 1967: 504-514). Nietzsche saw the sublime as the artistic conquest of the horrible and he admired the Greeks for facing up to the terrors of nature and history rather than seeking refuge in a Buddhistic negation of will.

21. Bataille's connection between eroticism and death is echoed by Bruno Bettelheim who sees fairy tales as embodying all these characteristics. Of the tale of *Bluebeard* he says, '... a tale about the dangerous propensities of sex, about its strange secrets and close connection with violent and destructive emotions' (Bettelheim 1982: 303). The themes of sex and violence are present in many fairy tales to a degree which is seemingly unfit for children. It is Bettelheim's assertion that it is the appeal of these tales to the child's subconscious which has a cathartic effect in dispelling his fears. The connection between sex, violence and the unconscious mind is a central theme of the research and is proven to have a connection in Bettelhiem's, Bataille's and Freud's theories.

22. Dijkstra's writings on the virgin /whore dichotomy in Western society which was evident in the depiction of women in art and literature as either loving wife or insatiable whore. The 'virgin' wife, for whom occasional relations with her spouse was considered normal, was contrasted with the dangerous sensuous woman who has a bestial blood lust thought to be precipitated by her insatiable need to replenish the blood incessantly lost to her system as a result of her degenerative subjection to the reproductive function and its attendant sexual cravings (Dijkstra 1986: 334). Such women can be seen for example, in paintings based on the popular theme of Salome whose need for the head of John the Baptist has been considered as a metaphor for male castration. The paradox of woman's position in society is reflected in the

ambiguous depiction of her in the Table Series (1989-1992) as alternatively passive and compliant or active and domineering.

23.   According to Robert Stoller, Freud's great contribution to the study of sadomasochism is his growing awareness the power of destructiveness, of the self and of others, in humans. However, Stoller disagrees that it is driven by an inherent biological force (the 'Death Instinct'), which is how Freud explained such inclinations. Rather, Stoller sees such destructiveness as a technique one feels one chooses as a way to take power from others - to destroy oneself - guaranteeing that the choice resides only in oneself. He also disagrees with Freud that the masochist seeks (needs) genuine punishment for unconscious sins, because, according to Stoller, that explanation holds for everyone, not just the S & M aficionado (Stoller 1991: 292-293). An indication of the 'normality' of patterns of domination and submission in sexual behaviour is the observation by Freud that the cruel component of the sexual instinct develops in childhood even more independently of the sexual activities that are attached to erotogenic zones. He notes that cruelty (which alludes to sadism), in general comes easily to the childish nature, since the obstacle that brings the instinct for mastery to halt at another person's pain - namely a capacity for pity - is developed relatively late (Freud 1905: 59).

CHAPTER FOUR

NUDITY, FASHION AND THE WORK OF ART

An important iconographical device which could arouse an empathic response in the viewer is the image of the naked body, because the naked body has an important social and political symbolism, particularly in Western society. According to Marina Warner (1985: 294), human identity in the West is inseparable from the theme of the personal body, and self-consciousness is physically created. The shameful awareness of one's nakedness is documented in Judeo-Christian theology as the result of Adam and Eve eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge:

> And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed leaves together and made themselves aprons. And the Lord God called unto the man and said unto him "Where art thou?" And he said "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." (Genesis 3: 7,9,10)

As Gill Saunders points out, the naked body in art is ambiguous, and nudity subject to conflicting interpretations. In Christian philosophy it can connote sin, guilt and shame, with

the female body personifying sexual temptation.[1] In classical pre-Christian philosophy, nudity is a symbol of sexuality but without negative connotations (Saunders 1989: 10).[2] This connection between nudity and self-consciousness, is clarified by Kenneth Clark, who attempts to define the difference between being nude and being naked. He sees nakedness as more than just being nude; feelings of self-consciousness and embarrassment are part of the experience:

> To be naked is to be deprived of our clothes and the word implies some of the embarrassment which most of us feel in that condition. (Clark 1972: 3)

The sense of shame that perhaps dictates how the Western viewer sees the nude. This is not to say that everyone is embarrassed by nudity, but that the nude in public, or an image of it, is immediately seen as violating a code of dress in Western society. A viewer who has been socialised within this society automatically brings a set of biases about the 'state of undress', when viewing an image of a nude.[3]

Modern Western images of the nude most frequently depict the female figure in different poses. The female body, dressed or undressed, is used in advertising to sell anything from men's socks to tractors. Her naked form is used to titillate viewers of 'blue' movies or readers of pornographic magazines. Sensual parts of her body are plastered across billboards

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and television advertisements. Her body is used visually to allure, titillate, captivate and sell.[4] According to Saunders (1989: 6), the term 'nude' is synonymous with the 'female nude' because nakedness connotes passivity and vulnerability: it is powerless and anonymous. It is a female state equated with femininity. In contrast, male nudes are presented as active and dynamic figures, shown labouring, fighting or otherwise contorting their bodies in order to show off their musculature. As a pattern of excellence and physical perfection the male body is symbolic of spiritual and cultural aspiration. This was especially so during the Renaissance during which the male nude was usually the subject of anatomical studies (Saunders 1989: 26).

The history of the visual tradition of the nude in European oil painting also incorporates a gender difference. As John Berger points out, in the visual tradition of the nude, men have always had privileged access to the sight of the female body:

> In the average European oil painting of the nude, the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture and is presumed to be a man ... It is for him that figures have assumed their nudity. But he, by definition, is a stranger, with his clothes still on. (Berger 1972: 54)

It is obvious that the female nude has had, and still has, a special attraction for the heterosexual male. Pleasure in looking without being seen, or voyeurism, is also

characteristic of other cultural forms such as cinema viewing and pornography.[5] The sexual pleasure gained by viewing the female nude will obviously arouse positive feelings of empathy in the male viewer. However, Betterton questions whether women experience those same feelings of pleasure when confronted with pornographic female forms. She asks whether ways of seeing can be reformed to better represent what women want:

> One central question which has been explored is whether men and women experience and enjoy looking in the same way. In asking: 'Whose pleasure?' critics have pointed out that many of the pleasures offered by dominant visual culture are connected to the ways in which it addresses a heterosexual *male* spectator. (Betterton 1987: 11)

One might logically conclude from these statements that women do not experience pleasure from images of themselves arranged and displayed for male voyeuristic gazes. The sight of another female arranged and displayed in submissive and passive poses may arouse feelings of embarrassment, humiliation and disgust. Although the female viewer may feel repulsed, these feelings can be described as empathic because her personality is projected onto the object of her gaze. Her feelings reflect a participatory approach to viewing the image, which characterises the empathic experience. The opposite of empathy would be disinterest, alienation and boredom.[6] Images of submissive females are not always abhorrent to female viewers. The feelings of powerlessness in these images are reflected in soap operas,

women's magazines, romance fiction and film melodrama: cultural forms supposedly constructed for a predominantly female audience. It seems that women internalise and relate to narrative which affirms the powerlessness and submission of women, as it is bound up with the way in which femininity is defined.[7]

Feminist critics such as Mulvey (1975) have sought ways to destroy these visual forms in order to create new ones which would offer a different kind of engagement with the image. These ideas were developed from Modernist art practice which rejected illusionism, narrative and figuration in favour of an emphasis on materiality, process and the de-construction of the image. Betterton points out the difficulties viewer's experience with such images. Such difficulties include the unfamiliarity of Modernist art practice, which mystified, alienated or simply bored the audience. Betterton suggests that the thrill of subverting traditional cinematic techniques for example, excited the film-maker while failing to grasp the attention of the viewer (Betterton 1987: 207).

The rejection of figuration and representation as a means of creating an erotica or representation of the female body, sometimes alienates the viewer. The boredom and sense of mystification is very different to the negative empathic experience described above. The

viewer may have an antipathy towards traditional realistic representation, but he may still become interested and engrossed in the drama of the realistically-rendered image.

The use of semi-clothed or naked figures is important in my work because of the provocative quality of such images. I deliberately use the nude in order to 'capture' the attention of the viewer and involve him in the action of the narrative. Because of the private nature of the state of nakedness, the sight of someone in that state may seem forbidden and tantalising. The curious viewer might more readily engage with the narrative of the painting. In **Birthday Party** (1991 fig. 19) I have immobilised and exposed the body of the woman on a table covered with cakes and sweets. This image of suggested bondage is enhanced by the nakedness of the female and serves to emphasise her helplessness. Similarly, the figure of the woman on a laden table in **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig. 6) seems more vulnerable to pain, because her state of undress is juxtaposed with the piercing forms of the candle-holders and umbrella. The semi-naked figure of the woman in **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1) also sets up a tension between her nakedness and the nudity of the males. Her state of undress is contrasted with the figure of the clothed bride, who jumps out of the wedding cake in the fashion of a 'play girl' at a stag party.

Betterton notes the tendency of some feminists to work outside the institution of fine art production, in areas of popular culture, as a response to the problem of communicating ideas to an audience:

> The use of photography, of cartoons and of graphics can be seen as a way of communicating feminist ideas and imagery in forms which are more accessible to a wide range of women.(Betterton 1987: 208)

This strategy of disrupting and transforming visual discourse through parody and reversal, has been important for feminist photographers. Sherman, in large photographs of herself in different disguises, disrupts the meaning of very familiar imagery from cinema and glamour photography, in order to subvert and parody media stereotypes (Mulvey & Wollen 1987: 209).[8] In **Untitled # 97** (1982 fig. 21) Sherman poses sulkily in typical starlet style, wrapped in a towel, with her limbs arranged sensuously for the viewer. However, certain elements of the image jar. Sherman's expression is hostile as she stares blankly out at the viewer. Her head is cropped by the picture edge, thus thrusting her uncomfortably into the viewer's space. Her form intrudes rather than seduces.

In **Sabbath Bride 2** (1990 fig. 20) I adopt the typical pin-up pose of a *Scope* magazine girl. *Scope* caters for a male audience. Its articles on motoring and adventuring appeal to a certain target group. I deliberately used the body of a typical *Scope* pin-up girl with her bottom

thrust out at the viewer and contrasted her pose with an anxious expression. Such an expression is antithetical to the pouting and provocative expressions of *Scope* girls, who are meant to entice the reader with their wanton glances. I represent myself crawling in a feline way in **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1). Instead of offering my breasts and face for display, I parody pin-up postures by presenting my behind to the viewer. Similar poses of females with their rear ends thrust up or legs splayed apart, are common in the paintings of Balthus. In **The Children** (1937 fig. 23) and in **Le Chambre** (1952-1954 fig. 7) both the figures of the girls are positioned in this manner. Although their bodies are not thrust out at the viewer, there are others in the painting who may be the viewers of such a pose.[9]

The effect of such poses in the paintings of Balthus is very different to that produced by a pin-up girl. Guy Davenport suggests that the reason for this difference is that Balthus' sense of the erotic disarms the viewer, because of its literalness, explicitness and evasion of vulgarity or cheapness of any sort. According to Davenport, Balthus brings the taste of Fragonard and Watteau into our century (Davenport 1989: 11). So, although Balthus uses provocative poses, the effect is very different to that produced by pin-up girls. As a result, the viewer's expectations are undermined when confronted with images which do not rely for their effect on the complicity of the audience. Sherman's work,in contrast, does rely on the complicity of the audience. While it is not necessary to know the specific poses or styles or

fashions to which she refers, the generality of the looks, the positions implied and the kinds of narrative situations are taken as understood. Similarly, my use of familiar pin-up poses decontextualised by being related to unfamiliar expressions and scenarios, is meant to provoke the viewer into wondering about the image.

According to Lisa Tickner, the use of parody and the self as object is an important aspect of feminist iconography. She says:

> The depiction of women by women (sometimes themselves), in this quasi-sexist manner, as a political statement grows potentially more powerful as it approaches actual exploitation but then, within an ace of it, collapses into ambiguity and confusion. The more attractive the women, the higher the risk, since the more closely they approach conventional stereotypes in the first place (Tickner 1987: 248).

It is obvious from this statement that the potency of the images derives from the 'sexploitation' of the female forms. The immediacy of the image and its myriad meanings within the politics of gender creates strong feelings of empathy with the subject in the male or female viewer.

The potency of the visual image of nudity in our society is further amplified when men are placed in the same position of submissiveness as women. The artist, Sylvia Sleigh (c. 1935-)

uses this device to highlight the traditional references to the archetypal female nude. By placing her graphically painted male nudes in typical female postures, she reminds her viewers of the extent to which the values of that tradition are non-transferable. In **Phillip Golub Reclining** (1971 fig. 24) Sleigh depicts an adolescent boy in a typically 'feminine', recumbent pose. His body is passive, graceful yet virile, because of the presence of body hair. This typically passive pose is at odds with traditional images of male nudes because of the psychological connection between active postures and the strength, invulnerability and dynamism associated with the male body.[10]

Images of male nudes as constructed by the male artist are almost always active or in a state of dynamic tension. In the images there is an interest in how the body works rather than how it appears. It is not devised for contemplation as a sexual object in the way that the female nude invariably is (Saunders 1989: 129). Male reaction to paintings of male nudes is generally hostile. This is evident in the complaints received when they are exhibited. The suggestion that it is a way for women to take revenge was reflected in the following headline 'Woman gets even by painting nude men' (Tickner 1987: 240).

Saunders indicates how a contemporary female nude is generally acceptable but the male nude can still provoke censorship. She comments on the violent reactions to the exhibition

'Women's Images of Men' at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, in 1982 (Saunders 1989: 7). On this show many of the paintings were of male nudes in passive poses usually seen as the territory of female nudes. Many critics denounced the show for its 'scratching and biting savagery', 'full frontal assaults' and 'loads of penises'. It is obvious from such reactions as those documented by Saunders, that men resent the presentation of their genitalia in public, in overt, graphic and vulnerable ways. Their discomfort perhaps arises from their identification with the naked model, who has been placed in a compromising position. A man's nakedness creates this empathic response rather than his maleness or pose. Kent and Morreau note that when the 'Women's Images of Men' exhibition was held, the nude in particular was considered an inappropriate subject for a serious artist of either gender: the nude had simply faded from the iconography.[11] They saw this exhibition as marking a re-emergence from the dark ages (Kent & Morreau 1985: 1).

Negative sensitivity to the visual naked form is not universal in South African society. There are many instances where images of the naked body in public do not provoke the reactions described above. Although until recently images of pin-ups in girlie magazines all wore black stars on their nipples, ostensibly to censor and desexualize these mammary appendages, none of these appear on the breasts of tribal women. Postcards, books and calendars of Zulu, Sotho and Ndebele women appear everywhere, yet their breasts are apparently perceived as

less subversive and sexual than those of a lighter colour. The white South African censors seem to place tribal women in a separate category of sexuality and humanity, objectifying and dehumanizing them, by having their potential sexuality denied. Somehow the shock value of the naked body is nullified by the presence of traditional beadwork and utensils. It is as if those signs of tribal living signify and assert the 'otherness' of those bodies. By denying the sexuality of the tribal women, we dehumanize them, and it is this dehumanization which was fundamental to the apartheid system. Viewing nudes of other temporal and historical locations may also serve to desexualise the image of the naked body and, in this way, lessen the possibility of its provoking empathic responses in the observer.

Historical images of the nude often embody ideals of beauty that have undergone radical changes throughout the centuries. Contemporary criteria of feminine beauty are very different to what they were, say, fifty years ago. For example, if we look at an advertisement for a goose-down quilt (1981 fig. 25), we see a model who is the current embodiment of feminine beauty as perceived by Western society. The advertisement is an image of a recumbent female nude, whose passivity is enhanced by her closed eyes. However, there is something specifically 'modern' about her. We recognize her as a model of idealisations of the 1960's by the thinness of her body, a state which has been much admired in the latter part of the twentieth century. Her emaciation is evident from the

boniness of her protruding rib- cage, knees and wrists and the sinewy quality of the muscles of her neck and legs.[12] Some of these features can be seen in Mel Ramos'(1935) **Ode to Ange** (1972 fig. 26) and are thrown into relief when compared to its prototype **The Source** (1856 fig. 27) by Ingres (1780-1867) painted about a hundred years before.

Ramos' picture depicts a *Playboy* nude, holding an urn in the manner of **The Source**. We recognize the contemporary quality of her nakedness by the subtle shading which enhances the concave cavity of a dieter's stomach, and the bony protrusions of her jutting hip, elbows and ribs beneath her skin. Another sign of the 'all-American' woman is her sun tan. The tan marks of her bikini are evident across her pubic area and breasts. It is clear to any Western viewer that these changes of pigmentation denote tanning, an activity engaged in by beauty-conscious young women during the last few decades. In contrast, the young beauty from **The Source** (1856 fig.27) by Ingres has a softly rounded protruding stomach, fleshy arms and knees and smaller breasts, (big breasts having become a popular twentieth-century female attribute). The only similarity they share is hairlessness, a characteristic of female nudes which seems to be universal in all epochs. It is perhaps the connection between hairiness and virility that prevents the (male) artist from showing any evidence of the model's sexuality. It seems that although criteria of feminine beauty may change, the idea that the female body is for male pleasure rather than her own, is universal. The contemporaneity of

Ramos' image may provoke an empathic response to the nude because the spectator recognises the 'modern' aspects of that form. Perhaps these fashionable criteria of beauty, arouse what Lipps terms as positive or negative feelings of empathy in the viewer (Lipps 1905: 7).

Cranach the Elder (1472-1553) painted many images of the female nude, which seem strange and distorted (and therefore less sexually provocative) than a contemporary nude. In **Jealousy** (c. 1530 fig. 28) his females all have pear-shaped stomachs, which protrude from under their rib-cages, abnormally high waists and very small breasts placed high up on the chest with no sense of weightiness or fleshiness.[13] The articulation of these figures suggests that the artist did not have the chance to study the female nude in detail. Instead he seems to have taken cues about the structure of the female form from her clothed appearance. The body features echo the currently fashionable high-waisted dresses which were worn with full, heavy skirts dropping down from under the breasts (which would explain the large pear-shaped stomachs).[14] Anne Hollander theorised that images of the nude in Western paintings follow the fashions of the day. She notes that during the Renaissance the clothes worn by women emphasised the stomach area. The girdlestead in the fifteenth century was worn high, with the garments fitting tightly above it around the bust, armholes, and upper arms, with expansive yardage of skirt and sleeve below. She observes that fashionable female

posture all over Europe at this time required the stomach to swing forward well in advance of the bosom and the female torso was elongated through the middle. Hollander detects this emphasis on the stomach in Italian Renaissance fashion reflected in nudes painted during this time.

> In the erotic imagination of Europe, it was apparently impossible until the late seventeenth century for a woman to have too big a belly ... . The breasts of all the famous Renaissance and Baroque nudes in art, however fleshy the rest of the body might be, are delicate and minimal ... . Heavy bellies on the other hand, were worn by the tenderest virgins, whether in the austere works of the Gothic North or in the lushest productions of Venice.(Hollander 1978: 98)

Hollander notes that by the mid-sixteenth century the torso became encased in a corset almost cylindrical in shape. The breasts, once well defined under a fitted and shaped bodice, are now pressed flat inside an unyielding tube. As a result the waist is enlarged to have almost the same apparent width as the bustline. Consequently, the hips lack any lateral emphasis as the stays came down over them instead of indenting the waist.

As a result of this fashion, the resultant female shape, complete with clothing was very much increased in bulk and the head above it looked very small. This 'look' is reflected in the shift in overall proportions of High Renaissance nudes where they have been given thick trunks and legs which have been correspondingly lengthened to balance the elongated torso

(Hollander 1978: 100). Viewers of these nudes might find them fat and unattractive because of our contemporary canons of female beauty. As a result, the feelings of empathy that might be aroused when viewing images of the 'forbidden' nude may be dulled by the disassociating recognition that the nudes form part of another era, with canons of female beauty different from ours, as well as obvious differences in postures, environments and accessories. To the Western viewer made aware of the so-called 'desirable' female form by the proliferation of 'bikini' and pin-up girls in the media, the temporal and cultural gap between the image viewed and his own experience of the nude would be apparent. The historical distancing of the viewer from the image, would perhaps serve to prevent him from having an empathic response to the image.

David Freedberg expands on this idea when he says:

> ... with images from the distant past, it may well help to establish the limits of the publicly acceptable and the borderline between that which arouses shame and that which does not. Modern beholders may no longer find the **Venus of Urbino** especially arousing, not only because they have seen so many reproductions of it and so many others like it, but because sexual imagery can now go so much further. One has only to consider the vastly greater sexual expressiveness and exposure in popular imagery - from billboards to pornographic magazines - over the past few decades. But even with regard to the sixteenth century, one will still need to know how far Giorgione and Titian pushed beyond the normal

conventions of representing the nude figure. Did they transgress the conventions just sufficiently to arouse the prurient, or much more, or not at all? (Freedberg 1989: 21)

Whether the figures are historical or not, the Western viewer is acutely aware of the embarrassment inherent in the state of undress. Public nudity is still not acceptable in our so-called permissive society, a fact made evident by the outcry which topless sunbathing creates on our beaches. This response was evident when newspaper reports about topless sunbathing on Clifton beach were reported in many of the national newspapers in December 1987 and January 1988. It is this pervasive sense of shame that dictates how the Western viewer sees the nude. Concepts of nudity and modesty are socio-cultural as they are learned and internalized in one's own upbringing, in a particular culture. Xhosa women, Brazilian natives and Tobriander Indians may seem to be indecently exposed to Western eyes, whereas they are appropriately dressed according to their own cultural traditions.

Ted Polhemus comments on evidence of the perplexing discovery that native peoples of South America and Africa went naked. According to his research, they were creatures who looked more like Europeans than any known animal, but who in their nonchalant exposure of their bodies shared no sign that they had inherited Adam and Eve's sense of modesty (Polhemus 1988: 72).

According to Genesis, all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve and, therefore, heirs to their sense of modesty. It would therefore be impossible for the Western viewer to regard the naked body in the same light as members of the above-mentioned societies. It is this sensitivity to nakedness that makes the nude figure a potentially potent visual image in Western society.

Because of the history of restrictions and taboos on nudity in Western culture, the naked figure is seen as sinful, and its appearance in images is often censored.The censorial and prohibitory approach to the naked figure, makes the nude form more fascinating than the ordinary clothed figure, except perhaps in the case of tribal nudity, as already mentioned. Images of nude figures are an instant attraction, in a society with repressive views on nudity. The viewer is pushed further into the role of voyeur when confronted with an image not meant for public viewing.The image of the nude in Western culture, with its invisible burden of puritanical morals and shameful restrictions, becomes a catalyst for attracting and holding a viewer's attention. It is this involvement and fascination with the image which perhaps creates the empathic responses referred to in this dissertation.

Another aspect of the problem of nudity and the creation of empathy is the issue of empathy and dress. The hypothesis here is that images of historical scenes and historical costume will

appear strange to the viewer and, therefore, alienate him, rather than provoke an empathic response to the picture. A major indication of historical scenes in paintings, are the fashions worn by the people of that epoch. It is mainly through the dress of participants in a painting from the past, that the viewer is provided with information about the painting's temporal frame of reference.

According to Michael Solomon fashion is a reflection of cultural activity: He says that fashion is in many ways an extreme of cultural activity as it is concerned with a basic human need, but goes far beyond the simple biological necessity (Solomon 1985: 3). He points out that style in clothing is a combination of personal expression and social norms, influenced by dominant values.

> Fashion is in part determined by social and cultural norms: fashion is a function
> of society and period. In addition it is frequently influenced by social standing,
> socio-economic position and stage in the life course ... . (Solomon 1985: 6)

Therefore Solomon sees fashion as a way of communicating a message to a society who is familiar with a particular code of dress. An example of this type of communication would be the codes of dress used by Elizabeth I and her maids of honour. While she preferred to wear white or black embroidered in gold, and colours, her maids of honour had to dress in white. All the decorations on her clothes were emblematic conveying messages to those

educated in their symbolism: an ermine embroidered in silver on a sleeve, for example, indicated chastity. Other emblems acclaimed her wisdom, her power, her purity and her beauty, and her court read such symbols with ease (Plumb & Wheldon 1977: 81).[15]

The contemporary viewer would, however, be unable to decipher these symbols and would only be able to 'read' the painting on a superficial level. Not only would the meaning of the image be diluted through the passing of time, but the elaborate costumes of Elizabeth together with her fantastic hair styles, would seem alien to modern eyes. This sense of viewing an image from the distant past, serves to remove the viewer from the immediacy of the action and, therefore, would perhaps blunt any potential empathic response to the image. In paintings where this fashion aspect is less evident, the scene becomes more universal. In Goya's (1746-1828) **Third of May** (1814), the figures of the peasants are clothed in the generalised garments of their, and our, time. The men are wearing simple shirts and pants rather than the rich brocades and lace which were standard male fashion of that time. The priest wears a monk's habit, which is of the style worn by the clergy today. The absence of highly fashionable attire in this image serves to universalise the horror of the event and its impact is not lessened by being an historical event in the distant past.

Images of contemporary dress may serve to enhance feelings of empathy with the image. In Rego's painting **The Family** (1988 fig. 10) the figures are clothed in contemporary dress specific to this century. The male is wearing a suit and tie and the girls are wearing knee-length dresses The action in the picture is thus immediately recognisable as belonging to the same milieu as the viewer. Perhaps if the scene were painted with the protagonists in Elizabethan costume, their actions would be interpreted in terms of some strange fifteenth-century custom rather than as an image of sexual abuse. Similarly, the figures in **The Children** (1937 fig. 23) by Balthus, are dressed in typical modern attire. The girl in the foreground wears a knee-length tartan skirt and a pullover jersey; the boy in the background wears knee-high socks and a coat. The children's clothes place them in the viewer's temporal space which heightens a sense of empathy with the image more so than if the children were clothed in the fashions of the distant past.

Contemporary fashion serves therefore to 'connect' the viewer with the action of the painting. To a viewer in the distant future, scenes from the present will have an equally alienating effect as, say, Elizabethan costume appears to us now.[16] An example of this sense of contemporaneity can be applied to the work of Fischl. His paintings are mainly of nudes placed in ultra-modern surroundings which are specific to the Western urban environment. Although the figures are naked and therefore could belong to any era, the specificity of their

habitat places them firmly in American suburbia. Curlers, cigarettes, sandals, sunglasses and caps are all modern accessories which serve to further enhance the contemporaneity of these figures. It is this identification with the habits and environment of the protagonists that perhaps serves to 'connect' the viewer with the image. In **Happy Birthday** (1991 fig. 18) the female nude is wearing contemporary stiletto-heeled shoes. Other references to the present are evident in the camisole tops worn by the model as well as curlers, tanga panties, tee shirts and hairstyles. In order to establish a feeling of contemporaneity in my paintings I place familiar artifacts around the central image of the female nude, in order to locate her in the same temporal space as the viewer.

Aside from traditional church attire such as monks and nuns habits, folk costume also has a universal quality. Ted Polhemus emphasises the difference between costume and fashion when he states:

> Just as a costume system exists only in space and possesses no temporal dimension (all folk costumes are timeless), so a fashion system is located only in time and possesses no spaciality (other than that which is defined and created in terms of its own temporal categories). (Polhemus 1988: 124)

Whereas costume indicates where an individual is located sociologically, fashion indicates what a person's position is in linear-progressive time. A viewer in this linear-progressive

temporal sense would, therefore, recognise the artifice of fashions from a different temporal location and would perhaps identify more with an image sharing his linear-progressive time experience. Therefore, images of fashion from different time locations and cultures would alienate, rather than provoke empathic responses in the viewer.

The issues that surround the concept of empathy in art are complex. In this paper, I have attempted to define empathy in terms of spectator experience, rather than the urge to artistic creation, as Worringer does. The aim is not to separate artistic intention from spectator experience, but to show how cultural constructs in the area of nudity and dress, may serve to destroy or enhance feelings of empathy with the image.

ENDNOTES

1. Paul Ableman notes that in the myth of Adam and Eve the first thing the two human beings notice after they eat the apple of knowledge is that they are naked. Shame envelops them and they sew an apron of fig leaves to hide their nudity. Ableman sees this behaviour as a change from unselfconsciousness to self-consciousness; timelessness to awareness of time; the change from unthinking participation in the world to a conceptual separation from it (Ableman 1982: 7). This idea is compatible with Carl Sagan's differentiation of animal and human consciousness. He sees the waking

state of other mammals very much like the dream state of humans, where we encounter vivid sensory and emotional images and active intuitive understanding, but very little rational analysis; where we have a very feeble sense of self (Sagan 1977: 150). In my opinion, humans are separated from animals in the early myth of the Garden of Eden as a result of a new sense of self, an understanding of time and their separateness from the world, which depended on, or resulted in, an altered awareness of their nudity.

2. According to Saunders, the Gothic disgust with the naked body was replaced by a reversion to classical ideals and precedents during the Renaissance. Man's nobility and potential for perfection were embodied in the naked figure. Vitruvian architectural theory advocated buildings scaled to the proportions of a man, and Leonardo da Vinci drew the most successful of the many attempts to prove that the (male) body was the pattern for those perfect geometric shapes, the circle and the square (Saunders 1989: 10).

3. The bias against nudity does not exist amongst many primitive tribes. Ableman questions whether naked man is essentially pre-cultured man and whether concealment of the body indicates developing cultural complexity (Ableman 1982: 9). Unlike 'cultured' man who feels shyness when revealing his nudity, primitive man feels shame when he is first dressed, because clothing forces an exaggerated awareness of the body upon his consciousness (Ableman 1982: 15). The differing attitudes to clothing and nudity in societies indicates the importance of cultural attitudes in the interpretation of semiological codes present in images.

4. Labowitz and Lacy note that because men own and control the media, advertisers dig deeply into male mythology for images which create powerful resonance with the viewer. Sexual images of women appear to motivate, so these have been manipulated extensively to create the novelty that attracts attention. The authors see an increased

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trend towards incorporating violence with sexuality (Labowitz & Lacy 1979: 172). The emphasis on nudity and violence to motivate the potential buyer, correlates with the argument in the dissertation that such images create an empathic response in the viewer.

5.   Equivalent images of naked males presented for female viewing do not appear as frequently in the history of art. Images of naked men are usually strategically draped with cloth or covered with fig leaves. Such paintings are usually of males being tortured or partaking in some activity, rather than flagrantly presenting their bodies for viewing with no other justification for their state of undress, as in the case of female nudes.

6.   Because the term 'empathy' is popularly perceived to have a positive meaning, the negative aspects of the empathic experience need to be clarified here. The experience of revulsion when viewing such images can also be viewed as a negative empathic experience as defined by Lipps (1905) and myself in Chapter 1. Whereas Lipps applies the term to the experience of ugliness, and therefore uses it as a measure of aesthetic judgement, I found it useful to apply this term to strong negative feelings which one has when viewing an image which conjures up feelings of revulsion.

7.   This statement affirms the argument about the 'naturalness' of female passivity in Chapter 3. I argue that male dominance and female passivity are gender patterns universal to different cultures and therefore are an integral part of our genetic make-up.

8.   The use of parody in Sherman's photographs is referred to in Chapter 1. Parody relies on the spectator's understanding of that which is being parodied. It is Sherman's reliance on the spectator's participation in the 'meta-language' of her photographs, which embues her work with a meaning that goes beyond the mere image. See Chapter 1, footnote 19 for more information about Sherman.

9. Balthus' paintings created a negative empathic experience for the critic Linda Nochlin. She criticises Balthus' canvases as having perverse subject matter which clings to an outmoded visual language. She asks 'Why must I submit to a male-controlled discourse of the erotic?' and 'In what sense is the gaze of the male fetishist equivalent to and identical with an erotic discourse? '(Nochlin 1991: 41).

10. The intention of Sleigh to undermine spectator expectations by placing the male nude in typical female poses, is negated by the femininity of the males depicted. The portrait of **Phillip Golub Reclining** (1987 fig. 24) is peculiarly woman-like, with the model gracefully reclining on a bed with his long feminine hair. Perhaps if Sleigh had chosen a more masculine-looking male the disassociating effect of a man in a traditional female pose, would have had more potency.

11. The exhibition 'Women's Images of Men' opened in 1980 at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London and toured Britain. Many critics denounced the show but in each venue it attracted record attendances. The book by the same name, came about because of the controversy aroused when it opened (Kent & Morreau 1985).

12. The thinness of the model is a reflection of the contemporary preoccupation with slenderness. According to Naomi Wolf, ninety percent of anorexics in America are women (Wolf 1990: 181). Anorexia is an eating disorder where the sufferers are convinced of their obesity even though they are painfully thin. As a result there is a fear of eating in case of further weight gain. The statistic that it is predominantly women who are sufferers, indicates the importance of conforming to fashionable aesthetic criteria in our male-dominated society.

13. Cranach uses the naked female as a metaphor for jealousy. Marina Warner points out that medieval theologians distinguished between four different types of nudity, one of which was nuditas criminalis, or the nakedness of the sinner, a sign of vice. This

association between nudity and sin is a recurring theme in the Judeo-Christian scriptures (Warner 1985: 295). This accounts for the provocative and titillating effect of nude images for the Western viewer.

14. According to Hollander, the fashion of the time was to have slim shoulders and chest which were set off by an equally chic abdominal swell (Hollander 1978: 109). The exact opposite applies today where a swollen belly is an indication of plumpness and is therefore undesirable. Although the image of the nude is universal, changes in taste impose a quality of fashion and temporality onto its appearance.

15. Ableman discusses the equally important signifying function clothes have in our society. He says: 'If our society could suddenly be stripped naked, without having its modesty offended, chaos would undoubtedly supervene for a time since all interactions between man and man as well as between man and women would be deprived of their normal guidelines.' (Ableman 1982: 30). See Introduction, footnote 9 for more information about the relationship between status and clothes.

16. The fashionable look for men during the Elizabethan period were elaborate collars made of fine lace. They also wore colourful, embroidered clothes trimmed with ribbons and jewels. To the modern eye these trimmings would appear strange on a man because of a strict code of dress forbidding him to wear anything which may signify femininity. Men who do dress in a flamboyant and colourful manner are often thought to be of dubious sexual persuasion. One could say that clothing in our society not only relegates a status to the wearer but also becomes an indicator of sexual preferences and morals. Elizabeth Wilson concurs with this view when she notes that, not only does dress speak of status, it betrays the unconscious of both the individual and the group and it has a moral dimension. She sees fashion as a form of visual art, a creation of images with the visible self as its medium (Wilson 1985: 9). Therefore

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it is the recognition of the morals and consciousness of the group that makes contemporary images more potent communicators of semiological data.

CHAPTER FIVE

ELICITING EMPATHY IN THE PRACTICAL COMPONENT

The paintings created for the practical component of this dissertation arose out of my interest in images which provoked a mental dialogue and held my attention. I perceive the desire to linger over an image as being expressive of a type of empathy between the spectator and the image. The desire to relate to the image through one's own experiences as well as the attempt to understand the image more fully, is what I understand as an empathic viewing encounter.[1] However, my interest in spectator responses posed some complex problems. I faced the difficulty of being both the creator and the spectator of my own work. The interest in spectator empathy with the image led to an overemphasis on the message in the picture. My concern in the early paintings of the **Fairy Tale Series** was that the viewer understand the message in the picture. The central concern of the **Fairy Tale Series** was the strong socialising effect of these tales in the reinforcement of gender behaviour in young boys and girls. In most of the tales women are depicted as passive heroines at the mercy of evil women or men. They are rescued by active male heroes. I attempted to indicate in my paintings the sexual overtones present in most of these tales. Further, I give them an

authenticity by elevating them from the status of fantasy to the more authentic and believable realm of religious stories by utilising compositional forms of early Christian paintings.[2]

As a result the paintings became superficial and didactic, lacking the enigmatic and provoking quality necessary for eliciting empathic responses in the viewer. The emphasis on iconography reduced the significance of the formal issues of composition and surfaces. The superficiality of the message seemed to translate itself across to the cursory handling of surfaces. Pastel, paint and collage was used in a way which did not explore intrinsic material qualities of the medium. The blandness of the surfaces prevented other associations and richer meanings from emerging and these works were ensnared by their illustrativeness.

In this chapter I shall expand upon the iconographic and formal issues which arose in the creation of the practical component and link them to my criteria for the empathic viewing of an image. It is difficult to isolate the cross-fertilization of ideas between the theoretical and practical components, but generally I have divided the body of my work into two series: The **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986) and the **Table Series** (1989-1992). The theoretical component of the research commenced during the creation of the **Table Series**, but the issues and problems which were dealt with, had their roots in the earlier **Fairy Tale Series**.

The images in the **Fairy Tale Series** refer partly to Jungian concepts of the unconscious; namely the model of the unconscious as containing material held collectively by all men prior to personal experiences. The Jungian approach to the unconscious differs from the Freudian emphasis on the individual as having instinctive unconscious based upon infantile sexual experiences. Freud conceived of the unconscious as a place where the individual stored those thoughts and urges that he wished to keep hidden. According to Ira Progoff, Freud's model of the unconscious allows society to be viewed as a restraining influence on the natural spontaneity of sexuality. Jung saw society as a necessary condition for the Xdevelopmenbf individuality. Progoff says:

> Freud sees the human being as caught in the midst of this tension between his
> natural urges and the prohibitions of custom. His view, then, is that the basis
> of conflict within the individual grows out of the very fact that the individual
> lives in society. (Progoff 1969: 42)

Assumptions about empathy and the voyeur and sadomasochistic viewer are based on Freud's emphasis on the repression of sexuality. It is because of repressed sexual instincts that the viewer empathises with images which are provocative within the context of a repressive society. Jung, on the other hand, ascribes to a less repressive view of society and emphasises instead the spiritual, as opposed to Freud's sexual, orientation of the individual's consciousness. In the **Fairy Tale Series** Jung's notion of archetypal types has been applied

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to the fairy tale of *Little Red Riding Hood*. The references to Jung's own archetypes are less important than the symbolisation of the Red Riding Hood characters as universal members of a microcosmic Western society. In my **Table Series** there is a movement away from Jungian symbolism and fairy tales to biographical references and the use of self-portraits. Although I did not consciously allow Freud's ideas to influence my paintings, his emphasis on the individual's sexual inhibitions in a repressive society gave credence to the ideas reflected in the paintings in the theoretical component of this dissertation. The concept of empathic viewing experiences provoked by placing the viewer in the role of voyeur or sadomasochist, depends partly upon forbidden sexual innuendo in the image. Therefore the Freudian model of the unconscious with its emphasis on repressed sexual emotions, facilitates an empathic response to images reflecting these sexual desires.

In both series the following images recur: the virgin/bride, wolves, dwarves, burning candles, the anthurium and hibiscus flowers, chameleons, the presence of containers (teacups, saucers, plates, vases, teapots), birthday-party paraphernalia and food, tables and references to the paintings of Frida Kahlo.The paintings will be discussed separately under their various headings and their relationship to the central concepts in this dissertation will be emphasised.

THE FEMALE AS VIRGIN, BRIDE AND MOTHER

The first images created in the practical component were based on characters in fairy tales. I isolated the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* because it has been the first modern fairy tale. According to Iona and Peter Opie, the story is remarkable for the fact that no version of the story is found prior to Perrault's manuscript of 1695, and its subsequent publication in *Histoires ou contes du temps passe*, 1697 (Opie & Opie 1974: 93). It is a tale in which characters seemed to be archetypes of those found in present-day society and they seem to relate closely to some of Jung's archetypes of the collective unconscious.[3] These include aspects of the anima and animus as well as the Trickster and Mother. The figure of Red Riding Hood contains the feminine (anima) principle although not necessarily present in the consciousness of men, which is how Jung defines the anima. Whereas Jung sees the anima as the female within the unconscious of male, I have 'borrowed' the concept of anima to isolate the archetypal features of the feminine character. Red Riding Hood becomes symbolic of the innocent female who is passive and compliant, in contrast to the active and domineering male.

In contrast to Red Riding Hood, the grandmother is symbolic of the old, wise woman and refers to aspects of Jung's mother archetype. For Jung, the mother archetype represented any

relationship with a woman who might be termed a mother in the figurative sense: a stepmother, grandmother, or nurse and governess (Jung 1954: 15). The mother archetype according to Jung can have a positive or evil meaning for me, however, the grandmother in my paintings of Red Riding Hood, symbolises women who live their lives by tradition, ritual and conformity. Unlike the virginal Red Riding Hood, the grandmother is sensual and her role is to instruct young women in the art of femininity and domesticity. Her tutoring function is marked by the raising of her forefinger as if she were emphasising an instruction. The grandmother's role as protector of traditions is an ironic one, as it is women who make the necessary plans for celebrations and rituals and therefore their role becomes one of protecting and perpetuating traditions which ultimately oppress them. The theme of food and rituals is explored further in the **Table Series** (1989-1992) except that the treatment of the subject changes as well as its meaning.

In the **Triptych** (1986 fig. 29), the grandmother figure holds up a didactic finger to Red Riding Hood who is lying across her lap. In her hand she holds a rolling pin, a comic reference to the weapon used in Punch and Judy shows, and becomes a symbol of female authority.[4] The triptych is a painted collage composed of gold paint, photographs, and porcupine quills to create an image which has a richly textured surface. The stance of the figures is an obvious parody of medieval triptychs, where there is a madonna and child motif

in the centre and adoring saints or patrons on the sides.[5] These allusions to culturally-loaded images are part of the concern to communicate a message to the viewer. The imposition of fairy tale characters on a Christian iconographical structure, was meant to 'shock' the viewer into recognising the thin line between myth and fairy tale, biblical legend and folklore. The attempt to create an empathic response in the viewer lies not in the visual effects of the image, but in the more cerebral attempt to appeal to the existing knowledge of the spectator and his associations with the image.[6]

The madonna of medieval Christian triptychs is referred to in contemporary literature and in the bible as 'the bride of God' and the bride in the Judeo-Christian tradition has always been a symbol of purity, chastity and virginity. Red Riding Hood dressed in her cape and holding flowers, becomes symbolic of the virginal bride who is the opposite of the temptress who seduces men. Eva Figes (1978: 48) has commented on the widespread belief that contact with a woman weakens and emasculates a man before he undertakes masculine pursuits such as hunting and fighting, and must be properly regulated to avoid excess. The juxtaposition of the virginal bride (madonna) and the temptress (whore) are two mutually-exclusive categories that a woman can belong to in society, according to feminist literature. In the images produced of Red Riding Hood, the figure of the girl is always placed in passive situations. In **Fragment I** (1986 fig. 30), her body is being massaged and her hair is being

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brushed. In **Fragment 2** (1986 fig. 31), she is dragged off to bed by the wolf, thereby having all volition and action denied to her.[7] The theme of domination and submission, which has been isolated as important for an empathic response in the sadomasochistic viewer, is clear in these two paintings.

The uneven format of the **Fragment** images, painting on paper mâché, expresses a deliberate attempt to emulate archaeological evidence. By presenting the tale in archaeological guise, the story of Red Riding Hood is given historical credibility; the fairy tale is elevated to the status of a bible story. The fragments of painting are meant to suggest pieces of artifacts that could be found on archaeological sites in Israel, Greece and Italy.[8] It is at these sites that evidence is discovered which gives credence to the early Jewish and Christian religious beliefs which ultimately oppress women. These beliefs are challenged in my paintings.

The gold background of these fragments is an allusion to the gold leaf used in Russian icons and medieval painting.[9] The image of the wolf and Red Riding Hood stand out from the background with their jewel-like brightness. At the same time, however, my choice of imagery and its rendering subverts any expectations the viewer may have of their authenticity as historical artifacts. The need to convince the viewer about the authenticity of fairy tales was an aspect of the didactic approach to the images in the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986).

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Emphasis on the viewer's response during the creative process at the expense of the artist's own intuitive reactions to the image, is ultimately unsatisfactory as it halts creative experimentation. For this reason during the **Table Series** (1989-1992) my interest in spectator response remains, but it is combined with a more intuitive approach to creating the image.

In the later paintings of the **Fairy Tale Series** I attempted to overcome an impersonal approach by using images of my family as characters in the story of Red Riding Hood. I later stopped relying on well-known fairy tales to communicate ideas to the viewer and began to use self-portraits to express my experiences of the myths and taboos which surround my own life.[10] In **Self-Portrait with Champagne** (1989 fig.32) I place myself in the foreground looking directly at the viewer, with my mouth full of liquid. Whereas the earlier images of Red Riding Hood never showed her face, except for the few where I used the face of my niece, in this image the reference to fairy tale has disappeared in order to re-invent the tale of my own life. It is in this image that I begin to isolate the figure against a dark background, a device I use later in the **Table Series**. The use of pastel on interfacing enables me to work on larger surfaces to those used in the **Fairy Tale Series** but the fluffy surface of the 'interfacing' (a fabric-like material used as stiffening in clothing manufacture), makes it difficult to build up a variety of textures. Instead, the velvety texture of the interfacing

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imposes itself on the image, creating an all-over flatness which proved problematic because it led to a lack of definition and blurring. At this stage I was attempting to find a visual language with which to communicate the experiences of myths and taboos in my own life. The cerebral approach of the earlier **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986) had now developed into a more personal iconography which I developed further in the **Table Series** (1989-1992).

The next series of paintings, **Sabbath Bride I** and **Sabbath Bride 2** (1989 figs. 22 & 20) and **The Menorah** (1989 fig. 4) were the seminal works of the Table Series.[11] I used my background as a Jewish orthodox female to challenge the laws of modesty which are seen to be of central importance in a Jewish woman's life. The term 'Sabbath bride' refers to the Sabbath day which, like a bride, is full of beauty. The bride is an object of love and affection in the same way that the Sabbath is, to the Jews (Donin 1972: 61).

The prayer said on Sabbath eve is :

> Come my friend, to meet the Bride
> Let us receive the face of the Sabbath.
>
> (Birnbaum 1949: 246)

It is obvious in these paintings that the modesty and beauty of the bride is abused. In all the images I posture in the manner of a pin-up girl and display my body in underwear. The

juxtaposition of Sabbath candles, a menorah and my self-portraits are therefore at odds with tradition. Although the title and the immodest postures in the images are meant to shock, the recognition that the candles are holy does not always communicate itself to the viewer.

In **Sabbath Bride 1** and **Sabbath Bride 2**, pastels are used to build up the images, but no attention has yet been given to the surface qualities and possibilities of the medium. The objective in these paintings was merely to explore imagery and metaphor and its communicative potential. In **The Menorah** attention is paid to the surface and light qualities in the painting. This is perhaps because of the use of different mediums rather than the quality of the surfaces themselves. The image, painted in pastels and acrylics, is of myself crawling on a patterned surface. In this work some of the characteristics needed for empathic viewing begin to emerge. The woman, myself, crawling along the ground, seems to look up at the viewer from a supplicatory position. This provocative pose becomes an arrested dramatic moment which is an important criterion for empathic viewing. The background spaces merge into darkness, and the possibilities inherent in the pose alludes to pain or pleasure, as well as to domination and submission. The figure is semi-naked, wearing a camisole top and therefore becomes a titillating subject for the Western viewer because of the garment's specificity as a signifier of underwear. The viewer is placed in the role of voyeur/sadomasochist. This role heightens an empathic response to the image.

The image of the bride in her white dress can be seen in **The Groom's Table** (1990 fig. 1). She is jumping out of the wedding cake in the manner of call-girls at stag parties. Such wild behaviour is inappropriate for any woman in a repressive society, most of all for a bride who is meant to embody modesty, chastity and virginity. This painting contains most of the criteria needed for empathic viewing and can be seen as one of the more evolved images in the **Table Series**. The dramatic element is evident in the action of the painting where a series of events are orchestrated to provoke the viewer into wondering about them. Tiny men dance around a crawling female figure while a bride jumps out of a wedding cake. The large female's nudity and pose is provocative and alludes to submission and anxiety whereas the men's attitudes allude to pleasure. The dark background spaces and the private nature of the table top scene makes the viewer feel like an uninvited guest and this contributes to a feeling of voyeurism. The light in the picture emanates from candles in the background and highlights the activity on the table. Surfaces and colours now begin to operate on levels that are not merely descriptive but have a meaning of their own. The cloth upon which everything is placed ripples along the surface in a multitude of hues and the texture of the paint is richer and therefore invites closer inspection of the surface.

WOLF / MAN

The meaning of the male continually shifts in both series of paintings. In the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986), the dual nature of man is represented by the wolf and the woodcutter.[12] The wolf symbolises on the one hand, basic repressed instincts of the unconscious as defined by Freud, and on the other hand he is symbolic of pariahs in society such as the Jew, Negro, homosexual and transvestite. The woodcutter symbolises the civilized and cultured male who is also the white hero of most fairy tales. These opposing aspects of the male psyche become less defined in the **Table Series** (1989-1992). In the earlier images of this series, the male reflects the basic instincts of the wolf but later evolves into the more personalised figures of male friends and family members. In both series the male is an important protagonist who facilitates the creation of narrative situations, and which I regard simultaneously as being important in the creation of an empathic viewing response. In this sense his role is especially important for me, in creating what Gadamer terms a fusion of horizons', that is, the viewer is able to engage creatively with the work; here this is achieved through the viewer identifying with the human forms and relationships depicted.

A Freudian approach to the issue of masculine prototypes of heroes and villains is noted by Paul Hoch, who says:

> The eternal struggle of the beast for the goddess represents the eternal struggle of the Freudian unconscious against the prohibitions of conscience, our eternal rebellion against the demands of sexual repression, and an unconscious quest for reunion with the mother ... . The battle of hero against beast is the Western male's eternal crusade to maintain his self-control (repression), the rule of consciousness over the repressed. (Hoch 1979: 63)

The Freudian interpretation of the hero/beast unconscious struggle is significant because Freud's concepts of sexuality form an integral part of the empathic experience in this dissertation.

The woodcutter from the tale of Red Riding Hood, is portrayed in the **Triptych** (1986 fig. 29) as the saviour of helpless females. His purity of purpose is not diffused beneath layers of interpretations as is the case with the wolf. In the **Triptych** he holds his weapons ready to do his duty. In the woodcutter all the stereotypes of the 'macho' male, such as the brave soldier, responsible husband and hard-working, corporate climber, are present.[13] The theme of the hero battling a sex-crazed half-man half-beast can be seen in the Greek myths of Theseus and the Minotaur and Perseus and the sea monster which menaced the Princess Andromeda. In Danish mythology similar battles are referred to in the story of Beowulf and

the monster Grendel. According to Hoch the common theme of all the above is the threat of the dark villain to the white goddess. He says:

> Almost by definition, the villain is threatening and immoral - a representative of the *dark, bestial* forces of lust and perdition, an embodiment of the *lower* and *sexual*, as against the higher and spiritual ties of the hero's conscience. The very polarisation of villain from hero implies one between sexual and spiritual; between 'lower' and 'higher' moralities ... . (Hoch 1979: 45)

The sexual relationships implied in the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985- 1986) relate to the theme of the hero as saviour although this is not as evident in the tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* as it is for example, in the story of *The Sleeping Beauty*, where the hero has to battle through alien forests to reach and kiss the enchanted princess. The theme of morality mentioned in connection with the honourable intentions of the hero is significant in terms of the religious references in the paintings of this series. The heroic figure of the male disappears in the **Table Series** (1989-1992) and the villainous character of the male is depicted instead. However, the later paintings of the series depict a more sympathetic figure of the male, who is less aggressive and more humorous. There is a movement away from clear-cut stereotypes of males to a more ambiguous interpretation of the male. In the paintings created during 1991 and 1992 the anonymous figures of men gradually metamorphose into the recognisable faces of my husband, his brothers and friends. The feeling of violence changes over to that

of caricature and humour. In **The Groom's Table** (1991 fig. 1), my husband dances with his brother and a friend, all of whom are wearing skullcaps on their heads.[14] The juxtaposition of their nudity with the skullcaps is meant to be provocative, in the same manner as the earlier **Sabbath Bride** paintings.

In the **Terrible Twins** (1991 fig. 35), the image of the male becomes pathetic as he is represented as having to hold up the conflicting and perplexing natures of the women in his life. It is the most sympathetic image of the male in the whole series. Unlike the earlier paintings, the action takes place within the visible boundaries of a room. The lighting is bright and does not dissolve into darkness, yet the private nature of the action is created by the nudity of the females riding on the back of the man, and by the walls of the room which surround the scene and therefore create a sense of intimacy in the picture. The roles of submission and domination have been reversed in this image. Whereas in all the previous images the females have been placed in a submissive role, here they dominate the male by riding him. This image therefore contrasts with **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig 15) where a tiny man clings to the body of a crouching woman. In both these paintings the surface has undergone radical reworking over a period of time to provide encrusted and rough textures. The encrusted painting surface invites closer inspection of the image and therefore a stronger engagement with the painting.

In contrast to the hero of Red Riding Hood, the wolf is a villain who can be seen as the Negro who for some people, according to Jungian symbolism, is the archetypal image of the dark primal creature and therefore a personification of certain contents of the unconscious. Jolande Jacobi, referring to Jungian symbolism explains why the Negro is so often rejected and feared by people of the white race. Her Jungian interpretation of this fear is that white men project onto the Negro, the primitive drives, the archaic powers, the uncontrolled instincts that they do not want to admit to themselves, of which they are unconscious, and that they therefore designate as the corresponding qualities of other people (Jacobi 1964: 371). The image of the wolf is also important here because it's primitive nature is contrasted with the heroic figure of the woodcutter.

The wolf is also synonymous with Jung's archetype of the trickster.[15] According to Jung, the trickster has the powers of a shape-shifter, a fondness for sly jokes; he is half animal and half divine and can be cruel, cynical and unfeeling (Henderson 1964: 104). The changing image of the wolf, as discussed above, undergoes further transformation in the works of paintings of the **Table Series** (1989 - 1990). In these paintings the figure of the wolf disappears and is replaced by a group of stunted males.[16] These little men adhere more to the destructive, sly nature of the wolf than to the heroic intentions of the woodcutter. They break and destroy, rape and vilify everything around them. These men first make their

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appearance in **Tea Party** 1 and 2 (1990 figs. 2 & 6), where their tiny scale does not hinder their violent actions. According to Joseph Henderson the shift from animal to male is an important aspect of the trickster archetype. He says:

> This figure, which at the outset assumes the form of an animal, passes from one mischievous exploit to another. But, as he does so, a change comes over him. At the end of his rogue's progress he is beginning to take on the physical likeness of a grown man. (Henderson 1964: 104)

The metamorphosing character of the trickster archetype is of importance within the context of the paintings where the character of the male continually changes form.[17] In the earlier **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986), the male element is represented by the animal figure of the wolf and the woodcutter. As the paintings progress the male character metamorphoses into tiny, destructive men. Their role is to comment on the destructive nature of man as well as to establish a sense of drama and tension between themselves and the female figures in the images. The arrested dramatic moment is seen as being important role for the creation of an empathic response to an image. The feeling of an ongoing narrative in the paintings is interconnected with the male presence because of the immediate tension staged between the protagonists in the images.

In **Tea Party 1** and **2** (1990 figs. 2 & 6) and **Vase with Anthuriums** (1992 fig. 33), the little men in the background smash plates, fornicate with food and masturbate into crockery. Their sexual engagement with the uncovered teapot evokes symbolic associations of container equals female and body equals vagina.

An early image of the **Table Series** is **Objects on a Table** (1990 fig. 34) where I depicted myself as an ornament and surrounded myself with male objects. Included in the picture is a photograph of myself in a typical calendar-girl pose, the same as that of the ornament. Again the surface qualities of the image are not as resolved as they should be, because of my concern with the iconography of the image at the expense of its formal qualities. It was from this image that the idea of the table as a site for dramatic action emerged, an idea which will be further elaborated upon. **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2), **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19) and **Vase with Anthuriums** (1992 fig. 33) were the next images to be produced in this series. I began to experiment with different grounds. With **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19) I glued 'interfacing' to 'masonite board' in order to make the hard surface of the board more receptive to pastel, and to provide a firmer ground for the 'interfacing'. For **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) I then primed the 'interfaced' surface with acrylic paint which altered the texture and colour of this surface.

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These grounds added to the final effect of the pastel and oil paint respectively, by imbuing the colours with a translucent white light. This effect serves to invite closer inspection by the viewer and in so doing contributes to the empathic response.

In **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) the action of the participants, a crying women in the foreground with smaller figures of a reclining women and two men in the background, creates a dramatic moment. It is difficult to fully understand the context of the action which seems to carry on beyond the confines of the picture frame. The use of pastel on a painted 'interfaced' surface creates textural effects which enables the image to operate on a level that goes beyond the immediate representational impact of the image. The **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19) also consists of a large female figure around whom smaller figures play. The use of pastel is more dense and worked up in this image, creating a surface which invites the viewer to closely inspect and experience a tapestry of textures and colours. Use of 'interfacing' where the velvety appearance seems to dominate the overall surface texture, together with the hard masonite surface beneath the fabric allows for greater experimentation thus enabling me to develop new surfaces and textures. In all three paintings the criteria I isolated as important for empathic viewing, namely private spaces, placing the viewer in the role of voyeur or sadomasochist, and contemporary references to fashion or nudity, are evident. The quality of light in **Tea Party 1** and **Tea Party 2** (1990 figs. 2 & 6) illuminates the main action in

the picture while the backgrounds fade into darkness. In all three pictures the action is limited to the private space of the table surfaces, each with a few protagonists interacting in a way that creates the impression that we are viewing some part of a dramatic event. The darkness and privacy of the spaces places the viewer in the empathic role of voyeur or sadomasochistic viewer.

CANDLES

Candles have traditionally been used in religious ceremonies, festivals, rituals, funerals and birthdays.[18] The image of the candle as used in my paintings, also undergoes many iconographical changes. The earliest reference to a candle is in the **Triptych** (1986 fig. 29) with its religious overtones and allusion to the candle-lit interior of a church. The next appearance of candles imagery is in the paintings: **Sabbath Bride 1** and **Sabbath Bride 2** where the two sets of candles respectively, refer directly to the lighting of candles to herald the coming of the Sabbath. The painting **The Menorah** (1991 fig. 4) also includes candles this time, as a reference to the festival of Hannukah, the Jewish festival of lights[19].

In the **Table Series** (1989-1992), the candles are a reference to birthdays and birthday parties. Festivities such as these would hardly take place if it were not for the caring and dedication

of women. The preparation of food is central to these festivities and this is generally the domain of women. One could almost equate the preparation for these festivities as the perpetuation of the festivity itself. Without the energy and commitment to creating the occasion, the event would not happen and therefore the festivity, whether it be religious or secular, would not exist. It would seem, therefore, that women are largely responsible for the continuation of those very traditions which enslave them. In the **Table Series** I have used the candle, as well as other party objects, as instruments of torture. In **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19) the body of the naked woman is pierced by party candles and decorative umbrellas. She wields a cake knife in her hand but seems unable to use it to free herself. She is trapped, and is surrounded by food and utensils, and in this way her importance as a human being in her own right is negated as she is reduced to the status of crockery and food. The same party candles can be seen in **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig.6) and **Happy Birthday** (1991 fig.18) refers to the use of candles in certain paintings as a reference to the penis. He cites the example of the use of a candle as a symbol of a penis in René Magritte's (1898-1967) **La Folle du Logis** (1948 fig. 36), which depicts three eggs in a nest with a candle in the middle. Kahmen equates the candle with male potency and the nest with female security in terms of Freud's symbolism of the subconscious where the overwhelming majority of dream symbols are sexual (Kahmen 1972: 13). Magritte, the Surrealist, placed great emphasis on Freud's ideas and therefore these references to the symbolism in his painting are probably accurate.

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The parallel between candles and male potency as residing in the phallus is particularly relevant in the **Table Series** (1989-1992) where the candles move off the cakes and begin to pierce the bodies of the women on the table. The penetrating action is a direct allusion to the sexual act where the female body in which is penetrated by the male organ.

THE TABLE SURFACE

The action in all the paintings of the **Table Series** (1989-1992) takes place on table surfaces. The table is the inconspicuous site of numerous activities in which people partake. People eat, cook, create, laugh, talk and socialise around tables. The anonymous surface of a table acts as a catalyst for all these activities. While working on this series, it occurred to me that the boundaries of the table top becomes a legitimate site for all types of activities, including those not already mentioned.

In this series of paintings, the table becomes a stage on which the dramatic narrative of the picture is acted out. In **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) two little men are smashing crockery with images of my face while in the foreground a figure of myself crouches and weeps. In **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig.6) a woman (myself) gazes into a mirror, while a group of men wait to masturbate into a teapot with the face of Frida Kahlo on it. The action of urinating or

masturbating into a female head is symbolic here of universal male oppression of females.[20]

The spaces that are structured by the area of a table-top are invariably intimate, locking the people around the table into a closer relationship with each other. Parties, dinners, conferences, discussions and meetings held around a table, imbue the people with a common purpose and thereby provide a type of intimacy not available to the uninvited. In this way the table surface becomes a private space as opposed to a public one, where inhabitants or onlookers of the space become aware of the special intimacy it allows its users.

The table top structures the space of the action and forces the viewer to focus upon a specific area of action in a way similar to that of a voyeur who is forced to remain in a specific area so that his gaze is not discovered. Therefore the space circumscribed by the boundaries of the table edge becomes a private space for intimate viewing. Its space is always finite, like the space of a stage and it is within its confines that the interaction between viewer and image takes place. The sense of privacy and voyeurism elicits an empathic response in the viewer of the image.

RECEPTACLE

In all the images of the **Table Series** (1989-1992), there are receptacles on the tables. These containers take the form of cups, saucers, teapots, ashtrays, vases and drinking glasses. The use of vessels to symbolise women is not a new concept. According to Jung, hollow objects such as ovens and cooking vessels are associated with the mother archetype, as well as the uterus, yoni and anything of like shape (Jung 1954: 15). Examples of drinking vessels in the shape of women have been found in ancient Peru, and even modern slang terms such as 'a bun in the oven' referring to the state of pregnancy (a baby is within a uterus) attests to the tradition. Amongst artists this century who deliberately use this symbolism in their work, Meret Oppenheim's (1913-) **Fur Teacup and Saucer** (1936) is an example. Judy Chicago's (1939-) **Dinner Party** (1979), where all the plates were painted in such a way as to allude to the labial folds of a vagina, is another. Within the context of the **Table Series** (1989-1992),the vessels refer not only to the female, but also to the females position in society where she is regarded as an object rather than as a person. Receptacles are objects with no thoughts or feelings and this extends to the conception of women in a chauvinistic society.

The continued connection between vessels and female genitalia this century, enables a new signifying reference to emerge when these forms are alluded to in art and literature. The development of new associations and symbolism connected to female issues, is an inevitable result of feminist agitation and consciousness-raising this century. The allusion to female genitalia by feminist artists is no longer only a reference to biological and sexual function, which was its previous symbolism. Instead it has become a topical statement about women's position as objects in a society that fails to recognise or give credence to their individuality. The objectification and fetishisation of women is evident in the way in which they are represented in advertising and in pornographic magazines. Kathy Myers comments on these images:

> The process of sexual fetishisation ... is always complicated by that of commodity fetishisation, whereby the image of a women's legs, for example, becomes isolated and estranged. They become a commodity, an object of display to be visually consumed by an audience. (Myers 1982: 199)

Therefore the objectification of women in the media is commented upon in the arts and traditional female symbols such as receptacles can acquire new political meanings based upon feminist ideologies.

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In **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) the vessels are being violated by the males in the picture. Around them lie shattered pieces of crockery with the artist's face, broken into small fragments. The cake on the table in **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19), which also includes the artist's self-portrait, has been sliced open and in this way creates a wound on the facial features of the portrait. Around the central figure of the woman, men fornicate. She lies helpless on the table, pierced by candles and Chinese umbrellas: flesh and food become one.

PORTRAITS OF FRIDA KAHLO

The use of Frida Kahlo's (1907-1954) portraits in **Tea Party 2** (1990 fig. 6) and **Happy Birthday** (1991 fig. 18), is a reference to the autobiographical nature of the paintings in the **Table Series** (1989-1992).[21] In Tea Party 2 (1990 fig. 6), Kahlo's face is placed upon a teapot into which men are masturbating, and in **Happy Birthday** (1991 fig. 18), the face of the bound woman has her likeness. Kahlo's use of her own face in her paintings is directly connected to the use of my own image as the central motif in my paintings. Her utilisation of metamorphosis in **The Little Deer** (1946 fig. 37), where she replaces the face of the deer with her own, relates to the transformation of receptacles and food into portraiture, as in my **Table Series** (1989-1992).

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In the **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19), facial flesh metamorphoses into icing, and hard pottery changes into facial features. Anthuriums are placed inside the artists 'head' in **Anthuriums in a Vase** (1992 fig. 33), and a face shatters into pieces in **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2). The boundaries between flesh, ceramic and food are obliterated in this way and the objectification of the woman is complete.

CHAMELEONS

The chameleon symbolises the hidden but ever-present presence of male malevolence. This lizard-like creature changes its colour to suit its surroundings. The type of invisibility that it acquires is part of the insidious and all-pervasive mythology that men construct. Women experience their world percolated through the eyes and minds of men. The image of the chameleon which blends into its background, best describes the impossibility for women of separating their world from its male constructs. In **Objects on a Table** (1990 fig. 34) these lizard-like creatures crawl in and around the objects, the only living and moving inhabitants of an otherwise static image. The chameleon reappears in **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig. 15) slithering on the table while at the same time, remaining abstruse in the image.

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In conclusion, the formal and iconographic elements which arose during the creation of the practical component of this dissertation, structured and defined the central hypothesis. My interest in paintings which affected the viewer, forced me to isolate those characteristics which I felt operated in such images, in other work as well as my own.

The paintings produced first concentrated on content as opposed to formal issues, and as a result became didactic and superficial. As a visual language developed, the formal issues became an integral part of the process of making rather than a thing apart, something to be added on at the end of the process. The interesting issue to emerge from this process was the recognition that the message was an integral part of the medium, and was enhanced and strengthened by formal issues such as composition, light, colour and texture. The realisation that the image itself does not operate in isolation from its formal manifestations, forced me to reconsider my approach to the creation of an image and finally enabled me to blend the two considerations together during the painting process.

ENDNOTES

1. The empathic encounter referred to here ascribes in part to the theories of Lipps (1905) who places an emphasis on the empathic encounter of the viewer rather than the artist. In contrast Worringer (1908), stresses the empathic experience of the artist in his

thesis. Their arguments are presented in greater detail in Chapter One of this dissertation.

2.	In the **Fairy Tale Series** (1985-1986), the characters are composed in a way that parodies art historical compositions. For example in **Triptych** (1986 fig. 29), I place Red Riding Hood in the centre with a baby wolf on her lap, parodying the mother and child images of the Madonna and Jesus. An example of a medieval triptych is the **Dresden Triptych** (1437), by Jan van Eyck. The Madonna and Child enthroned are painted on the central panel and St Catherine of Alexandria, St Michael and a donor appear on the side panels.

3.	Jung sees the collective unconscious as a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually, but is inherited. It consists of the pre-existent forms, the archetypes, some of which are referred to in the text (Robertson 1987: 85). The concept of universal and archetypal images is especially relevant to this dissertation which places importance on the experiences and thoughts of the viewer.

4.	Punch is the abbreviated form of Punchinello (Italian Pulcinella), the chief figure of the Punch and Judy show. It is not certain who was the first Punchinello was but it is thought that he was first a comic servant from Atellan farces. His characteristics were not clearly marked at first and the hooked nose, hump back and the tendency to wife-beating and general lawlessness typical of the English Punch were acquired gradually. In the late eighteenth century the glove puppet version of the Punch and Judy play became popular at fairs (Hartnoll 1985: 68). Contemporary references to Punch and Judy are perhaps evident in the Andy Capp cartoons by Smythe where the wife Flo is often shown wielding a rolling pin when she is angry with her chauvinistic husband, Andy. The theme of violence in relationships between men and women

reflects the theme of domination and submission in Chapter 3 on the sadomasochistic viewer.

5. See footnote 2 of this Chapter for an explanation of the composition used in **Triptych** (1986 fig. 29).

6. The attempt to communicate messages to an audience places limitations on the type of work produced. As a result, didactic paintings become stereotypical and obvious rather than thought-provoking. By depending too much on the 'historicity' of the viewer, the painting relapses into a basic visual language that communicates clearly to every viewer. As a result the image becomes as superficial and nebulous as one that reflects solely formal concerns. It is here that the perceptualist and interventionist debate arises in the analysis of visual interpretation. The hermeneutics depends on both the artist and the viewer to construct a satisfactory visual experience.

7. See Chapter 3, footnote 15 for examples in art of instances where men are shown to be active and women passive. The sly shape-changing trickster reflects many of the active aspects of man's nature.

8. Mock archaeological constructions are documented by Lucie-Smith (1985), who notes that the subject of archaeology has become, through television, very much part of our contemporary consciousness. He does not find it surprising therefore, for American artists to become interested in creating work based upon for example, ancient Egyptian and Minoan themes. He refers to the work of Charles Simonds (1945) who creates elaborate miniature structures for a race of mythical people, the type found in old museums designed to help the visitor imagine the original appearance of a particular site (Lucie-Smith 1985: 74-76).

9. An example of this type of icon is **The Virgin of Vladimir** from the fourteenth century in the Tretiakoff Gallery in Moscow, which is based on Byzantine models. This can be seen in the stiffness and formalisation of the mother and child composition. Its fragmentary character is evident in the patches of bare wood where the gold leaf background has worn away. The decay of old icons is interpreted in the disintegrated character of my fragment paintings.

10. A recurring problem in the **Fairy Tale Series** was the depiction of the face of Red Riding Hood. The generalisation of female facial features seemed to be an unsatisfactory solution. I decided to use my niece as the model for Red Riding Hood which led to the inclusion of other members of the family as models for the characters in the tale. This solution however, became an exercise in 'staging' scenes from Red Riding Hood and did not convey the complexities of Jungian meanings that I had ascribed to it.

11. The Hanukah Menorah is an eight-branched candelabrum with an additional place for the 'service' light. It commemorates the miracle which occurred of the single portion of oil which burned for eight days and nights instead of one. Hanukah is observed for eight days. It commemorates the historic victory of the Maccabeans following a three-year long uprising against the ruling Assyrian-Greek regime who tried to impose restrictions on Jewish religious practices. The struggle culminated with the recapture of the Temple of Jerusalem in 165 B C E and the restoration of its traditional Jewish service (Donin 1972: 258-260).

12. Bettelheim notes that the female roles in the tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* are insignificant in comparison to the males. He says, 'The male by contrast is all-important, split into two opposite forms: the dangerous seducer who, if given in to, turns into the destroyer of the good grandmother and the girl; and the hunter, the

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responsible, strong and rescuing father figure' (Bettelheim 1982: 172). Bettelheim sees the violent and destructive tendencies of the id as embodied by the wolf and the unselfish, thoughtful and social aspects of the ego as embodied by the hunter. Therefore the tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* expresses the contradictory nature of the male (Bettelheim 1982: 172). The paradoxical approach to the male character is especially appropriate given the ironical stance of the author of this dissertation.

13. Although the woodcutter is seen as the typical breadwinning male in our society, the reality of this role may have already undergone a transformation with the advent of female breadwinners and the flight of men from traditional commitments. Barbara Ehrenreich points out that during the nineteen fifties and sixties in America, adult masculinity became indistinguishable from the bread-winner role and therefore it followed that men who were unable to achieve this role were either not fully adult nor fully masculine (Ehrenreich 1983: 20). She notes that during the eighties there has been a collapse of this 'breadwinner' ethic and a general flight from commitment as it becomes more acceptable for men to reject their responsibilities.

14. A skullcap is worn by religious Jewish men. To wear a headcovering was the ancient Roman stigma for a servant. Free men went bareheaded. The Jews adopted this practice in a House of God and in prayer or whenever God's name was mentioned in blessings to emphasise that they were servants of the Lord (Donin 1972: 180).

15. Trickster gods are found in many different cultural mythologies. The Indian monkey god, Hanuman, the Norse mischief-maker, Loki, and the Coyote of North American Indian mythology, all represent the mischievous cunning and destructive forces at work in creation. They do not all possess evil natures as Hanuman uses his wit to aid the forces of good (Cotterell 1989: 78-79). The female equivalent of the active male in fairy tales is the witch. Aside from the passive female heroines, the active, feminine

roles reside in the evil activities of step-mothers and witches. The insidious message being relayed in fairy tales to little girls is the equation of passivity with goodness and action with evil.

16. Dwarves have different connotations in various fairy tales. According to Bettelheim they can be good or bad; in Snow White they are of the helpful variety. Whatever their nature, they are seen to be hard-working and clever at their trade. Work is the essence of their lives and they know nothing of leisure or recreation. According to Teutonic lore they are workers of the earth, extracting metals. There are no female dwarves and therefore Bettelheim has a specific meaning for the existence of male dwarves in tales. He notes that,' These "little men" with their stunted bodies and their mining occupation they skilfully penetrate into dark holes all suggest phallic connotations' (Bettelheim 1982: 211). The depiction of dwarves in **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2) and **Riding Bareback** (1991 fig. 15) suggests the relevance of this interpretation because of the nature of their activities. For further information about the relationship of dwarves to work refer to the *Motif Index of Folk Literature* by S. Thompson, 1955-1958, H 973.3.

17. The theme of metamorphosis is important to all fairy tales. People, animals and objects never have a finite signifying function as they continually change form and shift their meaning. A pumpkin becomes a carriage (*Cinderella*), a giant becomes a mouse (*Puss-in-Boots*), a wolf becomes a grandmother (*Little Red Riding Hood*) and a dead girl awakens in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This kind of shifting of meanings was used in the images produced in the **Table Series** (1989-1992). In the **Birthday Party** (1990 fig. 19), the teapot, cake and heads become faces. The theme of metamorphosis can be seen in **Tea Party 1** (1990 fig. 2), where the crockery has faces and men are the size of dwarves.

18. Candles are used in religious rituals and celebrations to mark certain events. Candles are lit at the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, during Lent and at Christmas time. They are used to commemorate deaths in Judaism and are 'blown out' at birthday parties. Therefore candles in religious and secular traditions are lit to separate these rituals from daily activities.

19. See footnote 11 of this Chapter for an explanation of Hanukah.

20. Andrea Dworkin notes that women often support those institutional traditions which oppress them. She says,' The Right in the United States today is a political movement controlled almost totally by men but built largely on the fear and ignorance of women. Every accommodation that women make to this domination, however apparently stupid, self-defeating, or dangerous, is rooted in the urgent need to survive somehow on male terms' (Dworkin 1983: 34).

21. Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), was a Mexican artist who painted images of herself in different costumes and guises in a naive and detailed manner. Her life was one of pain and suffering as the result of an accident that took place in 1925, when she was eighteen. A bus she was travelling on was rammed by a streetcar and she was literally impaled on a metal bar in the wreckage. From that day until her death twenty nine years later she lived with pain and the constant threat of illness because of the damage done to her pelvis, spine and foot, in the accident. Her paintings reflect her passion for life, the pain she suffered, as well as scenes from her tumultuous marriage to the mural painter, Diego Rivera.

CONCLUSION

The concept of empathy presented in this dissertation highlights the spectator's response to an image, rather than the artist's attitude to his work in terms of responses, as proposed by Worringer. The shift of emphasis from the artist to the audience does not depreciate the artist's contribution to the creative process, but instead, re-orientates him towards a conscious communication with an imagined viewer.[1] The problem facing an artist in the nineties is how to re-engage the viewer in a meaningful dialogue while at the same time not compromising himself. The paradoxical stance of disclosure and concealment, meaning and enigma, becomes a central issue in the creative process. This goes in tandem with the ambiguous position of being both creator and spectator of one's own work. The perceptual theorist Wollheim states that the artist should take this stance. He says:

> An artist must fill the role of agent, but he must also fill the role of spectator. Inside each artist is a spectator upon whom the artist, the artist as agent, is dependent. (Wollheim 1991: 101)

Here the perceptualist account of the role of the artist as a spectator of his own work, coincides with my own. However, Wollheim emphasises the intention of the artist as being

ultimately that the spectator understands the image. He notes that the spectator should understand the desires, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, emotions and commitments that motivate the artist to paint as he does (Wollheim 1991: 102). He stresses that the required experience must come about through looking at the picture and that the spectator's experience is irrelevant to the understanding of the picture. The paradox of Wollheim's position is that, if the intention of the artist is of primary importance and spectator experience irrelevant, the question should be raised as to why the artist should place himself in the position of the viewer in the first place.[2] The perceptualist emphasis on how a work is constructed, and the exclusion of a psychological account of the mental states of the artist and viewer, results in a primarily formal interpretation of the image and fails to take into account the context within which the work is viewed.

The emphasis on a purely formalist response to the work of art has its theoretical counterpart in deconstructive literary theory where both critical approaches reject the authority of the author/artist. This anti-humanist stance rejects the traditional notion of the author/artist as the fixed source of meaning in the work. The impoverished semiotic language of, for example, Minimalism in the nineteen seventies, like deconstructive theory, refuses to allow the existence of the signifier. Both question and ultimately annihilate, the self-presence of the artist and author and both art forms require a meta-language committed to deciphering its

complexities, using the critic as mediator. The necessary role of critic intervenes between the art object and the viewer, enforcing the marginalisation of its existence in a society bombarded by more accessible semiological data. Rather than attempt to understand uninterpretable art objects, the wider audience moves further towards the simple language of mass media. Potential responsiveness to fine art is further atrophied. The combination of public apathy and a dissident creative philosophy evident amongst the Modernists, has resulted in the liminal status of the artist in society.[3] A solution to the problem of understanding images perhaps lies in Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' where both the spectator and the viewer contribute to the meaning of the picture.[4] In this way part of the artist's original meaning is recovered within the confines of the viewer's own perspective. However, where hermeneutics gives us access to meanings from our own point of view, it cannot provide an explanation of the conflicts which gave rise to them. According to the art historian Janet Wolff:

> Any changes in ideology, any new developments in aesthetic ideas, any generation of ideological conflict remain unexplained. Meanings, texts, values and ideas are simply taken as given, the task being to interpret them. (Wolff 1981: 104)

What Wolff proposes is a sociological approach to the interpretation of art which enables the viewer to understand the work of art within its historical location which she sees as revealing

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pertinent ideas, ideologies and beliefs implicit in the interpretative process required for the production of art. This approach coincides with the semiological and interventionist theoretical framework proposed in the research where the viewer's historicity and experiences are considered when viewing an image. It is for this reason that the sociological description of the imagined viewer in this research has been prescribed. The viewer, who is a member of a Western culture based upon Judeo-Christian doctrines, absorbs cultural myths and taboos into his unconscious[5]. As a result, there is a close relationship between the sociological model and the psychological model of visual representation based on Freud's concepts of the unconscious. The empathic experience is therefore determined by unconscious social and psychological influences on the viewer as he projects his personality into the object of contemplation.[6]

Because of a viewer-orientated concept of empathy, the values, ideologies and beliefs of the artists selected for the research are not subject to the same scrutiny, although references to their intentions are made in Chapter 1. They all use representation and figuration in order to communicate something they perceive to be of value to the audience and although their style of representation differs, their pictures all have something in common: a mixture of social taboos about violence and sex presented in an enigmatic and non-narrative way. Each artist seems to present a dramatic moment in a continuing action rather than a completed

narrative, which provokes the viewer to wonder about the image. This method of presentation is different to representational modes of, say, Socialist Realism where the image tells a story.[7] The critic Donald Kuspit in his article 'Crowding the picture: notes on American activist art today' (1988b), refers to artists like Hans Haake and Barbara Kruger who rely more or less on familiar readable images to convey their messages.[8] He says:

> But after an initial surge, their art is victimized by its own media, sinks back into
> its sources and what is left is the message that we can trust common experience
> to point the way to social transformations. (Kuspit 1988b: 113)

As a solution to the problem of creating good activist art, Kuspit suggests that the artist, instead of encouraging passivity in the spectator, or intellectual sloth, should try and reach, cultivate, encourage and draw out the viewer. He cites **The Death of Marat** (1873) by David (1748-1825) as an example of radical resonant activist art. Kuspit describes the painting in the following way:

> The viewer finds Marat in the most *intimate* setting possible, his bath ... . Body
> is not abstract here, but defined, palpable ... . Intimate identification, rather than
> aggressive assertion, *The Death of Marat* suggests, is the mode by which one can
> achieve significant change, both personal and social (Kuspit 1988: 117). [my
> italics]

The naked image of the dead Marat contains both the sexual and violent allusions mentioned above. Allusions to the taboos of sex and violence are enhanced when subjects are placed in intimate settings with a few protagonists. These are some of the necessary criteria for the voyeuristic experience of the image as discussed in Chapter 2. It is the intimate identification in the paintings discussed here that creates spectator empathy with the image. In contrast to intimate identification, the aggressive assertion of representational styles evident in Socialist Realism, encourages a passivity which negates the opportunity for further intellectual dialogue between the viewer and the image. The creation of empathic responses in the mind of the viewer constitutes a shift in consciousness which could, according to Kuspit, affect social and personal change. Although one cannot determine the extent and depth of an empathic experience nor whether an image can instigate significant personal and social change, the possibilities of an art that can transform the consciousness is appealing as it would constitute a movement away from its present liminal status.[9]

A dissident attitude to representational and figurative images focuses on the iconography of the picture. It is the image and the manner in which it is conveyed which becomes a vehicle for subversion. The image which titillates the mind of the viewer and simultaneously engages him in a mental dialogue can be defined as an empathy-provoking visual experience. It is in this arena of empathic mental debate stimulated by the dialogic nature of subversive images that the potential for social and personal transformation lies.

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ENDNOTES

1. The creative process is difficult to analyse but factors such as the role of the artist in society has an important influence on what the artist creates. Before the invention of the camera one of the functions of the artist was to chronicle events. The role of artist as chronicler therefore determined the type of image produced because of the emphasis on communication. During the past hundred years the role of the artist has undergone a change and possibly facilitated the rise of a dissident and independent approach to creating art. The creation of images for their own sake, with little emphasis on audience communication is perhaps a reason for the marginalisation of art in our society.

2. A criticism of Wollheim's paradoxical claim that the audience take the view of the artist and vice versa is voiced by Flint Schier who asks, '... if the artist is to take the audience's view, and the audience is to take the artist's view, then surely the artist need only take his own point of view, since that will be the proper point of view of his audience' (Schier 1991: 153).

3. See Introduction, footnote 4 for further information on Modernism.

4. See Chapter 1 for further discussion on the subject of hermeneutics.

5. The term 'taboo' is Polynesian. According to Freud there are two meanings of the term. He says, 'To us it means, on the one hand, 'sacred', 'consecrated', and on the other 'uncanny', 'dangerous', 'forbidden', 'unclean' (Freud 1913: 71). He points out that taboo prohibitions have no grounds and are of unknown origin. In the context of this research the definition used means dangerous and forbidden as it is images which have this quality which seem to provoke interest in the viewer.

6.   See Chapter 3 for further information on projection.

7.   An example of Socialist Realist art is the **Defence of Sevastopol** (1942) by Alexander Deineka. In this painting heroic Russian men fight off a garrison of German soldiers during World War Two. The figures are idealised and dressed in white in contrast to the smaller darkly dressed figures of the Germans. The painting attempts to capture the drama of the battle and the heroism of the Soviets in an illustrative way. However the literalness of the image fails to spark further mental dialogue in the viewer. It is this type of dialogue which is seen to be important for social and political transformations to occur.

8.   The paintings of Haake and Kruger use letters and words which can be 'read' by the viewer. The use of esoteric sayings in public spaces by Kruger are problematic in their emphasis on writing rather than imagery. Resorting to the written word rather than a visual image to convey a message places the work in a different paradigm of communication to that of 'fine art'.

9.   Perhaps the way to effect these changes lies in the dissident creative attitude of the Modernists combined with a representational and figurative approach to form. The Dadaists were nihilistic and destructive in their approach to art and attempted to destroy art through the use of mockery and shock tactics. The irony of their attempts was to give art a new impetus and direction. Their mockery of traditional techniques and the role of the artist resulted in the exploration of a wider range of materials and ideas within the field of art. An example of such an approach is Marcel Duchamp's (1887-1968) image of the Mona Lisa by da Vinci called **LHOOQ** (1914), where his combination of an icon of the Renaissance with a bawdy phonetic message, sought to undermine and subvert the viewer's preconceived ideas about art. The use of popular

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images and banal objects in order to provoke a response in the viewer, relies on a shared semiological system for its effect.

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9. Cindy Sherman, **Untitled # 92** (1981). Colour photograph, 61 x 122 cm, Saatchi Collection, London.

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15. Glenda Sacks, **Riding Bareback** (1991). Oil on masonite, 121 x 121 cm, Johannesburg.

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17. Paula Rego, **The Departure** (1988). Acrylic on paper on canvas, 213,4 x 152,4 cm. Collection of the Artist.

18. Glenda Sacks, **Happy Birthday** (1991). Pastel on paper, 67,5 x 48 cm, Johannesburg.

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33.   Glenda Sacks, **Vase with Anthuriums** (1992). Pencil, graphite and pastel on paper, 76 x 109,5 cm, Johannesburg.

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35. Glenda Sacks, **Terrible Twins** (1991). Oil on masonite, 109 x 122 cm, Johannesburg.

36. Renée Magritte, **La Folle du Logis** (1948). Gouache, 17 x 14 cm, Private collection, Brussels.

37. Frida Kahlo, **The Little Deer** (1946). Oil on masonite, 22,4 x 30 cm, Collection Mrs Carolyn Farb, New York.

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Below Left: **Fig. 3** Sherman, Untitled #90 (1981), Colour photograph, 61 x 122 cm, *Metro Pictures*, New York. Source: Nairne (1987:134)

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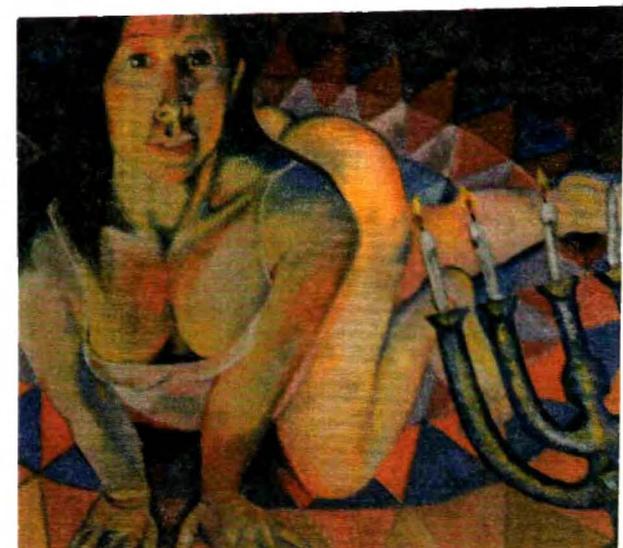
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Fig. 6 Sacks, **Tea Party 2** (1990), Oil on masonite, 122 x 122 cm, *Collection of the Artist,* Johannesburg
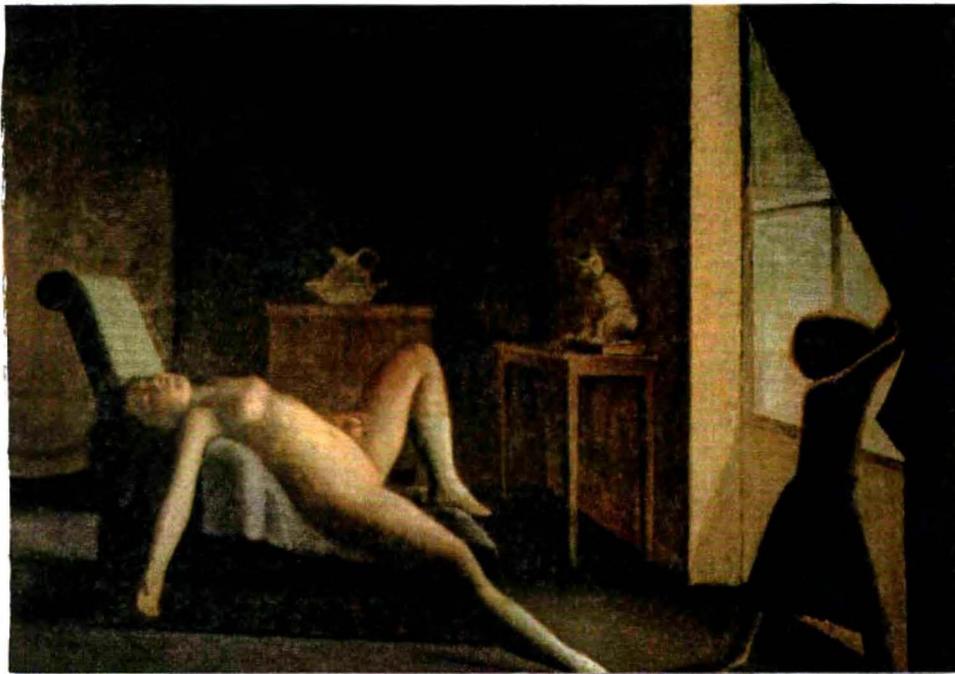
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Source: Leymarie (1979:19)

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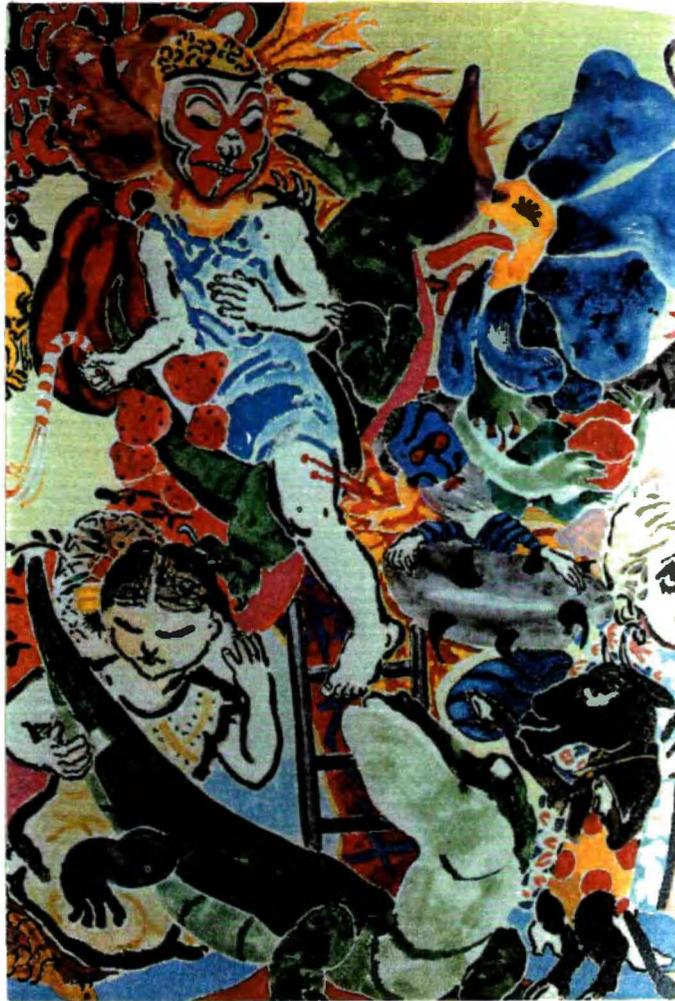
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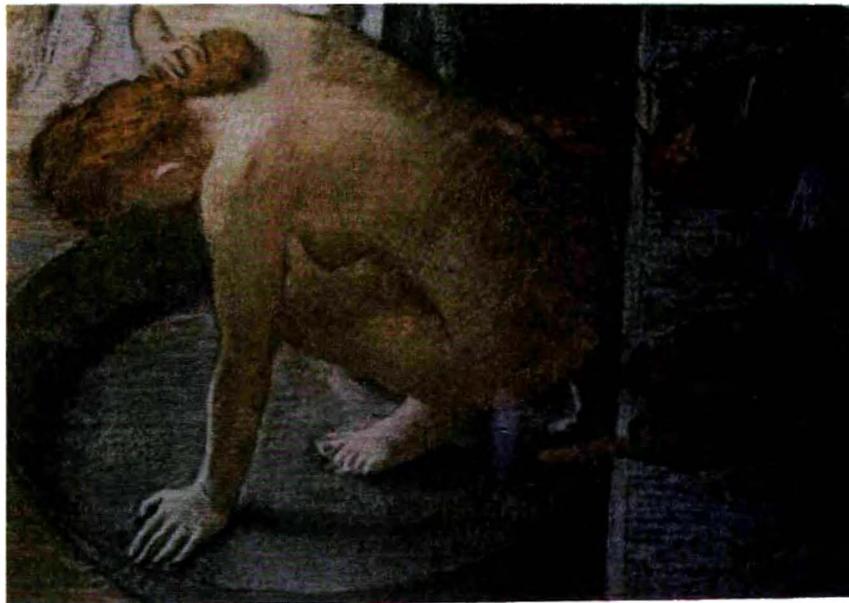
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Source: Field (1981:107)
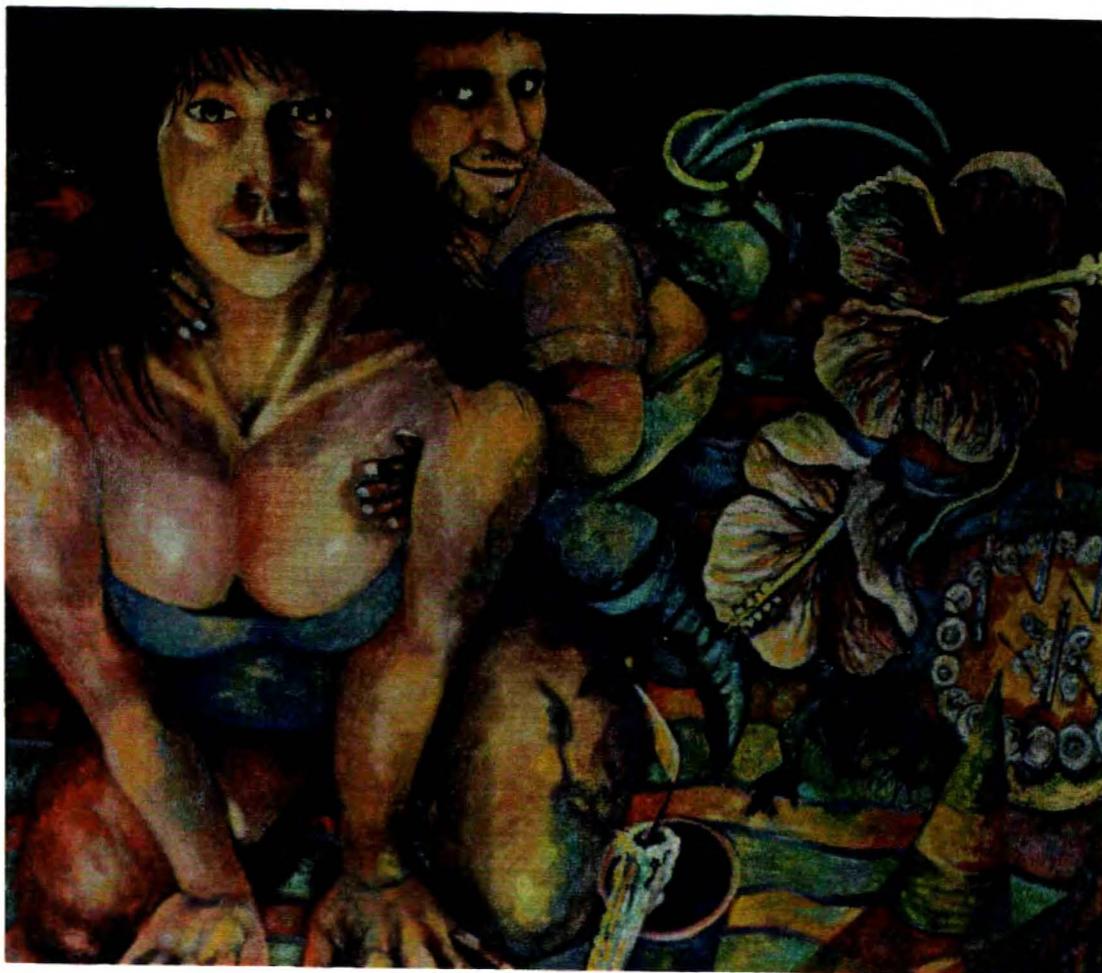
Fig. 15 Sacks, **Riding Bareback** (1991), Oil on masonite 121 x 121 cm, *Collection of the Artist*, Johannesburg
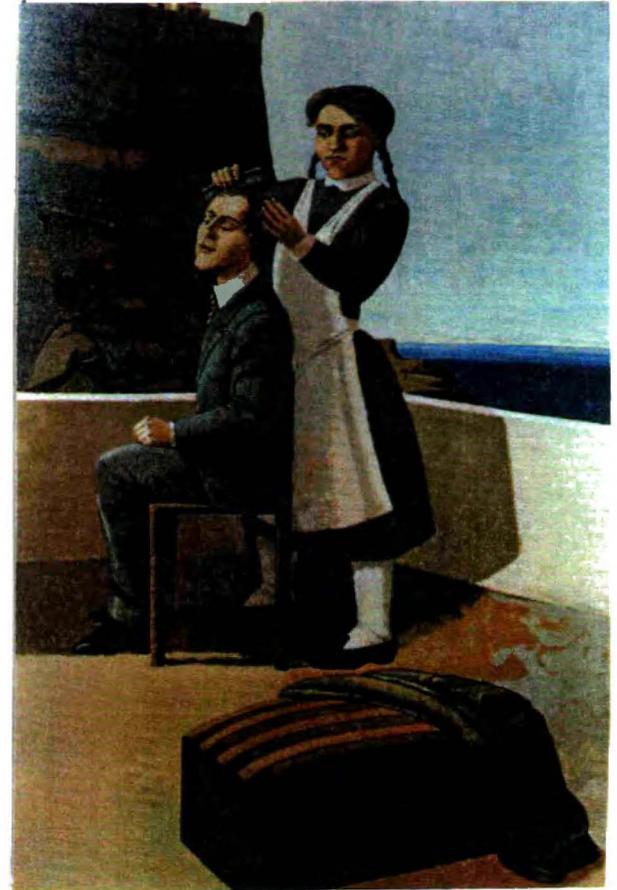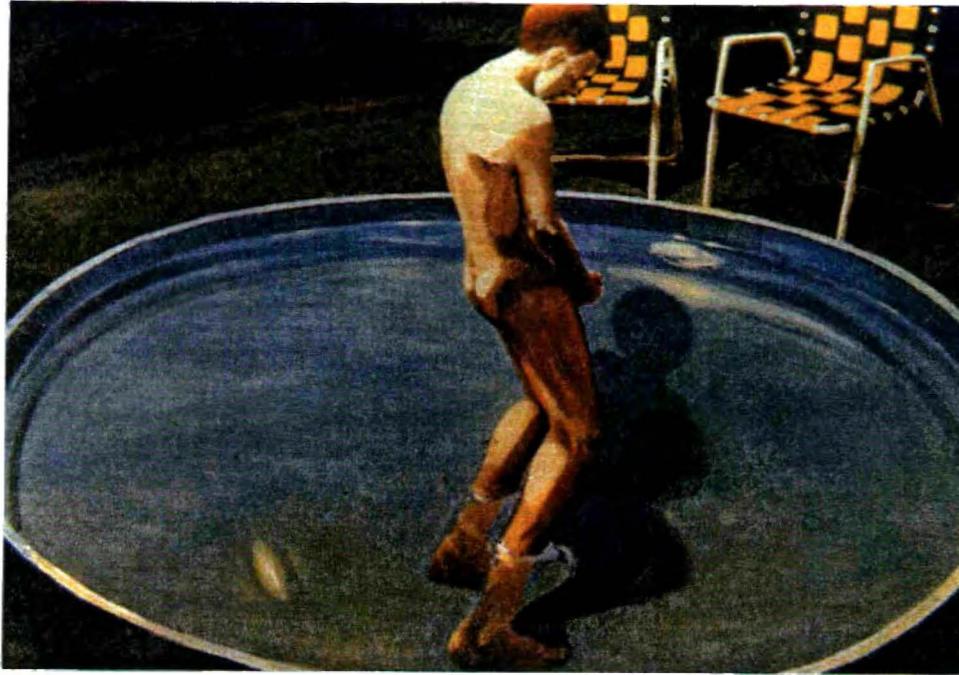
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Source: Honnef (1986:182)

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Source: Paula Rego (1988:47)

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Fig. 18 Sacks, **Happy Birthday** (1991), Pastel on paper,
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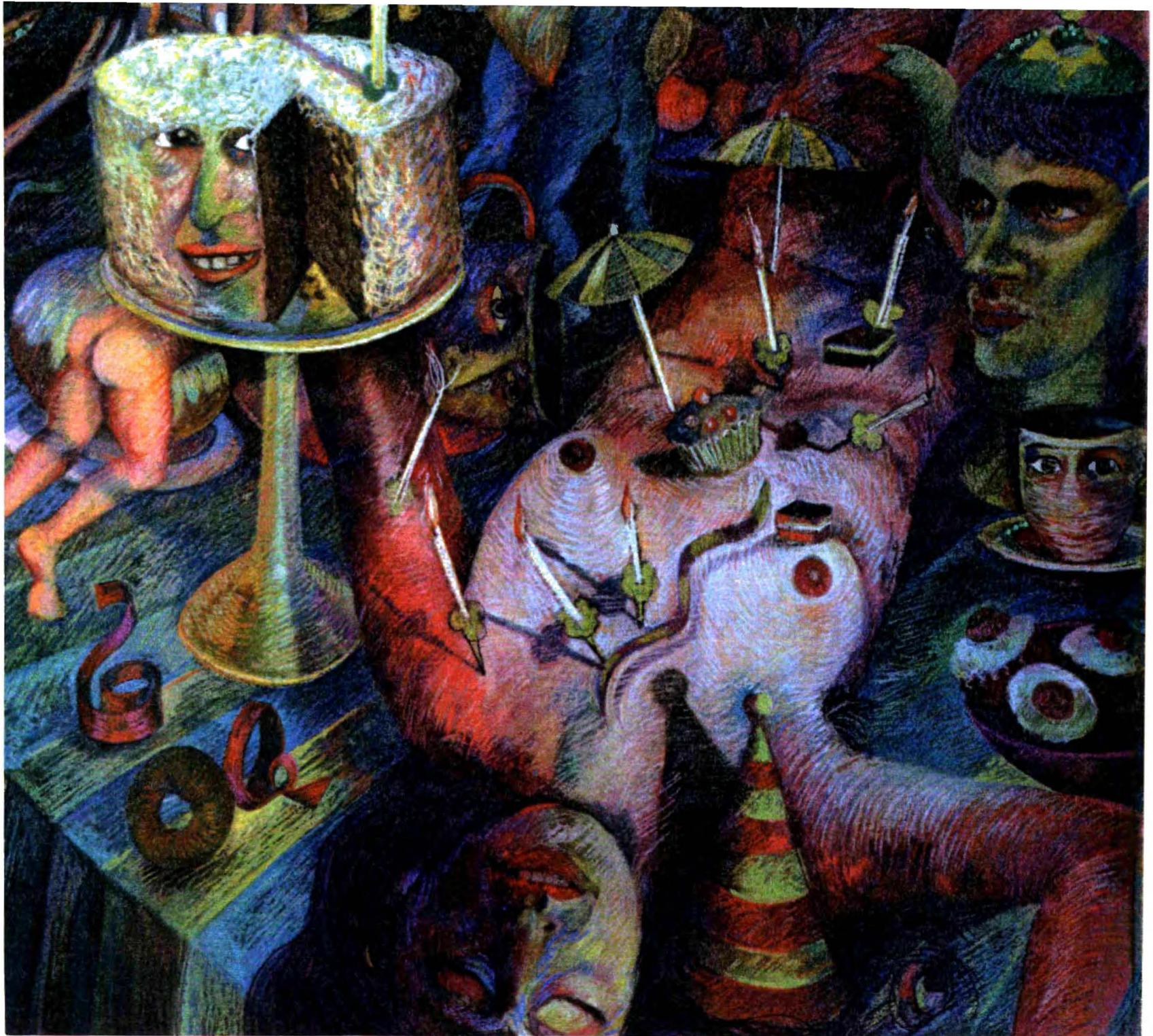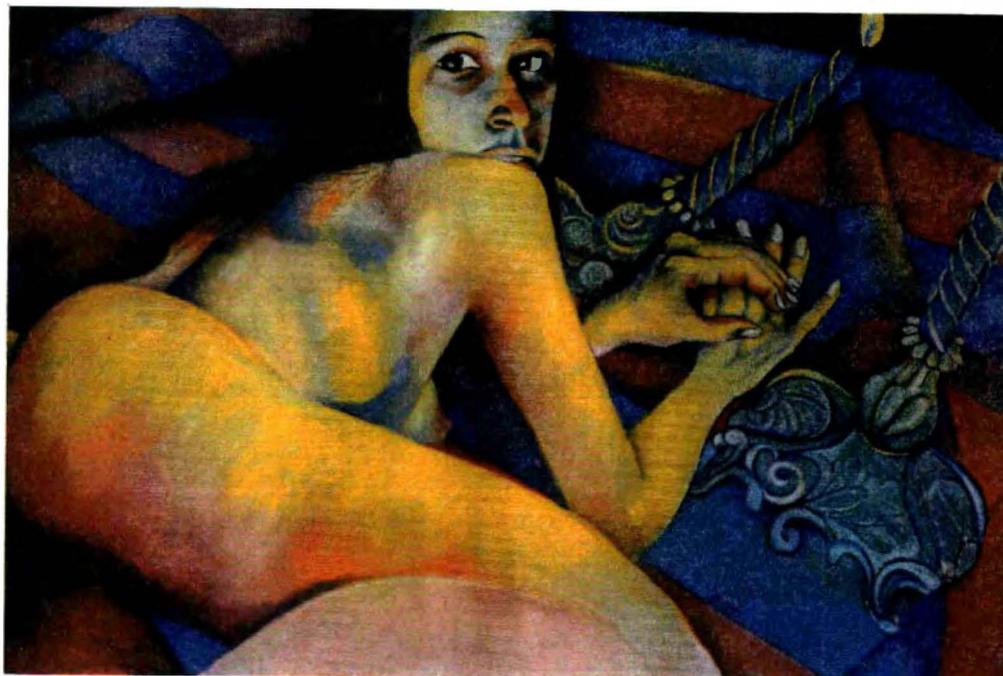
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Fig. 21 Sherman, **Untitled** #97 (1982), Colour photograph, 114,3 x 76 cm, *Metro Pictures*, New York
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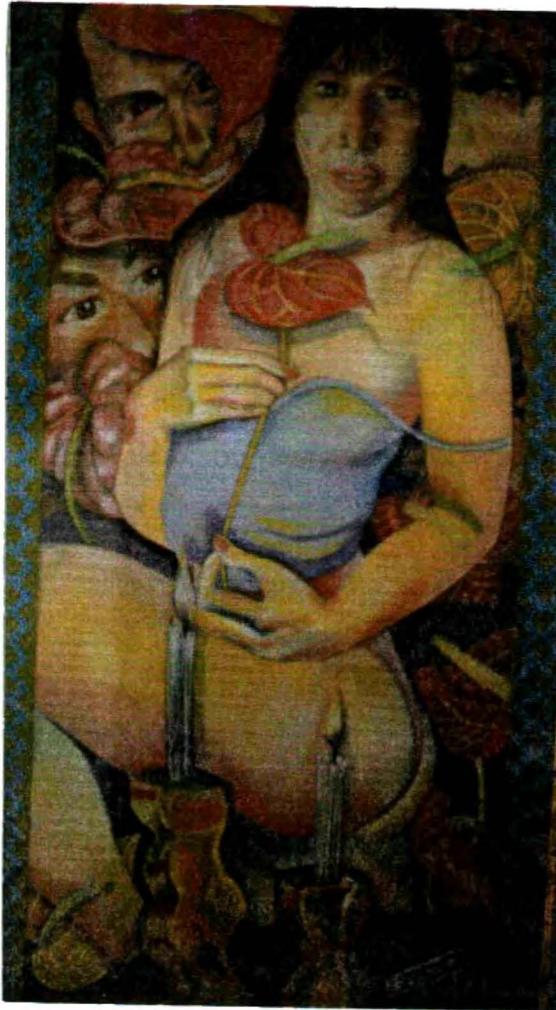
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Source: Davenport (1989:Fig.5)

Below:
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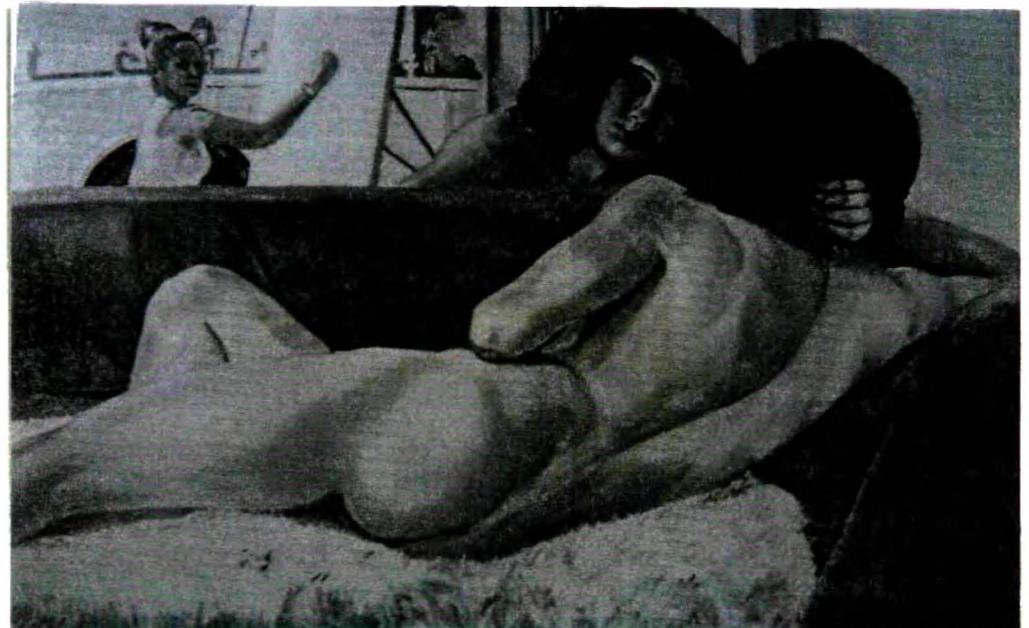
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Source: Field (1981:123)
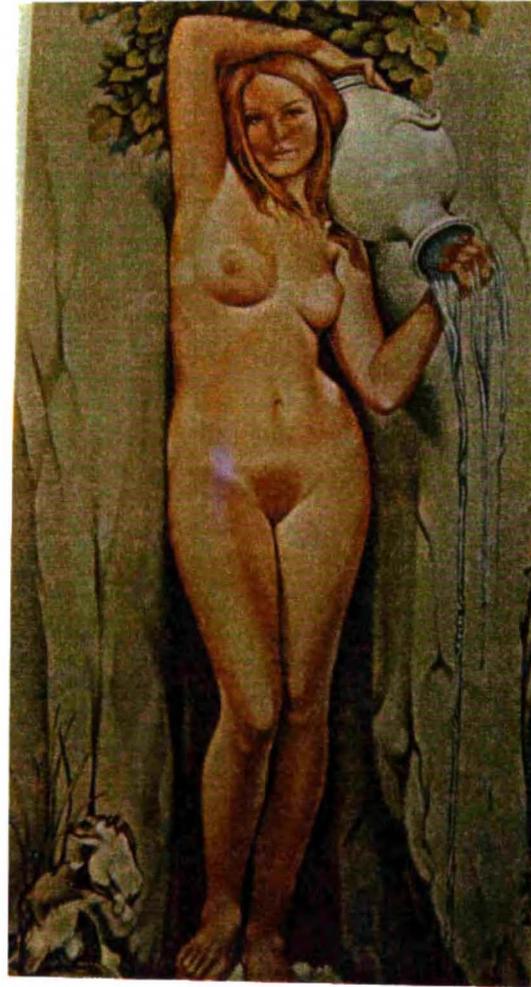
Fig. 26 Ramos, **Ode to Ange** (1972), Oil on canvas, 178 x 94 cm, *Collection Charles Wilp*, New York
Source: Field (1981:122)
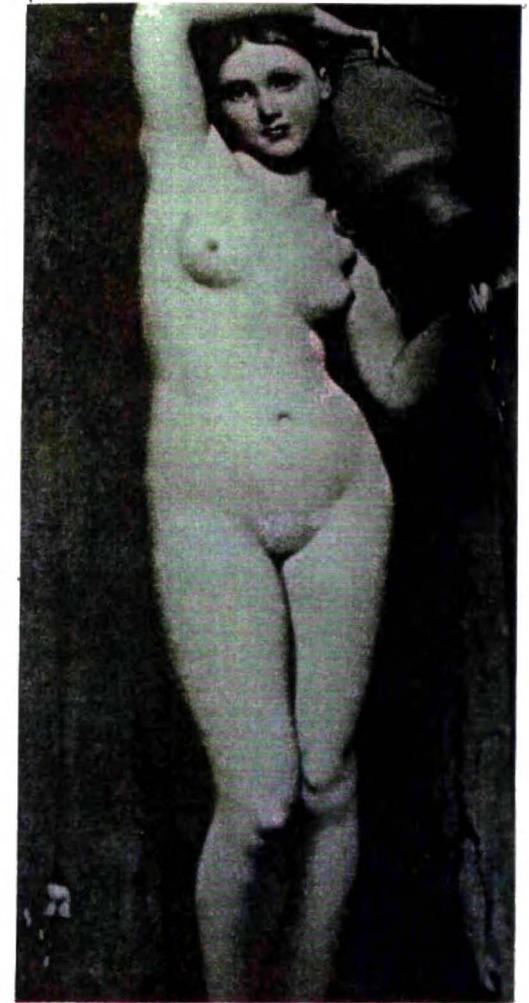
Fig. 27 Ingres, **The Source** (1856), Oil on canvas, 163,8 x 81,9 cm, *Musée du Louvre*, Paris
Source: Field (1981:89)
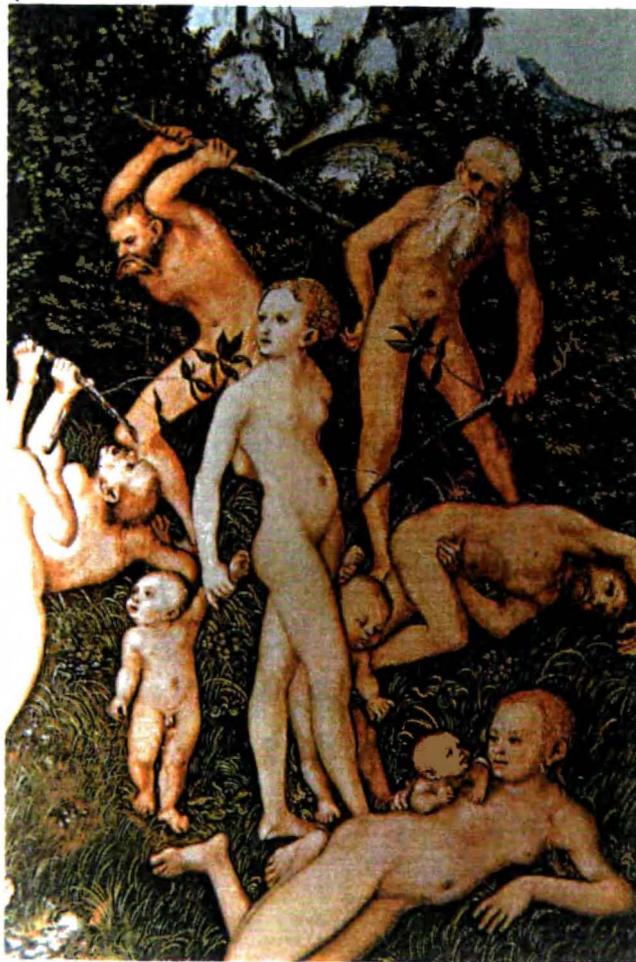
Above:
Fig. 28 Lucas Cranach the Elder, **Jealousy** (c.1530), Oil on wood, 50,2 x 35,7 cm, *National Gallery,* London
Source: Field (1981:43)
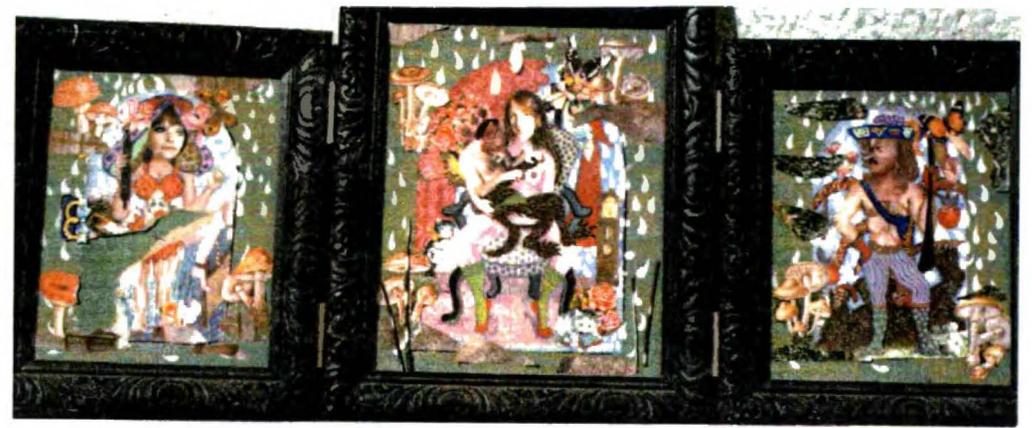
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Fig. 29 Sacks, **Triptych** (1986), Gouache, photographs and quills on paper, centre panel: 24 x 29 cm and side panels: each 24 x 19 cm, *Collection of the Artist,* Johannesburg

Left:
Fig. 30 Sacks, **Fragment 1** (1986), Gouache on paper mâché, 57 x 28 cm, *Collection of the Artist,* Johannesburg

Top:
Fig. 31 Sacks, **Fragment 2** (1986), Gouache on paper mâché, 69 x 25 cm, *Collection of the Artist*, Johannesburg

Above:
Fig. 33 Sacks, **Vase with Anthuriums** (1992), Pencil, graphite and pastel on paper, 76 x 109,5 cm, *Collection of the Artist*, Johannesburg
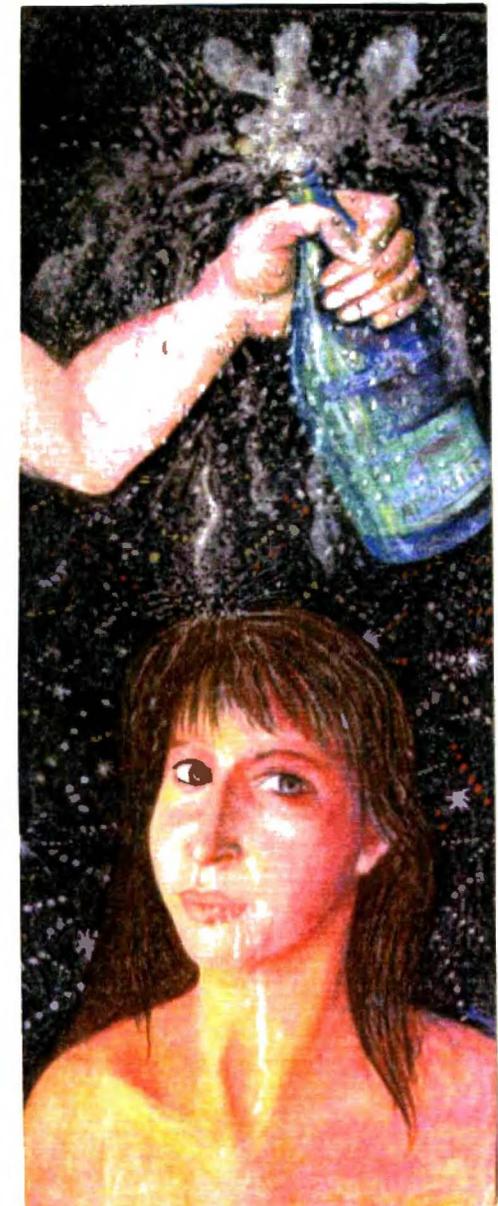
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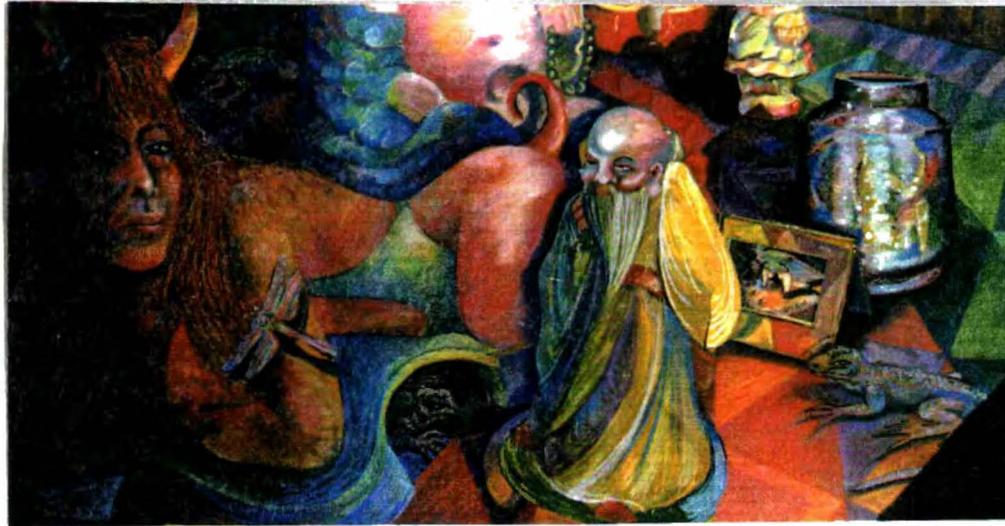
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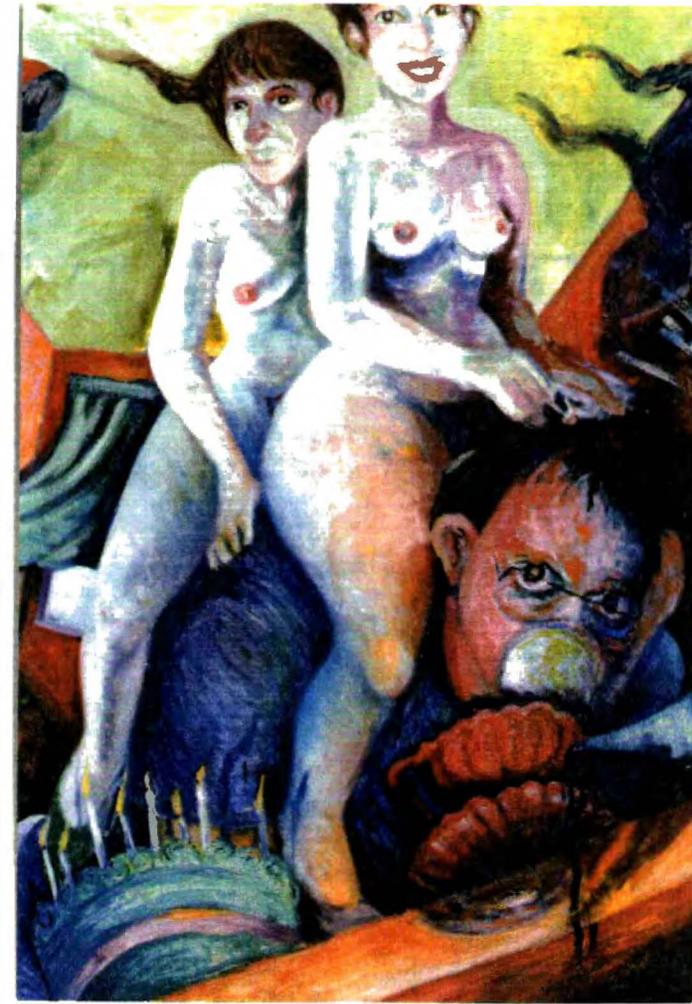
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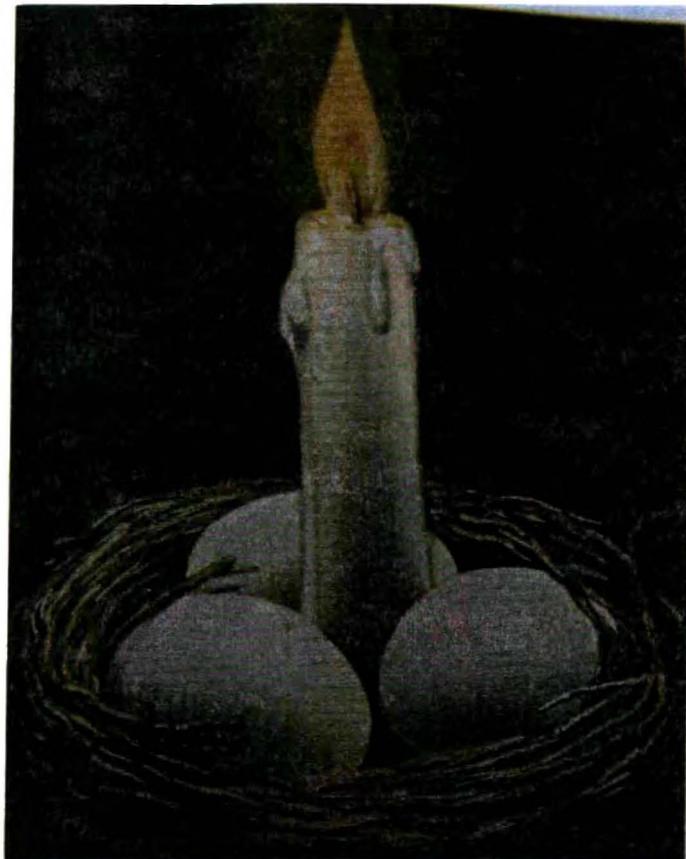
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Fig. 1   **The Groom's Table.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 2   **Tea Party 1.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 3   **Untitled # 90.**

Source: Nairne, S. 1987. *The state of the arts: ideas and images* in the 1980's. London: Chatto & Windus.

Fig. 4   **The Menorah.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 5   **The Cadet and his Sister.**

Source: Lucie-Smith, E. 1991. *Sexuality in Western Art*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Fig. 6   **Tea Party 2.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 7   **Le Chambre**

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Fig. 8   **Nu Jouant avec un Chat.**

Source: Lucie - Smith, E. 1986. *Lives of the great twentieth century artists*. New York: Rizzoli.

Fig. 9   **Untitled # 92.**

Source: Nairne, S. 1987. *The state of the arts: ideas and images in the 1980's*. London: Chatto and Windus.

Fig. 10 **The Family.**

Source: *Paula Rego*. 1988. (Catalogue for an exhibition held at the Serpentine Gallery, London). London: Serpentine Gallery.

Fig. 11 **The Bride.**

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Fig. 19   **Birthday Party.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 20   **Sabbath Bride 2.**

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Source: Kent, S. & Morreau, J. (ed.). 1985. *Women's images of men.* San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

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Fig. 29   **Triptych.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 30   **Fragment 1.**

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Fig. 31   **Fragment 2.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

Fig. 32   **Vase with Anthuriums.**

Source: Photographed in Johannesburg. Photograph by Glenda Sacks.

CHRONOLOGICAL CATALOGUE OF PRACTICAL RESEARCH

1985 - 1992

KEY   (d) destroyed

         (u) unfinished

Many works were destroyed without being documented, therefore this is not complete record of work created during this period.

1	**Laughing Wolf.** 1985. Acrylic on canvas. (u)
2	**Bathtime.** 1985. Acrylic on canvas.
3	**Puppet Show.** 1986. Shells, acrylic paint and quills. (d)
4	**Dancing Wolf.** 1985. Acrylic on canvas.
5	**Mealtime.** 1986. Pastel on paper.
6	**Red Riding Hood.** 1986. Pastel on paper.
7	**Cinderella.** 1985. Pencil crayon and poster paint on paper.
8	**Begging Wolf.** 1986. Pastel on paper.

9   Painted Man. 1988. Pastel on paper.

10   Lipstick. 1988. Pastel on paper.

11   Self-portrait. 1988. Pastel on paper. (u)

12   The Patio. 1989. Pastel and acrylic on paper. (d)

13   Me and Me again. 1989. Pastel and acrylic on paper. (d)

14   The Whip. 1989. Pastel on 'interfacing'.

15   Marriage Portrait. 1990. Acrylic and pencil crayon.

16   The Mirror. 1989. Paste on paper.

17   The Concubines. 1990. Acrylic and pencil crayon. (u)

18   Sabbath Candles. 1989. Pastel on paper.

19   Hands in Pants. 1989. Pastel on paper.

20   Juggling Babies. 1989. Pastel and acrylic on paper. (u)

21   Happy Birthday to You. 1990. Pastel on 'interfacing'.

22   Double Portrait. 1989. Pastel on 'interfacing' on masonite.

23   The Bride. 1990. Oil on masonite. (u)

24   The Breakfast. 1990. Oil on masonite. (u)

25   The Animal 1. 1990. Pastel on paper.

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43   Vase of Anthuriums. 1992. Pastel and charcoal on paper.

44   Tea Party 2. 1990. Oil on masonite.

(All paintings photographed by G. Sacks, Johannesburg)

# CHRONOLOGICAL CATALOGUE OF PRACTICAL RESEARCH: 1985-1992

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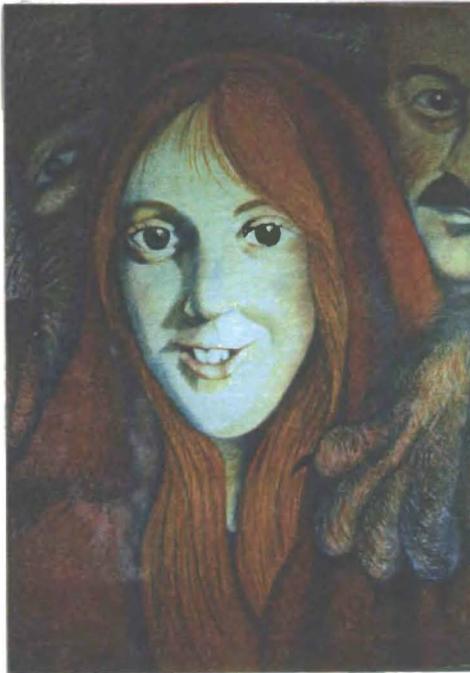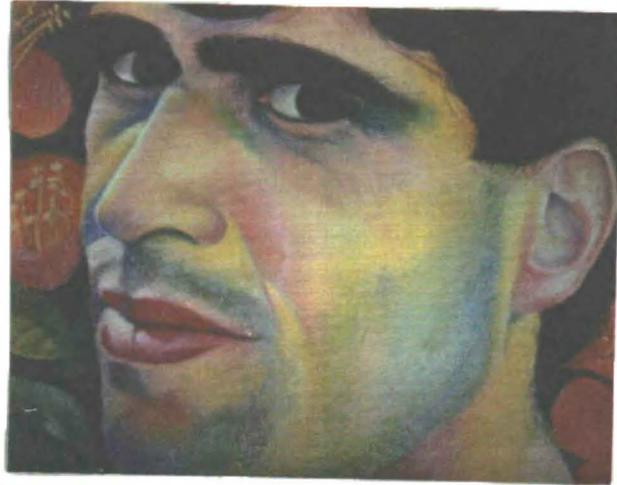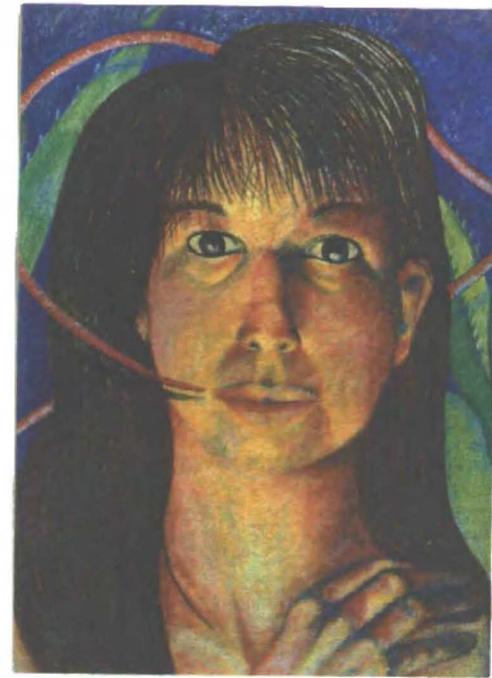
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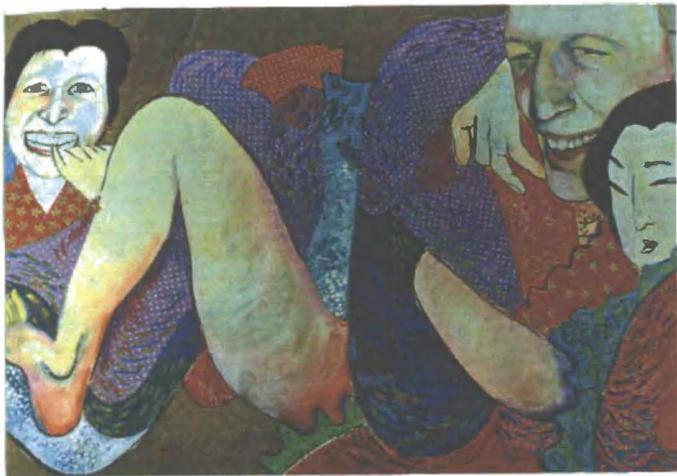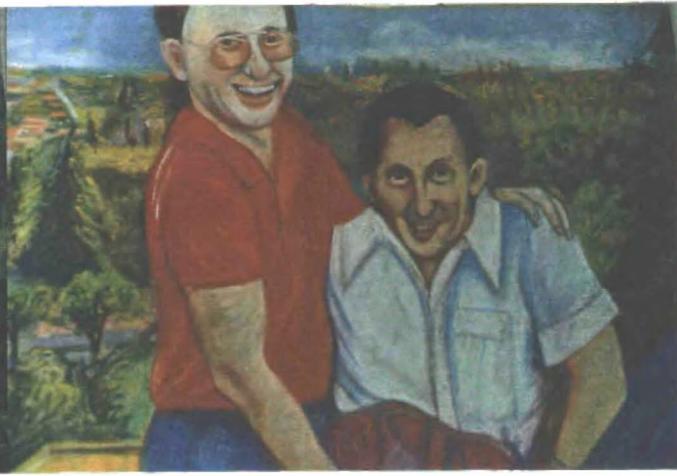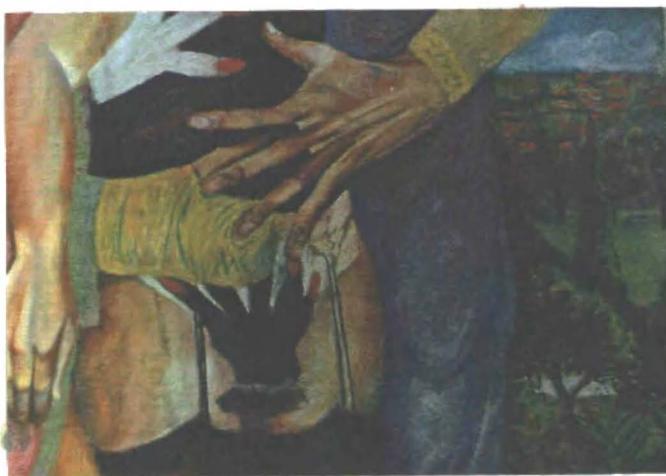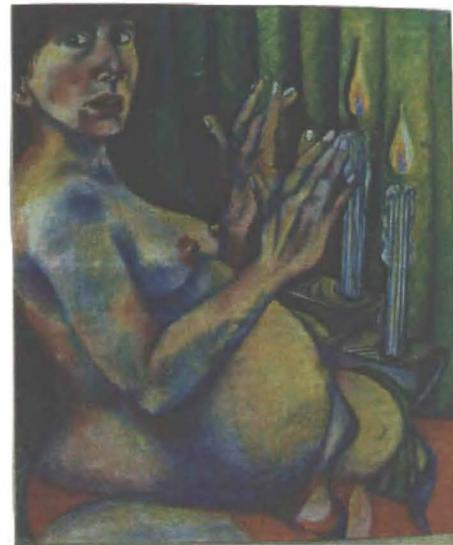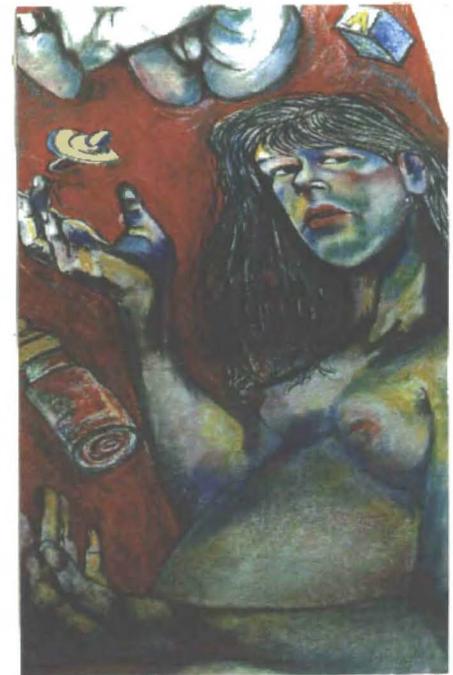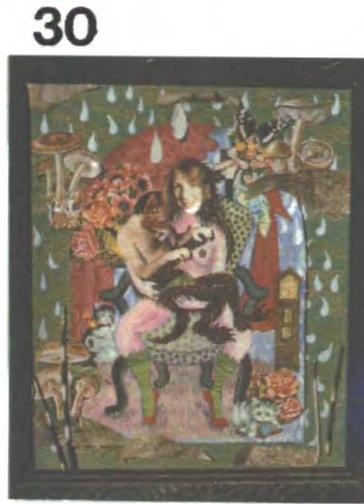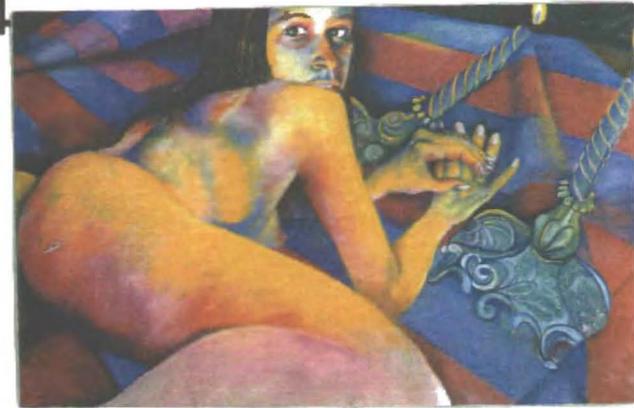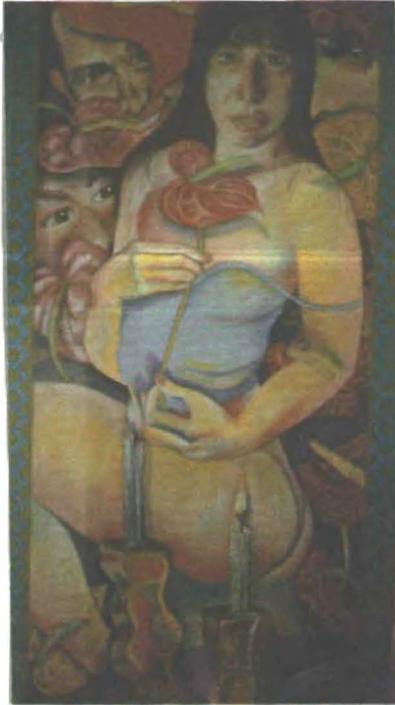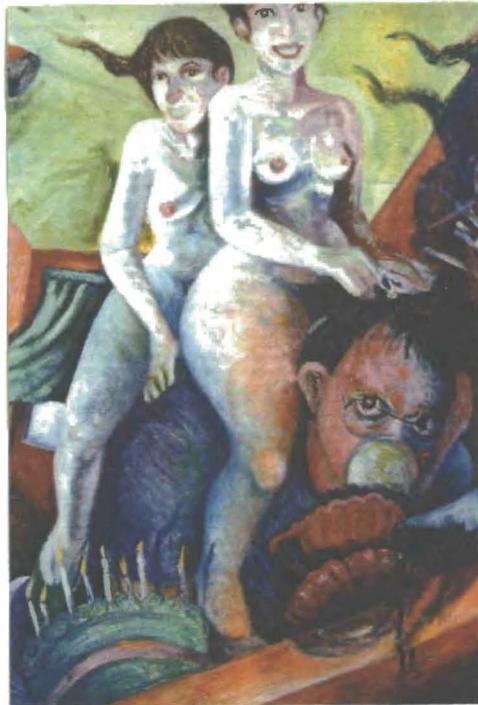
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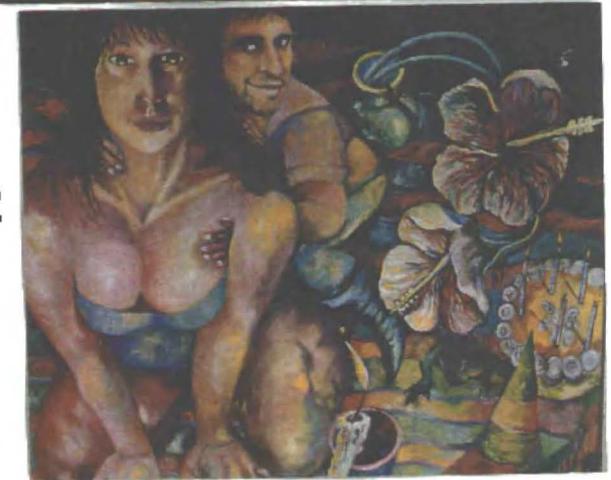
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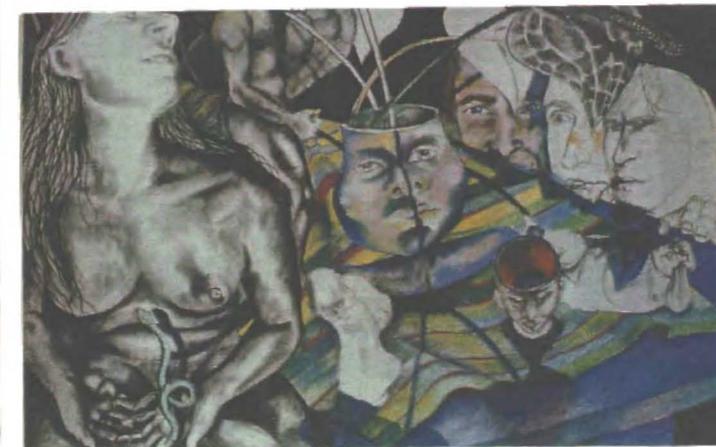
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