

Roots, rhizomes and radicles: critical reflections on memories and the voyage of becoming

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I declare that the dissertation handed in for the qualification *Magister Artium* (Fine Arts) in the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work, and I have not previously submitted the same work for a qualification at another University or faculty.

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¹ In 1998 the palimpsest was bought by an anonymous buyer for \$2 million. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. URL: <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-050631/Eureka-1->

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Fig. 1: (Anon), *The triumph of Death or The Three Fates* (1510-1520)

THE STAGES OF LIFE

The various Ages and degrees of Human Life explained by these Twelve different Stages from our Birth to our Graves.



70 Years old.
His only delight is to see his
With eyes delicate yet—
The empty bubble of a dream,
Which waking change to tears,
From 10 to 20 Years old.
His heart is now puff'd up.
He sees the taper's base,
He hies to meet the least constraint,
And glories in retirement.

From 20 to 30 Years old.
There's naught here that can withstand
The rage of his desire,
His warm flames are now blown up,
His mind is all on fire.

From 30 to 40 Years old.
Look forwards and repeat
Of all thy wrong past,
That no thereby thou may'st attain,
True happiness at last.

By
J. CATNACH,
—
Mineralist Court, 7, Dials,
LONDON.

From 40 to 50 Years old.
At fifty years he is
Like the declining sun,
For now his better half of life
Must needs be overrun.

From 50 to 60 Years old.
His wanted taper now,
Begins to lose its light,
His sparkling flames doth plainly show
Tis growing towards night.

From 60 to 70 Years old.
People'd with slavish fear,
And miserable woe,
He breathes on life's expiring way
With looks as white as snow.

From 70 to 80 Years old.
Indefinite in great
At this advanced age,
And ceaseless grief and weakness
Now rent their better-ages (Cougard)

From 80 to 90 Years of age.
Life's a Vapour spunk the now,
In hovering on the verge
Of an eternal world above
And waiting to engage.

From 90 to 100 Years old.
The sun is sinking fast,
Behold the clouds of earth,
O may it shine with brighter beams,
Where light receiv'd her birth.

HYMN.

YONDER see the Lord descending,
Mark his chariot drawing nigh,
Flaming troops descend the sky,
Down to the Lord and seek salvation,
Sound the praise of his dear name!
Glory, honour, and salvation,
Glorify the Lord in songs to raise,
Heav'n is shaking, earth is quaking,
Kingship by before his face;
See the graves their dust heaving,
Nations sinking in a blaze,
Hark, the herald angels sing,
Hail him children, hail his Christness,
Yonder's your victorious King,
Now behold each shining warrior,
Rising from their dusty beds
Fly to meet their bloodied Saviour,
Glittering crests upon their heads,
How then tell their glorious story,
In their singing, loudly King,
Glory, glory, glory, glory,
Glorify the Lord they sing,
Now hark ye onward with a voice,
Brighter than the sun's fire,
Dancing through the clouds of heav'n,
Singing on the great white throne,
Yea a blessing on the morning,
Thus his precious blood did run,
Ye've's brought us to the fountain,
Springing from his Father's throne.

Disce, discis, discis.

THAT day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When all the world in ashes lay,
As David said, when Jesus said,
How shall you mortals take with fear
When that impartial Judge appears,
Who all their crimes strictly scans,
His trumpet sounds a dreadful tone,
The noise through all the graves is blown,
And calls the dead before his throne,
Nations and death shall stand at gaze,
When continents shall their bodies raise,
And never for their dust rest days,
The sinners' path of conviction show
How black in history shall be known,
And every soul for guilt shall own,
So when the Judge shall sit on high,
All hidden crimes shall open lie,
No sin shall then be hid from thee,
I as a guilty person come,
My facts are in my conscience known,
My conscience prays for mercy on me,
Pay dear Lord, my supplicant's own
My conscience prays for mercy on me,
But then, Lord, thy great trumpet,
To arise on from mortal men,
Arrange the sleep great I may sit
Far from the great righteous land,
Somebody put it on my eye, I need
Pay dear? whose heart needs
Pay dear as from mortal men,
From death our every spirit free.

THE PILGRIMS PASS THE RIVER

A PRAYER.

O Lord, my Father and Friend,
Thou whom I trust all my days,
Let thy love so still my delight,
And bid thee will continue to me.

My trust is in what thou hast done,
Thy judgments & death on the tree,
No man I plead of my own
No righteousness, Lord, will I show.

Fig. 2: (Anon), *The stages of life*, published by James Catnach (1830)



Fig. 3: Casper David Friedrich, *Die Lebensstufe (The stages of life)* (1835)

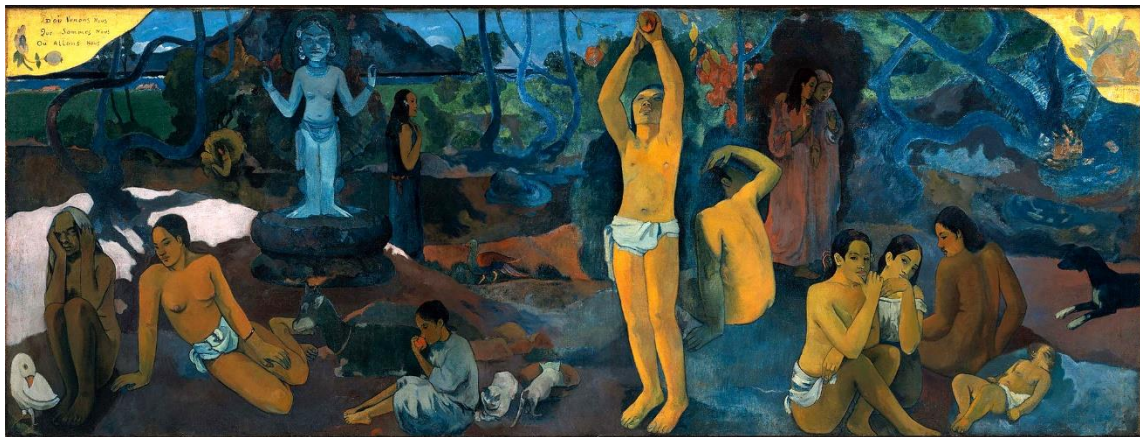


Fig. 4: Paul Gauguin, *D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* (Whence come we? What are we? Whither go we?) (1897)



Fig. 5: Umberto Boccioni, *Stati d'animo I: gli addii* (*States of mind I: the farewells*) (1911)



Fig. 6: Umberto Boccioni, *Stati d'animo II: quelli che vanno* (*States of mind II: those who go*) (1911)



Fig. 7: Umberto Boccioni, *Stati d'animo III: quelli che restano (States of mind III: those who stay)* (1911)



Fig. 8: Ben Shahn, *Liberation* (1945)



Fig. 9: Ivan Albright, *Poor room - there is no time, no end, no today, no yesterday, no tomorrow, only the forever, and forever and forever without end* (1942-1963)



Fig. 10: Cornelia Parker, *Neither from nor towards* (1992)



Fig. 11: Honoré Daumier, *Un wagon de première classe* (1864)



Fig. 12: Honoré Daumier, *Un wagon de second classe* (1864)



Fig. 13: Honoré Daumier, *Un wagon de troisième classe* (1864)



Fig. 14: John Sloan, *The city from Greenwich village* (1922)

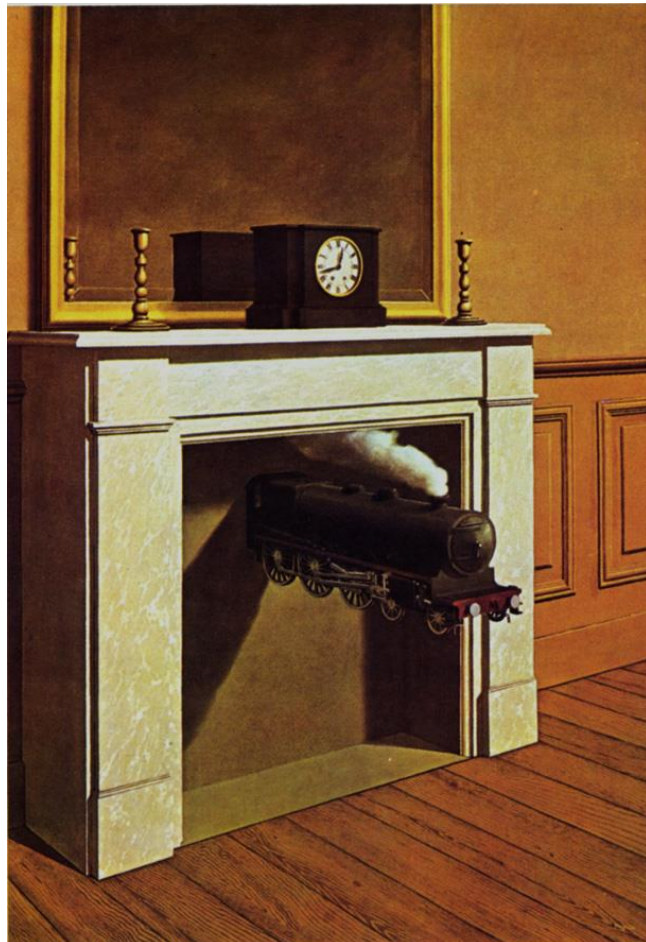


Fig. 15: René Magritte, *La durée poignardé* (*Time transfixed*) (1938)



Fig. 16: Richard Estes, *M-train en route to Manhattan approaches the Williamsburg Bridge* (1995)



Fig. 17: Richard Estes, *The Plaza at Central Park* (1991)



Fig. 18: Gregory Crewdson, *Untitled (House fire), (Beneath the roses)* (2004)



Fig. 19: Alex Garland, *Annihilation*, film still #1 (2018)



Fig. 20: Alex Garland, *Annihilation*, film still #2 (2018)



Fig. 21: Alex Garland, *Annihilation*, film still #3 (2018)



Fig. 22: Alex Garland, *Annihilation*, film still #4 (2018)



Fig. 23: Cecilia Maartens, *Miraculous pathways* (2016)



Fig. 24: *Odysseus returning to Penelope* (ca. 460-450 BCE)

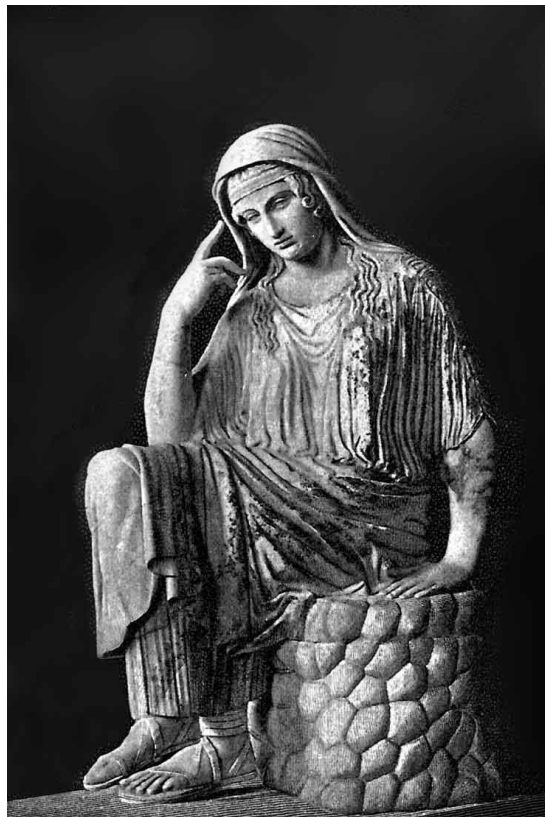


Fig. 25: *Melos Penelope* (450 BCE)



Fig. 26: Angelica Kauffmann, *Penelope at her loom* (1764)



Fig. 27: John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, *Penelope* (1864)



Fig. 28: Archimedes Palimpsest (1229)

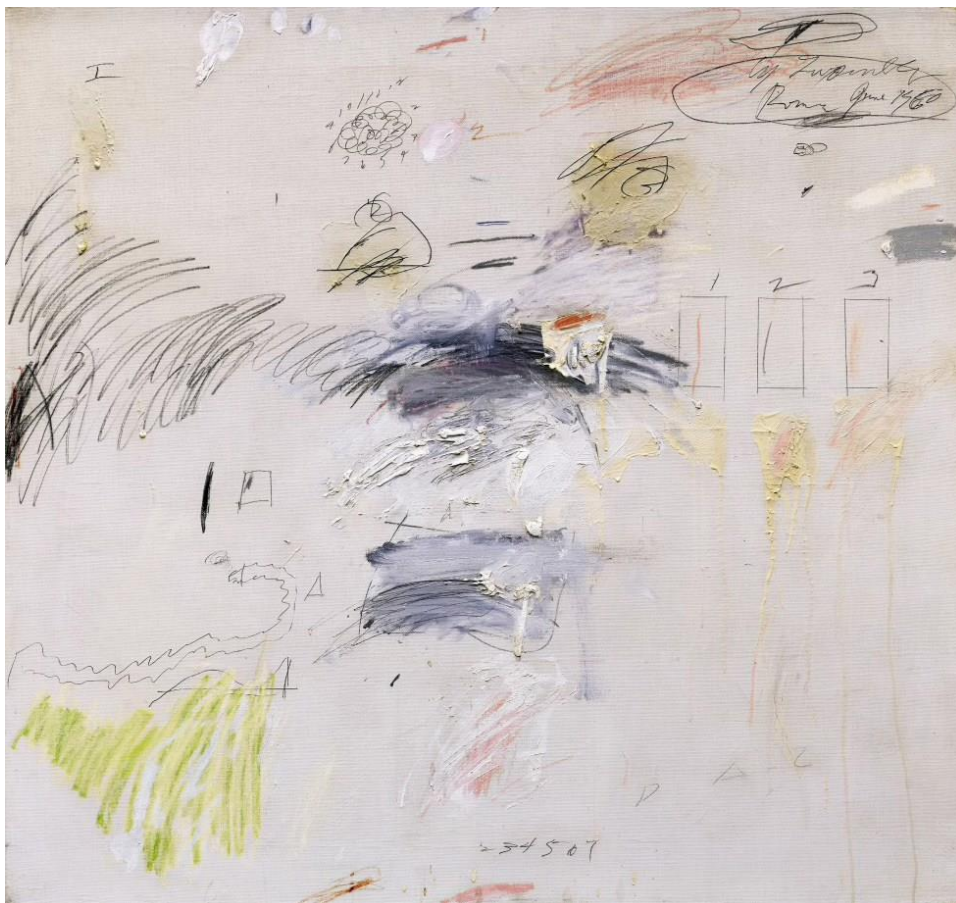


Fig. 29: Cy Twombly, *Untitled* (1960)



Fig. 30: Max Ernst, *Europe after the rain II* (1940-1942)



Fig. 31: Peter Milton, *In search of lost time* (2006)

LONE HEART MOUNTAIN

In August the last train stood waiting. We moved about excitedly, packing bundles, now labeling them with our numbers as well as names. We were ordered to stand far back from the fence. Then the gate opened. The country side, unobstructed by the pattern of the fence, spread wide and peaceful beyond. A truckload of those who were ill passed through the gate, then the trucks with our bundles. We were lined up to march. Soldiers with revolvers on their hips, stepped in between every twenty of us, ordering everyone to keep two feet apart and walk slow, so the shorter steps of small children in line with their parents would not lag behind. As we walked the road stretched on and on until it came to the railroad tracks and an ancient dusty train. A finely uniformed military person sat at the side of the road in a shining automobile looking at us, while soldiers divided us along the cars and put us aboard. With hats, coats and luggage piled in the racks above, we sat calmly, and some seemed to smile a little in anticipation of the starting of the train.

A faint hope held us, - a rumor that there might be pine trees and a river - it might be better there than here where we had been - but then there was no way to know. As we passed through mountainous country and vast prairies of many states, farther and farther away, uneasiness came, and grief and apprehension grew. At one place, guards told us to pull down the shades, so people would not see our faces as we passed through towns where they said, rocks had been hurled through windows of preceding trains and guards paced every hour, day and night, through each car of the train.

Hours lagged into days. Then hopeless depression filled the cars, children cried while their elders, hollow-eyed and weary, remained alert with heart sinking despair.

Fig. 32: Estelle Ishigo, *The Estelle Ishigo papers* (1941-1957)



Fig. 33: Estelle Ishigo, *Lone Heart Mountain* (1942)



Fig. 34: Anselm Kiefer, *Lots Frau* (1989)

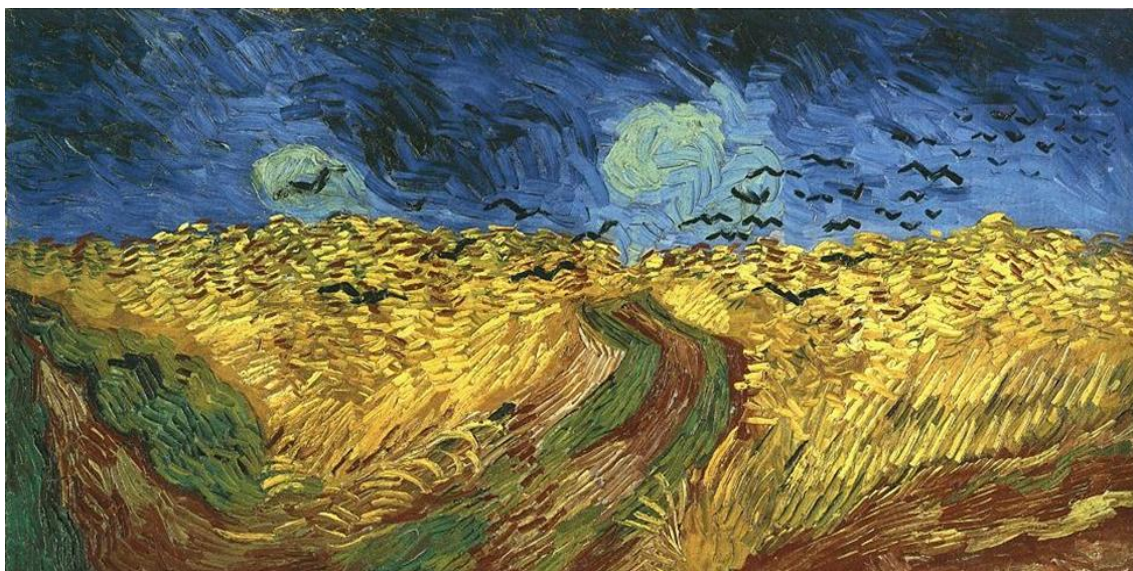


Fig. 35: Vincent van Gogh, *Korenveld met kraaien* (1890)

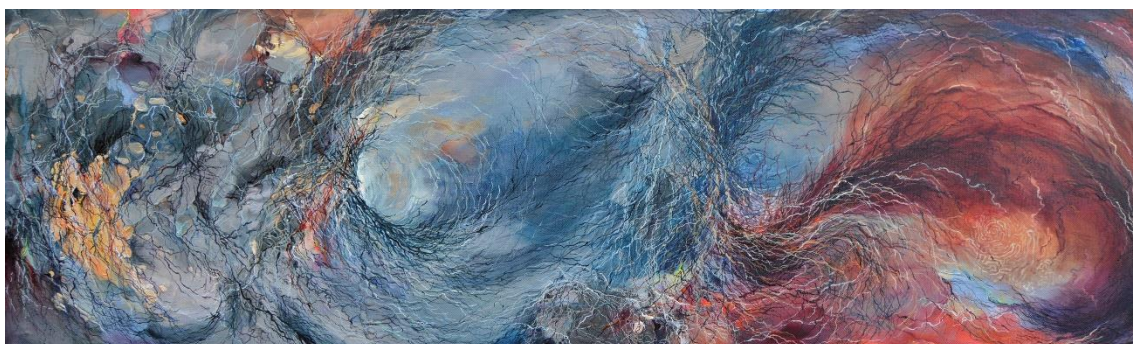


Fig. 36: Cecilia Maartens, *Escaping the labyrinth #1* (2018)



Fig. 37: Cecilia Maartens, *Escaping the labyrinth #2* (2018)



Fig. 38: Cecilia Maartens (1956-), *Intensities #2: Ruffled serenity* (2017)



Fig. 39: Cecilia Maartens (1956-), *Intensities #4: Suspended disbelief* (2017)



Fig. 40: Cecilia Maartens (1956-), *Intensities #5: Disillusioned* (2018)

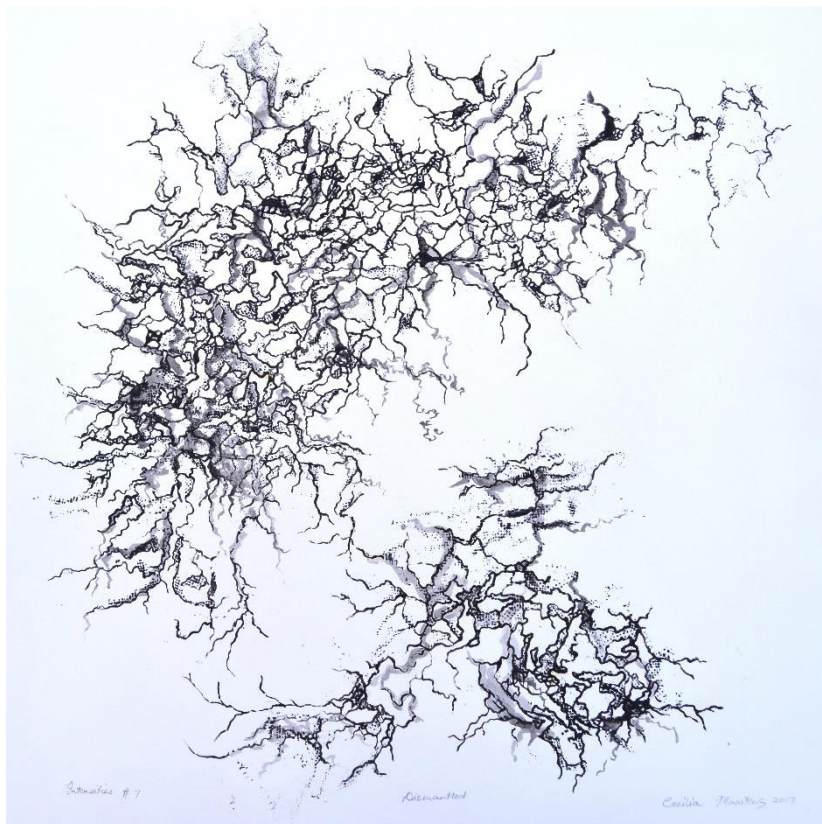


Fig. 41: Cecilia Maartens (1956-), *Intensities #7: Dismantled* (2017)



Fig. 42: Cecilia Maartens, *Waiting for the next move* (2017)



Fig. 42.1: *Waiting for the next move* (2017) - detail



Fig. 43: Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VI* (1913)



Fig. 44: Cecilia Maartens, *Innere Klänge #1: Fantasia in c# minor – Reverie (Gratissimus error – a most delightful reverie of the mind)* (2017)

Fig. 45: Cecilia Maartens (1956-). *Innere Klänge #2: Requiem (Moriendo vivo: in dying I live)* (2017)



Fig. 46: Cecilia Maartens (1956-). *Innere Klänge #3: Rhapsody in white – a meditation (Patei matos: through suffering comes wisdom)* (2017)



Fig. 47: Cecilia Maartens (1956-). *Innere Klänge #4: Mazurka – I received a white Amaryllis (Mihi consulit Deus: God cares for me)* (2017)



Fig. 48: Cecilia Maartens (1956-). *Innere Klänge #5: Sola gratia* (2018)



Fig. 49: Cecilia Maartens (1956-). *Innere Klänge #6: Flesh-Spirit (Simul iustus et peccatore)* (2018)



Fig. 50: Cecilia Maartens , *Innere Klänge #7: The lives of human beings are like grass, but ... (Verbum Domini Manet Aeternum)* (2018)



Fig. 51: Cecilia Maartens, *A presentiment* (2018)

Summary

A critical reflection on childhood memories and time unfolds into a labyrinthine journey involving fluctuating emotions, but also a voyage of creativity and new beginnings. In this M.A. Fine Arts project, comprising a dissertation, an exhibition of painting, embroidery and installation, and an exhibition catalogue, I endeavour to share my lived experiences on such a life journey. The objective is to raise awareness of the dynamics of inner life and the existence of the past in the present, which influence behaviour and future endeavours. Childhood memories of railroads and trains, motivated an exploration of the experience of the flow of time. In our planetary existence, we are consciously responding to a sensorium charged with impressions, the continuous passing of time and the irrevocability of the past. Not only a pressing awareness of the potential creative impact of one's past experiences on current perceptions of life is raised, but also how humans impact each other and the environment.

Henri Bergson's philosophy of life, embodying the revitalising of past lived experience in the present through the process of duration (Fr. *durée réelle*), underpins the research. The past's actualising in the present as something new implies inner movement and change alongside invention, which is realised as a spiritual becoming – an outcome of the evolution of time, as conceived in Bergson's concept, vital impetus (Fr. *élan vital*). Hence, Bergsonian envitalised life as perpetual becoming serves as the determining conceptual frame in the discursive ordering of the dissertation, mainly because he emphasises the emergence of something new from the reconfiguration of past experiences through the method of intuition or inner perceiving. Bergson's evolutionary time, relative to contemporary thought, is explicated through the relationship between the plant-based metaphorical concepts of roots, rhizomes and radicles, to explore memory, time and the life journey. Throughout the project, the rhizome, due to its peculiar mode of growth, becomes a metaphor to express the relationship of memories, thoughts, feelings and lived experience. Temporality and life as a journey through time, is explored by analysing a selected group of artworks. Prevalent figures of time, exemplified by life as being predestined, the progressive life stages, the transience of life, and the decay of matter were revealed in the process. The impact of changing environments related to catastrophic events (wars and industrialisation), culminated in the epoch of the Anthropocene. With the *élan vital* concept at hand, the Anthropocene is reflected upon to compel human beings to confront and counteract the trajectory of earthly destruction.²

² Legislation was passed by the New York City Council for example, to enforce carbon "emission restrictions on buildings over 25,000 square feet", and confront climate change by

Conceptual metaphors of memory in the folds of time and place are analysed by means of historical and contemporary artworks, including some of my own, in order to grasp the nature and impact of memory and place in the flow of time. These metaphors are the engram, which is investigated as the imprint of experience, the palimpsest revealing fragments of layered memory and the rhizome by which the flow and connection of memories are interpreted, and how this relates to the actual physical brain. My reflection on memories is informed by Boym's (2001: 41) rendering of reflective nostalgia as a way to characterise one's relationship with the past and one's own self-perception. My position is that of a reflective nostalgic who cherishes memories of the past, especially those of childhood, as a rich source of information that could serve as encouragement, better understanding of the self and of perceiving the present and the future within my own cultural existence. Therefore the act of looking back as conducive to the spectator's spiritual becoming is discussed, as well as the way in which intense emotions, thoughts and conceptualisations are expressed. Thus the complex reality of the labyrinthine life journey unrolls towards maturation, encompassing movement, change, creativity and invention. In the dissertation's coda, time's persistence in the present and future is reviewed by means of T. S. Elliot's "The Dry Salvages" (1941). Elliot conceptualises the transference of tradition with Bergson's evolutionary time conceived in *durée réelle*, as time unfolds in memory and place. What is eventually revealed is that the reconfiguration of past lived experiences potentially impact my present perceptions and behaviour, as well as views on the future. My belief in the significant impact of music and colours on emotional expression subconsciously conditioned my studio practice and selected artworks in this research.

Key words: duration, evolutionary time, memory, rhizome, labyrinth, voyage, spiritual becoming, creativity, *élan vital*, inner movement, Henri Bergson, folds of time.

introducing, *inter alia*, "new building codes, glass tower crackdowns and renewable energy requirements" as reported in *The Architect's Newspaper* (Hilburg 2019: online).

Chapter 1: Overture: the endless track?

... to be in the present and in a present which is always beginning again ...

(Bergson 1908: 279)

The authorial voice of Qoheleth in *Ecclesiastes* on the diversity of time, the ephemerality of human life on earth, and the rhythm of nature in the temporal order of the days and seasons, initiated my interest in the role of time in our planetary existence. Our being on this earth, consciously responding to a sensorium charged with impressions, the continuous passing of time and the irrevocability of the past, raised a pressing awareness of the potential creative impact of one's past experiences on current perceptions of life. Such experience is spontaneously associated with the development and establishment of individual mental states, exemplified by emotions and thoughts. Human beings are, however, not isolated, and function within a particular socio-cultural context and environment, experiencing mutual impact. I believe that human beings' behaviour, perspectives and the sense of self are mediated by present perceptions integrated with past experiences, thoughts and passions while anticipating future actions. Hence, this study will explore the inner life of human beings and the conscious actualisation and impact of memories, by reflecting on personal memories and the voyage of maturation by means of the analysis of historical and own artworks based on Bergson's conceptualisation of evolutionary time.

The temporal concepts, past, present and future, refer respectively to a previous time ('that was then'), the in-the-now time ('this is now') and an impending time ('what is still to come'). A happenstance experienced 'in the now' will, after the passage of time, form part of the past. In the present something new will be happening 'in the now', moving to the past again, which as a process repeats in every moment. One may, in an antecedent thought, question whether humans will always live in a present where memories just become an archive of happenstances in a past. However, while further exploring the mystery of time, a person may suspect that memories are more than stored happenstances. Sayings, for instance 'time is flying', 'I have no time', 'time waits for no man', 'time is running out' typify time as a phenomenon involving movement. Contemplation on this inferred movement might reveal elements of the mysterious nature of time pertaining to the

following overarching questions of this research project: *“What is time?”*, and, *“How is time and its apparent movement manifested in one’s mundane existence and inherent quest for meaning, particularly in artmaking (which is in itself the material result of several passages of time)?”*

Consequently, this explication, and its accompanying exhibition, consisting of paintings, embroidery and installations, unfold in the dimensions of time and memory. The temporality of life is explored within the view of a journey through time that is also a journey of maturation or ‘becoming’. Such a journey of becoming suggests a continuous process of movement, creativity and change. Bergson transforms "being", which is the metaphysical concept that underscores the fact that things in life are fixed and static, when he argues, through the ontological concept of "becoming", that all things are in constant flux (Grosz 2005: 10). In my artworks the changing effect of physical, mental - and spiritual impresses and personal metaphors were analysed by reflecting on significant recollected events from my childhood. Railroads and trains dominate my earliest recollection of cherished childhood experiences in Komatipoort, a north-eastern border town adjacent to the Kruger National Park. Other memorable experiences in this town include numerous explorations there by my brother and I, my precious moments in the shade of an old fig tree, my mother’s exquisite needlework, my father’s building of a mechanical toy and the day my parents bought me a piano.³

My reflection on memories is informed by Boym’s rendering of reflective nostalgia as a way to characterise one’s relationship with the past and one’s own self-perception (2001: 41, 49 and 50).⁴ Although I could indulge in re-experiencing joyful emotions, a bittersweet awareness is raised of the transience of life, the irrevocability of the past and the fading of memories with time. I endeavour to counter such saddening emotions in my artworks by re-interpreting memories in the painting of rhizomatic connections and transformed cherished objects, underscoring the creative potential of nostalgic feelings.

Of importance is my own creative processes that strongly resonate with the envitalised thinking of the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1895-1941), whose

³ Cf. the accompanying catalogue p. 5.

⁴ Cf. Chapter 3.3 for a delineation of reflective nostalgia.

creative processes unfold in time, memory and consciousness. Bergson's (1907, 1908, 1912, 1913 & 1922), lavish thinking on envitalised life is intriguing, because he writes in the seminal work, *Duration and Simultaneity* (1922: 216), “It is we who are passing when we say time passes”, which has a deeper meaning of continuous change, suggesting a perpetual spiritual becoming in the course of time. It is therefore imperative to fathom the meaning of the human beings’ movement in time from the beginning to the end of life on earth, from birth to death, continuously moving through happenstances from the past, through the present to the future.

Hence the following section of this introduction will be devoted to an exposition of key Bergsonian concepts and related conceptualised interpretations by Gilles Deleuze and T.S. Eliot, which will serve as a conceptual framework for subsequent chapters.

1.1 *Lebensphilosophie*

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past ...

From “Burnt Norton” (1936) by T.S. Eliot (1943: 3)

At the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, an anti-rationalist philosophical stance, variously named “vitalism” or *Lebensphilosophie*, was formulated to express views of life as an all-encompassing creative process that unfolds with ceaseless bodily, mental and spiritual experiences. Continuing evolutionary processes within vitalism are elucidated by means of the essential concept of ‘direct inner perceiving’ or ‘intuition’. The term *Lebensphilosophie* was also used to emphasise the post-idealistic current of this philosophical trend, which emerged in response to a sensed limitation of creativity in, and life choices of the individual. Such limitations were installed by oppressive instrumental reason and the industrial forces on modernising societies of the time (Midgley [s.a.]: online). The irrational (versus rational) principle of a fundamental ‘life force’, endorsing immediate feelings and inner perceptions, is hence championed as the fascicular

root⁵ of existence and thought, taken as underpinning the quest for meaning, value and purpose of life and the richness of lived experience.

Life, originating at its inception in a primary mode of force, is prompted by a vital impetus which Bergson, one of the most prominent vitalist philosophers, conceptualised as *élan vital*, the core principle of his philosophy of evolutionary time (Bergson 1907: 19, 51, 54, 88, 97, 104, 232, 239, 252, 255, 262 and 342). He proposes that the objective and regulated measurement of the passage of time by clockwork mechanisms is only a technological and abstract representation of knowledge, enabling people to adapt to the routinised and standardised life brought along by industrialisation. Bergson's *la durée* or *durée réelle* (duration)⁶ is the intuitive perception of real time as flux, where each moment vitally flows with our memory of the past and appears to us as new and unrepeatable in the present, with an anticipated view of the future. True duration is conceived as a direct inner perceiving, an intuition of the world in terms of our conscious sense of unfolding time, which allows us to grasp any object's uniqueness through direct connection, utilising our senses. Duration, encompassing the actualisation of memories in the present, is prompted by a vital impetus, thus driven by *élan vital*. Thus, in principle, Bergson opposed mechanised or measured time through the notion of real time as envitalised duration.

Although the correlation of the temporal rhythm of daily existence with the ordering of life in terms of mechanised time goes without saying, the following question is explored in Chapter 2: *How is time experienced by humans, considering the transience of life and various environmental changes?* The experience of time as a multi-faceted phenomenon, as interpreted in visual art, at least since antiquity, will thus be considered. In Chapter 2, selected art works pertaining to prevalent figures of time will be discussed with reference to Bergson's view on 'real time', to form a general sense of the representation and interpretation of life imbued in time, and accordingly elucidate the subjective and social experience of time. From ancient times the thread or line has been regarded as significant as metaphor for

⁵ Fascicular root, also known as a radicle, is the embryonic root of a botanical plant.

⁶ The process of duration or *durée réelle* "forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole" (Bergson 1913: 100).

a lifeline, life story or life journey. Therefore an artwork with woven fabric as medium, exemplified by a Flemish tapestry,⁷ will be discussed, because the weaver simultaneously suggests a destined lifespan and one's intricate and evolving relationship with others and the environment as part of human existence. The human being's life journey is further depicted and discoursed as ordered in stages from birth to death. Bergson (1908: 9) argues that physical and mental changes, which are taking place in a human's lifetime from inception until old age, reside in the passage from one state to another. The implication is a continuous movement of ideas, feelings and thoughts as examples of mental and physical states.

As will be argued in Chapter 2, the fleetingness and susceptibility of human existence in the face of environmental decay, continue to be prominent in the arts and underscore Bergson's processes of movement and change generated by duration. The exploration of the impact of the flow of time is extended to matter as represented in selected artworks by Ivan Albright and Cornelia Parker. Furthermore, I will explore how depictions of movement and change are mostly motivated by consequences stemming from environmental changes encapsulating momentous historical events as exemplified by the effect of wars,⁸ industrialisation and the subsequent global ecological crises.

The train as a grandiose and persistent piece of machinery moving along towards a destination, made a tremendous impression on me. In Komatipoort where I grew up, powerful steam, electrical and diesel engines carrying tourists, travellers as well as local produce, played a major role in the community's existence. Furthermore, the endlessness of a railroad track suggests, in a metaphorical sense, the continuation of simultaneously lived experiences from the past, an alertness to life in the somewhat unsettling present, and views and expectations towards a transformative future. Consequently, my experience of the railroad and trains conditioned my focus on the railroad as first dramatic avatar of industrialisation. Beyond my individual experience, and since the dawn of the

⁷ Cf. the Renaissance Flemish tapestry *The triumph of Death* (1510-1520) (Figure 1) and discussion in Chapter 2, pp. 56 to 57.

⁸ Ben Shahn shares his hardships pertaining to the second world war in the gouache painting *Liberation* (1945) (Figure 8), which is analysed in Chapter 2 p. 60-61.

industrial age, the train has impacted humans in historical, socio-economical and psychological ways which are explored. In Chapter 2, historical and contemporary artworks related to movement and change (Umberto Boccioni), mechanised versus subjective time (René Magritte), the social impact of a changed environment (Honoré Daumier) and the psychological impact of the changing environment (John Sloan, among others) will be considered. A highly significant aspect of this research project is Bergson's (1907: 17) emphasis on the persistence of the past in the present implying envitalised movement. Bergson regards memory as the means by which the past merges into the present and the present flows into the future, thus establishing an emergent continuum in the experience within the order of time.

In the actualisation of relevant memories in the present Bergson considers intuition's characteristic of immediacy. Wilhelm Dilthey's idea of *Erlebnis*⁹ resonates with Bergson's concept of intuition as an immediate apprehension or mental appearance of an object or subjective experience (Kumar 1962: 129).¹⁰ These perceived experiences accumulate each moment into the past as memories, which are in turn actualised in the present through the continuous flow of our consciousness. Consciousness thus effectuates the intersecting of this intuition of the external environment through the senses with the memory related to the present experience. A unique perception emerges that guides human actions in the present.¹¹

⁹ Dilthey (Ermarth 1978: 97) another vitalist philosopher, distinguishes between two "modes of experiencing reality: *Erlebnis* (inner lived experience) and *Erfahrung* (outer sensory experience)". Ermarth (1978: 226) explains that "*Erlebnis* is an immediate and unreflected experience, whereas *Lebenserfahrung* is reflected and articulated experience".

¹⁰ Bergson (1912: 18) believes that the true purpose of knowledge is to "touch the inner essence of things ... to search deeply into its life, and so, by a kind of intellectual auscultation, to feel the throbbings of its soul." (Auscultation is listening to the internal organs through a stethoscope. Similar to the physician sensing what is happening within the patient's body, the metaphysician practices a mental equivalent of auscultation to apprehend the inner essence of things (Phipps 2004: online).

¹¹ Consciousness has been described as a "complex "first-person experience comprising the awareness of phenomena, emotions and events" (Groes 2016: 16). Bergson (1908: 178) states that one's presence prevails in the consciousness one has of one's own body, which experiences sensations and simultaneously performs movements, representing the "actual state of [one's] becoming, that part of [one's] duration which is in process of growth – the continuity of becoming is reality itself."

Significantly, Bergsonian thought re-emerged during a new “industrial” revolution in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Gerald Edelman (2004: 55), articulates Bergsonian consciousness as the field of energetic interaction between memory and continuous perception. However, it is Deleuze who recognises Bergson’s enunciating of pure becoming, which empowers thinking “beyond the human condition” (Ansell-Pearson 2007: 58). The currency of ‘life’ as theme of discourse in twenty-first century philosophical dialogue is mainly due to Deleuze’s integrating of the non-human element in his thinking, thus avoiding assertions privileging humans (Woodward 2015: 28), which in a sense opposes Bergson’s alleged anthropocentric exposition of the *élan vital*. Furthermore, Deleuze describes *élan vital* in terms of Bergson’s philosophy of evolutionary time, as an image of thought deepened by experience (Ansell-Pearson 2007: 65).

As a result of fundamental changes to the earth’s geology by humans (Carey 2016: online), the earth has, according to the environmental activist Colin Walters, become a “different planet”, which necessitates an exploration of the concept of the Anthropocene as the time we live in. Sam Mickey (2010: 90) writes that anthropocentrism articulates the sustenance provided to destructive and abusive actions that are detrimental to the environment. Such an articulation could imply that the *élan vital* in the collective sense (of humans especially) is disappearing and progressive growth towards maturity thus negated.

The questions posed are: *To what extent can the trajectory of total destruction be fathomed?* and, *How can artists and writers who embrace Bergson’s concept of creative evolution, which implies growth towards maturation, contribute to the changing of such a trajectory?* I surmise that Bergsonian duration potentiates artists and writers to think, as Ansell-Pearson (2007: 57) states, “beyond the human condition”. Artists need to think in terms of envitalised duration and the consequent movement, change and invention that constitute a perpetual becoming or growth towards maturation. How Bergson’s articulation of a philosophy of pure becoming (Ansell-Pearson 2007: 58) may foster awareness of our position in terms of the environment (Davis 2015: 5) is discussed in Chapter 2.

Lastly, what is of particular importance in this project is the relationship between Bergsonian thought and that of the British poet, T.S. Eliot. Zekiye Antakyalioglu

(2018: online) argues that Bergsonian thought may be analogous to a coin with Eliot and Deleuze representing two dissimilar sides of a coin.¹² Both, having been motivated by Bergson, formulated distinctive and somewhat separate concepts considering time and movement. Complementary to Bergson's philosophy of time memory and consciousness, is T.S. Eliot's demonstration of Bergsonian thought in his poetry.¹³ Eliot, however, emphasised the importance of collective cultural history as well as the impersonal aspect of writing, which differ with Bergson's notion of evolutionary time and the subjective nature of intuition or 'inner perceiving'.¹⁴ As endeavoured in this research, the continuous movement in time necessitates critical reflections on memories and works of art related to memory and time. Thus the continuous movement in time is questioned.

1.2 Considering the critique on Bergson's philosophy of life

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) (1946: 838), emphasised the lack of logos in Bergson's thinking and notes the impossibility of proving or disproving Bergson's creative picture of the world. Bergson was dismissed from the post-structuralist context due to his alleged phenomenological approach.¹⁵ Notwithstanding this critique of Bergson's concept of evolutionary time encompassing the concepts *élan vital* and *durée réelle*, I could resonate with the views of Suzanne Guerlac and Leonard Lawlor below, and therefore still regard Bergson's thinking as providing an appropriate conceptual framework for this research. Guerlac, cited by Alipaz (2011: 96) regarded Bergson's philosophy of time as constant processual movement valuable in the reappearance of challenges related to "temporality, affect, agency, and embodiment" in her book *Thinking in time: an introduction to*

¹² Antakyalioglu is an associate professor in English language and literature at Gaziantep University, Turkey, since 2009.

¹³ The opening lines in "Burnt Norton", the first poem in the *The four quartets*, quoted at the beginning of this section, play on the simultaneous existence of past, present and future. Jedidiah Paschall (2017: online) views these lines as "quintessential Bergsonian", with which I resonate (cf. Chapter 3 p. 81 and the catalogue p. 6).

¹⁴ Eliot values the endurance of tradition from generation to generation, not denying possibilities for collapsing, thus nuancing a different duration than Bergson's renewed memory when actualised in the present.

¹⁵ Bergson considered immediate experience as core element in his concept *durée réelle* (Westmoreland 2016: 241).

Henri Bergson (2006). Lawlor, defends Bergson, suggesting that he balances the survival of memories in the past with consciousness and gives primacy to memories rather than perception (Alipaz 2011: 97-98, 102, 106). Delisle Burns (1913: 367) condemns the supremacy Bergson provides to 'intuition' above 'reason', because he argued that 'reason' and 'intuition' are part of the same process of understanding reality.¹⁶ In *Creative evolution* (1907), Bergson (1907: xiii) promotes however, the inseparability of a philosophy of life and a philosophy of knowledge, which in a way counteracts the critique of Burns.

Due to Bergson's attention to life and the inner movement of individuals involving memory, *la durée* was further thought of to be too subjective. Keith Ansell-Pearson (2018: 5), however, argues that Bergson's philosophy of experience moves away from a direct philosophy of the subject and subjectivity. In *The two sources of morality and religion* (1932) Bergson approaches society afresh introducing terminology like the "closed" and the "open" and the "static" and the "dynamic" as highlighted by Ansell-Pearson (2010: 403), thus underscoring a kind of interdependence between separate individuals within a society (Bergson 1932: online). Bergson himself confirms that the development of a workable philosophy of life is a process involving various stakeholders.

Ansell-Pearson, as well as Deleuze and Félix Guattari regard Bergson's most significant accomplishments in his philosophy on creative evolution, to be the concept of *élan vital*, the universal vital impetus by which new "forms" are incessantly created. They take his notion of the *élan vital* as life force towards invention and creation, despite their critique of Bergson's human-centred point of view in this regard, and propose therefore a "rhizomatic model of evolutionary time", with emphasis on the connection and re-connection of multiplicities (May 2001: 26, 27). Based on Deleuze and Guattari's model of the rhizome as image of thought and the connotation to Bergson's creative evolution, roots, rhizomes and radicles are explored through artmaking, which necessitates an explication of these pivotal concepts in the next section.

¹⁶ Burns warns further that a misinterpretation of Bergson's 'intuition' could encourage intuitive violent action without reasoning.

1.3 Roots, rhizomes and radicles

... the notions of origins and order is arborescent, but the principles of evolution are
rhizomatic ...

Michael Mikulak (2007: online)

Bergson (1908: 220) conceptualises that memory, contracting the entire past, responds to associative present inner experiences.¹⁷ In Chapter 3, and to a certain extent Chapter 4, it is critically considered how the inner re-experience of works of art, interacting with lived experiences from the past, influence our actions and perspectives in the present as well as our anticipations regarding the future. The question is: *How does the re-configuration of lived experiences therefore influence the re-experiencing of selected historical and contemporary art, as well as my own artmaking processes?*

Memory is part of the vital unfolding of life in the flow of time implying the co-existence of the past in the present and future, the future of the past being in the present. Thus, through exploring multidirectional pathways or routes, the roots of the past are integral to conditioning the present, but also serve as a guide to a dynamic and open-ended future. Journeys in artmaking as well as discourse, may be enriched and informed not only by Bergson's *élan vital* enfolded in *durée réelle*, but also by the work of various other seminal figures discussed in Chapter 3. Richard Semon (1859-1918), for instance, theorised that intensive experiences leave physical memory traces in the individual's brain, labeling it an 'engram', which Aby Warburg (1866-1929) extended to social memory in his notion of *Pathosformeln*, or the recurrence of images of intensively charged emotions in art and visual culture. Conceptual metaphors of memory enfolded in time provide a fruitful understanding of memory and are explored in Chapter 3 with reference to selected artworks.

¹⁷ Bergson (1908: 196) proposes the figure of the cone to explain *durée réelle*: intuition as an inner perceiving and the flow of time as virtuality, prolonging relevant memories from the past into the present and the future. The virtual (memories contracted in the volume of the cone) becomes actual in the present (single point at the summit of the cone) through a process of envitalised duration.

During the intertwining processes of artmaking and exploring memory and time while contemplating "past roots and routes", three pivotal concepts emerged, namely roots, rhizomes and radicles. In botany, a radicle is the emerging part of a seedling during the process of germination.¹⁸ This primary root is associated with the beginning of life and conditions the formation and direction of life in an entire root system, which eventually secures a plant in the soil environment as growth continues. While reflecting on childhood memories in artmaking, the more common metaphor "roots" was embraced because "roots" also refers to a primary point of origin, one's provenance and the experiences one has had while being settled there. Bergson, a vitalist, approached the philosophy of an envitalised life in a similar vein by projecting meaning from the roots of life.¹⁹ Moreover, Bergson embodied *élan vital* in the concept of duration (*durée réelle*), which emphasises the resurgence of the past in the present, while projecting a view of the future, implying movement, emergence and change. Continuity is thus imminent and potentiates a multidirectional creativity (Luschetich 2011: 81). Such creative possibility resembles the unique way in which a rhizome grows.

Different in character from roots and radicles, the rhizome is developed as an image of thought by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A thousand plateaus* (1987: 20, 24), and functions by variation in a creative manner, moving and connecting unsystematically. Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 7-13) modelled a structure of relationships with a multiplicity of entities, continuously interacting and changing. The rhizomes' mode of growth in subterranean environments creating numerous passages, may be compared to axons (extruding fibers) carrying continuously firing messages from one neuron to the other. The structure and dynamics of memory neurons in the brain resemble the burgeoning rhizome: when a continuous movement in a certain direction of botanical rhizomes as well as in neurons is disrupted, a new plantlet will grow. The growth mode of a plant rhizome is therefore congruent with how new neuronal pathways are formed in the brain. Furthermore, rhizomes and neurons do not function in terms of hierarchy and

¹⁸ Also called the fascicular or principal root.

¹⁹ The homophone 'radical' further plays on Bergson's philosophy that was widely regarded as radical, due to its definitive divergence from the idea of the intellect as sole directive of reality, towards the 'intuition', an inner perceiving of the world.

therefore have no beginnings or ends with multiple entries and exits. Thus they have no centres or peripheries. Any point is connected to any other point, resembling a complex network. The structural similarity of memory neurons and the growth of the botanical rhizomes, however, is assimilated to mental processes by transference of the rhizome as metaphor of memory, while substantiating Bergson's view of memory as inherent to consciousness enacted in *durée réelle*. Moreover, analogous to the growing process of the rhizome, human life is interwoven with multi-dimensional environments, shaping our lives as we continuously form relationships and new perspectives, apprehending the future in terms of the experiences of the past. The rhizome as metaphor is fruitfully applied in my artworks to insinuate spontaneous movement with regard to relationships, thoughts, emotions and memories in the exploration of past experiences, specifically memories that were formed during my childhood.

Like the burgeoning rhizome whose growth is often motivated by disruption, the imagination and acts of imagining are related to the aleatoric element of contingency (or chance). The imagination is therefore active in the actualising of memories in the present when the new appears, as well as in the creative production of artworks. Aleatory processes were popular specifically in Surrealism (and Dada), therefore *Europe after the rain II* (1940-42) painted by the Surrealist Max Ernst, is selected to be briefly analysed in Chapter 3 to elucidate the role of the imagination in the artmaking process.

Boym (2001: 50) refers in her conception of nostalgia to Bergson's thinking on the relationship between the past, present and future, particularly the means by which the past appears in the present as vitally renewed. My reflection on memories is done from a viewpoint of reflective nostalgia grounded on Boym's (2001: 41, 49, 50) discernment that one's relationship with the past and one's own self-perception is characterised either by restorative or reflective nostalgia. Unlike restorative nostalgia, which circumscribes the human's need to wistfully reminisce about past events in order to restore untainted ideals, reflective nostalgia is, among other considerations, in cognizance of individual time and memory, a meditation on the passing of time and human finitude, as well as the projecting of the past into the future. In the creation of my own artworks as well as when reflecting on the work of other artists, the aleatoric imagination comes into play. In the last section of

Chapter 3, the impact which the act of looking back has on the spectator is explored by analysing the oil painting *Lot's Frau* (1986), produced by Anselm Kiefer (1945-), with the imaginative remnants of memory in a war-ravaged landscape as thematic focus.

Thus, I will argue in Chapter 3 that the encountering of the unforeseeable is characteristic of the rhizome. On a life journey through time, the sensible confluence of multiple streams of thought may emerge from the re-experiencing of artworks and past events to form actions in the present, and imaginaria on the future. The prevalence of the depiction of rhizomatic connections in my artworks emphasises the interconnectedness of a multiplicity of lines implying labyrinthine complexity – a coiled storyline of perplexity and confusion – underscoring a continuous process of a spiritual becoming.

Recollected emotive events are assumed to be enfolded in such a life narrative. Experiences of pain, suffering and distressing emotions are felt, but also the awe of a life history filled with vitality, which are shared in order to inspire creative reflection in search of purpose and meaning. Furthermore, by sharing a personal life story through a body of artworks, I endeavour to evoke, not only awareness of the interwoven-ness with, and otherness from the environment and people, but also creativity and spiritual growth, which is discussed more intensely in Chapter 4.²⁰

1.4 The spirit of becoming

Our intuition (inner perceiving) is linked to what Bergson called *élan vital*, a life force active in the conscious process of creating the new, interpreting the flux of experience in the flow of time, prolonging the past into the present, projected into the future.²¹ Such an evolutionary process is regarded as growth towards maturity and implies inner movement, invention and change – a perpetual becoming.

²⁰ “Becoming [further] involves the differentiation of individuals from one another and the mutual affect between individuals and their environment” (Weinbaum 2014: online).

²¹ According to James DiFrisco (2015: 12) the *élan vital* is “thus a metaphor or image to help direct our thinking about life in terms of flows of energy proceeding from an active, driving force.”

Additional to the continuous flow of time in the cosmological sense, Bergson (1907: 10) elaborates on “real time” incorporating the act of waiting, as discussed in Chapter 4. By exemplifying the dissolving of sugar in water, Bergson (1907: 10) argues that the period of waiting may feel longer or shorter depending on his impatience, hence overlapping with his own duration, that is, his 'lived' experience of time. During this project, I endeavoured to explore how our behaviour and perspectives are mediated by our present perceptions and integrated with past experiences, thoughts and passions, while also anticipating our future actions, accepting the mortality of human beings and the brevity of life. On the journey of life we frequently find ourselves in a state of limbo, a space of indeterminacy, when we endure time having to wait. How such spaces, rich with ambiguity and uncertainty could potentiate creative, imaginative thinking and transform into a heterotopic space, is discussed in Chapter 4.

Life encounters are not always easily and intelligibly assimilated and necessitate contemplation and re-configuration. This in turn points to the underlying socio-cultural environment and the dynamics of the human spirit. Bergson considers the spiritual²² in his philosophy of life as embodied in *élan vital* implying a ceaseless response to a multiplicity of sensory impressions and recollections, recreating each moment of experience through the consciously intuitive process. When engaging with vital memories, a vibrant inner life of emotions and thoughts is embraced, embodying the voyage of spiritual becoming. Such a voyage will most probably evolve into a labyrinthine journey of complexity and perplexity that might eventually become, what I think of as being-at-rest, *i.e.* accepting one's mortality, and living a life of faith without negating continuous inner movement – the opposite of *akatastos* (Gr.) meaning unstable and restless.

The last research question, addressed in Chapter 4 is: *On the one hand, creative potential is embedded in experiences of conflicting and/ or radical emotions and thoughts, but on the other hand, is the artistic expression of deep inner states*

²² The "spiritual" in this sense is not necessarily connected with a specific religious tradition, but is an expression of (or recognition of) the existence of an inner life. It is defined as a uniquely human capacity for perceiving the ineffable quality of existence, that which is hidden beneath the surface; it is a sensitivity to the relationships between the self and other, between the world that we perceive through our senses and the very personal nature of the senses themselves (Zechman 2011: 2).

experienced on a life journey not more conducive to an eventual spiritual becoming? The expression of deep inner states (intense emotions, spiritual experience and syntheses of colour and sound) is a common feature in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) and Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). These works will be analysed in the final two sections of Chapter 4, along with my own relevant works in view of the research question formulated above.

Furthermore, viewers and readers are invited to embark with me on a journey of spiritual becoming, intuitively perceiving the shared lived experiences related to childhood memories, in order to associate with, and learn from similar experiences.

Thus, my conjecture is that Bergson's concept of evolutionary time as a continuous process of becoming, *i.e.* movement, change and invention, may be useful to assimilate and process personal experiences of lived time in a socio-cultural context, because artists may tap creativity from the maieutic interplay between time as duration, the imagination and memories. The relation to oneself is enfolded in memory. His philosophy encompasses the flow of time, creativity, ceaseless becoming, inner movement and lived experiences conditioning future behaviour. Bergson (1922: 317) states: "He who installs himself in becoming [continuous change] sees in duration the very life of things, the fundamental reality". Thus, Bergson's philosophy of life as perpetual becoming serves as the determining conceptual frame in the discursive ordering of my thoughts and the creative surprises of studio work.

Chapter 2: Temporality and life as a journey through time

“What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know.”
(Augustine 401 A.D.: 155)²³

“the dividing line between past, present and future is an illusion.”
(Albert Einstein 1905)²⁴

“Time is a brisk wind, for each hour it brings something new ... but who can understand and measure its sharp breath, its mystery and its design?”
(Paracelsus)²⁵

We know that, although our lives are embedded in time, time remains a mystery and extends beyond human understanding. Time is thus multifaceted, all-embracing and difficult to describe although it is inextricably woven into all dimensions of our planetary and spiritual existence. I believe that God created the “heavens and the earth”²⁶ with a distinctive rhythm imbued in natural phenomena and living beings, and authorised the living human being to have dominion over the earth and its inhabitants,²⁷ which simultaneously makes a person intensely aware of the transience of life.

The metaphoric thread of life is explored here, firstly as woven fabric, as exemplified in the Renaissance Flemish tapestry by an unknown artist (Figure 1),

²³ *Confessiones*, Book XI, Chapter 14.

²⁴ Albert Einstein (1879-1955) stated in his *Special relativity theory* that “the dividing line between past, present and future is an illusion” as cited by Greene (2016: online). URL: <[www.physics – astronomy.com /2016/05/according-to-Einstein-time-is-illusion.htm1#.Ww-81u6Fouk](http://www.physics-astronomy.com/2016/05/according-to-Einstein-time-is-illusion.htm1#.Ww-81u6Fouk)> [accessed 31 May 2018].

²⁵ The spiritualist Paracelsus’ description of time in the Renaissance as a “brisk wind” that brings “something new each hour,” insinuates the movement and creative element of time which is contained as key elements in Henri Bergson’s theory of time, memory and consciousness. The epigraph is from the writings by the Swiss scientist Paracelsus (1493-1541) (Jacobi 1951: 153). URL: <http://a801605.us.archive.org/24/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.63939/2015.63939.Paracelsus-Selected-Writings_text.pdf.> [accessed 18 September 2018].

²⁶ Gen.1: 1 (New International Version) (NIV).

²⁷ Gen.1: 26 (NIV) Then God said “let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds in the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground”, meaning that the authority over the earth is transferred to the human race.

depicting the interwoven-ness with the environment and the thread as a metaphor of a pre-destined lifespan. Ariadne's thread is another line metaphor from Greek mythology for a destined life journey, which assumes a labyrinthine rather than woven figure for life. The idea and image of a woven fabric relates to warping and weaving of threads, thus a kind of texture evolving into a work of art, a picture of a life within a cultural context. The line in the unicursal labyrinth, coiling in on itself also symbolically narrates a life story – an arduous journey in search of meaning, from the periphery to the centre, intensely aware of the self's inescapability from the labyrinth.

To form a sense of the distinctive experiences of temporality in the existence of the human being and his/her environment, and to create an awareness of the featuring of different figures of time lines in art, particular artworks from art history are analysed. Selected artworks printed by James Catnach (1792-1841) and painted by Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) interpret temporal human existence from antiquity until the Romantic period as ordered, entailing various stages from birth to death. Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) expresses a more dichotomous individual versus communal experience of the journey of life from birth to death.

The transience and vulnerability of human existence in the face of death and decay continue to be prominent in the arts. In the wake of the industrial revolution and the first and second world wars, technological development in the twentieth century globalised the chronological mechanisation of time and movement. The consequences of this are presented in artworks from these periods and beyond. Selected artworks of Giacomo Boccioni (1871-1958), Ben Shahn (1898-1969), Ivan Albright (1897-1983) and Cornelia Parker (1956-), are analysed to illuminate the indubitable interwoven-ness of human existence with the environment, concomitantly impacted by key events and changing situations. The epochal relationship of industrial development with art will be interrogated in the concluding section of this chapter with the annihilation of human life and the role this plays in memory formation as underlying theme of the various selected artworks to be analysed.

2.1 Life is enfolded in time

There is a time for everything ...
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die ...
... a time to scatter stones
and a time to gather them ...
a time to embrace and a time to refrain
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away ...
(Ecclesiastes 3: 1-14) (NIV)

According to Qoheleth, the authorial voice of Ecclesiastes, God is the Creator of time.²⁸ The quest of Qoheleth is for something of true value in this life “under the sun”, or, “under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1) (NIV 1984), that is, from a temporal viewpoint. He comes to the conclusion that life on earth is a gift from God which we must enjoy even if we do not understand it (*cf.* Bartholomew 1999: 8). The first emblem of Roemer Visscher, *Iovix omnia plena* (1614), from *Sinnepoppen* serves as an example of the seventeenth-century Dutch emblematic notion to embed mundane objects with wisdom (De Jongh 1995: 130). *Sinnepoppen* demonstrates that God fills everything on earth, and therefore nothing is meaningless, which recalls Qoheleth’s conclusion of a feeble life without God. The transience of life remains, however, undeniable and the development of the *vanitas* theme²⁹ in art related to *memento mori*,³⁰ reached a peak in seventeenth-century Dutch still-life

²⁸ Augustine regarded time as objective order (a creature of God) as well as subjective (a phenomenon of human consciousness) according to Hernandez (2016: 37).

²⁹ The *vanitas* theme in art, comprises mainly the certainty of death and our mortality, emphasising the fleetingness and insignificance of worldly splendors and desires. Qoheleth’s acclamation in Ecclesiastes 1: 2: “vanity of vanities; all is vanity”, probably gave rise to the *vanitas* theme in art. Symbols like the skull (representing the certainty of death); bubbles (representing the brevity and fragility of life and worldly beauty); smoke, hourglasses, and watches (every minute that passes brings you closer to death); decayed fruit and flowers (representing the instability and deterioration of earthly things); musical instruments and music sheets (representing the ephemeral nature of life); torn or loose books (representing earthly knowledge); and dice and playing cards (representing the role that chance and fortune play in life) (McKay 2012: online).

³⁰ *Memento mori* is a Latin expression which means: “Remember that you will die”. In the European Christian art context, “the expression [...] developed with the growth of Christianity, which emphasised Heaven, Hell, and salvation of the soul in the afterlife” (McKay 2012: online). The *memento mori* theme is expressed in an engraving by seventeenth-century Dutch artist Simon de Passe after Crispijn de Passe, titled *Memento mori* [s.a.], combining flowers and a skull as motifs to symbolise death (De Jongh 1995: 133).

painting.³¹ The purpose was “moral instruction and entertainment” reminding the viewer that life is precious and should not be squandered on lighthearted and worthless things.

Furthermore, the Hebrew word *hebel* of which the literal meaning is “vapor” or “breath”, repeated several times in Ecclesiastes, is not only symbolic of the transience of life, but also the encompassing mystery of God’s creation of life in its many forms, variously enfolded in time. Psalm 139: 13-16 describes God’s formation of life as being “knit” and “woven together”, signifying the metaphoric thread as a life line laced into a specific pattern, as well as the pre-destined human lifespan (NIV 1984):

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
...I was woven together in the depth of the earth, I praise you
Because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place ...
All the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to me.

The thread of life line is however not only found in the Bible but also in classical texts from Greek mythology, for example, the three goddesses of Fate, called the *Moiriae*, who personify human destiny. When a human being is born, the spinner, Clotho³² spins the thread of life; the drawer of lots, Lachesis³³ measures the thread of life, and Atropos³⁴ cuts the thread of life. The personification of fate as three goddesses, also called the three Fates, was first clearly described in Hesiod's epic

³¹ The painting titled *Vanitas with a vase of flowers* [s.a.], by the seventeenth-century Dutch painter, Christoffel van den Berghe, is an example of the skull motif once again being combined with flowers, symbolising death and thus comparing the fleetingness of human life with a flower that withers easily. Flowers also signify resurrection (De Jongh 1995: 132-133).

³² Greek Κλωθώ ("spinner") spun the thread of life from her distaff onto her spindle. Her Roman equivalent was Nona, (the 'Ninth'), who was originally a goddess called upon in the ninth month of pregnancy. (URL: <<http://shedrums.com/fates.htm>> [accessed 19 July 2014]).

³³ Lachesis (['lækəsis], Greek Λάχεσις ("allotter" or drawer of lots) measured the thread of life with her rod. Her Roman equivalent was Decima (the 'Tenth') (URL: <<http://shedrums.com/fates.htm>> [accessed 19 July 2014]).

³⁴ Atropos (['ætrəpɒs], Greek Ἀτροπος ("inexorable" or "inevitable", literally "unturning", sometimes called Aisa) was the cutter of the thread of life (URL: <<http://shedrums.com/fates.htm>> [19 July 2014]).

poem, the *Theogonia*, and depicted in a fresco³⁵ *The Three Fates*, dating back as early as 135 BCE.

The mythical legend of the three Fates has been a recurrent theme in art history explored by many artists, among others Giorgio Ghisi (1558), Francesco de Goya (1820-23) and Henry Moore (1941 and 1983-4). The Flemish tapestry, *The triumph of Death* (1510-1520), is particularly appealing as it may be associated with the delicately woven texture of human life in harmony with nature as described in Psalm 139 (Figure 1).³⁶ The three Fates, Lachesis, Clotho and Atropos, who draw out, spin and cut the thread of life, represent past, present and future as the temporal order of time, encompassing the flow or duration of time, which ends in Death triumphing over the fallen body of Chastity.³⁷ The thread of life is subjected to all earthly matter as the tapestry, although skillfully woven with durable silk and wool, depends on care and reparation to endure time. The preciousness of life is juxtaposed with its inescapable transience. Another characteristic of Renaissance art is the drawing of symbols from nature and related to virtue and vice, as suggested by the animals and distinctive flowers depicted in the tapestry (Meagher 2000: online). The typical *mille fleur* style in Renaissance tapestries and the various families of animal life mirror the close relationship of human beings with the basic elements in nature in terms of their co-existence in time. For instance, the hare is a symbol of fertility and consequently the cycle of life as a figure of time is depicted, with regard to the way life carries on from generation to generation (Kielmas [s.a]: online).

Another figure embodying temporality occurs in an anonymous woodcut and print, published by Catnach in 1830, *The stages of life*, comprising a confection of

³⁵ *Ostia Antica* is a large archeological site, close to the modern suburb of Ostia, 25 kilometers southwest of Rome. The site is noted for the excellent preservation of its ancient buildings, magnificent frescoes and impressive mosaics, where the fresco, the artist of which is unknown, could be found: *Moerae Atropus*, Clotho and Lachesis (135 -140 BCE), fresco, *Ostia Antica réserves du Muséé* (Arnoldus-Huyzendveld 2013: online).

³⁶ The woven fabric elicits a memory of my mother's beautiful embroidery work imbued with love, patience, perseverance and skill, which I have admired since I was a little girl. Cf. the catalogue p. 11 for the artworks *Bequeathed memory #1* and *#2* and the relevant discussion.

³⁷ The middle-aged Lachesis ('The Allotter') spins it and sings of the things that were; Clotho ('The Spinner'), the youngest, puts the wool round the spindle, and sings of the things that are; Atropos ('The Never-turn-back'), the eldest, sings of the things that will be, and cuts the thread when Death arrives (Förlag 1997: online).

emblems in a Victorian allegory³⁸ depicting the journey of a dying pilgrim (Figure 2). Human life is suggested as a pathway on which revelations of transcendent life from a Christian viewpoint, are experienced, and it is therefore a moralising representation of the passage of time flowing from the metaphoric thread of life. The pathway could also be connected to a line on a map signifying the route of a journey and a narrative line of an arduous, labyrinthine journey. Repeating a seventeenth-century Dutch emblem type, the progress through common stages within the life process of humans is described as a step-like ascending and descending progression through life from birth to death, followed by the final judgment. This movement through the different transitions affords humans' intense experiences of liminality,³⁹ despite the hope of life after death.

In 1835, when he was 61 and five years before his death, Caspar David Friedrich completed the meditative oil painting *Die Lebensstufe* (Figure 3), which comments with a nostalgic undertone on his own mortality and the transience of life. During the Romantic period a fresh inclination towards the spiritual emerged among artists and philosophers which is evident in the scope of approaching death in this seascape depicted as a dusk scene. The five family members depicted on a shore, range from children to an old man, corresponding to the five ships at different distances from the harbour, which is an allegorical reference to the different stages of human life and progress on the distinctive life journeys towards their destinations. The old man dressed in winter fashion dissimilar to the other members, and the noticeable distance between them, may allude to his meditation on the approach of death. A mysterious atmosphere is simultaneously evoked, enhanced by the ships sailing into the unknown, visualised by *sfumato*, and the insignificance of the figures against the vastness of the open sea.

Paul Gauguin contemplates the meaning and transience of life by emphasising the role of the senses in constituting experience in his oil painting representing the historical fate of Polynesian societal culture, *D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-*

³⁸ The anonymous woodcut (Figure 2) suggests human life (or rather, the journey to death, as it is the story of the dying pilgrim with the inscription underneath the first stage: "Every day added to life is a day taken from it"), as twelve stages, as a rising and falling stepped sequence which could be regarded as a variation of a line.

³⁹ The Latin word *limen* for threshold, is the root word for liminal time or space, that is, time outside of time or in-between times. "Things are not as they were, and they are not yet what they are to become" (Hogue 2006: 3, 5-6).

nous? Où allons-nous? (Whence do we come? What are we? Whither go we?) (1897), (Figure 4), described as more subjective and “obscurely spiritual” by Paulson (2017: online). According to Rookmaaker (1959: 234) the metaphoric painting was created from Gauguin’s imagination as a reflection on the meaning of life and his view of the world with which he grappled. When he started working on the painting he regarded human attempts to be in vain, and life as a struggle to survive (Bowness 1971: 15). The artist inscribed the title of his painting, notably without question marks, in the upper left corner. This corner, painted chrome yellow,⁴⁰ resembles a fresco withered with age signifying the passing of time, and the mystery of life that has always haunted human beings.

Although the painting was not intended to be allegorical (Rookmaaker 1959: 259), it could be interpreted as the depiction of life ordered in time from the past to the present to anticipation of the future based on knowledge of the past. Each period in the order of time corresponds to a question in the painting's title. The first phase echoes the question “Whence do we come?”, contemplating the way of life in the past – the oral passing on of traditional culture of a simple but fulfilling life to the next generation, which alludes to Eliot’s notion of tradition as endurance over time, with an underlying potential to collapse.⁴¹ Such passing includes the bond with the natural environment in the symbol of the god of nature. The second phase, the present (and question “What are we?”) interprets human nature with the central human figure picking fruit, probably suggesting a break with folklore and native customs (collapsing of tradition) in the process of adoption of colonialised life styles. Such a break depicted through the vicissitudes of a utopian garden, resembles the fall in the Garden of Eden.

In the third phase, the future, corresponding to the question “Whither go we?” disenchantment is obvious in the physiognomy of the seated figures and disaffection towards the infant. A looming bad omen is vested in the symbol of the black dog and the concern of the standing figures in the background. The use of a

⁴⁰ The strong contrasts of blue colour combined with chrome yellow communicates intensity of emotions and resembles Van Gogh’s colour sense. Van Gogh shared a house for two months in Arles, France, with Gauguin.

⁴¹ Cf. Chapter 1.

pinkishpurple colour may allude to the setting of the sun and thus the inevitable approach of darkness (death).

Moving through time suggests the experiencing of time, which is on the one hand a process of continuous physical change characterised either by growth or decay as visualised by artists in the depiction of movement through various life stages. On the other hand we are simultaneously changing spiritually as well, in both instances underscoring Bergson's evolutionary time. Enfolded in the metaphoric thread of life are beginnings and ends of events and experiences. Like a woven tapestry, our lives simultaneously contain the past, the present and the future. The order of time is however the unchangeable part of our transient human existence opposed to life unfolding over time simultaneously into development, growth and vitality as well as conflict, destruction and darkness, as will be investigated in the next section.

2.2 The flow of time as movement and change

I approach the artworks for analysis in this section in terms of Bergson's concept of evolutionary time, in the tenor of a progressive changing environment.⁴² Umberto Boccioni's triptych, *Stati d'amino I-III* (1911) (Figures 5-7), is more subjective⁴³ and theoretical in nature than the artworks of his peers (Martin 1969: 265). Boccioni comments on the movement of people pertaining to arrivals and departures. Some people stay behind while others are moving away. Simultaneous with the fascination of mechanised speed, time and movement, Boccioni suggests in his paintings the emotive inner perceiving of the forceful environment related to Bergson's concept of intuition residing in consciousness.⁴⁴ Boccioni endeavours to translate the sensations informed by related memories of the past, while underscoring his view on the synthesis of the remembered and the perceived, as observed by Brian Petrie (1974: 142). Petrie (1974: 140) remarks further that

⁴² Cf. Chapter 1.

⁴³ According to Petrie (1974: 141) this subjectivity refers to a "projection of our intimate self-awareness onto the external world", which is related to Bergson's "intuition".

⁴⁴ Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916) is generally regarded as the greatest artist from the Italian Futuristic movement (Petrie 1974: 139-140), in which the progression and innovation brought about by the industrial revolution is accentuated by experimenting with the creation of images of movement (action) and speed in art.

Boccioni, “externali[s]ed” himself as an artist, as his artworks liaise emotive events, which he extended to social experiences of movement and change vitalised by industrialisation.

The term *linee di forza*, or lines of force, describes his rendering of the evocative strokes of paint in the same direction in the individual pieces of the triptych. The direction of the strokes create movement, the flow of time and a melancholic atmosphere enhanced by subdued colours, resonating with the moods associated with farewells. The lines of force suggest Bergson’s idea of *élan vital* in the accumulated sense of change and the intensity of the felt emotions, as well as the vitality of progress represented by machined speed. Boccioni conveys the innovation of the train as an industrial method of public transport as well as a method for moulding social behaviour. He provides the viewer with an indication of the intensity of economic and social change as a result of industrialisation and progressive travelling impacting on the physical and the psychological planes of human existence. With the succession of emotional states in the series *Stati d’amino*, Boccioni allows the viewer to imagine a personal story of pain, alienation but also vitality and growth implying change in a socio-cultural context.

The devastation of the first and second world wars cast a chill over the enthusiasm for innovation and prosperity in view of the progressive economic development instigated by industrialisation, in particular the military-industrial complex. In human history, the second world war signifies an era of suffering and indescribable horrors that left psychological scars on humanity expressed in several literary and visual artworks. Ben Shahn, a Jewish American social realist artist,⁴⁵ portrays historical events of his time and shares his own experience of hardships during the second world war and those of people persisting in efforts to overcome the monstrosity of war.

The gouache painting by Shahn titled *Liberation* (Figure 8), painted in 1945, at the end of the second world war in Europe, may be interpreted as an expression of Bergson’s *élan vital* as life force or vital impetus in the process of creating the new.

⁴⁵ Shahn commented through his art on societal injustice, philanthropic issues and spiritual restoration (Laurier 1999: online).

Despite the ruined, desolate landscape – a wasteland of war-ravaged ruins and rubble, the three little girls improvised a playground and swing around a pole. By imagining themselves playing in another time, they create their own world to liberate themselves from their gloomy environment. However, the sad and frightened faces tell another story: how can the horrifying consequences of war be escaped? Prolonging the past, and extending it into the present, forms and changes our perspectives and inner experience of the world around us. The expressive rendering of material by Shahn prolongs the temporal flow into the imaginative realm: the strokes of paint in one direction of the background surrounding the lean figures of the children, suggest the movement of the swinging children but also of time as movement and change. Their illusion of liberation while suffering, with which I could hardly associate, elicited memories of my carefree childhood experience of swings,⁴⁶ a mere twenty years later. The continuous movement of circling swings suggests the passage of time as an inner experience of continuous renewal which is simultaneously a unifying experience with the cyclical environment characterised by ever-recurring beginnings and endings.

Ivan Albright also observes life cycles and his art contemplates the effect of the passage of time in our world, as well as time as movement and change. His focus is, however, on decrepitude and thus the decaying effect of time on spirit and body, as he refers to “shadow beams” in the description of his painting endeavours (2015: online):

Paint the dancing sun beams ...in this case shadow beams – all is a unit – all is one ... The bit of universe is repeating itself and moving in a circle ... painting it as a ball of motion. Everything is included in it. Its motion includes time, also life and death. In its movement it's on its way to eternity.

He describes the motion of the universe to include not only time, but also life and death in its movement towards eternity, and thus the endless decay that ultimately results in death. The emphasis is therefore on the evanescence of matter, analogue to the *vanitas* theme⁴⁷ in medieval and Renaissance art (Friedman 2018: online), as Albright mostly portrayed the process of degeneration and corruption of

⁴⁶ Cf. swing-sculpture *Passage of time* and the relevant discussion in the catalogue on p. 12.

⁴⁷ Cf. Chapter 2.1 above.

the human flesh in his paintings (Brenson 1983: online). Albright completed the oil painting *Poor room - there is no time, no end, no today, no yesterday, no tomorrow, only the forever, and forever and forever without end (The window)* in 1963 after 21 years, literally embedding it in time (Figure 9). Furthermore, the phrase in the title, “there is no time” suggests the timeless fact of the disintegration of matter similar to a circling movement which is movement with no beginning or end. Deterioration of matter occurs with the flow of time and is therefore a phenomenon that will forever be part of our existence. The ‘window’ in Figure 9 is jam-packed with mundane objects that could symbolise the typically human habitual accumulation of earthly things which nurture a sense of wealth in possessions, but are transient and have no infinite significance. This acquisitive space is in actual fact not a room filled with treasures but a “poor room”. The human presence is signified by a hand as part of the decomposing material. Change due to the passing of time induces a sense of the future degeneration of human flesh, in which condition earthly possessions have no value at all, as Qoheleth⁴⁸ concludes in his quest for the purpose and meaning of life.

In contrast, Cornelia Parker’s installation (1992) *Neither from nor towards* (Figure 10), reminds one of the passage of time in terms of the history of degenerated objects: the brick leftovers of a row of houses that were washed off a cliff near the sea is suspended in the shape of a house, echoing their previous life. In this installation the focus is on the effect of the passage of time on found objects enduring the harsh onslaughts of nature within the surroundings of human beings.⁴⁹ The mundane worn bricks are re-interpreted and transformed into an evocative installation based on the effects of time passing, reminding the viewer of the transience of life. Pregnant with sensations of alienation, liminality and the future unknown, the work alludes to Bergson’s concept of evolutionary time. The tranquil installation appears immobile, but is filled with immanent movement. Hattenstone (2010: online) remarks that the intention of Parker’s art is to convince

⁴⁸ Cf. Chapter 2.1 above.

⁴⁹ Cf. my artworks *Innere Klänge #1-#9* (Figures 44-50), conceived from found withered Correx board and discussed in Chapter 4.2 p. 103-105.

viewers to observe their environment anew and “re-imagine their history” as she argues that everything has the potential to change (Tickner 2003: 370).

The paintings above attest to the undeniable and irrevocable impact of the passage of time on the human condition.⁵⁰ In the tenor of the experience of time as movement and change, the simultaneity of past, present and future, and the significance of the environment in the lived experience of the human being, art in the Anthropocene will be explored in the second part of the next section to illuminate the human being’s construction and destruction of self and relationships with and within his/her cosmic environment.⁵¹ The onset of the Anthropocene is said to coincide with the dawn of the industrial revolution (Carrington 2016: online). The impact of industrialisation on society as manifested in visual art since the early nineteenth century will thus be explored in the first part of the next section.

2.3 Mechanisation and the annihilation of time and space

On the journey of life a network of relations is established within a cultural context which affects individuals and is in turn affected by individuals. Bruno Latour’s inclusion of objects as part of the network of relations that play an actant role in one’s life, underscores the recollection of significant events from my childhood when trains and railroads featured prominently. The train as symbol for a life journey and the interconnection of the railroad nexus, are analogous to the relation with self, others and the environment and continuous movement in time on different (or the same) routes in the absorption of lived experience. Latour (2005: 79) proposes in his Actor-Network Theory,⁵² that culture is an associative process in which objects (human or non-human) and ideas interact on the same level to jointly create change.

⁵⁰ The human condition is defined as “the characteristics, key events, and situations which compose the essentials of human existence, such as birth, growth, emotionality, aspiration, conflict, and mortality” (*Your dictionary* [s.a] Sv “human condition”).

⁵¹ Environment in this sense is understood as the “physical-cultural realm in which people engage in all activities and responses that compose the weave of human life in its many historical and social patterns” (Berleant 2002 [n.p.]).

⁵² Bruno Latour (1990: 3) introduces the Actor-Network Theory and the use of the term ‘network’, which is similar to Deleuze’s and Guattari’s use of the term ‘rhizomes’.

The railroad is regarded as the first dramatic avatar of industrialisation, the life-changing phenomenon in human history. Wolfgang Schivelbusch examines in his book *The Railway Journey* (1986), the way in which our perceptions of distance, time, autonomy, speed and risk were altered by the railway industry.

2.3.1 The packaged body in railroad and train

The passenger on a railway journey has no control over the direction, the speed or the arrival and departure times at railway stations along the railroad and could therefore be regarded to be in an isolated space, like a package marked with a destination address. Railroad critics claim that travelling by train “transformed the traveller into a parcel”, feeling like an object immersed in augmented speed and progressive movement (Schivelbusch 1986: 193). The annihilation of space and time was the early nineteenth-century characterisation of the effect of railroad travel. What was experienced as being annihilated was the traditional space-time continuum: transport time was compacted and passengers found themselves in a space apparently insulated from the danger surrounding travelling by road either on horseback or -cart. The development of mechanised transport like railroad travel, changed the consciousness of passengers over a relatively short period of time. Due to the change in consciousness a new set of perceptions⁵³ and ways of interacting with each other and their environment evolved (Schivelbusch 1986: 14, 33). Before industrialisation most people lived and worked in the country and produced goods on their pieces of land for own consumption. Families worked together and children were taught skills like farming and weaving to enable them to support themselves as adults. They travelled mostly by horse carts and time seemed to pass slowly. Natural obstacles like bad weather and dangers like road thugs that might be encountered when travelling by road were elements of life to which they had presumably adjusted.

Industrialisation uprooted most of the countrymen from their previous lifestyles and they had to adapt to rapid changes in modes of travel and customary time-

⁵³ Schivelbusch (1986: 36) states that traditional transport [preceding mechanisation] was organically embedded in nature and “had a mimetic relationship to the space traversed which permitted the traveller to perceive that space as a living entity.” What Bergson called *la durée* (duration, the time spent getting from one place to another on a road) is not an objective mathematical unit, but a subjective perception of space-time.

honoured associations with fellowmen. Workers experienced a decreasing sense of autonomy and an increasing estrangement from their work, customary social connections as well as the “natural world” (Spielvogel 1962: 607).

Schivelbusch (1986: 72) indicated that in England up to the 1840's, the lower classes did not receive passenger benefits but were conveyed in open “boxcars” on freight trains. With the implementation of the compartment and replacement of the “coach chamber”, first-class travellers protested, claiming that they felt like parcels, apparently due to their realisation that they are part of the industrialisation process despite the fine upholstery (Schivelbusch 1986: 73).

Since the nineteenth century, passenger trains have become more luxurious. Social and economic divisions of societies materialised dramatically during the industrial revolution, which had various implications for social structures especially on the middle and working class of society. The rising urban working class was confronted with unemployment, diseases and increasing mortality rates, especially among babies, due to poor living and working conditions in industrialised cities, and the implementation of cheaper child and female labour. The way different social classes, gender and age influence and inform changing perceptions of the environment is evident in the works of Honoré Daumier, which depict travelling experiences of this time. In the paintings, *Un wagon de première classe (First class carriage)* (Figure 11), *Un wagon de seconde classe (Second class carriage)* (Figure 12) and *Un wagon de troisième classe (Third class carriage)* (Figure 13) produced in 1864, class divisions and changing perceptions are viewed in the disparate appearance of the passengers, waiting for the arrival at their destination. In this sense, Daumier's paintings relate to Bergson's notion of true duration as a direct inner perceiving or intuition.

Daumier's empathy with the working class in the incomplete painting *Un wagon de troisième classe (Figure 13)*⁵⁴ is evident in his use of warm colours and the stillness of the passengers, as if accepting their circumstances, whatever they may be, with stoic acquiescence. In view of industrial urbanisation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the passengers in third class could be moving from the

⁵⁴ Daumier painted the series of the passengers of different classes in watercolour and repainted only *Un wagon de troisième classe (Third class carriage)* (Figure 13) in oil, which suggests his more empathic inclination towards the worker class passengers.

country to the city in search of jobs, or returning, disappointed. Travelling by train was regarded as mass transport due to the increasing number of passengers versus the availability of compartments.

The family is the main focus of this painting. Three generations are present: young, middle-aged and old, almost as if they represent the full spectrum of human life. As they are apparently not speaking to each other, they seem to be lost in their own thoughts or dreams. One gets a sense of their circumstances through the weariness of their posture and the shabbiness of their clothes, but also their leaning towards each other as if being comforted by each other's bodily presence. Although each passenger is apparently preoccupied with his/her inner awareness and own thoughts, they are most probably experiencing the same social consciousness reflected in their more authentic, unsophisticated immobile postures, travelling through time and space in comparison to the passengers in *First class carriage* (Figure 11) who seem annoyed by each other's proximity.

The passengers of the watercolour paintings of the first and second class carriages (Figures 11, 12) are each confined to his/her own space with a clear disinterest in each other. The two men in the first class carriage (Figure 11), judged by the uncomfortable posture of the one and impatience emanating from the posture and facial expression of the other, probably can't wait for this journey to end, while the two females are seemingly unaware of anybody else's existence. Despite their difference in social class and behaviour, Daumier depicts the passengers' intuitive experiencing of lived time and not mathematical time, suggesting inner movement, despite the immobile postures.

A sense of the vulnerability of people, each trying to conceal his/her displacement in a new environment, is elicited in response to the depicted physiognomy of the passengers from different social classes travelling on the same train. This sensation still prevails in our post-modern society if we find ourselves in altered political, social or economic environments. This resonates with Berleant's (2002) view that such environments, including the associations that contribute to the development of our societies, have a deep-rooted impact on human beings.

The train was often thought of in a romantic and nostalgic way as if it could transport one to another world even if only temporary. In 1922 John Sloan painted

The city from Greenwich village (Figure 14) depicting a magical and atmospheric nocturnal scene with the city lights of Lower Manhattan and a train running on elevated tracks. In the distance the lights of downtown New York are depicted, alluringly illuminating the horizon, which is in direct contrast with the squalor of the immediate environment: urban attraction idealised in the 'American dream' juxtaposed with urban reality. Modernisation seems to be rapidly destroying the romantic past by transforming the environment, and suggests that Sloan could have temporarily experienced a sense of self-loss in terms of the shaping of his identity by the environment in which he lives, as a result of the annihilation of time and space as effected by industrialisation.⁵⁵ The artwork elicits an awareness not only of the continuous changing of people and things, but also the transience of our existence.

Another example of how time is dealt with by artists in the light of industrialisation is René Magritte's *La durée poignardé (Time transfixed)*, an oil painting of 1938 (Figure 15). The Surrealist, Magritte, depicts the disruption of mundane existence. Incongruous objects are juxtaposed to translate the subconscious into reality – to unveil the unseen, to make visible the invisible. A steaming miniature locomotive rushing from inside a fireplace in a prosaic interior setting is an unsettling analogy of mechanisation penetrating our way of living, changing society's sense of time. The literal translation of the title is "ongoing time stabbed by a dagger",⁵⁶ suggesting the persistent destruction of psychological⁵⁷ time in favour of mechanised time.

Progressive technology, the further development of improved machinery with ever-increasing speed, requires faster responses and sharpened attention by human beings to adjust to changes in their environments. These demands for adaption could lead to feelings of alienation and displacement, another dimension of self-loss, which is evident in the painting by Richard Estes, *M-train en route to Manhattan approaches the Williamsburg Bridge* (1995) (Figure 16). This photo-

⁵⁵ According to Colebrook (2018: online) Kant and the writers of his time sometimes used the metaphor of annihilation to describe various forms of self-loss.

⁵⁶ Magritte preferred the translation 'ongoing time stabbed by a dagger' to the general translation of 'time transfixed' (URL: <<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/34181/time-transfixed>> [accessed 20 January 2019]).

⁵⁷ Cf. Bergson's stance on 'psychological time' versus 'clock time' in Chapter 1.

realist oil painting of the built urban environment depicts a forward staring elderly woman in a speeding train, her hand in the pocket of her jacket. She is apparently in a state of disengagement from the environment, held by the train tracks which are isolated from the rest of the city by a sturdy fence. However, in an earlier work, *The Plaza at Central Park* (1991) (Figure 17), younger people are depicted by Estes as having apparently adapted more freely to the train as part of their daily existence. Here, the environment and the interior of the train seem to be an integrated whole.

The digital carbon print *Untitled (House Fire)* (Figure 18), from the series *Beneath the roses* (2004) produced by Gregory Crewdson, depicts desolate railroad tracks and young people that wander seemingly absent-mindedly in the unkempt landscape, evoking a sense of rootlessness and loneliness. No one seems to care much about the burning house in the background, left, suggesting adaptation to the mood of *Gelassenheit*, which intends release or letting things be (Drucker 2005). Crewdson photographs staged tableaux of the demise of American life, which he constructs with precision and the finest detail. He advocates the spirit of complicity as he intentionally partakes in the corrupted world, applying the best Hollywood equipment to achieve similar effects of illusion. His pictures concurrently display a sense of fakeness and the sensational (Drucker 2005: 2, 3). The figures in *House fire* (Figure 18) seem to be dream-walking in the dystopic landscape, contributing to the atmosphere of unreality and a sense of displacement, illuminating extreme changes attributed to the industrial revolution. Such changes are characterised by the division of social classes, the suffering of self-loss, uprooting and environmental changes, sudden poverty/wealth and changed social and individual perspectives of the environment.

Various artists sourced themes from these experiences and provided divergent commentaries since the dawn of industrialisation – from tongue-in-the-cheek depictions of class differences in the eighteenth century, alienation, as well as integration with the environment in the twentieth century, until virtual self-destruction in the twenty-first century, which will be investigated in the next section.

2.3.2 Experiencing the Anthropocene in a mutating world

The term “Anthropocene” is used to describe the “time we live in”, which proposes that the current geological epoch is primarily defined by the vast human impact on our planet (Garrett 2015: 120). The Anthropocene, viewed as the culmination of the constructive and destructive effects of human activities on the planet, is explored here. The focus in contemporary artmaking is thus expected to shift from the affected human being to the effect of the human imprint on the environment, and the endangering consequences which threaten the survival of the changed planet and its inhabitants. Anna Tsing, cited by Davis and Turpin (2015: 4), is of the opinion that art provides a polyarchic site of experimentation for the restoration of/adaptation to an impaired living environment.⁵⁸

The film *Annihilation* (2018), directed by Alex Garland (Figures 19-22) will be analysed to fathom the *Erlebnis* of time in the Anthropocene often referred to as the end of times: “The end is now of our making, and its mode will be that of slow attrition” (Colebrook 2018: online). The awareness of human contribution to the trajectory of extinction of earthly life primarily implants a fear of “losing” oneself.⁵⁹ “Losing oneself”, in this case, pertains to the embracing of self-annihilation, with the recognition of horrors like slavery that had been imposed on others, as identified in the West (Colebrook 2018: online). The following observation by Colebrook (2018) concurs with the underlying theme of the film *Annihilation* (2018): “In the twenty-first century this motif of human self-annihilation becomes intertwined with planetary destruction”. Underscoring the underlying theme this film could thus be interpreted as a metaphoric articulation of human confrontation with the idea of the lurking, inherent desire for self-destruction and ruination of our environment (Looper 2018: online). Nature is transformed to meet the needs of human beings with regard to advancement of technological development and information expansion.

⁵⁸ Anna Tsing is a professor in anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She organised a conference “Anthropocene: arts of living on a damaged planet”, that took place at the University of California, 8–10 May 2014 (Davis and Turpin 2015: 23).

⁵⁹ In the twenty-first century this self-extinction takes many forms: our living like slaves, the colonized, refugees, or indentured laborers (*Elysium*, *Oblivion*) (Colebrook 2018: online). She indicates further that “Kant and the writers of his time used the metaphor of slavery (and sometimes annihilation) to describe various forms of self-loss” (Colebrook 2018: online).

In the film's fictional world the expanding domain of the "Shimmer" resembles the growth of a cancerous tumor (Olcese 2018), which is in "a constant accelerated state of mutation". Every living thing in the Shimmer is continuously changing, mutating into something new – either monstrous or beautiful (Figures 19, 20). Recognised life is thus destroyed in the process. The personal lives of all the female members of a scientific team tasked to determine the Shimmer's origin, are afflicted in some way by cancer. All eventually die in the Shimmer, except for one woman called Lena (Natalie Portland). The penetration of the Shimmer with its transmuting qualities is analogous to being entangled in a spiritual labyrinth with a gnawing awareness of its inescapability.

For Olcese (2018: online) "mortality and decay" are continuously prevalent in the film, reverberating the meaning of annihilation (obliteration or total destruction) which is evocative of the inevitability of death as "we are dust and to dust we will return". Crow (2018: online) remarks in this regard that the inability of Lena to remedy destructive conditions like cancer and dementia is analogous to human inability to stop the trajectory of human existence towards destruction of the natural environment and eventually the whole planet.

Lena's arrival at the lighthouse and the centre of the Shimmer was the initial purpose of the expedition, which she sensed as the fulfillment of her destiny. Apart from discovering how her husband Kane (Oscar Isaac) died in the Shimmer, she is astounded at the sight of the unceasing movement of the rhizomatic growth of root-like life forms consuming the lighthouse from the inside out. She learns that the alien force 'embodied' in the Shimmer is deprived of consciousness, but possesses a driving force that seeks to destroy human biology and reconstruct a molecular-based entity. Lena also observes with fascination how a fellow scientist, Dr. Ventress (Jennifer Jason Leigh) is absorbed into a moving mass (Figure 21). Thus far, the film may be interpreted as a commentary on the impact of human beings on nature in pursuance of wealth and knowledge, resulting in the destruction of life-giving environmental resources, which eventually leads to self-destruction. Through mutation, a humanoid form emerges from which Lena temporarily escapes, but eventually confronts (Figure 22). Through the elemental force of the imagination, Lena manages to kill the humanoid and destroy the Shimmer in the process.

This film metaphorically suggests self-annihilation as a phenomenon of cancer cells mutating, which finds application in the urge of a human being towards self-destruction, but also in the devastation of the environment and inevitably, human existence itself. The film *Annihilation* (Figures 19-22) raises awareness about the eeriness of being entranced by the apparent marvel of the unknown, and the quest for increasing knowledge, and to be subtly drawn into its power to a point of total destruction. Human beings are enthralled with the glamour of progress and wealth, and this could be the reason for neglecting our mandate to nurture the earth, as is evident in the predicament of the human being confronting the Anthropocene.

In conclusion, reflecting on temporality and life as a journey through time, brings to mind once again Qoheleth's words:⁶⁰ "There is a time for everything...a time to be born and a time to die ..." Our pre-destined life journey is simultaneously an unfolding narrative of lived experiences in the flow of time and change. The line is interpreted as the metaphoric thread of life bifurcating,⁶¹ to signify life as woven fabric as well as an arduous spiritual journey in the labyrinth, each enfolded in time. Mortality and the transience of life have also been explored as extended figures of time in the analysis of artworks in this chapter. The culmination of the impact of human activities on the planetary existence, mainly through industrialisation, is a burning concern in the twenty-first century and various ideas invite the artist to become involved in the remediation process. Mickey (2010: 94) envisages the fostering of new relationships to influence our fate re-awakening the "anthropocosmic ties of the [human] to elemental nature" by means of the imagination. The philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy appeals to humanity to be aware of and to endure the disaster that is facing us (in Davis 2015: 5). Nancy (2015: 85) further emphasises the sense of a condition of an "ever-renewed present" which resonates with Bergson's duration as "attention to life" to remedy errors of the past. According to Corey Latta (2014: 100) the significance and strength of Bergson's concept of duration is embedded in becoming, which is movement, invention and change, also in the sense of decay and entropy in this case. Bergson articulated a philosophy of "pure becoming that enables thought to think beyond the human

⁶⁰ Ecclesiastes 3:1 and 2 (NIV: 1984).

⁶¹ History is seen as development, growth, differentiation and integration, as well as conflict, destruction and darkness.

condition”, *i.e.* thinking in terms of duration. Such a way of thinking implies the need to consider a “genetic” (life-giving) rather than a mystical philosophy (Ansell-Pearson 2007:58). Human life is thus interwoven with multi-dimensional environments, shaping our lives as we continuously form relationships and new perspectives, apprehending the future in terms of the experiences of the past. Recognizing my relatedness to the environment I fruitfully explore the rhizome as metaphor in my artworks to insinuate spontaneous movement with regard to relationships, thoughts, emotions and memories in the exploration of past experiences, specifically memories that were formed during my childhood.

The next chapter will focus on memory as phenomenon in our existence, alluding to Bergson’s view that memory is the enduring, spontaneous fusion of the past and the “ever-changing present into an undivided whole” (Perri 2014: 4).

Chapter 3: Memories in the folds of time and place

From the fabric to space-time *via* the words that form it, the fold leads the dance,
makes us and clothes us, fills space and wrinkles time.
(Aziza Gril-Mariotte 2018: online)⁶²

The folding and enfolding capability of fabric, described by Andrew Graham-Dixon (2016: online) as the “flow and rhythm” of drapery, has been a mode of aesthetic expression of intensities since antiquity.⁶³ It is through this distinctive figure of the fold⁶⁴ that Deleuze’s (1988: 118) concept of “to think is to fold” could be assimilated. He interprets the world further as a body of infinite folds and surfaces that twist and weave through compressed time and space. On the plane of memory the fold,⁶⁵ in its nuances or inflections of folding, unfolding and eloquent enfolding, is thus a mutual relationship among the elements of time, space, movement and place (Deleuze 1993: xvi and 25).

Augustine (401 A.D.: 158) indicates in his *Confessiones*, Book X, that memory is a means to understand the connectedness of the human’s experiences with time, which “do exist in some sort, in the soul ... present of things past, memory; present of things present, sight; present of things future, expectation.” Bergson confirms that memory is inherently part of our existence, from manifesting in mundane, supposedly insignificant instances of forgetting and remembering, to recollections

⁶² “Unfolding” from the editorial line, written by Gril-Mariotte of the online magazine *Memento* of 23 February 2018. The magazine is issued by *Diptyque*, who creates fragrances. The perfumes are inspired by past memories that are also connected to specific artworks since the seventeenth century. URL: <<http://www.diptyqueparis-memento.com/en/the-fold/>> [accessed n 6 May 2018].

⁶³ Anneke Smelik (2014: 42) writes “Already in 1436, Alberti described in his short treatise *On Painting* how the folds of drapery, gowns and dresses indicate not only movement and the display of mastery over the materiality of paint, wood or marble, but also that the folds, pleats and drapes create a sphere of agitation, drama, sensation and the expression of pure emotion.” An example of this eloquent depiction of the feeling of grief through the folds of the garments is the painting of Rogier van der Weyden, *Descent from the Cross*, circa 1435. Prado, Madrid, Spain / Bridgeman Images. URL: <<https://www.christies.com/features/Drapery-and-the-secret-history-of-painting-7152-1.aspx>> [accessed 14 September 2018].

⁶⁴ Artist and theorist, Simon O’Sullivan [s.a.], indicates that in terms of Deleuze’s concept of the fold “There is a variety of modalities of folds - from the fold of our material selves, our bodies - to the folding of time, or simply memory”. URL: <<https://www.simonosullivan.net/articles/deleuze-dictionary.pdf>> [accessed 8 September 2018].

⁶⁵ The fold is a metaphor for the notion of being closely related but different, *i.e.* being analogous.

(or non-recollections) of events in the past. Aleida Assman (2011: 138) indicates that it is not possible to elucidate effectively on the nature of memory without the rendering of metaphors, and she groups them into metaphors of space and metaphors of time.

The first conceptual metaphor of memory to be explored is the 'engram' (based on Semon's (1921: 24) concept), alluding to the *Pathosformel* introduced by Warburg, which indicates that intensive emotions are embedded in images of antiquity, revived in the art of the Renaissance and even have an afterlife in modernity (Warburg 2000: 19). Secondly, the palimpsest⁶⁶ as conceptual metaphor of memory will be considered, revealing memory unfolding into remembering, forgetting and imagining.

According to Lake (2011: 1) metaphor is the "language of the imagination" and contemplation on the characteristics of physical objects in our environment may lead to the creation of new metaphors. The rigorous growth of the rhizome with multiple connections is suggestive of non-hierarchical memory neuron networks in the brain. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome as image of thought provides a suitable mould for a conceptual metaphor for memory. The rhizome as a third metaphor of memory is then further elaborated upon in this chapter. The importance of the imagination as creative influence with regard to our continuous re-organising of the "past, present and future, that is, forgetting, restoring and imagining events" (Manning 2013: online), necessitates a further exploration of imagining as mental capability.

The embeddedness of time in terms of the lives and settings of humankind, as the immediate external environment we find ourselves in, impose a further interrogation of memory in terms of time and place. In the tracing of my own memories in the endeavor to configure a spiritual voyage of becoming, I re-visited memorable places, for example: various railway stations, as well as the old fig tree in the South African border town, Komatipoort, where I lived for the greater part of

⁶⁶ Early palimpsest text pieces consisted of parchment or animal skin used as writing surface which was scrubbed clean and re-used for writing.

my childhood.⁶⁷ In the process of recalling and re-configuring childhood memories I could resonate with Boym's concept of reflective nostalgia described by means of verbs like "cherishing fragments of memories ... dwells on algia⁶⁸ ... lingers on ruins and meditates on the passage of time" (2001: 49-50). The implicated inner movement of time, relates to Bergson's view of time as "lived experience", and the human creativity, *élan vital*, that "allows us to explore the virtual realities of consciousness". This chapter will be concluded with an investigation of reflective nostalgia as a historic emotion scrutinising the idea of a past unearthed through memory, which concomitantly informs my studio practice.

3.1 Conceptual metaphors of memory

Metaphor is the great human revolution; at least on a par with the invention of the wheelMetaphor is a weapon in the hand-to-hand struggle with reality.
(Lake 2011: 119)⁶⁹

Through the imagination human beings are capable of taking images or words from their known context and apply them to a new context in order to obtain a better understanding of a different concept. Claire Colebrook⁷⁰ cited by Craps *et al* (2017: 10) declares that recalling the past from the viewpoint of the present and anticipating the future can only be done through the imagination. The imagination as 'germinator of creativity' is thus at the core of various processes like the inner perceiving of inputs from the environment and interaction with the virtual past to actualise memory in the present consciousness; the anticipation of the future; creativity in the development of new ideas, and the creative transference of a word in a known context to an unknown context (thus the forming of metaphors).

⁶⁷ Cf. the paintings *Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future*, *Decalomania - a traced memory* and *Forlorn playground* and the relevant discussions in the catalogue on pp. 6, 8 and 14 respectively.

⁶⁸ Greek for "longing."

⁶⁹ Quote by Yehuda Amichai cited by Lake (2011: 119).

⁷⁰ Claire Colebrook is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English at Penn State University. She has written books and articles on literary theory, literary history, feminist theory, the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, queer theory, visual culture and, most recently, two volumes on extinction: *Death of the Posthuman*, and *Sex after Life* (both for Open Humanities Press, 2014) (URL: <<https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/author/brook21/>>, [accessed 28 May 2019]).

Metaphors are born in the imagination,⁷¹ the conscious central point of confluence of inner perceiving, memory, creativity, bodily actions on self or the environment (for example, feelings of pain), and thought.

In the view of Harald Weinrich cited by Assmann (2011: 139) only two principle metaphors for memory exist, namely, the store (the repository of memories) and the tablet (the act of remembering) which are in a complementary relationship. Engraving and writing relate to the making of marks, implying the leaving of traces and impressions associated with memory traces. Something being “written in the heart” also refers to intentional remembering (Assmann 2011: 141).

In his work *Die Mneme als erhaltendes Prinzip im Weschel des organischen Geschehens*,⁷² the influential memory researcher Semon (1921: 24) concluded as early as 1921 that organisms are permanently affected, as every experience leaves a memory trace (known as an engram) on cerebral matter. Horn (2001: 5282) states that since Lashley published his revolutionary paper titled *In search of the engram* (1950), the “nature of the trace [engram] has proved elusive”. However, recent experimental evidence (Delude 2012: online) affirmed that even ephemeral phenomena, such as personal memories, reside in the physical matter of the brain. These traces, however, also slowly fade, given the plasticity and finite nature of the brain. The labelling of pyramidal cells in the brain by MIT neuroscientists using calcium imaging, reveals the unique dynamics of memory neurons, forming numerous networks reminiscent of the continuous growth and random connections of the rhizome proposed as third metaphor of memory in this chapter.⁷³

⁷¹ In this case, I am relying on the following definition: “Traditionally, [imagination is] the mental capacity for experiencing, constructing, or manipulating 'mental imagery' (quasi-perceptual experience). Imagination is also regarded as responsible for fantasy, inventiveness, idiosyncrasy, and creative, original, and insightful thought in general, and, sometimes, for a much wider range of mental activities dealing with the non-actual, such as supposing, pretending, 'seeing as', thinking of possibilities, and even being mistaken” (Thomas 1999: online).

⁷² *Mneme* meaning “memory” is based on the Greek goddess, *Mneme*. The book was translated into English (1912-1914) by Louis Simon with the title *Mneme* and published in 1921 (after the death of Semon in 1919).

⁷³ Cf. my mixed media painting *Miraculous pathways* (2016) (Figure 23).

Semon (1921: 293) proposes a form of personal organic memory, thus a neurobiological connection between the past and the present, emphasising the retentive principle which inspired Warburg. He extends personal memory to social memory in a cultural context: the *engram*⁷⁴ becomes, according to Blassnigg (2009: 1) “an image charged with energetic and emotional power that remains imprinted in cultural memory as a persistent trace”, most obviously in art⁷⁵ and religion.

3.1.1 Engram as metaphor in individual and collective memories

In his *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*,⁷⁶ between 1924 and his death in 1929, Warburg (2000: 8-9) archived images of cosmography and visual culture from antiquity in Western culture that captured energetic human movement and intense emotions, which he called *Pathosformeln* (or “dynamograms”) aspiring to his belief that movement speaks as cited by Johnson (2012: 20). He mapped the moving historical memories (Johnson 2012: ix), emphasising the afterlife⁷⁷ of antiquity in social memory of modernity. The movie-like positioning of these images in the *Bilderatlas*, Blassnigg (2009: 1) argues,

⁷⁴ The engram relates to *Prägung* which is a “technical term describing the process of embossing metal”. *Prägung* is consistently used by Warburg to figure the fundamental artistic act by which originary events, expressive gestures, and volatile passions are transformed into aesthetic forms so that they became available for imitation and transmission. *Prägung* is derived from a descriptive subtitle to the *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1929): *Bilderreihe zur Untersuchung der Funktion vorgeprägter antiker Ausdruckswerte bei der Darstellung bewegten Lebens in der Kunst der europäischen Renaissance* (Series of Images for the investigation of the function of previously stamped Classical expressive values in the depiction of life in motion in European Renaissance art) (Johnson 2012: 20, 21).

⁷⁵ Warburg suggested that art should be understood as an “impulse and activity rather than a collection of icons [...] and the artwork constituted a juxtaposition of elements in tension – an intellectual, cultural and philosophical *dispositif*” (Blassnigg 2009: 1).

⁷⁶ Constructed in his library, it consisted of sixty-three wooden boards, covered in black cloth, to which he tacked, and then reconfigured, black and white reproductions of masterpieces and little-known works of art, literary tropes and conventions, allegorical figures and cosmological images, as well as newspaper and magazine clippings and advertisements, maps and assorted ephemera. As such, it constituted a means to chart the afterlife of ancient forms through time to the present day (Becker 2013: 5).

⁷⁷ *Nachleben der Antike* is translated as ‘survival’ or ‘afterlife’ of the antique (Becker 2013: 1). Warburg’s lifework is dedicated to tracing how certain pathos laden topoi from antiquity subsequently appear in Western art and thought (Johnson 2012: x). Even as they recur in dramatically disparate media and times, such pathos formulae, Warburg contends, remain the constant artistic means of expressing and thereby mediating intense emotions.

...requires the processes of projection, recognition and recollection of memory-images in the viewer's mind [to] stimulate[s] associative trajectories of meaning.

These mental processes are reminiscent of Bergson's concept of *durée réelle*.⁷⁸ Notably, Warburg's atlas was not descriptive of the development of the arts or the history of Western culture - he was looking for the functions and meaning of art for different societies, their roles for different social classes and most significantly, the energy of the cultural memory they preserve (Warburg 2000: 19). Transforming the cartographic and scientific notions of what an "atlas" should be, Warburg (2000: 8) creates a dynamic "thought-space" (German *Denkraum*) where cosmographic and art-historical images are functional in shaping Western culture as indicated by Johnson (2012: 166).

Such emotionally laden images that have re-appeared in art through time are exemplified by the mythical figure of Penelope. The terracotta plaque with a depiction of *Odysseus returning to Penelope* from the Greek culture (ca. 460-450 BCE) (Figure 24), the sculpture of the so-called *Melos Penelope* (ca. 450 BCE) (Figure 25), the oil paintings of Angelica Kauffmann *Penelope at her loom* (1764) (Figure 26) and John Roddam Spencer Stanhope's *Penelope* (1864) (Figure 27) are exquisite examples of the characteristic bowed head of Penelope and the folds of her garment that survived as pathos formulae in artworks.

Homer's Penelope remained faithful and waited twenty years for Odysseus' return from the Trojan War. During this waiting time, one of the attempts to evade the fate of marrying one of her many suitors, is pretending to weave a burial shroud for her elderly father-in-law Laertes. This narrative attests to intense emotions of longing, pain, fear, suffering and ambivalence. These intense emotions are embedded in the characteristic seated posture of Penelope, bowed head, position of the hand to the head, the physiognomy revealing concern, as well as the soft drapery of her folding and enfolding garment. The garment's numerous successive folds sometimes changing direction suggest complexity and intensity. The drapery, in enfolding and unfolding, fluctuates between inside and outside, corresponding to

⁷⁸ With regard to creative activity, both Bergson and Warburg, according to Blassnigg (2009: 2), valued the essence of intuition in the "production (and in the perception) of the artwork" Cf. Chapter 1 for an elucidation of Bergson's concept *durée réelle*.

the visible and the hidden. The garment interacts with her body in the same way, by accentuating and concealing the form of the body, simultaneously suggesting her vulnerability. This emotionally laden image constitutes Warburg's idea of the recurrent pathos formula leaving a trace, an engram, in the collective memory of Western civilization.

3.1.2 The Book/Palimpsest metaphor

The metaphor for memory as writing plays on a book packed with information as a form of storage, as well as the palimpsest, which consists of layers of writings, and though concealed for the eye, are still existing. Thomas De Quincey (1845: [n.p.]), cited by Assman (2011: 45, 142) compared the brain to a palimpsest and regarded memory as a mass of perpetual and never-ending imprints on the brain:

Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen on your brain as softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet, in reality, not one of them has been extinguished.

One example of a palimpsest is found in a parchment dating from the tenth century BCE. This parchment became known in the late twentieth century as an overwritten part of a severely damaged prayer book, entitled the *Archimedes Palimpsest* (1229), (Figure 28), which dated from the 13th century. Archimedes' inscriptions had been erased and the traces had apparently been buried underneath later texts and images.⁷⁹ A committed team at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore succeeded in revealing the "erased" writings of Archimedes after a sophisticated ten-year process of precarious removing wax from the damaged pages, and applying technologies like "spectral reflective imaging" and "pseudo-colour image renderings" (Easton 2008: 3, 8). As metaphor of memory, the palimpsest thus suggests the layering of events, in some instances an overwriting of previous "inscriptions" of memory, sometimes erasure as deliberate forgetting. Enduring the flow of time, even those memories that seem irretrievable may be actualised in the present.

⁷⁹ In the twentieth century scanners with ultraviolet light and, from 1990, multispectral imaging were able to probe into the layers of text embedded within the skin, and unearth texts we thought were lost for good (Groes 2016: 25).

Many painters deliberately overpaint on previously made marks with the intention of partially erasing the former completely in order to create a palimpsest-like image to suggest memory embedded in the canvas, although such a memory may not be visible in the present. Furthermore, artists erase, by rubbing or sanding initial marks, and then painting or drawing over those, subtly revealing previous layers to suggest that the history of the creative process is preserved in the artwork itself. This process suggests the pregnant presence of the past actions, marks, traces, in the present, supporting Bergson's concept of memory. In contrast to the considered creation of a palimpsest-like painting revealing previous marks, the overpainting or alteration made by artists on their paintings is due to a change of mind, which is referred to as *pentimenti* and only visible in some instances by means of x-rays or infrared reflectography.⁸⁰ The history of the creative process of the painting is thus also embedded in the painting and *pentimenti* as such could fruitfully function as figures for forgetting. The double exposure technique implies the superimposition of two layers and is thus related to the palimpsest, with the difference that one layer is not preferred to the other, suggesting the present, and thus more open to interpretation and the imagination.

One of Cy Twombly's oil paintings, *Untitled* (1960) (Figure 29), is an example of a palimpsest-like painting, drawing on his interest in history and his notion of the past as a source of creativity (Sallon 2017: online). Twombly has a free-spirited aleatoric use of paint, to some extent resembling the style of the Abstract Expressionists, but rather alluding to representations from everyday life. *Untitled* (Figure 29) is characterised by a sense of destruction and carelessness in the mixed media scabblings (Blessing [n.d.]: online), possibly suggesting the sometimes trivial details that are accumulated in our past. The dominating white canvas and hesitant marks may further attest to his expressed desire to render an ephemeral quality and concomitantly draws the viewer into the spiritual realm of the senses and the energising force of life peculiar to Bergson. The layered mark-making suggests the passage of time and the past, partly revealed in the presence.

⁸⁰ *The Arnolfini portrait* (1434) by Jan van Eyck serves as an example of *pentimenti*.

I approached the creation of my own oil painting,⁸¹ *Time present and time past are perhaps both present in time future* (2014), in the manner of the forming of a palimpsest. A wild fig tree that I identified as a spiritual marker in my early life journey and a railway station, which has since deteriorated into a desolate ruin, served as main references. Layers of paint were partly sanded away, overpainted, revealing 'historical' layers of paint that evolve into a rhizomatic network, thus suggesting the simultaneous uncovering, sheltering and interconnecting of a range memories from my childhood.

3.1.3 The rhizome as metaphor of memory

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987: 6-13) modelling of the rhizome as image of thought is considered alongside principles adapted from the botanical rhizome, which have already been mentioned in Chapter 1. The rhizome as well as memory finds itself in a place of the unforeseen encounter – in a process of becoming: forming new connections by connecting to any other point in a continuous process of change. I regard the rhizome as a fruitful metaphor⁸² of memory which will be further elucidated in the interpretation of selected artworks where applicable in the forthcoming sections of this dissertation.⁸³

Due to the vital role of the imagination in the actualising of memories from the past to the present, it is imperative to briefly discuss imagination as a phenomenon and the astounding ability of the human mind to consciously and subconsciously create virtual realities that exist only in the mind of the individual. Thomas (1999: 232), however, is of the opinion that, in terms of the creative imagination, no naturalistic account of how this “wonderful synthetic, meaning-creating capacity might work” could be given. The concept of the imagination seems to have been first introduced into philosophy as *phantasia* (Gr.) by Aristotle, as the imaging and imagining

⁸¹ Cf. *Time present and time past are perhaps both present in time future* (2014) and the relevant discussion in the catalogue on p. 6.

⁸² Metaphors' imperative role in personal sense-making is imparted in the association of elements with no clear-cut connection.

⁸³ My oil painting *Remembering, forgetting and imagining* (2017) is based on Bergson's concept of *durée réelle* which reveals itself in memory as remembering, forgetting and imagining. The rhizome as metaphor for memory is elucidated in this painting. Cf. the discussion in the catalogue on p. 16.

ability.⁸⁴ Imagination permits us "to have an experience" in Dewey's (1934: 219) sense and is associated with the maieutic interaction of external and internal ideas.

The oil painting of the Surrealist Max Ernst, *Europe after the rain II* (1940-42) is selected as an imposing example of an imaginative Surrealist artistic creation (Figure 30). According to Jessica Backus, the senior director of Gallery Relations at Artsy (2014: online) Ernst embraced the "irrational, chaotic, unknowable, and otherworldly" in an attempt to understand the modern world. In response to the devastation of the second world war, Ernst applied the technique, decalcomania, to express his intuitive perception of the ravaged landscape and its inhabitants through the generative power of the imagination. The first step of the painting process is to apply fluid paint onto a glass surface, press it onto a canvas and then pull them apart to reveal a textured canvas. Through a process of tinkering, affording free exploration an evocative painting may evolved as in the case of Max Ernst's *Europe after the rain II*. This creative process that is subconsciously formed from one stroke of paint to the next, connecting shapes and lines, resembles the spontaneous multiple connections of the burgeoning rhizome, forming a network of relationships.⁸⁵ In a sense Ernst is comparing the past (the time before the war), with the devastation after the war and created imaginative painting which expressed a peculiar sadness, associated with a kind of nostalgia, nurturing a memory of better times. Jeannette Baxter (2016: 52) suggests that Surrealists endeavoured to liberate memories from a consciousness reduced to reason and the social sequence of events, in order to foster imaginative play, creativity and impulsiveness. Some Surrealists have deliberately drawn on certain aspects of Bergson's views regarding memory, reality and the unconscious as not being determined by reason but as a vital function of intuition.

The folding of place into time in *Europe after the rain II*, calls to mind the embodied experience of briefly returning to memorable childhood places.⁸⁶ I resonate with

⁸⁴ Described by Aristotle in *De Anima (On the Soul)*, 428a1 (Gendlin 2012: 7). URL: <http://www.focusing.org/aristotle/Ae_Bk_3.pdf> [accessed 7 September 2018].

⁸⁵ Latour (1990: 3) introduced the Actor–Network Theory (ANT), and the use of the term 'network', which is similar to Gilles Deleuze's and Guattari's use of the term 'rhizomes', both constituting connections between human and non-human entities.

⁸⁶ Cf. p. 74 above regarding memorable places visited.

Trigg's (2012: 1, 11) recognition of place and cultural context as central in the formation of the self. We have the ability to shape our surroundings, but place in turn shapes us. In our attachment to places we are allowing memories to be held by place (Trigg 2012: 8). A deeper understanding of the relationship with memory, place and the passing of time will be gained using selected works of the writers, Marcel Proust and T.S. Eliot, and the visual artists Peter Milton and Estelle Ishigo, in the next section.

3.2 Memory and place in the folds of time

According to Arnold Berleant (2002) the “olfactory sense is intimately present in our awareness of place and time,” alluding to the sense of taste in Proust's *madeleine* episode. Proust had a familial relationship with Bergson and was influenced by his work (Kumar 1962: 11). The significance of *la durée* in a work of art, becomes manifest in his series of novels *À la recherche du temps perdu*.⁸⁷ According to Kumar (1962: 10) Proust claimed to have indirectly offered in his work a comprehensive theory of memory and consciousness. Prompted by the senses, an unintended (involuntary) memory unfolds into consciousness, elicited by an action like the immersing of a *madeleine* cookie in a cup of tea (Proust 1922: 34), resulting in the unfolding of childhood experiences aptly described by Boym (2001: 50) as a “memorable literary fugue”. The flow of memories described by Proust serve as an example of the networks of continuous interacting, configuring and re-configuring. The time and place of his childhood are enfolded in memory, forming one single surface of folds of lived experience. According to Patrick Alexander (2009: 9) the major themes of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* concern the protagonist's unfulfilled longing to become a writer and his misery at time's decay of human feelings and experience. Proust (1922: online) eventually understood that feelings and experiences are not lost, but endure in the unconscious: the saddening effects of “lost time” could be countered by the lived experiences elicited by involuntary memories, as well as reinterpreted as art. He concluded that “through art alone are we able to emerge from ourselves”.

⁸⁷ Proust emphasised conscious experience and artistic creation in this series of novels *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In search of lost time*), and his expression of involuntary memory is regarded by various contemporary scientists as valuable in research on memory and consciousness.

In a different way Peter Milton recalls the past into the present in an etching and engraving of 2006 (Figure 31). He places and re-conceptualises figures of famous writers, artists and characters (as well as objects) from paintings from the past in an imagined *belle époque* setting to create an imaginative scene from the past. Milton ([s.a.]: online), fascinated by Proust's work, titled the etching *In search of lost time*.⁸⁸ Milton also portrayed the protagonists Swann and Odette from Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, and explained the unknown gigantic face initially as a presence, observing the activities in a doll-house, but concluded that it is rather a symbol by which the vastness of Proust's childhood memories could be remembered. Thus, the reflection on childhood memories surfaces again as source of creativity in the present. The recollection of past experiences, especially from our childhood, and reliving the same joy and love resonates with Bergson's concept of evolutionary time. Thus the experience of immeasurable, spiritual time survived in the process of becoming.

T.S Eliot captures the process of spiritual becoming or continuous change in the journey of life (Fairchild 1999: 52) in his description of the relationship of the present to the past in "Burnt Norton",⁸⁹ with the opening lines:⁹⁰

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

Eliot named "Burnt Norton" after a manor house where he had once spent time, evoking the importance of embodiment and place in the recollection of memories as further described in "Burnt Norton":

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened

⁸⁸ The title was derived from the translated title of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* published between 1913 and 1922.

⁸⁹ Excerpt from "Burnt Norton" (1936), which is the first of the *Four quartets* (1943) written by T.S. Eliot and all named after memorable places from his childhood that he re-visited ("Burnt Norton", "East Coker", "The Dry Salvages" and "Little Gidding") (Leimberg 1999: 63).

⁹⁰ My own oil painting titled *Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future* (2014), was named after the opening lines of "Burnt Norton," depicting the experience of memories of place. Cf. the relevant discussion in the catalogue on p. 6.

Into the rose-garden.

The past, although not recurrent, can be transferred through memory to the present and the future (Hargrove 2014: 61). Eliot's "Burnt Norton" resonates, with Bergsonian conceptions of memory and time, thus extending the past into the present and future. Eliot is convinced that the jaded spiritual life in modern times can still be invigorated. In each of the *Four Quartets* memories of past experiences of place are described in the tenor of life extending beyond time (Fairchild 1999: 53), echoing the relationship of place, time and timelessness. "Burnt Norton" continues:

But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered.

Memory of place enfolded with temporal events is central in Eliot's "Burnt Norton" and is a description of "lived experiences" in a particular place rather than a "place of memory" associated with memorial sites or sites of trauma.

Regarding "place of memory" which is related to disturbing sites, I would like to refer to the life of Estelle Ishigo, a Caucasian artist who, by her own volition, was interned with her Japanese-American husband during the second world war. This display of endurance and love, suggests a demonstration of our shaping our surroundings and how we are in turn shaped by place.

The Ishigo family spent three years in concentration camps. Throughout their ordeal, Ishigo (1941: online) documented life in the camps by keeping a journal and making drawings of everyday life on many scraps of paper. Her empathic drawings and watercolours of shabbily dressed workers, mothers with their children, food lines, and the icy wind storms of Heart Mountain depict everyday existence in prison. She depicted the courage and dignity of the internees and their achievements in creating 'homes' in devastating circumstances. Presumably they derived their courage from memories of their lives before captivity, like the Israelites during their Babylonian exile.⁹¹

⁹¹ Cf. section 3.3 below.

Reading *The Estelle Ishigo papers* (1941-1957) (Figure 32), one gets the sense of their lived experiences in the concentration camps, depicting oscillating feelings of excitement, grief and disappointment – a poignant demonstration of Bergson’s notion of real time. Ishigo created a pathos-filled oil painting *Lone Heart Mountain* (1942) (Figure 33), as expression of embodied experience of place. She depicted herself, as well as her husband and child as desolate denuded human figures in an equally barren and wind-battered environment that seems to overwhelm them. The bowed postures communicate hopelessness and homelessness emphasised by their position at the peak of a hill, as if they have reached the end of the road. A sense of movement is conveyed by the brush strokes applied in the background, directing the gaze of Ishigo’s husband to the faraway prospect of future and freedom.

Empirical studies by Yochai Ataria and Yuval Neria Ataria (2013: 176) related to former prisoners of war⁹² revealed that the relationship between body, time and self is cardinal in “the structure of the human subject as Being-in-the-World.” Ishigo apparently dealt with her lived experiences, thoughts and imaging concerning her consciousness of her internment environment by sketching, painting and writing about life in the internment camp. I believe that, in so doing, she sustained the awareness of time, body and self in her environment during the couple’s internment. Ishigo documented a legacy of lived experiences, related to suffering and the endurance of waiting, within a traumatic and particular historic context.

3.3 Gazing backwards

To “look back” holds various meanings, of which one is to think of something in the past. This act, coupled with, for instance, feelings of longing, relates to nostalgia.

Boym (2001: xv, 10) refers to nostalgia as a historical emotion that is rather a yearning for another time than for another place, especially a longing for the period of our childhood. Reflective nostalgia is a response to the passing of time, accepting the inevitability of changes and decay – thus the temporality of our

⁹² Imprisonment in war is considered to be a severe change from a structured, well-known social and publicly organised environment, to a state of “extreme uncertainty and systematic infliction of torture and humiliation” (Ataria 2013: 161).

existence and the irrevocability of the past, specifically related to personal (or individual) and cultural memory (Boym 2001: 41). Reflective nostalgia is therefore in direct contrast with restorative nostalgia⁹³ as distinguished by Boym, rendering a positive side of nostalgia, not as an illness associated with paranoia according to seventeenth-century beliefs, but as a positive emotion with creative possibilities.

Bergson (1908: 220) conceptualises that memory, contracting the entire past, responds to associative present inner experiences. The inner re-experience of events from the past influences our actions and perspectives in the present and our anticipations regarding the future, and it is thus necessary to heed memories from our childhood and other past events especially if they are recalled involuntarily. My position is that of a reflective nostalgic who cherishes memories of the past, especially those of childhood, as a rich source of information that could serve as encouragement, better understanding of the self and of perceiving the present and the future within my own cultural existence.⁹⁴ Allan Jalon (1990: 235) is of the opinion that all artists have a right to their cultural inheritance as a source of creative identity. Proust describes in the *Madeleine* episode “delicious pleasure” and the “powerful joy” as emotions in the present, induced by the experience of familiarity⁹⁵ which resonate with my nostalgic experience of memories of my childhood. Memories of the railway stations where my father worked and where I played,⁹⁶ are triggered when I find myself standing or waiting on a station platform and absorbing the sounds and smells reminiscent of my childhood.

Furthermore, nostalgia is a historic emotion interwoven with the mundane (Hepper *et al* 2012: 102) and experienced by almost everyone since antiquity, as pointed out by Burton (2014: online) regarding the Israelites:

⁹³ Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* (return home). The word “restoration” is derived from the word *re-staure* meaning “re-establishment”, which implies a return to the original undisturbed (no marks of degeneration) image of the past and expresses itself in “total reconstructions of monuments of the past” (Boym 2001: 49).

⁹⁴ Reminiscing on childhood memories evokes a sense of *mono no aware* within me, which refers to an intensified awareness of the impermanence of things combined with a critical “appreciation of their ephemeral beauty and a gentle sadness or wistfulness at their passing” (Burton 2014: online).

⁹⁵ According to Epstein (2004: 219) the interconnection of the senses and “relationships recovered by involuntary memory is what experience is ‘really like’ for Proust.”

⁹⁶ Cf. my oil painting *Forlorn playground* (2018) and the discussion in the catalogue on p. 14.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, we also wept, when we remembered Zion. We hung our lyres on the willows in its midst. ...If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember you, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ... (Psalm 137: 1-6, NIV: 1984).

The inspiring biblical narrative of some exiled Jewish communities living in Babylon, not conforming to Babylonian culture, prospered amidst the violence and hostility under the reign of Nebucadnezzar (Wein 2012: online). The text supports the argument that nostalgia is intensely related to the exceptional human ability to source spiritual power and courage from recollections of past experiences (Hepper *et al* 2012: 102). Hepper explains this view by means of his interpreting the hero Odysseus' longing for Penelope during his arduous journey towards Ithaca in Homer's *Odyssey*. From the memories of Ithaca and his family he found the strength and perseverance to complete his journey.

Boym (2001: xv) interviewed immigrants and reported that for some, nostalgia was not an option, for fear of the consequences of looking back, such as those that befell Lot's wife,⁹⁷ and change into a pillar of salt. This image is viewed as a shameful memorial of their pain, and inability to return to their homeland.

Martin Harries (2007: 1) suggests in his book *Forgetting Lot's wife: on destructive spectators*, that such a fear aligns with the powerful notion that the "sight of historical catastrophe can destroy the spectator." His argument is based on the moral interpretation that punishment may lead to transformation – the desire to see the spectacle of divine destruction petrifies not only Lot's wife (Harries 2007: 4), but also those who remember Lot's wife. They deliberately refrain from nostalgic feelings, so as to evade similar consequences and the possibility of being annihilated and becoming a memorial to the destruction.

The painting by Anselm Kiefer titled *Lots Frau* (1989) endeavours to portray the act of looking back into history as a spectator (Figure 34). According to Jalon (1990: 245), Kiefer intentionally combines German and foreign styles to enable him to look back at his inheritance from an outsider's perspective. His method of simultaneous detachment and engagement (Jalon 1990: 239) underscores his

⁹⁷ From the well-known biblical story documented in Genesis 19: 26: "But Lot's wife looked back [at the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah], and she became a pillar of salt" (NIV: 1984).

view of the vulnerability of the artist. The struggle to personally and collectively come to terms with Germany's role in the Holocaust (Hinson 1993: 183) remains a controversial subject in Kiefer's work. "Passage" is a recurring motif suggesting movement between worlds underscoring Simon Schama's (1995: 18) view that every landscape is a source of memories and the persistent passions of the spectator. Kiefer depicts a barren and scorched landscape with two sets of railroad tracks converging at the horizon (Slattery 2016: 1). For Kiefer the railroad tracks disappearing on the horizon are associated with the transportation and elimination of Jews and others. A copper heating element is attached to the canvas near the lower end of the railway tracks. According to Oard (2009: online) the heating coil suggests the railroad's final destination: the crematory ovens at the end of the line. The final heat that burns and destroys just like the fire Kiefer applies to the canvas. Furthermore, the depiction of the land as burnt landscape is for the artist a metaphor of human suffering (Hinson 1993: 183). Kiefer believes in the restorative power of art to redeem German culture as argued by Badger (2017: online).

The overwhelming scale of the painting invites the spectator to look back on history and to ponder its import. Kiefer intends to re-evaluate the pain and suffering of Jews together with others. The viewer is compelled to remember, reflect upon, and to learn from past horrors (Nelsen 2015: 2). This is also emphasised by Oard (2009: online):

...if we are to know the truth about our world, about the processes that led to the present (the truth that power doesn't want us to know), we must look back.

The rendering of railway tracks, as well as his application of multiple materials, such as thick impasto paint and stucco in cracked layers, embed the passage of time in his paintings.

Kiefer's *Lots Frau*, although focusing on the horror of destruction, stimulated me anew towards exploration and discovery of the inner awareness of human beings in the spiritual process of personal becoming, which is the focus of my journey, embarked upon from the viewpoint of Boym's concept of reflective nostalgia.

According to Thomas McHaney (2008: 167) the human being is "incarnated" in memory. This incarnation emphasises the important role of memory as central to

selfhood and its comprehension, based on Bergson's concept of *durée réelle*.⁹⁸

Katie Reece Moss (2008: 7) aptly describes this concept as residing

...in the present, which becomes a moment of transcendence where past, present, and future merge – a moment of awakening, a moment of epiphany, or a moment of self-realisation and spiritual fulfillment.

In this continuous movement of inner life there are no pauses; perceptions, memories and sensations are rolling on, recreating self in eternally new forms. Kurt Mertel (2017: 416) remarks in this regard that reflexivity, as the “ability of the self to stand in a certain relation to itself” is generally regarded as an essential component in the formation of selfhood. Our sense of self is thus formed by the reconfiguration of memories of pain and suffering, but also of joy and belonging ... the rooted and lived experiences throughout this life: like the winding ways of a rhizome when new pathways are created and multiple connections are formed, even when a branch is severed.

In the next chapter, I explore the constitution and attestation of the self in relation to others, to things and to oneself on the journey of a spiritual becoming.

⁹⁸ Cf. Chapter 1.

Chapter 4: The voyage of a spiritual becoming

Voyage in place, that is the name of all intensities, even if they also develop in extension. To think is to voyage... voyaging smoothly is a becoming, and a difficult, uncertain becoming at that.
(Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 482)⁹⁹

Time becomes a subject because it is the folding of the outside and, as such, forces every present into forgetting, but preserves the whole of the past within memory: ...
[which] is the necessity of renewal.
(Deleuze 1988: 117)¹⁰⁰

Intensities¹⁰¹ are related to qualitative changes in deep-seated feelings, *i.e.* an individual's inner states. Intensity is a property of sensation in consciousness and deepens with the growing involvement of other sensations experienced by the same individual (Bergson 1913: 10-18). Similarly Deleuze, cited by Bertetto (2017: 792), regards intensity as a fluctuating vitality related to the senses, with the difference that he expanded the relation to include processes and ideas, associated with becoming.¹⁰²

The line of thought in this chapter revolves around the inner experiences related to significant events encountered on the journey of life in the folds of time and space, as well as how the self in its integration of acceptance and rejection is affected by these experiences. According to Deleuze (1988: 107) the relation to

⁹⁹ *A thousand plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 482)

¹⁰⁰ *Foucault*, Deleuze (1988: 117).

¹⁰¹ Deleuze indicates that "intensity is dynamism, it is a flow of variable strength and of differential processes, chiefly tied to sensation, but also to forms and concepts, and connected to becoming" cited by Bertetto (2017: 792).

¹⁰² Deleuze connects with Bergson's undermining of the concept of being (Grosz 2005: 10), thus the destabilization of the abilities of static objects through the ontology of the concept "becoming". Bergson argued that intelligence and the virtual are affected by intuition, which creates a durational force (*durée réelle*). Bergson's becoming is a "movement of difference, complication and dispersion" (see Grosz 2005: 10). Becoming further involves the differentiation of individuals from one another and the mutual affect between individuals and their environment (Weinbaum 2014: online). According to Todd May (2003: 148), "becoming moves from the virtual to its reali[s]ation", which resonates with Bergson's actualisation of memories in the present as explained in his concept of *durée réelle* (Cf. Chapter 1). Deleuze (1991: 23) clearly states that *Bergsonism* proposes movement beyond experiencing, towards the conditions of experience, thus the conditions of real experience.

oneself, or the “affect¹⁰³ on self by self” is imbedded in memory which is further elaborated upon by Scott Burnham (2000: 655) who emphasises the personal element of memory. According to him the content of our memories and the circumstances of recollection are connected to our inborn creativity and the formation of the self. The significance of selected recollections is furthermore directly dependent on an individual or society’s views in present-day cultural and social contexts (Andreas Huyssen 1995). Every human shapes his own subjective identity as a personal narrative in a network of joint relationships, characterised by dynamic processes of identification and self-attestation as a result of our interaction with others and the environment (Ricoeur 1990). The idea of networks and journeys are further explored in this chapter, specifically with regard to inner movement and imaginary routes taken during the lived experiences of diverse emotions. Experiences relevant to recollected events from the past, and fragmented memories are ruminated on, based on a fresh perspective, integrating them into a coherent life story (Sutton 1998: 18). Re-configuring past events and experiences reveal the conducive value of each significant event, whether positive or negative, to a spiritual voyage of becoming, which resonates with Eudora Welty’s (1983: 75) take on happenstances in our lives:

Events in our lives happen in a sequence in time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order, in the continuous thread of revelation.

Bruce Perry (2002: 81) emphasises the human brain’s intrinsic devotion towards the establishing of social relationships and communicate which are essential for the flourishing and survival of a human being.¹⁰⁴ Human’s lived experiences throughout life impact the organising and altering of these neural systems which support our thinking, feeling and acting, thus embodying our experiences. In childhood and infancy, neural systems are the most susceptible to social, emotional, cognitive and physical experiences. Responding neural systems affect brain-functioning for life (Perry 2002: 82). This may account for the fact that as a

¹⁰³ Deleuzian affect may be regarded as akin to intensity in that it is not recognisable, like emotion, but is felt physiologically. Brian Massumi (1987: xvi) explains that affect is the “ability to affect and be affected”, thus implicating the mutual change during an encounter of two or more bodies.

¹⁰⁴ The human brain functions by means of intricate and forceful neural systems (Perry 2002: 81).

child the train, a piece of grandiose and persistent machinery on its way to its destination, made a tremendous impression on me and memories from my childhood are still cherished and re-interpreted to make sense of my being in the world.¹⁰⁵

The associations that we have with the places that surround us outline and form our self-awareness¹⁰⁶ over time. Being displaced may thus have a dramatic effect on the realisation of identity and may even result in a "feeling of being homeless in the world" (Trigg 2012: 1).

Moving from a social to a more personal experience of environmental impact, the life and paintings of Vincent van Gogh are telling examples of his apparently turbulent inner experiences and his oil painting *Korenveld met Kraaien* (*Wheat field with crows*) (1890), (Figure 35) will be analysed in the second section. William James popularised the idea that "human consciousness flows like a stream." I could resonate with this idea of a "stream of thought" and memories came to mind of disappointments but also successes encompassing emotions oscillating between extremes related to both happiness and suffering. James, cited by Edelman (2004: 61), argues that every thought tends to be "part of a personal consciousness and is always changing".

Reflecting on and connecting memories of events from my past to similar feelings in the present, and how they impacted my life, a labyrinthine journey of spiritual becoming unfolds, which prompted me to narrate my lived experience by utilising the map as metaphor in the creating of my artworks to communicate the subjective experience of the flow of emotions¹⁰⁷ as part of my life story. The two-part series *Escaping the labyrinth* (2018) (Figures 36, 37) and my monochrome acrylic

¹⁰⁵ Cf. my oil paintings *Decalcomania – tracing a memory* (2016) and *Forlorn playground* (2018) and the relevant discussions in the catalogue on pp. 8 and 14 respectively, which allude to childhood memories of railroad and train in the town where I grew up.

¹⁰⁶ Self-awareness as the conscious knowledge of one's own character and feelings.

¹⁰⁷ According to (Deleuze 1991: 112) Bergsonism's ideal creative emotion (related to Bergson's *élan vital*) takes place in a kind of 'privileged soul,' like an artist or a mystic: "At the limit, it is the mystic who plays with the whole of creation, who invents an expression of it whose adequacy increases with its dynamism."

paintings presented as a nine-part series titled *Intensities #1-#9* (2017 and 2018) (Figures 38-41) are analysed as depiction of the vitality and duration of inner life.¹⁰⁸

The synesthetic¹⁰⁹ confluence of colour and music in the oil painting *Composition VI* (1913) by Wassily Kandinski (Figure 43) together with my own seven piece series titled *Innere Klänge* (2016-2017) (Figures 44-50), constituting degenerating found material, are explored in the second section, along with the installation *A presentiment* (2018) (Figure 51) in the third and last section.

4.1 Turning in on itself

To think means to construct the plane of immanence ... by means of stretching, folding, unfolding, enfolding, that is by multiple movements of this plane's intensive lines of becoming.
(Deleuze 1968: 37)

By means of Bergson's understanding of intuition (immediate inner experience) we may become intensely aware of our lived experience of time, and could thus focus on the creative lifelong process of becoming.

John Dewey (1934: 16) reminds us that imaginative creations flow from "life, creativity, innovation, and discovery", and emphasises aesthetic experience as being powerful in the process of artmaking as well as the perceiving of an artwork. He indicates that the creation of an artwork stems from interaction with the world and concludes in this regard that peace of mind results from harmony with our environment.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. also my oil paintings *Feelings #1- #4* (2017) and *Exulansis #1- #3* (2018), as well as the relevant discussion in the catalogue on p. 26.

¹⁰⁹ According to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the word "synesthaesia" or "synesthesia," has its origin in the Greek roots, *syn*, meaning union, and *aesthesia*, meaning sensation: a union of the senses. Many researchers use the term "synesthesia" to refer to a perceptual anomaly in which a sensory stimulus associated with one perceptual modality automatically triggers another insuppressible sensory experience which is usually, but not always, associated with a different perceptual modality as when musical tones elicit the visual experience of color[s] ("color[red]-hearing"). URL: <<https://www.iep.utm.edu/synesthe/>> [accessed 19 November 2018].

According to Arnold Berleant (2002) we may understand environment¹¹⁰ as the

... physical-cultural realm in which people engage in all the activities and responses that compose the weave of human life in its many historical and social patterns.

Some philosophers add the spiritual setting as part of the environment which becomes relevant in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh. During his life Van Gogh experienced dreadful isolation in an indifferent community. He was, however, compassionate about the poor and neglected workers in villages whom he rendered sympathetically in his paintings and drawings.¹¹¹ He considered painting as vital and believed in an inner force that urged his whole being (Graetz 1963: 284) towards action. He thus regarded images as far more important than words and devoted all his time to drawing and painting almost to the point of fanaticism (Hammacher 1968: 9, 27), driven by his increasing awareness of his own limited life expectancy. He, so to speak, turned in on himself,¹¹² analogous to the complex curving pathways of a labyrinth, and his life became self-consuming, while he revealed characteristics of a typical martyr. His changed view on life might be as a result of disappointments related to his religious endeavours to which people did not respond as expected, as well as his failed relationships earlier in his life. Inner torment and despair as well as passion (Graetz 1963: 276) are, for instance, suggested in his oil painting *Korenveld met kraaien* (*Wheat field with crows*) (Figure 35) depicting a storm. The violence of the storm is enhanced by the artist's use of thick impasto, heavy brushwork and vivid colours. *Korenveld met kraaien* was painted in 1890 (the same month as his death), and regarded as one of his most powerful paintings. Gloomy earth colours such as raw umber, raw sienna and olive green are layered with yellow ochre and cadmium yellow in short impasto brushstrokes, creating movement and an atmosphere of urgency. A winding

¹¹⁰ The environment, is a place beyond which we think to contemplate from a distance, dissolves into a complex network of relationships, connections, and continuities of those physical, social, and cultural conditions that circumscribe my actions, my responses, my awareness, and that give shape and content to the very life that is mine (Berleant 2002).

¹¹¹ Cf. *The potato eaters*, an oil painting produced in 1885 which is characterised by a somber atmosphere of isolation (Graetz 1963: 34) induced by the dark brownish colour and the emotional, almost apathetic physiognomy of the subjects.

¹¹² To turn in on oneself means to withdraw from contact with others and become preoccupied with one's own problems (Collins dictionary: online).

pathway in the middle of the painting vanishes into the wheat field near the horizon. Graetz (1963: 276) suggested the road to be symbolic of Van Gogh's personal path, and *Korenveld met kraaien* therefore to be a premonition of his death. The ominous atmosphere is accentuated by the numerous black crows flying low above the wheat fields and the turbulent clouds.

Van Gogh's view on life was inclined towards the spiritual and his art is saturated with symbolic content (Graetz 1963: 288). As a Post-Impressionist, he persevered in his beliefs that through the qualities of colour, for example the application of saturated - and simultaneous contrasts, emotional intensities, and divergent moods could be expressed successfully.¹¹³

The line is an important signifier of movement and life and appears in Van Gogh's painting as brushstrokes of different lengths, viscosities and direction, suggesting divergent emotions, like agitation, loneliness, urgency and chaos. His intense inner experience of life is evident in his paintings through his use of pure colours and the tactile application of the paint with which he pictures a personal life story filled with the sadness of suffering and loneliness, but also energy and the realisation of vibrant life and the inextricable human bond with nature.

Looking back on my own life recollecting memories, plotting the significant events and lived experiences on the routes my life has taken, I am constantly reminded of *sonder*, a neologism recorded in the *Dictionary of obscure sorrows*, describing the feeling that the individuals around us each have their own personal life stories (Koenig 2015).¹¹⁴ In my oil paintings *Escaping the labyrinth #1 and #2* (2018) (Figures 36, 37), the painstaking processes of becoming, or change, are depicted as configurations of diverging emotions and thoughts regarded as exasperating and tiresome. Several lines turn in on themselves, suggesting confusion and intricacy, significant of a labyrinth, analogous to the deeper spiritual experiences of Van Gogh which he expressed in his art. Such experiences are the kind of

¹¹³ Contrast of saturation refers to the juxtaposing of colours with high intensities like blue used with yellow and orange or green and red which allow vibrating of colours (Birren 1970: 55), and simultaneous contrast relates to the eye's spontaneous generating of complementary colours (Birren 1970: 52).

¹¹⁴ URL: <<https://www.youtube.com/user/obscuresorrows> and <<http://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com>> [accessed 20 November 2017].

experiences that may leave deeper imprints on the human mind and lead to changed perspectives.¹¹⁵ The plenteous pathways resemble map-like rhizomatic formations which suggest continuous movement. In the acrylic painting nine-piece series *Intensities #1 to #9* (2017-2018) (Figures 38-41), intense emotions are likewise evoked by means of lines forming rhizomatic pathways. Robust contrasts and tensions are created in shades of black and white, suggesting forceful experiences of oscillating emotions or intensities.¹¹⁶

On the journey of life we frequently find ourselves in a state of limbo, a space of indeterminacy, when we endure time while waiting. We are waiting in lines for service, waiting for a green traffic light to indicate that we may continue on our journey, waiting on buses for transportation, waiting on a friend, waiting for the arrival of a new baby, waiting for time to pass by, waiting on news, or waiting on death. According to Barbara Schaetti (1999: online) such waiting experiences are pregnant with “the possibility of creative fomentation”.

The creative potential of the passage of time is demonstrated in my own oil painting, *Waiting for the next move* (2017) (Figures 42, 42.1), that was based on an experience in a public waiting room of a Mangaung municipality building.¹¹⁷ Meandering pathways and several miniscule unicursal labyrinths amidst waiting human figures in *Waiting for the next move* endeavour to transfer the unfolding of a spiritual becoming.¹¹⁸ The word labyrinth suitably means “coil-of-rope-walk”, which signifies a twisting pathway (Miller 1992: 1), recalling Penelope Reed Doob’s (1990: 85,144) description of the labyrinth as “a complex process in the context of mental activities as it describes moral and intellectual confusion”. The

¹¹⁵ Cf. the discussion of the engram in Chapter 3 pp. 76-77.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Escaping the labyrinth #1 and #2* (2018) and *Intensities #1 to #9* (2017-2018), as well as the relevant discussions in the catalogue on pp. 23 and 26 respectively.

¹¹⁷ My observation was that the citizens in waiting, who represented the diversity of the South African population, all shared one desire – they desperately needed their problems to be addressed in a timely manner. In the quiet waiting room, everybody was presumably occupied with their own thoughts, encapsulated in their own worlds, typically experiencing ‘time in mind’. If one could undoubtedly recognise the emotions of every individual there, these would possibly be emotions of fear, anxiety, frustration and alienation.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Waiting for the next move* (2017) in the catalogue on p. 30. The painting is discussed in the dissertation and included in the catalogue as it forms part of the project, but was removed from the exhibition due to it being an earlier work and taken up in the art collection of the Phatsoane Henney Attorneys group.

combinations of intermingled lines resemble firstly, the unfolding of a personal narrative of lived experience, and secondly, a map which is mundanely regarded as the inscription of pathways amidst a specific environment guiding the viewer to make sense of the world. The metaphoric thread of life explored in Chapter 2 has thus been extended to a labyrinthine journey burgeoning into rhizomatic pathways, and duration, having to wait.

Resonating with the concept of pathways are the squares detected in *Waiting for the next move*. The black and white squares are redolent of a chess board and the designated movements of each of the components of the game. The chess board signifies the margins set by ourselves, others and the environment in terms of relationships as well as physical movement and occupation of space. The game of chess was consciously designed to represent the world of transformations on a restricted field of action. Each player utilises the different forces of nature as well as the psychological motivations hidden within. Chess, to some extent, mirrors our relationship with the outer world, and allows us to reflect upon our inner self as we warp and weave our way to gain victory. The chessboard suggests the plane of immanence which is the field of action of inner psychological and spiritual processes. In life, as in chess, humans are constantly at war with their thoughts and emotions: waiting for the next move, either political, social or spiritual; we position ourselves for various possibilities, and act thereon.

To find yourself in a waiting place defined by a certain set of relations interrupting normal activities, is to find yourself in a place that is 'other', as conceptualised by Foucault (1967: 2, 3). He called such a space a heterotopian space that exists halfway between the impossibility of utopia (unreal spaces that do not actually exist) and real spaces, which he compares to a ship, which he argues is the "heterotopia par excellence". He states that "in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up" (Foucault 1967: 9), meaning that such 'other' spaces become places where desires are formed and creative thinking takes place. The seemingly immobile postures of people waiting, not revealing any sign of their immanent thoughts and emotions, suggest the prevalence of 'more than meets the eye' as well as the role of thoughts as the result of the inner perceiving of the world in which we find ourselves. Memory and imagination in the eventful duration during a waiting experience play a vital role in the creation of this thought-space. I argue therefore

that in this psychological space, an imaginative reality and temporal inner world is created, in accordance with the characteristics of a heterotopia, which Foucault (1967: 8) defines as liminal, a function of time, and a place that is not easily open for entry. The thought-space is thus a conscious space where virtuality and reality meet and temporal worlds related to our lived waiting experience are created. The time-concept is related to indeterminacy as time may be experienced as short or long, stretched or compacted in the transition between two events. We do not necessarily know when the event that we are waiting for is going to happen, and it is thus latent in the horizon of expectation.

Another form of waiting, particularly in the process of artmaking, is when passivity is experienced, especially when urged by a desire to create artworks in which *duende*¹¹⁹ resides (evocative, moving artworks). In this condition feelings of doubt and uncertainty may surface and one may start daydreaming or ponder on the purpose of life, inducing disturbing or joyful experiences from the past. Creativity often flows from feelings of, for instance, incompetency, uncertainty and passivity. Kierkegaard for example proposes that a person's potential is realised when anxiety is experienced (Galiaeva 2011: 33), while the well-known artist Gerhard Richter (2012: online) remarked that the only certainty in life is death. This uncertainty, or related mental experiences, opens up a space for something like Bergson's 'real' time, which is rich with ambiguity, uncertainty, and the possibility of creative, imaginative thinking, thus inner movement, encompassing changed perceptions. Analogous to the experience of real time in artmaking, is the momentous experience when an artwork is viewed by the spectator. When looking at an artwork, the work may reveal itself to the spectator only after a while. This in-between time is filled with expectancy, an exciting dimension of the waiting experience, affording time for associative contemplation, workings of the imagination and emotional responses. Such time may be shortened or extended in relation to the emerging eventfulness of the waiting period. The experience of the passage of time is expressed in a variety of art forms. Although music has the power to move people emotionally (Davies 1980: 86), Hugo Heyrman (2005: online) argues that all experience is in a sense synesthetic as the 'synesthetic

¹¹⁹ *Duende* (Spanish) is used here in the sense of an artistic work possessing that special ingredient that moves people, as explained by Lorca Garcia (Kline 2007: online)

experience' is the result of "the united senses of the mind", motivating the exploration of synesthesia in the next section. The artists below exemplify the particular exploration of the experience of expectation, and encourage intensive contemplation in the viewer/listener. Arnold Schoenberg composed the one-act opera, titled *Erwartung Op. 2, No.1* in 1899. Evocative expression of extreme emotions are realised by contrasting tempi, pitch and instruments, softer sounds followed by sudden, piercing, loud sounds, as well as unconventional intervals. Atonality underscores the complexity of the composition while repetitive patterns, accelerated *crescendos* and dissonant chords suggest a feeling of expectancy. The painting *Die Erwartung (The expectation)* (1935/1936), by Richard Oelze, depicts a group of people staring into an empty landscape with their backs to the observer, eliciting a sense of desolation and alienation. In the play by Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (1949), two characters experience a void while expecting the arrival of Godot. The filling in of this passing of time becomes an obsession. Passively waiting may be a frustration as the action of time is confronted, while the passage of time is less important when one is active while waiting. The novel by J.M. Coetzee *Waiting for the barbarians* (1980), tells the story of an imaginary kingdom in which violence, bias and distorted perceptions influence people's actions due to their expecting 'barbarians' to disrupt their lives.

4.2 Sounding colour and form

Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations
in the soul.

(Kandinsky 1910: online)¹²⁰

The centrality of intuition and inner perceiving to grasp true reality in Bergson's philosophy, recognising the spiritual as the expression of inner life, is paralleled in

¹²⁰ The excerpt is taken from Kandinsky's (1910: online) book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst (Concerning the spiritual in art)*. The translator, Michael Sadler, indicated in the Introduction that Kandinsky was one of the leaders of the new art movement at that time in Munich. This movement included painters, poets, musicians, dramatists and critics – all working to the same end – the expression of the SOUL of nature and humanity, or, as Kandinsky terms it, the *Innerer Klang* (inner sound). "Vibrations in the soul" are feelings compared to inner sounds, which is synonymous with spirit (Ringbom 1970: 154).

the thinking of the abstract artists, for example Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) who was adamant about bringing about changes to the values of that time through his art. Rose-Carol Washton Long (1980: 5) attributed the increasing disregard of moral and spiritual values at the turn of the twentieth century, to the acceleration of industrialisation in the nineteenth century. Kandinsky based his artistic endeavours on mystic elements borrowed from the Theosophy movement, which was a shared interest of many in Europe before the first world war (Long 1980: 13), and the Symbolism Movement (Golding 2000: 7, 82), that aimed to express the inner life or 'inner sound' of the soul. Kandinsky, in other words, wanted to "hear that which is not heard", thus embracing his auditory imagination.¹²¹ Listening to Richard Wagner's musical composition, *Lohengrin*, Kandinsky was impelled to explore expressive qualities in painting that relate to musical composition and sound. Thus, Kandinsky translated music into colour and form (Golding 2000: 82 and Kandinsky 1926: 98), attesting to his strong predisposition to sense impressions and his experience of synesthesia. In 1908 Kandinsky regarded music as superior to painting (Golding 2000: 87),¹²² and refers to musical forms in typifying his paintings, namely *Impressions*,¹²³ *Improvisations*¹²⁴ and *Compositions*.¹²⁵

Kandinsky's oil painting *Composition VI* (1913) (Figure 43), which he developed from a study titled the *Deluge/Flood* (Genesis 7-9), is an example of his artistic expression of feelings by means of colours and forms which he relates to music, and which conveys spiritual states of mind. For Kandinsky 'inner sound/*Klang*' and

¹²¹ According to John Golding (2000: 82), Kandinsky regarded himself as a Christian (he adhered to the Russian Orthodox Church) but viewed life and art in terms of clashes, contrasts and fusions, probably referring to his involvement with, and the *duoverie* of an East Finnish tribe (Golding 2000: 82).

¹²² Bergson (1908: 165) also used the keyboard and thus music as metaphor to convey spiritual meaning in his book *Matter and memory*: "If any image-centre really exists, it is likely to be a kind of keyboard, played upon by memories."

¹²³ "A direct impression of outward nature, expressed in purely artistic form" (Kandinsky 1910: online).

¹²⁴ "A largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, the non-material nature" (Kandinsky 1910: online).

¹²⁵ "An expression of a slowly formed inner feeling, which comes to utterance only after long maturing" (Kandinsky 1910: online).

'spirit' are synonymous. By verbally repeating the word *deluge*¹²⁶ (synonym for "flood") Kandinsky perceived the imaginative 'inner sound' or 'spirit' of the word, and how such a word flows into form and colour (Ringbom 1970: 154). *Composition VI* (Figure 43), is regarded as one of his more advanced abstract paintings, depicting a complex combination of conflicting lines and divergent colours. Stillness and peace expressed by combinations of blue and yellow resulting in shades of green which Kandinsky associates with the quiet drawn-out sound of a violin, are balanced by dense, unemotional brown and undefined forms (Kandinsky 1910: online). A purposeful intermixture of reds by Kandinsky effectuates a powerful inner harmony. The skillful blending of vermillion, sounding like a trumpet according to Kandinsky (1910: online), furthermore produces an inner appeal of extraordinary, indescribable beauty and was tenaciously executed by Kandinsky in the greater part of *Composition VI*. I would propose that vermillion was associated with a trumpet to suggest a sense of victory and of expectation experienced by Noah and his family when the first sign of life outside the ark was encountered. Kandinsky (1926: 98) regards musical instruments further as essentially linear and compares the tone of instruments to the width of the line, ranging from the fine line denoting sounds produced by the violin, flute, piccolo, finally culminating in the broadest line denoting the deep tones of musical instruments, such as the tuba.

Reverberating in the study towards the final production of *Composition VI* (Figure 43), suggestions of the original figures and objects can be distinguished (although distorted), for example, animals, waves, a human figure and a palm tree. The mystics' line of thought advocates that the shapes of visible things obscure "inner vision" (Ringbom 1970: 152). Kandinsky consequently strove to "emancipate" colour and form from the object, and to dissolve the visual representation of the study of the original theme *The Flood* in *Composition VI*. Two contrasting centres are created in the painting: the left-sided one revealing gentle colours dissolving into each other, evoke a sense of aloofness, while dissonance sounds from the other centre, by the uneven application of red-blue and solid clear-cut lines

¹²⁶ The term *deluge* (Old Fr.) means overflowing of land with water. Deluge is regarded by many as a universal tradition manifesting in different cultures, of which one is the Genesis flood narrative. My interest in Kandinsky's art, for purposes of this research, is in his ability to synesthetically combine painting (colours and forms) and music in his abstractions.

(Kandinsky 1913: online), induce overall balance. Kandinsky continues that the “deep brown abstracted forms” resemble a sense of futility, contrasted by the invigorating green and yellow colours. The prevalence of contrasts in *Composition VI* (Figure 43), is further emphasised by Kandinsky’s description of the original theme as simultaneously an incredible tragedy and a deep song of praise, comparable to “the anthem of a new creation following the disaster” (Kandinsky 1913: online). The unity of elements to create inner harmony is thus successfully accomplished in *Composition VI*.

Kandinsky’s extraordinary skill in combining and producing colours and form in such a way as to create movement and flow echoes Bergson’s theory on evolutionary time, encompassing the *élan vital* as manifested in the concept of *durée réelle*.¹²⁷ The twentieth century French philosopher Michel Henry (1988: 55) states in his book *Seeing the invisible: on Kandinsky*, that Kandinsky’s abstract art reveals the indiscernible core element of life in all its intensity. According to Kandinsky (1910: online), the subject matter of abstract painting is inner nature, the hidden reality which is the artist’s inherently felt desire for divine manifestation.¹²⁸

Kandinsky’s (1910: online) beliefs, that worldly forms may transform into heightened spiritualised forms through incandescent colour, and that the stimulation of the senses through musical atonality activates intense feelings and stimulates cross-sensory pathways (synesthesia), motivated me to create the seven-piece series *Innere Klänge #1-#7* (Figures 44-50). I believe that in this earthly life the spiritual voyage of becoming also includes discovering God’s¹²⁹ thoughts for me and the all-encompassing space of his thoughts, conveyed in the *Innere Klänge* series (Figures 44-50). The number seven is significant as the foundation of God’s word and, in Biblical context, associated with completeness

¹²⁷ Cf. Chapter 1 for the discussion on Bergson’s concepts *élan vital* and *durée réelle*.

¹²⁸ This concept of ‘internal necessity’ is the core and basis of Kandinsky’s aesthetic theory. He justified non-objective art based on “occult preoccupations” and is influenced in his theories on art by “theosophical thought-forms” but as abstract artist does not regard the “spiritual reality” in the “clairvoyant” manner which the theosophists claimed to be able to do (Ringbom 1970: 130,134,142).

¹²⁹ When I refer to “God,” I mean Abba Father. “Abba” means “father” in Aramic and typifies how God relates to people that are born again.

and spiritual perfection (Astrovera [s.a.]: online). The series reveals a personal inner life of fluctuating feelings and meandering pathways associated with the botanical rhizome's mode of growth in its hidden, subterranean environment – continuously searching for new pathways through the darkness of the earth to the light and life. Such imaginative pathways are suggested by the numerous minuscule cracks on the found objects, the withered Correx boards, which were re-appropriated as medium. The boards' brittleness, was caused by an unduly and elongated exposure to sun and rain metaphorically suggesting the fragility of the human being on this life journey, and the transience of life.

With the symbols painted in white with fluctuating thickness of line, in *Innere Klänge #1-#4*, (Figures 44-47), the diversity of emotions experienced on the journey of spiritual becoming is considered. The works simultaneously anticipate something unforeseen, enriched and unified by an invigorating musical composition. The association of white with light, and the opposite of darkness, supports the *nous* (the intuitive sense of distinction) on a metanoic journey towards spiritual revelation. Kandinsky's interpretation of white as the great silence, instilled both with the absence and sum of colour, has inspired the interpretational basis of the *Innere Klänge* series. A voyage of spiritual becoming encompasses an arduous labyrinthine journey of mental complexity and perplexity that might eventually resolve into harmony and reconciliation, and can thus be meaningful without having a teleological trajectory. The emotions experienced varied extensively, but were fleeting rather than intense, resulting from a contemplating mind randomly connecting to various reminiscing thoughts eliciting both diverse and complex feelings. Re-configuring past events and lived experiences reveals the value of each significant event, embodying a spiritual voyage of becoming.

The small square holes that resulted from decay changed the found material into imaginative pianola music sheets and evoked feelings of exhilaration attesting to my lifelong appreciation of music, and my vocation as musician and piano teacher. While creating this series, I delved into the secrets of my soul to discover the soft soothing sounds deriving from nature and machine, resonating with my memories of Komatipoort and trains. The description of the musical form *Fantasia* in the title *Innere Klänge #1: Fantasia in c# minor – Reverie (Gratissimus error – a most*

delightful reverie of the mind) (Figure 44), alludes to the freedom in imaginative daydreaming, or pondering described as reverie.

Innere Klänge #2: Requiem (Moriendo vivo: in dying I live) (Figure 45), proposes the discords of pain and suffering, as well as the unexpected paths and dark alleys when deviously sidetracked. Harmonious sounds and silence suggest the resolving of these vagaries which form part of a spiritual voyage. The different layers of Correx as well as the musical form *Requiem* interpret the intensity of the inner experience of sadness and mourning.

The choices of the musical forms like *Fantasia*, *Rhapsody*,¹³⁰ *Requiem* and *Mazurka*¹³¹ resonate with the presumed experienced emotions in the respective artworks. There are no musical forms relevant to *Innere Klänge #5, #6 and #7* (Figures 48-50), underscoring increased freedom in the series as an overall composition, and, in these specific works, as expressions of intuitive tranquility fostered by a divine presence. *Innere Klänge #5, #6 and #7* align with the idea of preparing a space for divine presence. The seven-piece artwork *Innere Klänge*, transfers movement and change, elements which are tied to the transience of life by means of the auditory imagination, in the home stretch of my voyage of becoming.

4.3 A presentiment

My installation of rhizomes,¹³² *A presentiment* (Figure 51) (2018), has deliberately been assembled in the shape of Bergson's memory cone¹³³ as it is associated with lives being implanted in time, and memories intertwined with the natural and human environment.

¹³⁰ A rhapsody in music is a one-movement work that is episodic yet integrated, free-flowing in structure, featuring a range of highly contrasting moods, colour and tonality (Scholes 1977 Sv "rhapsody").

¹³¹ Polish folk dance in triple time, usually at a lively tempo, and with certain accentuation of second beat (Scholes 1977 Sv "mazurka").

¹³² Cf. the installation *A presentiment* and its discussion in the catalogue on p. 17.

¹³³ Cf. Chapter 1 above.

As alluded to previously, the botanical rhizome grows subterraneously and horizontally, persisting when cut off by creating new pathways, and forms multiple connections in surprising directions. Despite their resilience, botanical rhizomes also age, die and wither to dust, similar to all other living beings. An analogue of the growing process of the rhizome is human life interwoven with multi-dimensional environments (physical, psychological and spiritual environments). The aforementioned include other human beings of similar and diverse cultures, nature in its fullness, but also ideas, beliefs and attitudes, and above all creativity implanted in the earth and its inhabitants by the Creator. These environments contribute to the shaping of our lives as we continuously form relationships (connecting to other humans and our environment) – also horizontally.¹³⁴ New perspectives evolve and the future is apprehended in terms of the experiences of the past (memories are piled up in a virtual past) and actualised in the present at the point of the cone by means of intuition, according to Bergson. Due to its distinctive growth properties I find the rhizome,¹³⁵ as a material object from the environment, a suitable metaphor for expressing the continuous changes and intensities in the experience of lived time.

A presentiment suggests a kind of self-portrait as it furthermore alludes to God's pronouncement in Genesis 3:19 (NIV 1984) after the fall of Adam and Eve:

... you [will] return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.

We are formed from the earth and will return to earth when our biological existence comes to an end.

¹³⁴ Cf. footnote 102. Deleuze uses the term "mutual affect" in our relationships in the process of becoming, and Bergson regards becoming as a process of movement and change from the past to the present, retaining continuity with the past – thus encapsulated in duration (Grosz 2005: 4). On the spiritual voyage of becoming, the recalled instances of God's intervention in my life and the experience of His Love, are categorically treated as lived experiences, which changed my perceptions of the world, and my relationship with others. This process is characterised by fluctuating emotions, continuously changing perceptions, ambivalence and uncertainty.

¹³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari use the rhizome as an approach to interconnections, based on the botanical rhizomes that apprehend multiplicity, allowing for multiple non-hierarchical entry and exit points (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 8, 9).

However, when God's inextricable plan of redemption through his divine Love is revealed in Adam and Eve, prophetically clothed by God, hope is instilled in Genesis 3: 15, 21 (NIV 1984):

...and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed] and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

The outward appearance of the installation may be perceived by viewers as a mere metaphorical presentation of an insignificant or rather miserable life that has ended. Carr (1912: 24) remarks in his comments on Bergson's philosophy of time, memory and consciousness that "immobility is purely an appearance". Important however, is the rooted lived experiences throughout this life: a labyrinthine journey that is to a large extent resembled in the winding paths of the rhizome. The deeper pain and disappointments of life are evident in the burrs of the wood.

A presentiment offers not only a reflection on the transience of life ("for dust you are and to dust you will return") from Genesis 3: 19 (NIV 1984), but also on spiritual becoming on our life journey through time, encompassing an inner life of lived experiences. The point of actualisation of the past in the present, creates tension as the new is created. Brian Massumi (1995: 105) remarks in this regard that:

It is the edge of the virtual, where it leaks into the actual that counts.
For that seeping edge is where potential, actually, is found.

In the duration of the journey of life on earth, time is thus experienced as a process of growth, but also of decay; of vitality but also of suffering; of creating of new pathways, but eventually of facing death, and the awareness of our inescapable mortality.

The exploration of the inner life in its intensities and perceptions of the environment, with consequent expression in art, has been pursued in this chapter, from the turmoil and artistic radicalism of Van Gogh and the synesthetic approach of the abstractions of Kandinsky, to resonating expressions in my own artworks. The seven-piece artwork *Inner Klänge* in dialogue with *A presentiment*, suggests movement within colour and sound and the home stretch of my journey of spiritual becoming – the sharing of lived experiences actualised in the present and

contemplated as instrumental in changing perceptions and behaviour. Dwayne Custer (2014: 7) aptly summarises my concerns in this chapter:

... originality and innovation may emerge from manifold ways of seeing the world and inspire change as we all live distinctive stories as uniquely created human beings.

5. Coda: the end of the line ...

The river is within us, the sea is all about us;
... Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
And piece together the past and the future ...
Time the destroyer is time the preserver ...
... Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus ...
... When time stops and time is never ending
...or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
while the music lasts ...
(T.S. Eliot)¹³⁶

The few lines above from Eliot's poem, "The Dry Salvages" reveal, to some degree, the tenor of this paper of life as a spiritual journey embedded in time. In this last chapter, the poetic value of the poem is also kindled in order to richly supplement the reflection on this research in this final chapter. Eliot's poetic thinking aligns with Bergsonian-ennobled philosophy in the way both represent "life and spirituality."¹³⁷

Water represents "life and spirituality" and Eliot considers the river as a metaphor of time and the sea as a metaphor of spiritual richness (Fairchild 1999: 73). The "river is within us" denotes an inner life source, which reminds us of the vital impetus of Bergson's *élan vital*. *Élan vital* constitutes the element of duration in evolutionary time, continuously creating the new as the past is prolonged into the present as well as into the future. Such a translation of a ceaseless becoming, encompasses Bergson's *durée réelle* – the underpinning of this dissertation. The metaphorical flow of a river or stream has been variously used to describe ongoing movement, continuously creating the new that is interpreted as never-ending change. For instance, Heraclitus, born 544 BCE, said "No man steps in the same river twice for it's not the same river and he's not the same man",¹³⁸ suggesting that both the human being and the environment are changing incessantly. In this

¹³⁶ From "The Dry Salvages" (1941), the third poem of the *Four quartets* by T.S. Eliot.

¹³⁷ Cf. Chapter 3, pp. 84,85.

¹³⁸ URL: <<https://theinvisiblemen.tor.com>> [accessed 26 January 2019].

project, just as, for example, in “stream of consciousness”-novels, Bergson’s idea of the durational flux of human experience has been fruitfully used to explore the shared characteristics in which characters, according to Kumar (1962: 1), are conceived “not as a state, but a process of ceaseless becoming”.¹³⁹ Although Eliot has been greatly influenced by Bergson’s concepts of time, his view on cultural endurance, pertaining to traditions which are transferred from past to present and future generations, differs from *durée réelle*, which is embedded in evolutionary time. Their views on the passage of time flowing from the past into the present and the future are, however, both inexorable and fallible as existence is constantly in a process of decay and renewal.

During the analysis of historical artworks in the exploration of temporality and life as a journey through time in Chapter 2, human beings’ earliest sense of temporality revealed a perspective of destined and ordered human existence in the succession of life-stages from birth to death. The metaphoric thread of life manifests itself in a woven fabric of relations with the natural environment and other individuals, transferring a pre-destined lifespan. Humans’ incessant turmoil in response to the gnawing quest for purpose and meaning of life in the face of death and the transience of life, is expressed through the repetition of sounds in “The Dry Salvages” such as “... trying to unweave, unwind, unravel ...”. The unweaving and unwinding becomes a spiritual journey of victories and setbacks molding and forming our sense of self, by means of thoughts, perceptions and actions. The figurative turns, ascents and descents in this life journey are analogous to the coiling of Ariadne’s thread, assuming a labyrinthine rather than woven metaphor for the unfolding and unrolling of life in the course of time. The process of “unweaving, unwinding and unraveling“, further alludes to the critical reflection on memories, especially from childhood, which is a focus of the research. Particular reference to a few significant childhood memories, which I believe had a radical influence on the spiritual direction my life has taken, was made in Chapter 3.¹⁴⁰ Bergson’s *durée réelle* provided the support for the embodiment of the impact of past experiences on perception and behaviour in the present and anticipation of

¹³⁹ Kumar (1962) discusses Bergson’s influence on the “stream of consciousness”-novel, by referring to *Pilgrimage* (1915) by Dorothy Richardson, *Portrait of the artist as a young man* (1916) by James Joyce, and *Orlando* (1928) by Virginia Woolf.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. the catalogue, p. 5, for the provenance of such memories.

the future. The re-living of persistent childhood memories necessitated considerable contemplation, as recollected events initially experienced as aporetic, could be sensibly connected to other memories, and eventually to present actions and future visions.

Eliot's description of the "... disentanglement and piecing together of the past and the future ..." echoes the concurrent arduous re-configuration of past events and experiences and coherent placement of such lived experiences within the relevant cultural context. From an ocean or boundless multitude of memories, sensations, lived experiences and intense emotions have been experienced afresh, interrogated and aptly configured during the research process. In the sharing of these configurations in my artworks, the viewer is invited to partake in the suggestions of creative potential of past experiences in the present in terms of Bergson's vitalised duration. Thus, the viewer is encouraged to interrelate their own inner experiences with the artist's inner experience of lived time. Viewers of the exhibited works are lured into experiencing 'real time' by utilising the senses, allowing the emergence or unfolding of meaning by direct inner perceiving of the artwork. The absence of the interference of pre-conceived knowledge, positions the viewer to intuitively grasp the individuality of the artwork.

Eliot's line "... time the destroyer is time the preserver..." describes the fickleness of the human being's experience of time. Time as "destroyer" as figure of time is suggested in the artworks of Albright and Parker, which are related to the degeneration of matter and the irrefutable transience of life.¹⁴¹ Albright's *The window* (Figure 9) prompts the viewer to face the reality of degeneration of human flesh and other matter over time, and the pointlessness of efforts to preserve matter. In the complete title, *Poor room - there is no time, no end, no today, no yesterday, no tomorrow, only the forever, and forever and forever without end (The window)*, Albright denies the existence of the order of time, implying only movement of time as an unending degenerative process. Parker's *Neither from nor towards* (Figure 10), simultaneously suggests the destroying and preserving qualities of time by utilising decaying matter to transfer the history of matter as

¹⁴¹ Cf. Chapter 2, Figures 9, 10.

inherent memory. The recalling of events from the past could thus be regarded as a means of preserved time and the flowing of present experiences continuously moving to the past, denoting time as preserver. Similarly, forgetting, as the fold(s) of memory, could be regarded as lost or wasted time, because, over time experiences or events are forgotten. With regard to healing from distressing experiences and working through emotions, for instance, experiences related to the overcoming of grief, time could be, on the other hand, a preserver. The human experience of time is thus fickle and individualised.

Furthermore, time as destroyer is depicted in the oil painting *La durée poignardé (Time transfixed)*.¹⁴² René Magritte is very specific in his interpretation of mechanised time destroying psychological time, thus destroying the lived experience of time understood as 'real' time in terms of evolutionary time. Although a miniature locomotive is depicted disturbing the tranquility of mundane life, an undercurrent of forcefulness is detected. Like the title in French suggests, time is pierced when the locomotive bursts through the room's static quality.

The simultaneous existence of past, present and future suggests that time is preserved in memories and the flow of consciousness. My oil painting, *Time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future*¹⁴³ visualises Bergsonian flow of time in the depiction of the interconnectivity of memories, the imagination and the formation of identity and spiritual becoming. The use of subdued colours and the rendering of palimpsest-like disappearing, emerging and changing of images foster a sense of evolutionary time. Although memories are primarily personal, individuals are interconnected with people and the environment in a mutual affective relationship – humans, in their life journeys, have an impact on each other, and on the environments they move through, while environments also have an impact on humans. Viewers are invited to touch this painting's mirroring surface, become part of the painting and associate with the shared experience of actualised memories and the emergence of surprising imaginings when time is spent to apprehend such imaginings in the painting. The printmaker

¹⁴² Cf. Figure 15 and last section of Chapter 2.

¹⁴³ Cf. the catalogue p. 6 and the discourse on p. 84 related to Eliot.

Peter Milton further suggested that the past coexists with the present by means of depicting memory images of artists and their work in his etching, *Search for lost time* (Figure 31). Milton simultaneously demonstrates the transferring of tradition to future generations, underscoring the value of the past in the present, which is a value that also transpires in Eliot's "The Dry Salvages".

The phrase "Fare forward travellers!" sounds the vital movement of a life journey through time in a particular direction and is referred to in this research. "Fare forward", implies a point of no return, just moving on and on. Umberto Boccioni, in his oil painting series *Stati d'animo* (Figures 5-7) demonstrates the movement involved in travelling, particularly by train. The series represents the Futurist's ideal of experiencing machine speed as exhilarating. Movement, not only of the train, but also of people viewed as either saddened or excited travellers departing and arriving, are depicted by Boccioni (Figure 6). Bergson's philosophy of movement and change is substantially explored in Boccioni's painting in his sympathetic rendering of trains in repetitive forms and complementary colours (Figure 5).¹⁴⁴ Boccioni's thematic content particularly appealed to me as I regard the train as symbol for a life journey and especially a journey of spiritual becoming. My affinity for trains originated in my childhood, because the train forms an integral part of my childhood memories and were thus mined as a source of creativity. The train served further as a metaphor to contemplate a conditioned inward direction which my art, and writing, took during the research project.

Eliot's "not escaping from the past into different lives, or into any future" reiterates the simultaneous existence of past, present and future, as well as life as an irrefutable labyrinthine journey. The irrevocability of the past, together with the positive and constructive potential of nostalgia in present behaviour and views on the future, are emphasised in the discourse of reflective nostalgia.¹⁴⁵ Boym's interrogation of nostalgia in *The future of nostalgia* (2001) changed my view on nostalgia. She differentiates between reflective and restorative nostalgia, which enables one to be in an improved position to effectively relate to nostalgia as

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *Stati d'animo I: gli addii* (*States of mind I: the farewells*), (Figure 5).

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Chapter 3.3 here.

historical emotion. The inescapability of human's labyrinthine life journey of complexity and confusion explored in this research, culminating in a deeper experience of spiritual becoming, is further echoed.

A poignant example of the inescapability and irrevocability of the past is Anselm Kiefer's painting, *Lots Frau* (Figure 34) discussed in Chapter 3. The necessity of looking back, as spectator to destruction, as portrayed by Kiefer, re-invigorates the questioning of the urgency with which humanity is taking responsibility for the entrusted mandate given by God in Genesis 1: 27 (NIV 1984), *i.e.* to care for the earth and its inhabitants. By means of the overwhelming depiction of ruination, Kiefer transfers the act of looking back from a personal experiential vantage point, to the experience of the viewer or spectator. The spectator's gaze is compared to the gaze of Lot's wife, which results in self-annihilation, but also the destruction of humanity and the environment. The spectator of Kiefer's work may bear a collective guilt with regard to an all-encompassing human suffering, becoming motionless when facing a past that cannot be undone. Gazing upon a devastated landscape of such vast proportions and petrified by the impact, may lead the spectator to experience real time. The imagining of the effect of the inhumane treatment of human beings and destruction of the environment, may involuntarily move the spectator towards changed perspectives. Eliot forewarns that railway passengers will undergo change from the onset to the end of a journey, that is, of life.

A sense of temporality and change is recognised in the emerging spirit of the Anthropocene. The epoch of mechanisation and consumerism has had a detrimental impact on the environment. An increasing awareness of a growing detachment from the environment has developed, which is progressing towards humanity's self-destruction and is realised in the dawn of the Anthropocene. The human condition has been explored by many artists interpreting human beings as victims of powers afflicted by changes in their environment or by others. The research revealed that such changes are imposed psychologically, sociologically as well as physiologically, and continuously condition views on the future. Susan Guerlac cited by Westmoreland (2016: 237) suggests that the "technocratic world" resulted from privileging the intellect and reason, resonating with the Bergsonian

view that the supremacy of scientific knowledge should be restrained (Bergson 1908: 184-185, 240). Furthermore, alongside the fluctuation of reactions for and against 'mechanisation taking command' (Giedion 1948), the indifference of humans towards the environment is staged in the photographs of Gregory Crewdson displaying the tenor of complicity that is gradually consuming the senses of some twenty-first century societies (Drucker 2005: 2, 3).¹⁴⁶

Eliot plays with the ambivalence of time in the phrase "when time stops and time is never-ending". "When time stops" most probably refers to death that awaits us all. One is reminded that humans partake in the natural life-cycle of our temporal existence on earth. The transience of life has been a theme in art since antiquity as explored in this dissertation. "When time stops" could, however, also be interpreted as Bergson's *durée réelle*: mechanised time stops and the vital, spiritual realm of 'real time' is experienced – the flow of time, continuously creating the new. In the creation of the painting *Waiting for the next move*, the peculiar experience of 'real time' is embedded in the spontaneous, meticulously created rhizomatic pathways and miniscule labyrinths emerging from the imagination.¹⁴⁷ Eliot's next phrase, "Time is never ending", underscores evolutionary time, but very possibly relates to the Christian hope and belief in life after death.¹⁴⁸ Imbued in my artworks is the vital growth of the rhizome utilised as metaphor to interpret the continuous flow of time, memory and consciousness – the rhizomatic stands as integrated system of the continuous creation of the new. The rhizomatic avenues of exploration flowed directly from the research and are thus experienced, not only as a fruitful integration with studio work, but also as enrichment of my journey of spiritual becoming. Eliot's reference to music underscores the uplifting power of music and the ability of music to express deeper inner states or emotions effectively as discoursed in the final section of Chapter 4. Eliot's "...or music heard

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Figure 18 and the last section of Chapter 2.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Figure 42 and Chapter 4 p. 97 of the dissertation, as well as *Waiting for the next move* (2017) in the catalogue on p. 30. The painting is discussed in the dissertation and included in the catalogue as it forms part of the project, but was removed from the exhibition due to it being an earlier work and taken up in the art collection of the Phatsoane Henney Attorneys group.

¹⁴⁸ Latta (2014: 126) stated that "literature can be unconsciously Christian rather than defiantly Christian", underscoring the fact that Eliot's faith only informs his poetry, with which I resonate, and endeavour to adopt.

so deeply that it is not heard at all, but you are the music while the music lasts ...” transfers a feeling of loneliness or being alone with one’s own thoughts, hearing only the sounds of oneself, which is redolent of Vincent van Gogh. His devotion to painting and the urgency with which he painted to capture his immediate experience of the environment, were shadowed by his apprehension of a short life (Hammacher 1968: 38-39, 45). He was adamant not to conform to stylistic influences of his time resulting in the rendering of paintings with bursting colours and thick, almost violent brush strokes with which he probably transferred his own inner situation: desire for love, passion for nature, apparently troubled mind and apparently extreme solitude (Graetz 1963: 13, 272). I regard Van Gogh’s reaction to his experienced hostile environment¹⁴⁹ by turning in on himself, as a telling example of the impact of the environment on the perception of individuals. His use of vibrant colour and swirling brush strokes to express his feelings has concomitantly impacted both artists and art lovers until today.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, in relation to colour and music, Wassily Kandinsky’s association of individual colours with particular musical instruments, and his belief that the stimulation of the senses through musical atonality, activates intense feelings, motivated me to create the seven-piece series *Innere Klänge #1-#7* (Figures 44-50). In this series of artworks, music’s ability to add emotive content is combined with the simultaneous creative exploring of the materiality of the white found material, which I experienced to be particularly thought-provoking due to its association with pianola music sheets, and contemplating the psychological impact of colour (in this case of “white”) on perception.

A voyage of spiritual becoming, encompassing the creative potential of the flow of time, was the main focus of this research. During this research, while I have been contemplating the reconfiguration of past experiences, I experienced Bergson’s ‘real time’, discovering exciting storylines in the analysis of past experiences and unearthing related emotions. Such emotions, for instance ‘misplaced allegiance’,

¹⁴⁹ Hammacher (1968: 9, 10, 13) describes van Gogh’s unfortunate life experiences related to the unresponsiveness of society to his paintings, women, contradictory reactions to the Christian message, and a difficult youth.

¹⁵⁰ The contribution of Van Gogh’s use of colour to the development of art is exemplified in Charles Riley’s (1995: 94-103) seminal book *Color codes: modern theories of colour in philosophy, painting and architecture, music, and psychology* (1995).

'exasperated anxiety' 'ruffled serenity' and 'kudoclastm' have been suggested in the series of acrylic paintings *Intensities*.¹⁵¹ The coiling rhizomatic pathways resemble various labyrinths, modeling confusion and complexity which have been experienced on such a life journey. Apart from the discovery of how past experiences have conditioned my present behaviour and sense of self, the research deepened my understanding of the interconnectedness between human beings, and with nature. I realised that one's encounters in such fragile relationships should be considered with responsibility. This also applies to the creation and presentation of art.

As alluded to in Chapter 1, an important critique on Bergson's philosophy of life, particularly in the prolonging of past experiences in the present and future through memory, is its confinement to the experience of human beings.¹⁵² In response Craps *et al* (2017: 9) proposes a challenge to memory critics to find ways to use the resources of memory studies to extend research "beyond its anthropocentric focus and to incorporate nonhuman species as objects, if not subjects, of memory", to be able to counter the trajectory of our planetary existence.

On the other hand, Davis and Turpin, in the essay, *Art and death: lives between the fifth assessment and the sixth extinction* (2015) accentuates the predominance of the senses in the full realisation of the Anthropocene. Jean-Luc Nancy (Davis 2015: 5) reverts to Bergson's 'attention to life' in his concept of intuition as immediate consciousness, and urges humanity to continue being "exposed," that is, to "endure" and allow oneself to "sense" the confrontation and contemplate the situation in which we find ourselves by positioning ourselves to be either arriving or leaving. As stated previously, Boccioni in particular, depicted a sense of arrivals and departures exemplified in *Stati d'animo* (Figures 5-7), which plays on the human's inner experience of the impact of change. Furthermore, to consciously confront our situation could counteract the increasing alienation from the environment, and the consuming complicity discussed above.

¹⁵¹ Cf. catalogue pp. 28-29.

¹⁵² Cf. Chapter 1.

To conclude, I propose that it is thus crucial to have an understanding of the 'attention to life' and 'real' time or evolutionary time in order to have a conceptualisation of the Anthropocene. Bergson's concept *durée réelle* encompassing *élan vital*, and the more recent prolongations of his thinking in the concepts of Deleuze, Ansell-Pearson and Boym, as considered in this research, could therefore be an appropriate foundation for sensible action and views of the future, which could be even more fruitfully assimilated in future projects.

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