Understanding Creative Intuition

Abstract

The teaching of the creative arts in an academic context is relatively complex and may be seen as problematic due to the fact that the creative process includes both rational and non-rational aspects. The rational aspects of creativity, such as cognitive strategies and skills development, are addressed overtly in university courses, but the non-rational aspects of the creative process, such as intuition and imagination, are often not discussed due to a lack of understanding. Creative intuition, in particular, is seen as 'mystical' an inexplicable, because it is not based on reason or logic. This article, however, argues that creative intuition can be understood. By exploring psychological and philosophical explanations of creative intuition it demystifies the concept and five key principles underlying creative intuition are presented, which may provide the basis for further discourse in the field of creative arts education.

Introduction

The creative process is multi-faceted. Whether one is designing a building, composing a piece of music or developing a series of paintings, the process involves both rational and other, less easily explicable, non-rational aspects. The highly personal 'internal determinants' include emotion, motivation, intuition, inspiration, insight and imagination, and there are therefore different ways of thinking and knowing involved in any creative encounter (Koestler 1964; Runco 2007; Sawyer 2006; Torrance 1962 and 1995). It is therefore obvious that both the rational and non-rational aspects of the creative process need to be addressed and nurtured as part of the academic education of a creative arts student.

For the purposes of this article, the creative arts are broadly defined as a collection of disciplines which overtly involve the creative process as part of their educational strategy. These include the fine arts, the performing arts, creative writing, architecture and various other design disciplines. Because of the relative complexity and multiplicity of the thought processes involved in the creative process, teaching in the creative arts may understandably be described as complex and 'messy', compared to the precision and clarity of thought in the natural sciences. The evaluation of creative outputs is equally complex in the academic context, where rationality is highly valued.

In the field of architecture, a broad way of measuring the success of a design is by considering the three categories outlined by Vitruvius: *utilitas, firmitas* and *venustas* (Evers 2006:12). *Utilitas* refers to function, *firmitas* to structure and *venustas* to that elusive quality inherent in all good design, whatever the field, which is 'delight'. This latter characteristic is the intangible and highly personal contribution to the creative process, and when it is present in a design, or in any other creative product for that matter, it is unmistakable. Unfortunately though, it often appears to be lacking.

One of the reasons for this is that the more subjective internal determinants involved in the creative process, such as intuition, motivation and imagination, may not be fully understood, nor actively nurtured in the academic context. This is largely due to the fact that arts educators and arts students are not familiar with the psychology and philosophies of creativity, as those are typically not included in academic curricula.

The article will focus on one particular aspect of the creative process which is hardly mentioned in academia due to its subjective and highly personal nature - the role of creative intuition. The relative neglect of intuition is largely due to the fact that it is regarded as an irrational, mystical and inexplicable component of creativity, which cannot be taught. The article will draw attention to the fact that creative intuition is not mystical, as it has been explored from both psychological and philosophical perspectives. It can, therefore, be understood and nurtured in an academic context. The situation in creative arts courses in major South African universities, however, reveals that creative intuition is not being addressed at course level, as neither the psychology nor the philosophies of creativity are being taught to students or arts educators.

The main purpose of this article is, therefore, to identify the key principles underlying creative intuition, drawn from an understanding of psychology and philosophy. It starts with a clarification of the concept of intuition, particularly as an important part of the creative process. It then briefly describes the current situation in the South African academic context, highlighting the absence of active and conscious nurturing of intuition in creative arts courses. What follows, then, is a call from the author for an understanding of creative intuition, by presenting and explaining five interrelated underlying principles. Creative intuition

- involves a state of expanded consciousness
- is an open, fluid state of becoming
- focuses on the particular rather than the general
- operates through an act of sympathetic identification
- relies on emotion

Intuition as part of the creative process

There are varying definitions of intuition, and the word is commonly used to indicate a direct insight that emerges without logical reasoning. Hague defines it as 'a spontaneous, immediate perception of truth that does not rely on the intermediary of rational thought processes or overt, external physical evidence' (2003:63). In the context of creativity, Stein defines it as 'a method of formulating or solving a problem in which the person has no conscious awareness or knowledge of how he arrived at the answer or what stimuli led him to it.' (1974:203).

It has been explored from a psychological perspective by Carl Jung and Robert Ornstein; and Western philosophers such as Henri Bergson, William James, Benedetto Croce and Jacques Maritain have developed their thinking around it (Hague 2003). Gilles Deleuze described it as 'neither a feeling, an inspiration, nor a disorderly sympathy, but a fully developed method, one of the most fully developed methods in philosophy (Hague 2003:13). Eastern philosophies which elucidate the concept include Zen Buddhism and Taoism (Chang 1970; Langer 2006; Lau 2004; Miller 1989). Intuitive consciousness is a fundamental part of the creative process, but it is a part of creativity which is largely neglected in creativity research and creative arts education.

Since the 20th century the conscious, more rational and empirical aspects of the creative process have taken precedence over the non-rational aspects of creativity, in terms of their understanding and development. Current research approaches associated with creativity have been summarised as follows by Sternberg and Lubart (Sternberg 1999:4-12):

- Mystical

- Pragmatic
- Psychodynamic
- Psychometric
- Cognitive
- Social-personality
- Confluent

The first three approaches will be discussed briefly, as they bear relation to the concept of intuition and the important role it plays in the creative process.

In terms of the Mystical approach, creativity is essentially seen as a spiritual process, and therefore does not lend itself to scientific study. Sawyer (2006:302) refers to so-called New Age notions of creativity, which emphasise process rather than product, and creativity as a spiritual practice. Citing Julia Cameron (1992) and Shakti Gawain (2002), Sawyer notes that these conceptions of creativity draw on psychoanalytic and spiritual conceptions of the unconscious, the importance of dreams and the Jungian notions of archetype. Critical of these approaches, he says they often 'trot out ethnocentric stereotypes of a century ago: that primitive peoples or children are more pure and less corrupted by convention and civilization' and states that these beliefs about creativity are rooted in the 19th century and have no scientific basis. He does, however, concede that this approach is supported by Amabile's research on intrinsic motivation (1996) and Csikszentmihalyi's research on the 'flow' state (1990, 1996), as the advice offered by the so-called New Agers is effective in helping a person attain such a creative state.

The Pragmatic approach, identified by Steinberg and Lubart (1999), is defined as the popularisation or commercialisation of techniques for developing creativity, as opposed to research which aims to understand and explain the phenomenon. These two authors state that pragmatic approaches are usually devoid of any attempts to test the validity of the ideas put forward, and they cite Edward de Bono as one of the foremost proponents of this approach, with his commercial success in selling the concepts of lateral thinking and the 'thinking hats' (De Bono 1971, 1985 and 1992). Other pragmatic approaches include the technique of 'brainstorming', developed and commercialised by Osborn (1963); as well as 'synectics', a method developed by Gordon (1961), which attempts to simulate creative thinking. 'Mind-mapping' as an aid to enhancing creativity was popularised by authors such as Buzan (1990) and Wycoff (1991). Intuition may also fall into this category, as many self-help books briefly refer to it as a creative asset, but imply that it is 'mystical' and therefore bot a form of scientific or academic knowledge (Gelb 2000; Morris 1992; Neethling and Rutherford 2005; Progoff 1992).

The Psychodynamic approach, which understands creativity as being linked to certain states of consciousness, proposes that creativity emerges from the tension between reality and unconscious drives, having its origins in Freud's investigation into the unconscious. Freud (1958) explored the idea of creativity as a 'defense mechanism' rooted in the unconscious, and Ernst Kris developed this theory into the psychoanalytic concept of 'regression in the service of ego' (1952:2). Sternberg notes that the Psychodynamic approach was not at the centre of emerging 20th century scientific enquiry, as concepts such as 'consciousness' and 'intuition' were not considered scientifically testable (1996:6). The more controlled, experimental methods of researching creativity, valued by psychologists, were therefore given preference, and this resulted in the study of creativity being isolated from mainstream psychology, with psychometric approaches being favoured. However, some psychologists continued to pursue the Psychodynamic approach. One of these was Westcott (1968), who demonstrates that intuition is a concept

that occurs throughout the history of philosophy, and from this basis he developed a contemporary psychology of intuition. His work, however, focuses more on the role of intuition in personal relationships and decision-making, than on its role in the creative process.

During the 1970s, Paul Torrance, a highly respected researcher in the field of creativity research, turned to philosophy for a better understanding of the so-called 'mystical' aspects of creativity, such as creative intuition and insight. He highlighted the similarity between the *satori* experience in Zen Buddhism, with the enlightenment or '*A-HA*!' experience in the creative process. (Runco 2007:275). Several other publications linking creative intuition to Eastern philosophical concepts have emerged in recent years, including works by Carbonetti (1998), Osho (1999), Loori (2005), Lynch (2006) and Langer (2006), but these have largely been ignored by creative arts educators, as the myth is being perpetuated that intuition is 'mystical', and therefore cannot be understood or actively nurtured in an academic context.

The current situation in South African universities

Preliminary research on the Internet into the academic curricula of the major creative arts institutions in South Africa, shows that neither the psychology of creativity, not the philosophies of creativity are being taught formally to students of the arts. The understanding of creative intuition as a powerful tool for developing creativity is, therefore, clearly absent form the curricula too.

Theory subjects vary according to the specific disciplines, and these include some theory on the specific discipline, such as Theory of Art, Music, Architecture and Design, a history of the specific creative discipline, Visual Communication, Performance Studies and Critical Thinking, amongst others. Studio work involves the practical application of lessons learnt in theory classes (whether in music, drama, fine arts or design) and this is usually at the heart of all creative arts programmes. It is in this setting that the student is able to explore the various aspects of the creative process under the guidance of an experienced studio leader.

The concept of intuition as an important part of creativity maybe imparted during the process of studio work, but this cannot be guaranteed, as formal teaching is usually restricted to the handing down of methods, skills and techniques, in addition to some cognitive state. In my experience as an arts and design educator, the nurturing of personal intuitive thought is rarely addressed or discussed at length in the studio. A possible explanation for this is that the non-rational and unconscious aspects of the creative process are not fully understood by the educators themselves, due to abovementioned knowledge gaps in the creative arts curricula. In addition, creative arts educators usually have no formal training other than their discipline-specific training. They have therefore not been taught how to nurture creativity or creative intuition I the academic context. Therefore, the more difficult-to-grasp aspects of the creative process, such as intuition, tend to be neglected at university in favour of more practical, rational and scientific considerations.

Understanding creative intuition

In response to the relative neglect of intuition in the history of creativity research, as well as its lack of acknowledgement in the South African academic context, this article will identify five principles underlying creative intuition, as derived from the examination of the

various philosophies of creativity, as well as the psychodynamics thereof. It argues, that once understood, these principles can be taught to creative arts students and nurtured by educators in an academic context. What follows is a summary of the principles underlying creative intuition which, although presented in the text as separate principles, are clearly interrelated.

Creative intuition involves a state of expanded consciousness

Research reveals that the most important principle underlying creative intuition is that it occurs at a relatively unconscious level of the psyche, unlike rational thought which is conscious. Many theorists of intuition denigrate rational or intellectual thought, either implicitly or explicitly, in order to validate intuitive knowledge. This is unjustified in the context of creativity, as it is clear form the research that both rational thought and intuition play important and complementary roles in the creative process. Creative intuition should, therefore, be viewed as an expansion of consciousness, rather than an absence of consciousness.

In his book *The Creative Mind*, Henri Bergson refers to the creative state of consciousness as 'immediate consciousness, a vision which is scarcely distinguishable form the object seen, a knowledge which is in contact and even coincidence… it is consciousness extended' (1946:32). Bergson defines intuition as a function of the human mind that grasps the interpenetration of experience through this 'immediate consciousness'.

The philosopher William James' exploration of intuitive consciousness parallels Bergson's description of intuition. In his critique of rationalism, James indicts rationalism for being a 'closed system of reality that ignores the open-ended, seemingly chaotic character of the actual universe' (Hague 2003:23). James refers to potential doorways to other types of experience and perceptions that are impossible in the 'sunlit' areas of everyday conscious activity, and calls this dimension of the psyche a 'transmarginal field' or wider self' that embraces aesthetic, mystical, religious and metaphysical events (Hague 2003:29). James calls this state of consciousness the 'B-region' and claims that it is as real as our 'daylight' one , because it has effects in the natural world. 'Our ideal impulses originate in this region… and we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong to in the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong' (James 1929:399). Like Bergson, James sees a connection between our openness to subliminal states of mind and creative activity, and says that 'we are alive or dead to the eternal message of the arts according as we have kept or lost this mystical susceptibility' (1929:302).

The psychodynamic theorist, Kubie (1958), refers to the existence of the 'pre-conscious' – a mental state which falls between conscious reality and the inaccessible unconscious. He regards this as the source of creativity, as it is in this realm that thoughts are loose and vague, but interpretable. Other theorists such as Noy, Rothenburg, Suler, and Werner and Kaplan have recognised the importance of both conscious and unconscious processes (Sternberg 1999:6).

Carl Jung (1960, 1966) expands on this philosophical and psychological investigation into consciousness, by equating consciousness with the ego and the will. He states that 'civilised' society tends to overvalue the conscious, due to the ego being placed at the centre of life. He sees this as an attempt by the ego to manage reality by creating a rational, ordered world which is relatively safe and predictable. Hence he refers to it as a defense mechanism which only expresses one attitude to the world – one that is not 'all-

embracing' (Jung 1960:485), and in this way it is only a fraction of creative consciousness. Jung claims that there are 'rational' as well as 'irrational truths' and that the 'greatest transformations that have ever befallen mankind' happen not by deliberate logical calculation, but by ways that include the irrational (Hague 2003:38). The 'irrational truths' originate in the unconscious , which Jung sees as far more than merely a storehouse of repressed and forgotten material. Jung sees the mind as consisting of three psychic levels: the conscious, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious.

The collective unconscious specifically is, according to Jung, the source of intuition and instinct. In his theory of the collective unconscious, Jung describes it as a fluid, sympathetic, 'boundless expanse,

> a place of unprecedented uncertainty, with apparently no inside and no outside, no above and no below, no here and no there, no mine and no thine, no good and no bad. It is the world of water, where all life floats in suspension; where the realm of the sympathetic nervous system, the soul of everything living, begins; where I am indivisibly this and that; where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me.' (1959:21-22)

According to Jung, the unconscious (both personal and collective) is therefore synonymous with ego loss, in that the unconscious eliminates boundaries between the 'I' and the rest of the world. He states that the creative person is somehow able to connect unconscious knowledge with conscious ideas, which often results in a creative product or action. Creative intuition is a communication between the conscious mind and the collective unconscious, which suggests possibilities inherent in a subject or situation. Referring to unconscious knowledge as 'absolute' knowledge, a perception through images or 'subjectless simulcra' (Jung 1960:494), Jung argues that a healthy, creative psyche involves the 'transcendent function', which is the unification or integration of its conscious and unconscious contents. Neumann (1959) refers to this unification as a 'tension between the unconscious and the ego-centred consciousness', and he claims that only once this tension is experienced, can a new creation be born, which 'transcends or surpasses the opposites' (1959:192).

like Jung and James, the philosopher Jacques Maritain (1959) discusses the characteristics of an unconscious level of the mind which he calls the 'spiritual unconscious' or 'preconscious'. He asserts that the rational functions of the mind are preceded by 'the hidden workings of an immense and primal preconscious life' developed in 'a night which is translucid and fertile' (1959:94). This realm of the unconscious contains the sources of creativity love and knowledge, and is an 'inner abyss of personal freedom and of the personal thirst and striving for knowing and seeing, grasping and expressing' (1959:94). According to Maritain, 'intelligible germs' give rise to concepts in this realm of the psyche, and the intellect is dependent on these concepts (1959:97).

It can, therefore, be seen that an expanded state of consciousness is a common thread that runs through the psychology and philosophies of creativity. Intuitive consciousness, which is the basis of creativity, does not abide by the rules of time, space or causality like conscious rational thought, and is characterised by an attitude of 'expectancy, by vision and penetration' (Jung 1926:366). It allows meaning to emerge from the world itself by being flexible, passive, alert and receptive to the fleeting nature of reality. This way of being is discussed as the second principle underlying creative intuition.

Creative intuition is an open, fluid state of becoming

> The great [artist]…. moves effortlessly… from some unknown centre which is certainly not the brain centre but which is definitely a centre, a centre connected with the rhythm of the whole universe, and consequently as sound, unshakable, as defiant, anarchic, purposeless, as the universe itself…. (Henry Miller in Ghiselin 1985:187)

According to Hague (2003), an intuitive approach to creativity assumes a world that is in a 'constant state of becoming, a fluctuating, dynamic, constantly merging and diverging reality in which meaning resides in the moment-to-moment metamorphosis of individual parts rather than in a fixed, conclusive future state'. This approach is largely based on Bergson's theory of intuition which asserts that the fundamental nature of reality is in a perpetual state of duration or flux, in which a 'continuous, nondiscrete, interpenetrating flow of experience constantly expands outward with no pre-ordained goal or conclusion in view; the future, always in a state of becoming, is open-ended and unavailable for rational prediction (Hague 2003:14). Only intuition, Bergson believes, can penetrate and grasp this flux, and it is therefore a 'fleeting, fragmentary glimpse of reality' (Hague 2003:64).

Access to this 'glimpse' requires an attitude of receptivity, described by James as a 'passive and receptive listening' and by Maritain as an 'alert receptivity', an ' attentive passivity' (Hague 2003:59). It is a state of mind which waits for meanings and patterns to emerge from the world, rather than imposing meanings and patterns on the world.

Intuitive consciousness has no goal in mind. It is therefore a way of being in the world, which Kokot and Coleman (1997) refer to as 'the creative mode of being'. Henry Miller writes that he had to learn to think, feel and see in a totally new fashion, in an uneducated way… throw[ing himself] in the current, knowing that [he] would probably sink' (in Ghiselin 1985:187).

This recalls Heidegger's concept of Being, which is an openness to the world through one's state of mind. It involves self-abandonment – an emptiness of mind, not seeking, but listening, waiting and reflecting. In his essay, 'The Origin of the Work of Art (1971), Heidegger writes that in this state of mind 'the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge' (1971:39). By adopting a passive and receptive state of mind, ordinary, habitual ways of thinking are annihilated, and the artists may be open to the poetic moment. In another essay 'The thinker as poet' (1971:6), he claims: 'We never come to thoughts. They come to us. That is the proper hour of discourse.' Heidegger describes the artist as 'one who truly knows what is' (1971:65), in other words, a person deeply aware of every passing moment of Being and completely open to its possibilities A Buddhist concept related to this is *sunyata*, which can be described as the living void, the passing concreteness of experience, which is continually opening to us. It is understood as non-anthropocentric in that, in this void, the individual self loses its separateness and merges with reality beyond itself (Miller 1989:20).

Ego-loss is an important aspect of this state of being, and the ability of the creative artist to yield to the indeterminate and the unknown is central to creativity. Doris Lessing's description of the artist as a conduit expresses this clearly: 'What is an artist? He's a man who has antennae, who knows how to hook up to the currents which are in the atmosphere, in the cosmos; he merely has the facility for hooking on, as it were.' (Plimpton

1977:172). Ghiselin (1985) describes the creative state of being as 'a sense of self-surrender to an inward necessity inherent in something larger than the ego', while Stephen Spender describes it as 'achieving nakedness' (Ghiselin 1985:124). This way of being endures that the creative person is open and receptive to the specific nature of every individual encounter with reality, the uniqueness of which is the third principle underlying creative intuition.

Creative Intuition focuses on the particular rather than the general

> So how do you observe a tree, this marvellous thing called a tree, the beauty of it, how do you look at it? Can you watch a tree, or the new moon, or the single star in the heavens, without the word moon, star, sky – without the word? Because the word is not the actual star, the actual moon. So can you put aside the word and look? (Krishnamurti in Fitzgerald 1996:78)

In contrast to the rational mind which orders, conceptualises, categorises and verbalises, the intuitive mind always desires to move beyond these delimitations in order to explore all the potential versions of the specific phenomena that the world has to offer, not concerned with whether or not these versions are 'probable' or 'correct'. Wild (1938) describes intuition as 'an appetite for new experience… a valuation of experience itself', and stresses two of the most important characteristics of intuition: its focus on the importance of the particular and its aim to encompass and experience more and more of the world.

Benedetto Croce (1911, 1995:1), who also draws attention to the importance of the particular rather than the general, describes intuition as a special kind of knowledge which seeks to understand the particular – a knowledge which is the basis for all artistic activity.

> Knowledge has two forms: it is either *intuitive* knowledge, or *logical* knowledge; knowledge obtained through the *imagination*, or knowledge obtained through the *intellect*; knowledge of the *individual*, or knowledge of the *universal*; of *individual things* or of the *relations* between them: it is in fact, productive either of *images* or *concepts*.

Croce therefore emphasises the imagistic nature of intuitive thinking, a point that Jung (1926) makes too when he maintains that the main function of intuition is to transmit images that have the value of specific insights, and that these images then 'represent possible views of the world which may give life a new potential' (1926:400).

While science uses logic and results in generalised, contracted, abstract thought, 'ordinary life' and art emphasise intuition, which focuses on the specific 'whatness' of phenomena, rather than on their conceptual, spatial or temporal attributes (Croce 1902). Heidegger uses similar terminology when he writes of the 'thingness' of things (1971:169). All artistic creation endeavours to move beyond conceotual thinking in order to discover and express the fleeting, fragmentary nature of reality, instead of relatively static 'moulds' created by the intellect. Bergson (1907) claims that intuitive thought, like reality itself, lacks precise limits and he writes that intuition is 'mind itself, and in a certain sense, life itself' (1907:55, 292).

In order to clearly grasp the 'whatness' of phenomena, Buddhist philosophy proposes a state of 'mindfulness', which is a sense of being completely in-the-moment and at-one with whatever is before you (Langer 2006). Similarly, Ghiselin writes of 'wholeness of motive',

which promotes intuitive thought and avoids conceptual, generalised thinking (1985:18). This way of observing the particular rather than the general, the real rather than the conceptual, involves becoming completely at one with what is before you. Van Gogh calls this a 'direct contact with things' (in Fitzgerald 1996:79) and this forms the fourth principle underlying creative intuition.

Creative intuition operates through an act of sympathetic identification

Intuitive knowledge usually involves this a ttitude of interconnectedness or oneness, the merging of subject and object, or Self and Other. Both Bergson (1907) and Jung (1959) refer to this as a kind of 'sympathy', and according to Jung it is characterised by an attitude of 'expectancy, by vision and interpenetration'. It is not simply perception or observation, but is an active, creative process that 'puts into' an object as much as is taken out (1959:366). Jung describes this as an 'embodiment' that 'brings … to life' the vision of the creative and intuitive person (1959:369).

Bergson expands on this by describing it as a 'sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique… in it' (1946:161). He claims that the goal of the artist is to regain what he calls the 'intention of life' by 'placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model' (1907:194).

Picasso describes the merging of the artist and his subject as a 'fullness':

> The painter passes through states of fullness and emptying. This is the whole secret of art. I take a walk in the forest of Fontainebleau. There I get an indigestion of greenness. I must empty this sensation into a picture. Green dominates it. The painter paints as if in urgent need to discharge himself of his sensations and of his visions. (Ghiselin 1985:51)

Becoming one with the subject requires a certain purity of spirit, according to D H Lawrence, who writes that 'art is a form of supremely delicate awareness and atonement – meaning at-oneness, the state of being at one with the object' (Ghiselin 1985:66). This 'at-oneness' is identical to the Zen Buddhist concept of interconnectedness which, according to Ornstein, may facilitate the *satori* or enlightenment experience:

> In Zen, the word *kensho*, a word for the enlightenment experience, also means 'to enter inside', the same meaning as intuition, which is from *in* and *tueri* in Latin. *Satori* in Zen is often pictured as a flash of intuition illuminating a dark area. (Hague 2003:50)

Intuition processes information by integration rather than separation, and Maritain describes it as the 'intercommunication between the inner being of things and the inner being of the human Self' (1955:3). The artist achieves his or her goal of creating a unique and singular work by a fusion with the object which is brought about by love (1955:58). He goes further to say that poetic, or intuitive knowledge is an 'invasion of things.. through emotion and affective union' (1955:231) and what emerges from this is the fifth principle underlying creative intuition, which is the importance of emotion.

Creative intuition relies on emotion

Most theories of intuition note the importance of emotion as an aspect of intuition, and Hague makes the point that 'the relationship between creative intuition and emotion is one of the most important elements of the creative process' (2003:75). What is common to all the theories and philosophies of intuition is that emotion enables communication with the unconscious regions of the mind, and this in turn allows intuition to emerge in rational consciousness. Wild refers to intuition as a kind of 'emotional knowledge' (1938:181) and Maritain stresses the subjective nature of the creative process, particularly the need for the artist to be aware of his own emotional involvement, as he claims that 'obscure knowledge' comes about through 'affective union' or emotion (1955: 115). He sees emotion as a way of knowing, which replaces conceptual thought and gives form to the work of art.

Regarding emotion, Freud writes: 'The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously – that is, which he invests with lare amounts of emotion' (Gardner 1993:24) and according to the poet William Wordsworth, 'poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility' (Ghiselin 1985:82). Picasso describes the artist as a 'receptacle for emotions, regardless of whether they spring from heaven, from earth, from a scarp of paper, from a passing face, or from a spider's web' (Fitzgerald 1996:74).

In several of Bergson's works he discusses the nature of emotion and its relationship to intuition and creative activity (Hague 2003:21). According to him, creation is impossible without emotional engagement, as emotion provides the fuel that allows the solid elements of the intellect to 'first melt and mix, then solidify again into fresh ideas now shaped by the creative mind itself' (Bergson 1932:46). In his view there are two types of emotion, the 'infraintellectual' type, which is the result of an idea or an activity, and the 'supraintellectual' type, which is a cause, rather than an effect, of intellectual activity. It therefore generates thought and is 'pregnant with representations', and it is only this second kind of emotion which can produce ideas. During the creative act, emotion precedes the intellect and is always ahead of the logical structuring or implementation of any work of art (Bergson 1932:47). It is therefore at the root of all creative activity.

Conclusion

An exploration of the theories and approaches of psychologists and philosophers clearly reveals that several principles underlying creative intuition can be identified. These theories and approaches are supported by statements from artists themselves who, in various ways, express the central role that intuition plays in the creative process. This article draws attention to the fact that the principles underlying creative intuition are not overtly addressed in the academic context, and it calls for further dialogue around the subject, so that creative arts education does not become compromised in the predominantly rational environment of the university. It concludes that creative intuition can be understood and taught, and can therefore be actively nurtured in the academic creative arts context.

> The most beautiful thing that we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed. (Einstein 1949:1)

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