Aesthetics in William Kentridge's " Drawings for Projection "

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Abstract

Using Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics as a methodology, this paper begins with reading William Kentridge's animated films － " Drawings for projection " series (1989 －1999) － in the social, political and cultural context of South Africa, then proceeds to analyze the visual symbols and metaphors used in the work. It concludes that Kentridge's animated films embody these four aesthetic aspects: (1) fluidity and ambiguity in time, space and characters, (2) abstraction and symbolism of form and color, (3) perpetual seeking of human reminiscences, (4) new meaning and image generated from semantic lacuna. The researcher hopes that this paper can offer an interpretative perspective on Kentridge's animated films. Also, it can contribute to the areas of art education, visual arts research and art making.

Keywords: William Kentridge, animation, hermeneutics, aesthetics

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metamorphosis as a means, Kentridge connected " fluid time, space and identity, " " history and fiction, " " abstraction of form and color, "and " new words generated from semantic lacuna " in order to generate fresh, symbolic and metaphoric meanings and images. The content, form and meaning remain fluid. The obscure characteristic is the intended room for interpretation. He emphasized the concept of " remembering " in his films. Releasing memories is what Kentridge embraces. Perhaps this is the one last freedom that he is fighting for, and also the very one that human beings deserve － to let memory take its place. Through the form of aesthetics, Kentridge breaks the confinements of space and time, self and the other, form and color, word and meaning. All of these have led the viewers to enter on an inner journey. They've returned to the history of South Africa; to the memories － until new interpretations and new meanings have arrived.

The figures 1-11 and 15-18 in this paper are from the book *William Kentridge*, published by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2001; the figures 12-14 are from the book *William Kentridg,* published by Phaidon Press Limited, London, 2003.

Author's Note

" for getting " (Walsch, 1996 / 2005); " disremember " is " dis-remember " that could be interpreted as " not to be a member again. "

From the above examples, we know that Kentridge uses so-called " living metaphors, " instead of " dead metaphors, " which is derived from Ricoeur. Metaphoric language is the most rich and poetic language that often creates refreshing and novel images. " What is needed in order to understand it (metaphor) is not instruction, but intuition and imagination " (Simms, 2003, p.74). Bachelard said: " In poetry, non-knowing is a primal condition. " His words － " an image is a transcending of all the premises of sensibility " (Bachelard, 1958 / 2003)－ have a similar meaning as that of Ricoeur's " living metaphors. " Furthermore, Bachelard's concept of " non-knowing " echoes Zurmuehlen's (1981) " seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees. " Simms stated: " Mere seeing is simply an experience. But seeing as is half way between an experience and an act, or it is an experience and an act at one and the same time " (Ricoeur, 1977:213). In order to have a genuine creation, a real " seeing " requires " non-knowing " and " breaking the old mode. " New image would be generated, and then new plots and meanings would arrive. Through dialogues, we explain. Through explanation, we understand better, surpass the old, and create the new. Through this dialectic process, the viewer not only understands the violent history of South Africa, but also the hidden meanings of Kentridge's films. Thus, the viewer is able to reconstruct and transcend the lives of his / her own, as well as those of others. " The new meaning and image generated from semantic lacuna " is the fourth aspect of aesthetics in Kentridge's work.

5. Conclusion

Kentridge once said, " I have never tried to make illustrations of Apartheid, but the drawings and films are certainly spawned by and feed off the brutalized society left in its wake. I am interested in a political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures and uncertain endings..... " (Goldby, 1994). The historical background and Kentridge's concept of film-making are presented in the form of aesthetics such as " the fluid time and space and the ambiguous identity. " Through the use of his unique visual language, he presented a whole new and complicated image of human condition. The message is ambiguous and uncertain. He does not desire any fixed or single interpretation. The work is open to the viewer for interpretation. Using

4.4. New meaning and image generated from semantic lacuna

Through rearrangement of alphabets within a word or dividing it into sections, Kentridge puts related or unrelated words together. This results in an effect of using metaphor and creates the transformation of meaning, which delivers a complex new message. This is a word game that he often plays. He changes words and finds the " gap " between the absent and the substituted word. From doing so, he obtains inspirations of plots for his stories. Here, a lacuna is a gap between the " absent word " and the " the substituted word. " It is originally from Ricoeur's tropology. According to Ricoeur, tropology traditionally depends upon the notion of the " semantic lacuna. " A semantic lacuna is a gap in a sentence that the author wishes to fill (Simms, 2003). The deviant word filled makes the structure of the sentence loose or the boundary blurry. As a result, the content, meaning or even the form changes or extends. The following are examples of such changes or extension in meanings due to an alien term substituted for the absent term. (Kentridge, 2003；Lipman, 1994)

Felix －Exile －Exit －Exist －Elixir

Amnesia －Amnesty

Historical －Hysterical

Picnic －Panic

The change or transformation of words has an effect of using metaphor. It also brings in the different meaning. For example, in " Felix in Exile, " Felix is in exile in order to seek an outlet for himself. It is a confirmation of his existence. Elixir in the sense of spirit aspect can be achieved through searching for the meaning of existence. His work emphasizes the inseparable connections among " history," " memory, " " forgiveness, " " guilt " and " amnesia. " To place a perpetrator under amnesty is similar to historical amnesia. The consequence of it would be hysterical and unpredictable. He implies that the " restoration of memory " and the " restoration of history " are two sides of the same thing. The purpose is not for revenge but for healing. " Remember " is " re-member, " which could be interpreted as " to be a member again. " The perpetrator and the victim are entities of two different ends. Both can be members of the world after remembering the forgotten memory. " Forgiving " is " for-giving " that could be interpreted as " for giving " ; " forgetting " is " for-getting " that could be interpreted as

South Africans under Apartheid. He makes the connection between how landscape forms and erodes and how our sense of history is easily shaped and re-shaped. Therefore, his " erasing, modifying, and re-drawing, " " the forming and erosion of landscape " and " the process of remembering and forgetting " echo each other. They represent the characteristics and connections of " drawing, " " history, " " life " and " memory " .

Kentridge's perpetual seeking of South African history recurs in his work. In " History of the Main Complaint, " Felix appears as a doctor to examine Soho in coma. He enters into the layers where memories and guilt are buried. Those are Soho's personal histories that are bound closely with the collective histories of South Africa. Along with Soho's breathing rhythm, his dark memories are brought back alive, which leaves the viewer no other choice but to enter the deep layers of his conscious and subconscious. There, histories of South Africa are closely examined. In " Weighing... and Wanting, " Kentridge enters Soho's memory rock (Fig. 17), recollects the fragments of individual and collective memories, puts them together. Only through restoring the disremembered memories, the present life can be connected to the torn past. The restoration of history is the only possible way for human awakening.
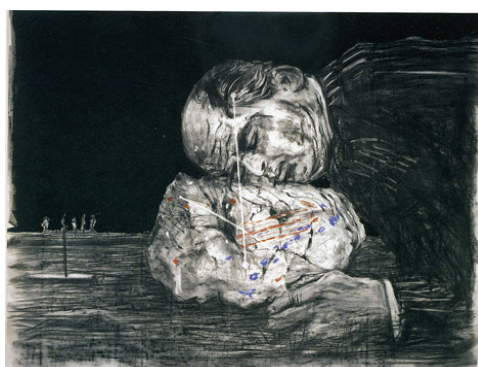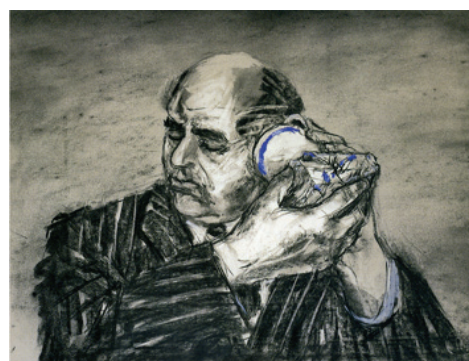

Fig. 17

Fig. 18

In the end of the film, Soho picks up a coffee cup, puts it to his ear, and listens to the sound of the ocean. It seems that he begins to pay attention to the call from his soul and the world around him. The search for personal history and inner world is also the search for South African history and the inner worlds of the collective South Africans. By refusing to face one's memory, history would be buried and forgotten forever. The perpetual seeking of human history is the third aspect of aesthetics in his work.

4.3. Perpetual seeking of human reminiscences

Nandi draws pictures of what she sees, emphasizing traces of violent human intervention in the landscape (Boris, p. 31). Through Nandi's eyes, Kentridge intends to examine how the victims of Apartheid will be remembered and forgotten. In the film, corpses of South Africans are circled with red marks that look like those of a surveyor (Fig. 15). Nandi records the landscape's evolving forms, devouring the remains left on the ground as if they had a life of their own (Boris, p. 31). History, memory, geography and identity are constantly shifted and changed. The landscape here is a witness to the changes as well as a reservoir for them. Nandi plays the same role as the landscape and becomes part of it after her death (Fig. 16). According to Boris's description, " The film ends when Nandi is struck dead. She falls to the ground, her body undergoing the same transformation as the others who came before her. Nandi becomes a heap of dirt surrounded by planks of wood and steel poles, on the land overrun by tire tracks. All traces of her existence are hidden… " (Boris, 2001).

Fig. 15

Fig. 16

The overall theme of the series is how political realities affect individual lives within the context of complex and violent history of South Africa. Kentridge once said that " forgetting is natural, remembering is the effort one makes. " His erasing and modification of charcoal drawings are metaphors for people's " forgetting " and " remembering " (The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004). In his work, we see how the personal and collective memories of South Africa's history were depicted and evolved. It also shaped the lives and identities of South Africans. Kentridge uses landscape as a metaphor to draw a parallel between the misuse of the natural landscape and that of

compromise the clarity and hinder the deciphering of dreams. Thus, the missing half would be hard to recognize. This is similar to the erased lines that are hidden underneath the newly-added layer.　Therefore, in Kentridge's films, water, dream and drawing imply each other. They are metaphors for love that is out of reach, forgotten memory and history, dreams in the past and future, eternal redemption, or the missing half. And the perpetual searching for one's missing half is a concrete evidence of the existence of human being.
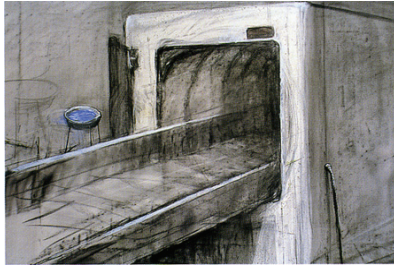

Fig. 12　　　　　　　　　　　　　Fig. 13　　　　　　　　　　　　　Fig. 14

　　　The red and blue colors used in the film have symbolic meanings, too. Blue is associated with peace, waiting, hope, retrospection, and sorrowfulness. In " History of the Main Complaint, " a pail with blue water is placed in a corner close to Soho's bed in the hospital. Here, blue water symbolizes redemption and hope. It has never been touched or removed from the room, and has waited quietly for the awakening of Soho (Fig. 12). In " Felix in Exile, " red color is used extensively in Nandi's depictions of landscape. The places where the corpses lay, as well as their wounds, were marked clearly in red. Red symbolizes blood, wounds, death, and violence. For example, when Nandi was shot down on the ground, the blue water flowing down from the faucet turned red. It is a declaration of Nandi's death. The dark red blood flowing out from the old wounds of the unknown corpse is a silent narrative of South Africa's violent history. And the small red crosses that mark the wounds (Fig. 13, 14) represent the possibilities of healing. " The abstraction and symbolism of form and color " is the second aspect of aesthetics in Kentridge's work.

love. When Felix kisses Mrs. Eckstein's hand, the fish in her hand turns alive and shares the sensual pleasure with the lovers. Here, water implies freedom and passion. This particular image, a symbol of love and free will, has become a strong contrast with Soho's greedy desire in the material world.

Johannesburg is a very dry city often in need of water. Therefore, water has many layers of symbolic meaning in the films (Fig. 11). It implies the sensual pleasure between lovers; the longing for freedom, purity, and rebirth of soul; the amniotic fluid to protect fetus from harm of the outside world; the holy water to clean the sin; the long-awaited rain to attend to the harshness of the landscape under Apartheid; probably for Kentridge, water confirms his existence outside the womb (Stone, 2003).

Another possible symbolic meaning of water is " seeing one's own reflection. " This echoes what was mentioned earlier － that everyone is seeking his/ her missing half. Stone thought that in Kentridge films, water, dream, and drawing were related (2003). However, she doesn't discuss the relation further. According to Greek philosopher Aristotle's " On Prophecy in Sleep " :

...the most skillful judge of dreams is the man who possesses the ability to detect likeness; for anyone can judge the vivid dream. By likeness I mean that mental pictures are like reflections in water, as we have said before. In the latter case, if there is much movement, the reflection is not like the original, nor the images like the real object. Thus he would indeed be a clever interpreter of reflections who could quickly discriminate, and envisage these scattered and distorted fragments of the images as representing a man, say, or a horse or any other object. Now in the other case too the dream has a somewhat similar result; for the movement destroys the clarity of the dream (Stone, 2003).

Aristotle said that mental pictures in dreams were like reflections in the water. A person who possesses the dream would indeed be a clever interpreter of the reflections. Reflected images are not the original. They do not resemble the real object if there is much movement (Stone, 2003). As we know, movement destroys the clarity of reflection in water, same as the image in a dream. Extending from here, " dream "and " water reflection "can be regarded as one's " missing half "at the spiritual level. To see one's reflection-the missing half, one must remain motionless since movement will

in a row with their backs to the camera, busy with connecting phone lines. As I have commented in the previous paragraph, the cables and phone lines run cross the surface of the drawing, not only connecting people or things but also dividing the picture. They separate people and create a sense of solitude and alienation that is not easy to overcome. In addition to this, the blue lines also go across the drawing and enter the other one. In other words, the blue lines enter the opposite space by penetrating one of the drawings. For example, Soho grabs the paper strip from the other Soho in the next drawing; a black cat jumps from the left drawing to the right one and then leaves. Kentridge also brings events that happened in the outside world into his drawing, which expands twice the size of the previous small drawing. For example, the cat is the result of slow formation of the fluid blue lines. Then it jumps out the drawing and walks away. The walking path left behind the cat brings out the scenes of the riots. This is a typical example of using metamorphosis to connect plots and different events in the films.
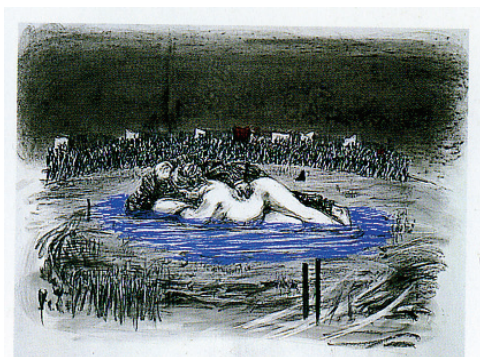

Fig. 10   Fig. 11

In " Drawing for Projection " series, blue water is a recurring image. Soho and Felix are often submerged in deep water and gaze into water (Fig. 10). In " Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old, " there are many depictions of water. Felix and Mrs. Eckstein's love affair is revealed as a love-making scene in a photo on Soho's desk. The lovers are submerged in water. The water finally floods the building, and, eventually, Soho's industrial empire. In the end of the film, Soho and his wife, Mrs. Eckstein, gaze at each other. They are surrounded by water - a symbol of love and protection. Additionally, in " Johannesburg, 2nd Greatest City after Paris, " Felix indulges himself in the fantasy of being together with Mrs. Eckstein. Water and fish are metaphors for their intimacy and

manipulating time, space, motion, or any constituent elements of the image.

Besides Kickasola, Le Grice (1977) also states that, " …abstract implies the separation of quality, aspects or generalizations from particular instances…. Some basically'abstract'tendencies in film are not necessarily non-representational in the photographic sense. "The abstraction of color and form, and the new meanings they give birth to have come from Kentridge's use of visual symbols and metaphors in the films. For example, in " Stereoscope, "he used the principle of stereoscope backwards and dismembered the world of reality by presenting it in two picture side by side. The same person and object have appeared in both pictures but were not identical or consistent. It implies uncertainties and possible choices in the future. The viewer sees the duality that evolves from one image to the other and the connections between them.
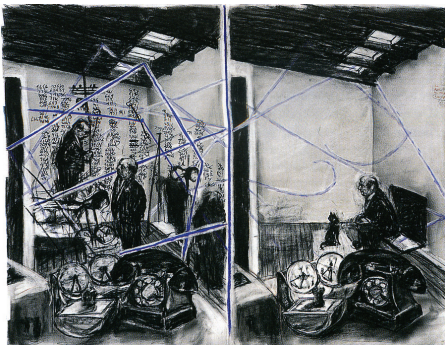

Fig. 8   Fig. 9

For example, in Fig. 8 and 9, the cables and phone lines penetrate the surface of the drawing. They are a means of connecting people and things. Besides dividing the drawing, they separate the inner and outer worlds. However, it seems that they also connect what we see and what we know at the same time. Another example is " Chaos in the City "from the same film. It describes the collapse of a city. The image is derived from a collage of newspaper and TV clips depicting riots that happened all over the world around the time of making of the film. Kentridge integrates the clips into his film since he believes that the images can represent symbolically the current commotions of Johannesburg (Carnegie Museum of Art, 2007). Through metamorphosis and fluid blue lines, Kentridge has connected different scenes of time and space. The seemingly objective depiction of the chaotic Johannesburg is also a representation of the inner conflicts of Soho. The city is filled with cables and phone lines. The operators are sitting

drawing. The identities of the woman and Felix are not clear at this moment. They are ambiguous and uncertain. This is the first aspect of aesthetics in the work of Kentridge.

4.2.   Abstraction and symbolism of form and color

According to Moins, Kentridge desires for a chromatic simplicity with symbolic values in his drawing. He " permits himself only the structuring pencil thin lines in red and blue to enclose the abyss of abstraction so as to allow for figuration to emerge " (Stone, 2003). Blue water and red or blue lines repeatedly appear in his films (Fig. 6, 7). By means of " metamorphosis, "they depart from the indexicality of daily life, transform into different form and generate new meanings. The other function of metamorphosis is to engage different events or images. Through the transitional stage of metamorphosis, the gap between the illogical or unexpected images can take a turn and thus unfold with no obstacle.
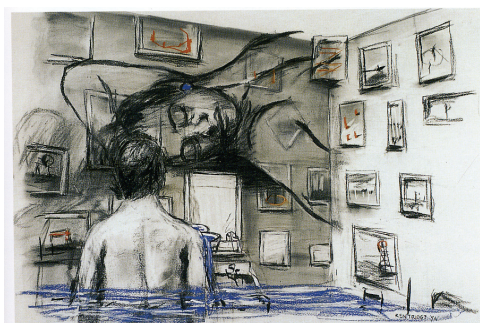

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

The strategy Kentridge adapts for his films is that he marries form and function while he divorces images from content. In discussion of the concept of abstraction Joseph G. Kickasola (2004) stated:

I conceptualize abstraction as a visual strategy found in the cinema that Deemphasizes the everyday representational approach to image and its Referent(s) in favor of formal concerns...That is, the term abstract should not be limited to nonrepresentational images, but applied to any image that emphasized form over " realist " indexicality through a strategy of

it looks like, the missing half if you look in the mirror and see the other half of yourself. When I understood that then I realized that she wasn't so far away from me. But who is that half ? " (Stone, 2003) Being a white man protected by Apartheid, Kentridge constantly expresses his guilty feelings through words (Tappeiner et al., 1999). His identity is in a state of fluidity that flows back and forth between Soho, Felix and Nandi, or sways between the victim and the perpetrator. He could be any of them. To him, the so-called " missing half " is the forgotten memory and conscience, in other words, the kindness and innocence inherent in humanity. They are never too far away from him.

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

The fluidity of time and space makes the roles played by the characters become ambiguous, capable of merging with each other. In the film " Felix in Exile, " Felix is set in an isolated chamber gazing at a drawing (Fig. 4). The camera zooms in and a woman in the drawing starts moving across the field. She is singing while carrying a pile of drawings on top of her head. Suddenly, a sheet of drawing is swept up by a gust of wind, floating off to the sky. Finally, it flies into Felix's chamber and lands right on top of the piled drawings that Felix was previously gazing upon (Fig. 5). In no time, the time and space have become ambiguous and can be penetrated by a floating drawing. The eyes of the viewer move forward with those of Felix, following the steps of the woman in the

Besides, it could be our own forgotten wasteland. Kentridge's technique of erasing parts of a drawing and making the next drawing over the top is a metaphor of the process of disremembering. The theme of " remembering and disremembering " is presented through the characters in the film. In fact, it is also the collective state we have shared. Kentridge brings forward the inquiries of our existence in the contemporary era in a profound way － facts and lies; remembering and disremembering; our own self and the other. All of these tell the stories of human existence dialectically.

Felix and Soho represent the two conflicting sides, one is " remembering, " the other is " disremembering. " Both are the " self " － and, at the same time, " the other. " The innocent soul of Felix resides in Soho's sinful body. However, Soho would be able to perceive the crystal-clear soul in him as long as he is willing to remember the " forgotten " memory. For example, in " Sobriety, Obesity and Growing Old, " he finally realized his vulnerability when he became aware of the affair between his wife and Felix. He also realized that his empire of industry was not the most important thing in his life due to the loss of his beloved wife (Cameron, 2003). Thus, he tried to regain his missing half. Kentridge uses himself as a model for the two characters, Soho and Felix. Soho's appearance derives from an old family photograph of Kentridge's grandfather in his three-piece stripped black suit (Tappeiner et al., 1999). This reveals that Kentridge reflects upon his heritage and identity as a white man in South Africa.

In one of the " Felix in Exile " most well-known drawings － " Eye to Eye ", Felix looked at himself in the mirror after shaving. Then, an African woman Nandi appeared in the mirror and gazed at Felix. Meeting eye-to-eye through a red-encircled monoscope, they could see through each other's eyes. The reflective space in the mirror was no longer an illusive world, since the monoscope served as a passage that allowed them to see the world on the other side. A pail with blue water overflows. It connects the two separate worlds divided by the mirror. Nandi is depicted as a black female surveyor. Her facial bone structure resembles that of Kentridge's. Also, her renderings resemble those of Kentridge's (Boris, 2001). Kentridge draws Felix using himself as a model. Thus, there are a resemblance and a connection between Kentridge, Felix and Nandi. All of them are searching for the forgotten history of South Africa through the depictions of changing history and landscape. The roles of the three characters sometimes overlap, sometimes drift apart － a relation that is similar to that of Soho and Felix. In Kentridge's words, " Bellow makes reference to Sophocles quoting Aristophanes saying that the state of love or longing is the pining for a missing half. So that is certainly what

In " The History of the Main Complain, "Felix and Soho wear the same suits (Fig. 1, 2), which makes them look alike. The resemblance of their appearance implies that Felix is the memory and conscience of Soho. He plays the role of a doctor who examines Soho's memory and guilt when Soho is in coma. Coetzee pointed out: " The doctor is Felix, the artist persona. Although Felix appears in the first film as Soho's rival, they are by no means immutable opposites " (2003). In one of the three travel sequences, Soho has entered his own subconscious. It is night. A figure runs across the road and is hit by Soho's car. This plot is a metaphor used by Kentridge. He questioned whether a driver with no intention of killing was innocent when he hit a person who appeared in his way unexpectedly. He also raised the following question for the viewer to ponder upon: In a violent and unjust system, is non-participation sufficient to prove one's innocence (Tappeiner & Wulf, 1999) ? Kentridge reflected upon himself critically as to his own responsibility of being a white man under Apartheid, albeit the one who did not participate in any violent acts. Through the three driving sequences, the viewer travels with Soho in exploring the memories, consciousness, and the subconscious. These are journeys in an ambiguous time and space, the constantly changing subjective and objective entities. During the travel, we are Soho, Felix, Kentridge, and the viewer at the same time. Each of them is distinguishable but their roles overlap as well.

Fig. 1   Fig. 2

The interlacing of time and space, and the ambiguity between the objective and subjective entities have brought the uncertain to Kentridge's work, which allows room for the viewer to imagine and interpret. In his work, time flows non-linearly and space exists illogically. In the brain of Soho and in the eyes of Felix, what we see or enter does not only belong to the physical world but also to the intimate feelings and the inner worlds of Soho and Felix. They are the worlds of Kentridge, the viewer, and the people of South Africa. They are where memory, consciousness and the subconscious lie.

the following paragraphs.

4.1.　Fluidity and ambiguity in time, space and characters

What does it mean to say that something is a drawing — as opposed to a funda-mentally different form, such as a photograph? First of all, arriving at the image is a process, not a frozen instant. Drawing for me is about fluidity. There may be a vague sense of what you're going to draw but things occur during the process that may modify, consolidate or shed doubts on what you know. So drawing is a testing of ideas; a slow-motion version of thought. It does not arrive instantly like a photograph. The uncertain and imprecise way of constructing a drawing is sometimes a model of how to construct meaning. What ends in clarity does not begin that way (Kentridge, 2003).

In the above statement, Kentridge clearly expresses that " drawing is a process of constructing meaning. " He makes his short film through a continuing process of drawing, shooting, erasing, modifying and shooting again with a camera. The viewer can see the passage of birds flying through the sky, the traces of people walking due to the vague charcoal lines left behind after erasing. They are the traces of the passing time, an ongoing history, and the process of the continuous forgetting and remembering. His work has placed emphasis on the dialect of forgetting and remembering. Besides recording human collective memories, his use of fluid visual language is meant to reflect and criticize the contemporary society of South Africa. Moins (1998) also emphasized " animation as a process. " He believed that what interested Kentridge was Time; its passing, the traces it left, the memory that events, beings and objects left when we closed our eyes on our past. The traces of each modification of drawing symbolize not only that animation, but also that life is a process of continuous changes. Human histories and memories can be forgotten and remembered, which is similar to the actions of " drawing " and 　" erasing " — an open process of continuous changes. The visible traces of the vaguely erased lines imply Kentridge's rejection of the so-called " final version. "

There are two main characters, Soho Eckstein and Felix Teitelbaum, in his films. Soho is a Johannesburg industrialist and Felix is a sensitive poetic artist, as well as a member of a repressed group in South Africa. Felix also represents Soho's alter. Or, we can say that they represent symbolically the dark and the bright sides of the same person and are one another's alter egos (Benezra, 2001).

reasons for the slow development of modern art in colonial Africa. The opportunity for black people to develop a career in art was excluded due to the practice of Apartheid and Grand Apartheid in South Africa. Later, more violent measures were adapted by the colonial government to reinforce Apartheid, which eventually led to the boycott movement initiated by South African artists. They refused to represent South Africa in any international activities unless black artists could equally share art resources with white artists. Their works are known as the " resistant art " and are bitterly opposed to the intention and content of Apartheid. Also, their works criticized and questioned the individual and national identities of people in South Africa (Okeke, 2001).

In this political climate, Kentridge was born in Johannesburg. He earned a B.A. in politics and African studies in 1976 — the same year that the Soweto riot broke out, in which more than 700 people were killed. Later, he studied fine arts at Johannesburg Art Foundation from 1977 to 1978. In the 70s, he created work with profound meanings that explored the violent police culture under the Apartheid. Both of his parents were actively involved in human rights and anti-apartheid activities and have had a great impact on him since he was young. He witnessed how the Apartheid system abused human rights in South Africa and the extent to which it twisted humanity. In this system, hatred, fear and racial discrimination were morally acceptable, and prejudice became law. His work is centered on the reflection of things that are of interest to him. However, his intention is never to react to important issues objectively. He keeps certain distance from political issues, even though they concerned him very much. In a speech that he delivered at the University of Witwatersrand, he quoted David Goldblatt: " It does not really matter what you do. In the end your work is about you and reveals your fears and desires. " (Kentridge, 2004) The message hidden in the statement above is that art making is closely tied to the artist's personal experience, life and the issues that concern him/her most.

4. Aesthetics

Through the analysis of the imagery, historical background of the work, and the artist's statement, Kentridge's animated films specifically embody four aesthetic aspects. They are: (1) the fluidity and ambiguity in time, space and characters, (2) the abstraction and symbolism of form and color, (3) the perpetual seeking of human reminiscences, (4) the new meaning and image generated from semantic lacuna. Each aspect is discussed in

inquiries. He transforms his experience and the history of South Africa into unique art symbols through the ambiguous time and space. Thus, the viewer can enter the time and space of Apartheid and the post-Apartheid era and experience the strong impact on people of South Africa. In the process of reading and interpretation, viewers construct new meanings, which inevitably interact with their own personal experience.

2.   Brief history of South Africa

A general historical review of Apartheid in South Africa serves as a basis to decipher Kentridge's work since his work has been created within this historical context. In 1910, South Africa gained its independence from England. Two years later, the black civil rights group, African National Congress, was founded. Following the independence, intense power struggle between the two groups, African National Congress and Afrikaner National Party, held sway until 1948, when the Afrikaner National Party took complete power and introduced Apartheid. Apartheid is a political system of racial segregation and political and economic discrimination against non-white majority that operated in South Africa. With the enactment of Apartheid laws, racial discrimination was institutionalized and prejudice was morally justified.

In 1949, cross-racial marriage was prohibited. In 1950, the Group Areas Act forced physical separation between races by creating different residential areas. All blacks were required to carry " pass books " containing personal information on access to non-black areas.

In 1951, the Bantu Authorities established a basis for ethnic government in the African reservations, known as " homelands. " All political rights, including voting, held by an African were restricted to the designated homeland.

After four decades of repression and economic troubles, Apartheid was dismantled under F.W. de Klerk in 1992. The first multi-racial vote in the history of South Africa was held in 1994, making Nelson Mandela the President. South Africa now is a multi-racial democracy (Terreblanche, 2003).

3. The context of the work and the Apartheid in South Africa

The objectivity of modern art is related to the independence of politics. The incompatibility between the liberal perspective and the colonial reign is one of the

1. Introduction

The form, content and aesthetics of the animated films by South African artist William Kentridge have offered various possibilities for art making, research and art teaching in the fields of the visual arts and art education. The purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze the form and content of Kentridge's animated film series "Drawings for Projection, " and to conclude with the aesthetic aspects of this series. It is the researcher's hope that such analysis can provide scholars and artists in the related fields with various ways of textual reading, interpretive methods and multiple perspectives.

To begin the research of Kentridge's work, the researcher not only studied South Africa in the context of her history, culture and politics, but also took the artist's personal history and intention into account. Through analyzing the use of symbols and metaphors in the films, the researcher has found the objective position that the artist has taken and the hidden meaning in the work.

According to Ricoeur, interpretation is a dialectic between understanding and explanation. Understanding and explanation are bound together in a dialectical relationship as components of interpretation. What is essential to narrative interpretation is not what is " hidden behind the text, but something disclosed in front of it " (Ricoeur, 1986). Human action or discourse can be seen as a text. Interpreting something is opening yourself to a dialogue with the text. Understanding is not aimed at the author's original intention within the text, but the meaning projected to us in front of the text. Such a text is " an invitation, a space to enter, an opportunity to create a new reality in the space between our assumptions and lives as readers and those of the people here described " (Hilligoss & Robert, 1997). We enter a hermeneutic circle by raising questions. Interpretations of a text would differ from person to person, from time to time. There has to be an interplay between the text and a person who tried to understand it. Gadamer (1989) said that explanation and understanding of a text is a fusion of two horizons — our own and what we seek to understand in the past. To understand a text, it is not only necessary, but inevitable to take others' subjective worlds into account.

In his films, Kentridge examines the people who live, the things that happened, and his personal life in Johannesburg-the city where he was born, lives and works. Through the use of visual symbols and metaphors, he intends to present complicated human situations. On the one hand, it leads the viewer to enter his work; on the other hand, it reflects the artist's specific perspective regarding certain things, and brings forward his

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