

Surrealism and Psychoanalysis
in the work of
Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff: 1935-1940

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

ABSTRACT

The story of the collaboration between the psychoanalyst Dr Grace Pailthorpe and the artist Reuben Mednikoff is indeed an extraordinary one. The aim of this thesis is to throw light upon their joint research project between 1935, when they first met, and 1940, when they were expelled from the British Surrealist group with which they had been closely involved since its official launch in 1936.

The project that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff plunged into just days after they first met in February 1935 focused on how art could be used as a way of curing mental problems. Paintings and drawings produced ‘automatically’ were used as a means to bring memories to a conscious level. Many personal tensions, obsessions and fears that had lain dormant and repressed were released and detailed commentaries and explanations followed every work they produced in order for the exercise to be fully therapeutic. The aim was to externalise the unconscious and reintegrate it with the conscious.

Despite the fact that Pailthorpe’s work was hailed as ‘the best and most truly Surrealist’ by the leader of the Surrealist movement, André Breton, at the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition in London, which brought the movement to Britain, the couple were expelled from the British Surrealist group just four years later and moved to America into relative obscurity.

After their deaths, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff’s drawings and paintings were dispersed and their commentaries never read. My thesis provides biographies of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff before they met. It analyses the work they made together,

discussing the impact on their thinking not only of Surrealism but also of psychoanalytic theory, notably the work of Melanie Klein. Apart from this, the thesis also reintegrates the couple into the history of Surrealism in England.

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Deepest gratitude goes to Kris for his loyalty, love and understanding during a sequence of challenging periods. My warmest thanks also goes to Richard Pailthorpe and Tony Black for their patience and because they offered numerous insights into the material. Ann Simpson and Kirstie Meehan (from the Dean Gallery in Edinburgh) deserve mention too because their help throughout the various stages of my research has been invaluable as well as the comments and suggestions made by my friend Ed.

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Introduction

The subject of my thesis is the personal and working relationship between Dr. Grace Pailthorpe (1883-1971) and Reuben Mednikoff (1906-1972). It focuses on the role art played within Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's study of the infantile unconscious and the 'the theory of birth trauma'. The couple's paintings were the result of a programme of psychological research in which they were the 'rabbits'. They produced a large number of works laden with psychoanalytic symbols that supposedly represent infantile sexuality and that were painted with the purpose of being subjected to analytic scrutiny.

The work of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff is a largely unexplored area and neither of them has been the subject of a detailed biography. Moreover, many of their works are inaccessible to the public and this has provided problems for the thesis. There is also very little secondary literature on the pair, but they are not totally forgotten figures thanks to the various writings of Andrew Wilson, David Maclagan and Michel Remy. Maclagan's research on Pailthorpe's work and its relation to art therapy was published in his essays 'Making for Mother'¹ and in 'Between Psychoanalysis and Surrealism: the collaboration between Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff'.² Remy's keen interest in the obscure couple is also evident in his writings on Surrealism in Britain whilst Wilson has explored the couple's

¹ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 39-47

² Maclagan, David. 1991. 'Between Psychoanalysis and Surrealism: the collaboration between Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff', *Free Associations*, 3/1: 33-50

complex relationship with Surrealism in his work on the book and exhibition of ‘Sluice Gates of the Mind’ in 1998.³

Apart from these publications, in 1982, through his research on the origins and early history of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, the psychiatrist Dr David Rumney happened to come across a copy of Mednikoff’s will. He followed this up and gained access to the couple’s research material. However, the book that Rumney was supposed to be writing, whose subject was the accumulated research of the Pailthorpes and which was based on the mass of handwritten and typed notes and other material that Rumney was in possession of, has never materialised. This is probably because he died before it could be completed. Unfortunately, even though Rumney’s daughter Lucy has access to her father’s unpublished manuscript, my repeated attempts to contact her have proved fruitless. Still, some of Rumney’s notes are in the Grace Pailthorpe/Reuben Mednikoff Archive at the Dean Gallery in Edinburgh and various researchers have made use of some of the material. So even though his work has never been published, Rumney’s efforts are still referred to and made use of.

My thesis is based on the study of original documents, most of which are unpublished, housed in the Pailthorpe/Mednikoff archive. The archive was purchased, through Andrew Wilson, in two parts in 1999 and 2000 with the Assistance of the Friends of the National Libraries, by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. It complements the very strong Surrealist collection already there,

³ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries)

notably the Roland Penrose Archive and the Gabrielle Keiller Bequest. Other archives which contain primary material on both Pailthorpe and Mednikoff include the Hyman Kreitman Research Centre at Tate Britain, the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Witt Library at the Courtauld Institute in London. This primary material is the core of my thesis, which has been organized around important events, moments and groups of works, arranged in a chronological order. I have purposely quoted from these documents very extensively throughout the thesis, making up for the fact that relatively few of them are in the public domain. This is because the writings of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff are often very vividly and characteristically expressed and deserve quotation for this reason too. I am also indebted to Pailthorpe's great nephew, Richard Pailthorpe, and Mednikoff's nephew, Tony Black, who kindly provided photographs, family documents and information about Pailthorpe and Mednikoff.

In my thesis, I weave biographical, contextual and critical commentary together into a narrative which has a chronological structure. Although I am unable to make any comments on psychoanalysis from a medical perspective, I am aware of its precarious position today. Thus, I stress that in my thesis I am presenting the attitudes of Pailthorpe, Mednikoff and the Surrealists during the 1930s rather than the attitudes on psychoanalysis that are held at present, since many of the theories of Freud, Klein et al are disputed. Moreover, even though Pailthorpe believed that it was, psychoanalysis is not a science. As a therapeutic practice, psychoanalysis has less respectability nowadays and early psychoanalytic theory is often seen as dubious. The theory of 'birth trauma' is no longer believed in along with the ideas

that one can represent it or reconstruct memories. Instead, the British Psychoanalytical Society is using psychoanalysis as an informative way of understanding and treating mental illness rather than as therapy alone so although its approach today may be different, psychoanalysis is not actually discredited.

The first and second chapters of the thesis provide a chronological account of the early lives and careers of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff before they met one another in 1935. The third chapter gives the reader a picture of when Pailthorpe and Mednikoff first met and outlines all the underpinning of their research project. It describes the couple's collaboration from mid 1935 to mid 1936 and includes an analysis of examples of their early works as being part of a scientific experiment.

Chapter 4 looks at the couple's invitation to exhibit at the International Surrealist exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries in London in 1936. The works that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff displayed, possible influences of Surrealist and Abstract art on Mednikoff's work, André Breton's reception of the couple's paintings and drawings, and critical reviews of their works are all discussed.

In Chapter 5 I analyse the paintings and drawings that Pailthorpe produced in her 'Birth Trauma Series' and I detail the series' relationship to Melanie Klein's famous theory of 'Object Relations'. Parallels with medical illustrations, Child Art and Miró's infantile drawings are drawn. I also discuss Pailthorpe's public lecture on the 'Birth Trauma Series', which she gave in 1938, and briefly refer to the 'Birth Trauma' lecture she gave in 1940.

The focus of my sixth chapter is on Pailthorpe's famous article 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' which was published in the *London Bulletin* in December 1938. This chapter also examines Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's first joint exhibition at the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery in London in 1939 (10.01.39-11.02.39) where they exhibited drawings, paintings and watercolours which were produced through their research. I analyse the visual detail of some of these works and compare some of Mednikoff's paintings to those by Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst.

The last chapter of the thesis is divided into two parts. The first looks at Breton and Trotsky's manifesto: *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant*, the strife within the Surrealist group, the outbreak of war, and Mesens's move to London and his divisive demands. The second part focuses on Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's efforts to reform the Surrealist camp in England, Pailthorpe's attempts to publish her research, the couple's expulsion from the Surrealist group in 1940 and their move to New York.

Although I am dealing with the couple and their relationship, Pailthorpe has occupied more space in the thesis because she is older, the leader and more is known about her. On a final note, I would like to end my introduction to the thesis by describing what happened to the couple's material after their deaths. Following discussions over a period of time before they died, Pailthorpe, Mednikoff and their friends Thomas and Rose Thursby agreed that the latter would prepare the couple's research material and arrange for its publication. This arrangement is noted in both Pailthorpe's and Mednikoff's wills.⁴ Moreover, as I have learnt through my contact with Tony Black, the large number of books that Mednikoff left him shows us that Pailthorpe and

⁴ Conversation with Tony Black, 21.08.08.

Mednikoff were also interested in and did a considerable amount of enquiry and research on various sects and new age movements in religious and philosophical fields. The couple's interests lay in theosophy, metaphysics, Buddhism, the writings of Alice Bailey (founder of the Arcane School of theosophy), and Agni Yoga. In fact, the couple had also agreed to leave their research material to the Agni Yoga Society in London, with instructions, decided upon while they were alive, as to how this should be dealt with after their deaths. Mednikoff's will, dated 7 August 1970, confirms this:

Mr and Mrs Thomas Thursby of 8a Dorset Road South, Bexhill, Sussex, having agreed with Dr Grace Winifred Pailthorpe to prepare her research material and notes on her life, with photographs of her family, for publication and to arrange for its publication, I bequeath to them the sum of £---- in order to cover all the expenses in connection with the preparation and publication of the research material, and request that they keep any balance remaining thereafter, but if they shall have predeceased me, I direct my executors to pay the same sum of £---- to the Agni Yoga Centre, Flat 10, 87 Cadogan Gardens, London SW3 for the same purpose, and direct that the Agni Yoga Centre shall keep any balance remaining thereafter.⁵

As it happened, Rose Thursby died in a car accident shortly after Mednikoff's death, and Thomas Thursby took on the task of preparing the research material on his own. It was during this period that Rumney came across Mednikoff's will at the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency and this was the start of his entry into the scene. He befriended Thursby and, as I stated, gained access to the research material. Some time afterwards, in 1986, Thursby died and the research material, and any money that was left from the bequest, passed into the hands of his niece, Mrs Valerie Curry, even though it is likely that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff did not even know of her existence. Because he wanted to use the Pailthorpe research material for his own purposes, Rumney pursued it, and gained full access, as well as certain rights, to the

⁵ Mednikoff's will, dated 07 August 1970.

research material. The rights meant that Mednikoff's family were excluded from any access to the research material, something that never happened when the Thursbys were alive.⁶

After Rumney's death, the research material was returned to Curry and it is likely that it was Curry, or someone appointed by her, who sold the research material as well as what Rumney had produced, to the Dean Gallery in Edinburgh. Thus, after Thomas Thursby's death, it seems that material was moved here and there, resulting in it disappearing and paintings being transferred to private collections, to which I have not been able to gain access. Although my thesis is, therefore, far from being a definite account of the Pailthorpe – Mednikoff relationship or the work they produced together, thanks to the extensive holdings of the Dean Gallery archive, it has been possible to provide a much fuller account than has hitherto been attempted.

⁶ Conversation with Tony Black, 11.01.10.

Chapter 1: Introducing Dr Grace Pailthorpe (1883-1934)

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will give a chronological account of the early life and career of Pailthorpe prior to her meeting with Mednikoff in February 1935. It will describe her service in the First World War, her travels, how she first got involved in psychological medicine, her early interest in art and art therapy and the research she did for the Research Medical Council which resulted in the formation of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency. I will also discuss Pailthorpe's work with Ernest Jones after she returned to England in 1922 and the likelihood that he introduced her to the writings of Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein, whose influence on her will be demonstrated in a later chapter. The writings of Cesare Lombroso as a source for Pailthorpe's research will also be looked at.

1.2 1883-1922

Grace Winifred Pailthorpe was born in St. Leonard's-on-Sea in Sussex on 29 July 1883 as the third sibling and only girl into a family of nine brothers (Figure 1).¹ She was the daughter of Edward and Anne, née Green, and had a strict puritanical, Christian upbringing. Her father was a prominent stockbroker and her mother was a seamstress. Pailthorpe's family were Plymouth Brethren and she experienced a rigidly austere upbringing against which, as we shall see, she eventually rebelled.

In this account I am going to draw upon Pailthorpe's unpublished autobiographical notes as she often described the nightmares her childhood gave her in them. Her

¹ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe, dated 1925. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 152 'GWP beginning of autobiography commenced in 1925'): 1

reminiscences are in the form of handwritten notes and were compiled in blue lined notebooks which are dated 1918, 1924 and 1925. It seems that these specific years correspond to the dates of composition. We do not know whether she planned to publish them or whether they were linked to her own personal analysis but they are all based on her childhood:

So much for God. My parents had both at an early age been captured by Him and with his gentle face to them He had stretched them on his rack and held them fast: with every twist of the lever and to every groan of agony, gently would he tell them, that this He did to all he loved, and at that would they kiss the hand that dealt the pain. So that my earliest recollection of my two parents were [sic] of people enduring pain. Sometimes God would ease the levers one bit and spare them time to smile at their children, but this was seldom; and we children knew, sensed the awful tragedy that was in process. Moreover, we were dedicated to mother at birth and that insatiable God quickly turned his attention to us. And the story of this book is the story of my deliverance from this mighty, cruel and brutal God.²

Because of the Plymouth Brethren practices, Pailthorpe and her brothers were educated at their home in Redhill, Surrey by tutors so as to prevent them from being indoctrinated by the outside world.³ She recalled how ‘we liked to play instead of pray, we liked to make a noise when we should engage in silent worship, we liked all the things of this world, when it is expressly forbidden so to do’.⁴

As we shall see when looking at her work with Mednikoff, Pailthorpe always had certain recurrent memories of her childhood of being just a single girl amongst nine male siblings and having been raised in such a puritanical fashion. In her autobiography she wrote:

Born 1883 on 29th July, on a Sunday between one and three of the clock.
My father waltzes with joy – the only time known to give expression to

² Ibid.: 6

³ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 12.08.08.

⁴ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe, dated 1925. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 152 ‘GWP beginning of autobiography commenced in 1925’): 9

wild gaiety. Brought up in an atmosphere of strictest Puritanism – the narrow way, even becoming more narrow as time went on, brought up with acute consciousness of myself always hanging by a thread over the Bottomless Pit, with God's Hand with a sword in it always poised ready to sever the thread. Acutest misery of my childhood years [...] ⁵ The naughtiness of childhood [...] My inner wretchedness that nothing I did might make my M[other] love me. Realization, that although I was apparently 'grewed up' the same as the boys, my M[other]'s love was for them not me. Somehow I had sinned in being a girl. ⁶

Two postcards written by her father when he was ill before his death in 1904 indicate that there must have been a bond between them (Figure 2). ⁷ The postcards were written during the time Pailthorpe's father spent in his nursing home and they were sent to the family's holiday house in Scotland. He was very fond of her and wrote how her 'letters have been quite a cheer to me often the one bright spot of a weary weary day'. ⁸

Despite the fact that her father left the family in a comfortable position after his death, for unknown reasons, the family moved to Southport in Lancashire. ⁹ Conversations with Pailthorpe's great nephew Richard Pailthorpe also bring to light the fact that the Pailthorpes spent their holidays in Scotland in a rented house called St. Germain's on the road to North Berwick and Musselburgh. However, the reasons why they chose to go there and the identity of the owners of the house are unknown (Figure 3). ¹⁰

Letters provided by Richard Pailthorpe confirm that, as well as with her father, Pailthorpe also had a close relationship with her younger brother Alexander, who

⁵ I have inserted [...] at points where I have omitted from quotations I supplied.

⁶ Ibid.: 1

⁷ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 12.08.08.

⁸ Letter from Edward Pailthorpe to Pailthorpe, dated 18.04.1904 (provided by Richard Pailthorpe).

⁹ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 12.08.08.

¹⁰ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 13.08.08.

was known as Frank. He had left home and sailed to Canada in 1912. There was a rumour that he went there because he had had an illegitimate child.¹¹ He then returned to England in 1914 to fight during the First World War and was killed in action in 1915.¹²

Frank and Grace Pailthorpe were close in age and thinking. Neither of them had a good relationship with their mother, who by all accounts was very dictatorial and this was probably because, as children, they must have questioned their Plymouth Brethren upbringing which, as Richard Pailthorpe says, was ‘incomprehensibly destructive’.¹³ This is made clear to us in Frank’s last letters which were all addressed to Pailthorpe as ‘my dear sis’. In one of his letters (Figure 4 (i)), he wrote:

Thanks very much for wanting to send me stuff [...] How is the mother. I can’t believe in her so called love for me when she would let me go to the front without the least desire to see me knowing that 100% I shouldn’t come back [...] Well so long old girl. Delighted you are doing so well...
Your loving brother Frank¹⁴

Frank also refers to his relationship with their mother in another letter (Figure 4 (ii)):

I note what you say about the matter. I suppose you are right. It’s the religion, but all the same she is very hard hearted to let me go to the front without desiring to see me. I wonder what she would feel like if I had been killed by now. Would she have any remorse. I think she would. Poor mother to be bound by such iron bars.¹⁵

Unlike Frank and her, Pailthorpe’s other siblings were only married into the Brethren. All of her other brothers’ children were also brought up as Plymouth Brethren and remained tied to it for some time. Pailthorpe’s brother Gerald was a

¹¹ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 13.05.09.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 13.08.08.

¹⁴ Letter from Frank to Pailthorpe, dated 16.06.15 (provided by Richard Pailthorpe).

¹⁵ Letter from Frank to Pailthorpe, dated 19.07.15 (provided by Richard Pailthorpe).

doctor and another brother was an engineer. Many of her other brothers squandered their inheritance.¹⁶

We can assume that Pailthorpe became interested in pursuing a medical career partly because her paternal aunt Mary Elizabeth was a doctor and had achieved much by qualifying in the 1880s when there were very few female doctors at all (Figure 5). Mary was a medical missionary, so for her religion came into the equation whereas Grace herself never seems to have considered working as a missionary. Because of her aunt, it is unlikely that there would have been much opposition to Pailthorpe also having a career.¹⁷

Pailthorpe attended the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women in the Winter term of 1908-09 (Figure 6). Twenty-two other students also enrolled that year. Pailthorpe qualified as MB BS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) at the University of Durham in 1914 at the age of 31. Conversations with the archivist of the University of Durham library have confirmed that Pailthorpe was only in Durham for two years before graduating. This was because, at the time, regulations for the MB and BS degree stipulated that candidates had to have been in medical study for five years, but that only one of those years needed to be spent in Newcastle, whereas the other three or four years could be spent either in Newcastle or at one or more of the other recognised medical schools.¹⁸

As we learn by looking at the University of Durham's annually published calendars, Pailthorpe matriculated as a student at the University's then College of Medicine in

¹⁶ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 13.05.09.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Conversation with Michael Stansfield, 14.05.09.

Newcastle in Michaelmas term in 1912 and qualified as MB BS on 15 December 1914. In 1912/13 there were in the College of Medicine twelve female and 198 male students.¹⁹ The fact that in the academic year 1913/14, the College of Medicine had only thirteen female students as opposed to 204 male students shows us how rare it was for a woman to study medicine at the time. Of the 34 graduates of MB BS in the calendar year 1914, Grace Pailthorpe was one of three females. Of 66 graduates in all medical degrees (MD, MS, MB/BS, DPH, LDS) that year, she was one of only four females. Of the 416 degrees, diplomas and licenses awarded by the University of Durham in 1914, only 48 went to women.²⁰

Pailthorpe's handwritten notes in her journal describing her service in the First World War and dated 1914-18, tell us that shortly after the outbreak of war on 28 July 1914, she rushed to inform her mother that she would volunteer her services. On 4 August 1914, Pailthorpe went to London and filled out her application form at the War Office even though officials told her that they did not favour the inclusion of female medics and rejected her offer.²¹ As she wrote in her journal:

Leaving the War Office, sadly, once more with the brutal way in which one's sex was utilised by the ruling sex to domineer. I made my way to every hospital unit that I heard about asking to be allowed to 'join up'. One after the other told me either that they weren't taking women or, in the case of women's hospitals that they already had a long list and they would add my name.²²

¹⁹ University of Durham academic Calendar, dated 1913-14. Durham: University of Durham Archive.

²⁰ Figures for the academic year 1913-14 at the College of Medicine in Durham. Durham: University of Durham Archive.

²¹ Diary notes by Pailthorpe on 'the war period', dated 04.08.14. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 25 'Wartime file titled: 'Doc in First World War 1914-1918'): 1

²² Ibid.

Nonetheless, although applications by female medics were initially routinely rejected,²³ ‘Before 2 yrs had elapsed there were over a thousand women medicals on active service on every front’.²⁴

During her visit to London in August 1914, Pailthorpe decided to sit for her final exam in medicine and surgery. She failed the oral section of surgery, but on her return to Newcastle to finish her last year of studies she and some other students in her year asked if they could re-sit the exam earlier than usual, given the pressing need for qualified doctors during wartime. Their proposal was accepted and Pailthorpe sat for her final exam three months later at the end of 1914.²⁵ She was awarded an honours degree and registered on 21 December 1914.²⁶

After finishing her degree, Pailthorpe went on to serve in the French and British Red Cross during World War I (Figure 7). Although many medical records were destroyed by the enemy in the 1940 air raids, records relating to Pailthorpe’s military service in the British army during the war can be traced and, because of this, we know that she served as a surgeon in several different hospitals between 1915 and 1918.²⁷ In January 1915, at the start of her military service, she worked as a surgeon with the Bromley-Martin Hospital Unit in the Haute-Marne District in France. As she described in her journal, the staff she worked with had all been rejected by the military authorities in their applications because of their sex, age or health. The staff

²³ Letter issued by Northumberland War hospital on inclusion of female medics, dated 01.05.15; in *ibid.*

²⁴ Diary notes by Pailthorpe on ‘the war period’, dated 1915; in *ibid.*

²⁵ Diary notes by Pailthorpe on ‘the war period’, dated 1914; in *ibid.*

²⁶ Certificate of Pailthorpe’s medical degree, dated December 1914. Durham: University of Durham Archive.

²⁷ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 82

consisted of three artists, a sculptor, a poet, an architect, a historian, among others.²⁸

Pailthorpe was in charge of several wards and acted as a personal assistant to the chief medical officer, Dr. Aspland, who had been a gynaecologist and missionary in Peking before the war. After working in France, she then served as a medical officer in charge of a flying ambulance unit in the Balkans.

One of Pailthorpe's greatest achievements during her time in France was when she set up the 'Amiens Club' for the soldiers (Figure 8). It first came into being in Amiens in October 1917 and was named 'Home from Home'. Official records of the 'Amiens Club' show us that she financed and maintained this club entirely for one year and partly for the following three years. However, where she received the money to fund it from remains unclear. The club was 'a place of encampment for large bodies of men on their way to the front'.²⁹ It was described as the only place that looked like home, for it:

..contained two silence rooms, reading rooms, badminton and ping pong rooms, art and handicraft rooms, etc, and was always a hive of industry [...] some of our boys were paperhangers and others painters [...] and the place blossomed like the Spring, and the men sang and whistled and jested and learnt to love every little nook and corner of their own place that they had made in their rare and precious spare time.³⁰

Moreover, half of the staff Pailthorpe worked with were artists themselves, so they must have influenced her early interest in art.

After serving in France, Pailthorpe also worked as a House Surgeon at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool. Between August and October 1916, Pailthorpe worked as a surgeon in Salonika in the Royal Army Medical Corps of the British

²⁸ Diary notes by Pailthorpe, dated January 1915. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 25 'Wartime file titled: 'Doc in First World War 1914-1918''')

²⁹ Document by E.M. Hamilton entitled 'The "Amiens Club" for Soldiers', not dated; in *ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Committee of the French Red Cross.³¹ Several photos of this period show us that Pailthorpe then spent some time in Malta³² and there is also evidence that on 12 December 1916, Pailthorpe was granted leave by the Governor of Malta to proceed to Italy. She boarded the S.S ‘Isonzo for Adriatic’ on 13 December.³³ In 1917, she was transferred from the French to the British Red Cross and worked as a District Medical Officer at Queen Charlotte’s Hospital in London. She remained in London until the end of the war and worked as a House Physician at Charing Cross Hospital, an Assistant Medical Officer at Whipps Cross War Hospital and finally as a House Physician at London Hospital.³⁴ As her war journal clarifies, it was Pailthorpe’s experience as a doctor for victims of the war that led her to a lifetime practice of psychological medicine, because treating patients encouraged her to investigate the unconscious as she realised ‘how intense a patient’s thoughts become and how sensitive one becomes’.³⁵

Pailthorpe’s poor relationship with her mother is further emphasised in her autobiographical notes as she wrote how her mother, who died towards the end of the war in 1918, had not left Pailthorpe a share of the inheritance money in her will and instead left everything to her sons.³⁶ According to Pailthorpe’s nephew, David Pailthorpe, Pailthorpe was considering changing faith to Catholicism and this would, no doubt, have upset her mother because of her strict Plymouth Brethren beliefs.³⁷

³¹ Letter from the ‘Ministry of Defence’ to Dr. David Rumney, not dated; in *ibid.*

³² Photographs of landscapes in Malta, dated 1916-17; in *ibid.*

³³ Document issued by the ‘Maltese Authorities’ granting Pailthorpe leave, dated 12.12.16; in *ibid.*

³⁴ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 82

³⁵ Diary notes by Pailthorpe, dated 1917. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 25 ‘Wartime file titled: ‘Doc in First World War 1914-1918’’): 25

³⁶ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe, dated 1918. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 81 ‘Autobiographical Notes by Grace Pailthorpe’): 4

³⁷ Conversation with David Pailthorpe, 09.12.08.

At all events, Pailthorpe later stated in other autobiographical notes how bitter her mother's will made her feel since it resulted in her having little money to finance her career.³⁸

Once the war ended, Pailthorpe decided to visit her brother, Douglas, in Australia with her friend, M.A.Cullis³⁹ who, like her, was 'addicted to travelling'.⁴⁰ As the manuscript of her unpublished travel journal, entitled 'Truants', informs us, their plan to go to Australia came about because they believed that, after the war, a holiday and a change of scenery were necessary.⁴¹ 'Truants' is dated 1920 to 1922, and like her autobiographical notes, it is partly written in the form of reminiscences. The two friends left for their destination on 11 December 1918 and 'embarked on the P.& O. s/s Mantua bound for Freemantle, w. Australia'.⁴² The boat they were on passed by Gibraltar, Marseilles, Port Said, Aden, Bombay, Colombo and arrived in Freemantle on 10 February 1919.⁴³

Pailthorpe's purpose in travelling to Australia seems to have been a combination of visiting her brother, sightseeing and developing her career, which for a female doctor at that time may not have been so easy in Britain.⁴⁴ It is likely that it was during this period that she first became interested in criminology as, historically, criminals had often been shipped to Australia. Transportation was a common punishment handed out for both major and petty crimes in Britain from the seventeenth century onward

³⁸ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe, dated 1924. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 81 'Autobiographical Notes by Grace Pailthorpe'): 5

³⁹ Efforts to discover more about Cullis have not yielded anything.

⁴⁰ Journal entitled 'Truants' by Pailthorpe, dated 1920-22. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 46 'Truants by G.W. Pailthorpe'): 1

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Conversation with Richard Pailthorpe, 13.05.09.

and was seen as a humane alternative to execution. Initially, such convicts were transported to the British colonies in North America but the American Revolutionary War brought an end to that. From the late eighteenth century onward, large numbers of convicts were then transported to the various Australian penal colonies in Sydney, Port Arthur, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island by the British government. One of the primary reasons for the British settlement of Australia was the establishment of a penal colony to alleviate pressure on Britain's own overburdened correctional facilities. For every six males, there would be one female convict. No practising female prostitutes were transported to Australia but many of them were driven to prostitution upon arrival in Australia as a means of survival because they were often required to house themselves at night or buy food, clothing and bedding on their own. Although the transported women varied in age, the majority were in their twenties or thirties and they were usually assigned as domestic help to soldiers.⁴⁵ Because this penal transportation to Australia officially ended about fifty years before Pailthorpe went there, she would not have encountered any transported convicts.

Between 1919 and 1921, Pailthorpe worked as a general practitioner in both Australia and New Zealand. However, I do not have any details of her posts. No doubt, it was very unusual for a foreign woman to become a Medical Officer of Health since, at the time, there was very little encouragement for women to build professional careers for themselves. Because of this, any female doing medicine at that time needed to be both intelligent and strong enough to succeed in a largely male - dominated environment. Moreover, in 'Truants', Pailthorpe wrote how she felt the

⁴⁵ Greenwood, Gordon. 1955. *Australia: A Social and Political History* (London, Angus & Robertson): 98

pressure from her local colleagues and was not popular with the midwives, considering them to be indifferent or cynical about their work. On the other hand, Pailthorpe was liked by the patients.⁴⁶

In her diary, Pailthorpe also spoke of the landscape with fondness: 'I am in love with Sydney Harbour - the only part of Australia that ever held or will ever hold a corner in my affections. I am not speaking of the people, but the land'.⁴⁷ She goes on to say that 'The bush country in New Zealand is some of the most beautiful in the world. After the eternal blue gum of Western Australia, the variety of her foliage was enthralling. Nor was this all. The undergrowth was correspondingly beautiful. All was green. Tree ferns of exquisite form, flowering creepers, ground flowers and grass made a veritable fairyland wherever one went'.⁴⁸

Furthermore, a map and guide of Hawaii in a notebook titled 'Diary of South Sea Island Trip', which she stated was 'written mostly on odd scraps of paper, in odd corners, at odd times', together with notes in the Pailthorpe archive entitled 'Notes for Honolulu', dated 20 October 1921, indicate that the two friends went there too.⁴⁹ Pailthorpe's travel journal also tells us that, after their visit to Hawaii, she and Cullis embarked on 'S.S.Makura' on 25 November 1921 and arrived in Vancouver on 3 December 1921. They briefly visited New York on 5 February 1922. However, we do not know whether Pailthorpe did any work, visited relatives or whether she was

⁴⁶ Journal entitled 'Truants' by Pailthorpe, dated 1920-22. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 46 'Truants by G.W. Pailthorpe'): 166

⁴⁷ Ibid.: 134

⁴⁸ Ibid.: 150

⁴⁹ Notebook entitled 'Diary of South Sea Island Trip' by Pailthorpe, dated 1921. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 28 'GWP Diary of South Sea Island Trip 1921')

just travelling for its own sake.⁵⁰ According to the 'Table of Dates' in 'Truants', Pailthorpe and Cullis left New York on 7 February on 'S.S. Aquitania' and went back to Southampton.⁵¹

1.3 The 'Medical Research Council' (1923-1929)

By the time Pailthorpe returned to Southampton on 15 February 1922, she had had an unusually wide experience in different parts of the world. Like her experience with victims of the war, her work as a general practitioner in Australia and New Zealand encouraged her to study Freudian psychoanalysis under the guidance of British psychoanalyst Ernest Jones after her return to England. At that time, there was a considerable shift towards the study of mental illness. Psychoanalysis was being discussed at great length at many medical meetings and Congresses in Europe. The first account of Freudian psychoanalysis to be published in England was in 1911. This was an essay by Bernard Hart on 'Freud's Conception of Hysteria', which was published in the neurological journal *Brain* and which brought Britain into the psychoanalytic arena.⁵² I shall return to the study of hysteria later.

However, it was Ernest Jones rather than Bernard Hart who proved to be lastingly influential in transmitting Freudian theory to Britain.⁵³ Jones had met Freud in 1908 when he went to Salzburg to participate in the first psychoanalytic congress and he soon became a member of Freud's circle. Jones played a key role in translating Freud's writings to English, and his biography of Freud remains the most significant

⁵⁰ Journal entitled 'Truants' by Pailthorpe, dated 1920-22. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 46 'Truants by G.W. Pailthorpe'): 160

⁵¹ 'Table of Dates'; in *ibid.*: n. p.

⁵² Jones, Ernest. 1964. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York, Penguin): 365

⁵³ *Ibid.*: 364

source of biographical information on Freud's life and work. He was instrumental in introducing the study of psychoanalysis to England, and founded and became the President of the British Psychoanalytical Society in 1920. Three years later, Pailthorpe became an associate member. In that year, under the direction of Freud, Jones also founded and became the editor of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*.

There is no information as to how Jones and Pailthorpe met but probably she sought him out because he was seen as the first person to develop the therapeutic practice of psychoanalysis in Britain. Pailthorpe's autobiographical notes tell us that she started being analysed by Jones in 1923.⁵⁴ As we will see in Chapter 3, Pailthorpe decided to undergo psychoanalysis with Jones. This was probably because she wanted to abandon general medicine and branch out into psychoanalysis, where being analysed was regarded as essential to one's training. Letters from Jones to Pailthorpe, dated from 25 December 1925 to 15 November 1932, show us that Jones encouraged Pailthorpe's work a lot. In one of his letters to Pailthorpe, which was written just after her psychoanalytic sessions, Jones wrote:

Dear Dr Pailthorpe,
I was deeply moved by today's event. But I judged it would be more considerate not to introduce an emotional role into a situation you were holding so well in hand, especially as it did not mean any real parting. I count on seeing you again before long and so keeping touch with developments and with your news. In the meantime, however, I do want to convey to you some expression of my personal feeling for you. You must know actually how deeply bound I am with your fight for freedom and happiness and how greatly I care about your success. Your courage has never really faltered in all the tenacious battle, and this week I admired it more than ever. I am convinced it will not fail you in this specially difficult time. Remember that the harder these things are to win the more valuable

⁵⁴ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe, dated 1924. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 81 'Autobiographical notes by Grace Pailthorpe'): 4-5

and precious are they when won, so there can never really be any doubt
about the worth-whileness of the fight.
I am not the first person in your life to believe whole-heartedly in you, nor
shall I be the last.
With heartfelt good wishes
Yours always
Ernest Jones⁵⁵

This letter shows us the degree of intimacy between them. Jones believed in the value of her work and they constantly kept in touch about her developments and her news over the years in spite of her developing attitude to Freud which I will look at in Chapter 3.

A year after her return to England, and around the time that she began her analysis with Jones, Pailthorpe began her study of female offenders, working with and under the direction of Dr. Maurice Hamblin Smith who 'was greatly impressed with the qualities she possessed for dealing with the work of her choice'.⁵⁶ Although I do not know how she first made contact with him, Pailthorpe's autobiography confirms that she went to Birmingham because she wanted to do research with Hamblin Smith.⁵⁷ Hamblin Smith was extremely interested in psychoanalysis as a way of assessing the personality of offenders and as a technique for treating the mental conflicts which, he declared, lay behind the criminal act.⁵⁸ He is identified by the sociologist David Garland as Britain's first authorized teacher of 'criminology'⁵⁹ and, according to the authors of *Making Sense of Criminology*, the first individual to use the title of

⁵⁵ Letter from Jones to Pailthorpe, dated 20.06.30. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 1 'Ernest Jones correspondence')

⁵⁶ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1932. *What we put in Prison* (London, Williams & Norgate Ltd.): 13

⁵⁷ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe, dated 21.09.24. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 78 'Autobiographical notes by Grace Pailthorpe'): 1

⁵⁸ Soothill, Keith, Moira Peelo & Claire Taylor. 2002. *Making Sense of Criminology* (Cambridge, Polity Press): 9

⁵⁹ Garland, David. 1988. 'British Criminology before 1935', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 28/2: 8

‘criminologist’.⁶⁰ Hamblin Smith published *The Psychology of the Criminal* in 1922, and there concentrated on psychoanalysis, which he defined as a ‘new development of psychology’.⁶¹ Hamblin Smith spent 34 years as a medical officer in Birmingham Prison and became convinced that the ‘only hope of solving the problem of delinquency’ lay with ‘the patient, intensive investigation of the individual offender’.⁶² He believed that getting into ‘the mind of the offender [...] and the immediate mental mechanisms which produced his delinquency’ was critical to any attempt to understand crime, and especially so when such understanding was to help devise ‘correct methods of treatment’.⁶³ As Hamblin Smith stated in his preface to Pailthorpe’s report *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency*, it was he who proposed her investigation of female offenders (Figure 9).⁶⁴

On 21 July 1923, Pailthorpe and Hamblin Smith published a joint paper entitled ‘Mental Tests for Delinquents: and mental conflicts as a cause of delinquency’ in the medical journal *The Lancet*.⁶⁵ Although after securing a grant from the Medical Research Council that year, Pailthorpe specialised in female offenders, their paper consisted of the results obtained from several mental tests which were carried out by both male and female prisoners in Birmingham Prison. Pailthorpe and Hamblin Smith grouped the 325 cases under the headings of ‘normal’, ‘subnormal’ and ‘mentally defective’. The subnormal group consisted of ‘persons considered to be defective in intelligence’, while the mentally defective group ‘present all the criteria

⁶⁰ Soothill, Keith, Moira Peelo & Claire Taylor. 2002. *Making Sense of Criminology* (Cambridge, Polity Press): 9

⁶¹ Hamblin Smith, Maurice. 1922. *The Psychology of the Criminal* (London, Methuen & Co.): 5

⁶² Ibid.: 7

⁶³ Ibid.: 25

⁶⁴ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1932. *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency* (London, Privy Council): i

⁶⁵ Pailthorpe, Grace & Maurice Hamblin Smith. 1923. ‘Mental Tests for Delinquents: and mental conflict as a cause of Delinquency’, *The Lancet*, 2: 112-114

of permanent mental defect from an early age, with need for care, supervision, and control for their own protection or the protection of others'.⁶⁶ After summing up the results of their tests, Pailthorpe and Hamblin Smith concluded that mental conflict was the single cause of delinquency:

The welfare of society is of supreme importance. Our point is that these cases require treatment, in the interests of society as well as in their own, and that this treatment must be on special lines. What is wanted is: (a) Recognition of these conflict cases by means of full investigation before trial; (b) appreciation by the courts of the value and the necessity of the treatment of these cases of conflict; (c) provision of means of treating these cases by (1) proper institutions, (2) perhaps some form of indeterminate sentence.⁶⁷

As Christopher Cordess wrote in his article on pioneers in forensic psychiatry, the work of Pailthorpe and Hamblin Smith represented the beginning of the penetration of psychological and psychoanalytic ideas into the British penal system.⁶⁸ To my knowledge, there were no other female criminologists working in the same field as Pailthorpe in Britain at this time and this makes her a pioneer not only in the theory and treatment of delinquency but also as a woman who, at the time, was still relatively young.

Whilst working with Hamblin Smith at Birmingham Prison, Pailthorpe's early interest in art is demonstrated as she used a method which she described as the 'Interpretation of Pictures'. Its aim was to test the prisoners' imagination, apperception and their recognition of a situation. Here, two pictures were given to the subject, and he or she would then be asked to give an interpretation of their meaning. She believed that this method would expose the visual acuteness and levels of

⁶⁶ Ibid.: 112

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 114

⁶⁸ Cordess, Christopher. 1992. 'Pioneers in forensic psychiatry. Edward Glover (1888-1972): psychoanalysis and crime - a fragile legacy', *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 3: 519

imagination of the patients she was attending to once they had studied the pictures, and she noted that ‘females had a greater power of imagination than males’.⁶⁹ In another test, subjects were given a brightly coloured picture and told to give a full description of everything that he or she noticed within twenty seconds. Here, Pailthorpe aimed to test their attention, observation and memory.

Just after the publication of Pailthorpe and Hamblin Smith’s research paper on delinquents, Pailthorpe transferred her research to Holloway Prison. For her first investigation, which dealt with 100 female prisoners from Birmingham Prison and Holloway Prison, she obtained a grant from the Medical Research Council to finance her research expenses for five years. The Medical Research Council had been formed in 1913 and encouraged and supported research with the aim of maintaining and improving human health. Pailthorpe was permitted to interview the prison inmates by Sir Maurice Waller, who was the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners and who provided her with all the facilities that she needed to carry out her investigations.⁷⁰ We also know that M.A.Cullis assisted her throughout her research investigation as she thanked Cullis in her report and book.

In 1924, Pailthorpe began to specialise in psychology and attended the Eighth International Psychoanalytic Congress in Salzburg as well as the Ninth International Psychoanalytic Congress in Hamburg the following year.⁷¹ However, there is no

⁶⁹ Scheme for prison research by Pailthorpe, 1923. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 60 ‘Pailthorpe’s Scheme for prison research’)

⁷⁰ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1926-27. ‘Report on a Psychological Investigation of the Inmates of Preventive & Rescue Homes in London’. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 7 ‘Typescript ‘Report on a Psychological Investigation of the Inmates of Preventive & Rescue Homes in London’ and accompanying correspondence’)

⁷¹ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 82

record as to who she attended the conferences with or what significant contacts she made, or indeed whether she delivered any papers.

On 19 September 1925, Pailthorpe graduated from the University of Durham and received her doctorate in medicine.⁷² At the time, the regulations for an MD (doctorate of medicine) from the University of Durham stipulated that candidates had to be at least 24 years old, had to have done two years of work since receiving their MB and BS degree, and had to pass a special exam in the theory and practice of medicine (which she did) or submit a thesis and pass an oral.⁷³ There was no residency requirement for the MD so she probably only went to Newcastle to sit her exam, seeing as she was based in Birmingham and Holloway prisons.

A year later, Pailthorpe also began her study on 100 inmates of various Homes for girls and young women at the request of the Central Council for Preventive and Rescue Work in London.⁷⁴ When doing her research, Pailthorpe's method was to interview the female prisoners as well as those who had been sent to Rescue and Preventive homes. She would spend up to ten hours in conversation with each inmate and make as many as six or seven visits per case.⁷⁵ The women were aged between sixteen and thirty.⁷⁶ Whilst interviewing them, Pailthorpe wrote that although 'at the time, my work was not to treat but to investigate, it was evident that many of the girls found considerable relief and often hope, when they discovered I was interested in

⁷² Correspondence with Michael Stansfield, 08.05.09.

⁷³ Regulations in University of Durham Calendar, dated 1925-1926. Durham: University of Durham Archive.

⁷⁴ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1926-27. 'Report on a Psychological Investigation of the Inmates of Preventive & Rescue Homes in London'. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 7 'Typescript 'Report on a Psychological Investigation of the Inmates of Preventive & Rescue Homes in London' and accompanying correspondence')

⁷⁵ Article 'Doctor's 5 years work in prison' in *Daily Express*, writer unknown, 20.09.32. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 165 'Newscuttings, receipts, miscellaneous documents')

⁷⁶ Article 'A hospital for Crime' in *Glasgow Herald*, writer unknown, 10.09.32; in *ibid*.

their problems as they felt them, and not as society felt them'.⁷⁷ Each inmate was interviewed alone and Pailthorpe was mainly concerned with cases where she detected 'mental conflict':

As far as possible, one aimed at an outline of the life-history of the individual and her reactions to life. Her reactions to the present circumstances, her emotional mobility, her moods, the way in which she disposed of the situation in which she found herself [...] her mannerisms [...] habit spasms, tremors, blushing, sweating; her affects [...] and her moods were all noted. Her history of states of depression and excitement was specially observed.⁷⁸

By reading Pailthorpe's notes and conclusions about her research method, we can see how Pailthorpe had been influenced by the writings of Freud. Her interest in the physical and psychological symptoms in cases which indicated 'mental conflict' demonstrates her knowledge of Freud's theory of hysteria which was influential in Britain in the 1920s. Because Freud considered hysteria to be more common amongst women, it is likely that his view influenced her decision to work with women. Moreover, although it is not clear whether or not she believed gender played a fundamental role in criminality, as a woman herself, Pailthorpe may have been more sympathetic to and interested in female offenders.

Freud had studied hysteria under the guidance of the French neurologist Jean Martin Charcot in Paris from October 1885 to February 1886. Later, his investigations with the Viennese physician Joseph Breuer of the psychic mechanisms involved in hysteria allowed him to develop the theory that hysteria was caused by repressed emotionally charged memories. Freud and Breuer published their findings in *Studies*

⁷⁷ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe on 'law procedure', dated 1920-1929. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 78 'Autobiographical notes by Grace Pailthorpe; text on legality of punishment and legal processes'): 90

⁷⁸ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe on 'law procedure', 1920-1929; in *ibid.*: 39-40

on *Hysteria* in 1895. This text became very famous and consisted of a number of their case studies on hysteria, including the famous study of Breuer's patient 'Anna O', a case which introduced the technique of psychoanalysis as a form of cure.

Although Charcot and Breuer had used hypnosis to free their patients' symptoms, Freud refined their methods as he realized that the success of the treatment depended upon the patient's relation to his or her doctor, whose aim was to bring the patient's unconscious and desires to the surface. It was this new relation between the patient and the physician which gave birth to psychoanalysis. We can assume that Pailthorpe had studied Freud's work on hysteria through her own work with Jones, and, following Freud, Pailthorpe believed not only that traumatic events can cause persistent psychological and physical symptoms, but also that allowing a patient to tell their story can be therapeutic.

During the time she spent with female offenders, Pailthorpe insisted that various degrees of mental distortion were present and that they needed help for they were quite incapable of helping themselves. According to an article in *The Scotsman*, Pailthorpe was quoted as saying that in 111 out of 200 cases, psychological treatment was considered necessary.⁷⁹ Another article that was published in *Glasgow Herald* included Pailthorpe's review of her research material:

1. Mental imbalance is evident in a large proportion of the cases.
2. Sentiment development is lacking in a great number.
3. Large percentage of homes where normal family love relationships are absent.
4. The influence of heredity as instability can be passed on from parent to child.
5. The need for reconsidering the present systems for dealing with delinquents.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Article 'A Hospital of Crime' in *The Scotsman*, writer unknown, 20.09.32. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 165 'Newscuttings, receipts, miscellaneous documents')

⁸⁰ Article 'Female Delinquency' in *Glasgow Herald*, writer unknown, 20.09.32; in *ibid*.

Pailthorpe's research was original because she focused on the causes and prevention of criminality rather than on the punishment of the criminal. She postulated that it was necessary to examine the structure of the penal system and that we must not only understand the criminal but consider our attitude towards him or her. Pailthorpe was adamant that society must attempt to understand the unconscious motives at work behind all crime as she believed that the criminals can only understand their offences if the unconscious motives prompting their behaviour have been made apparent to them. In her writings on 'law procedure', which are dated from 1920 to 1929, she affirmed that:

The unconscious mental life makes use of the external world as dramatic material. In order therefore to arrive at the meaning of the "performance" of these delinquents we must take their own rendering of their acts and translate them back into terms of their unconscious. When this is done, we shall find every play, down to its smallest details, perfectly logical and reasonable.⁸¹

The standard practice of law-makers and judges focused on the worst cases by isolating them and putting them in special institutions. Pailthorpe by contrast wanted to implement psychoanalysis as a treatment for psychopaths and asserted that the prison conditions at that time were unsuitable for the reform of criminals:

The mistake of our penal system is that it is neither deterrent nor reformatory to the individual imprisoned. That it is not deterrent is proved by the fact that the prisoner returns again and again to prison; that is to say, the shame of going to prison does not act as a deterrent, neither does the actual loss of liberty, nor the conditions of prison-life itself. The prison routine is too easy and pleasant.⁸²

⁸¹ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe on 'law procedure', 1920-1929. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 78 'Autobiographical notes by Grace Pailthorpe; text on legality of punishment and legal processes'): 33

⁸² Ibid.: 131

Furthermore, in her notes on 'law procedure', Pailthorpe complained that religious and moral attitudes appeared to prevail in both prisons and Rescue homes and hindered any type of advance. This refers us back to her own early experiences since she was aware of the ill-effects of religious repression. She noticed that many of the females spent their lives in different institutions and became indifferent to their surroundings and, thus, showed evidence of great repression. Pailthorpe noted that, because of the attitude of several directors of Rescue homes, a girl would be classified as mentally defective or feeble-minded if she were not responsive to the routine discipline of a home or institution. She wrote how the 'well-intentioned efforts of those who conduct these institutions on religious or sociological ground are bound to be fruitless so long as scientific mental treatment is ignored and the punishment motif remains'.⁸³

Pailthorpe made a request for all authorities not to force any of the girls or young women to conform to a set way of life but instead to allow each one the 'freedom to work out the one [way of life] which she herself desires and to which she can conform'.⁸⁴ She stated that society's 'only hope is to try and help them to reach their unconscious mind, so that by the resolution of the hidden cause of guilt there is no longer any reason for defensive measures against it'.⁸⁵

Pailthorpe argued that asocial behaviour occurs years before the future delinquents get into trouble with the police, and that preventive measures must be taken at an early stage:

⁸³ Ibid.: 135

⁸⁴ Ibid.: 135

⁸⁵ Ibid.: 132

If we at once realise that criminal actions are not the product of a momentary impulse but the product of a pathological pattern of psychology, it follows that the earlier we discover the pathological condition and the earlier we treat it the more likely we are to save such children from a criminal career.⁸⁶

By affirming this, Pailthorpe classified all criminals as being psychopathic in some degree and said that psychotherapeutic treatment should be available for every case. She stated that, 'It is as necessary to examine a case before placing it on probation as before sentencing it to imprisonment'.⁸⁷ Her opinion was based on the evaluation of her case studies which showed that 93 per cent of the prisoners she examined were 'psychopathic either by psychological arrest in development, or through maladjustment and mental conflict, or through incipient psychoses'.⁸⁸ The remaining 7 per cent were 'cases which had come into prison by some accidental occurrence or through ignorance of the law, and not because of any inherent inability or lack of desire to adjust themselves to the law as it stands today'.⁸⁹

1.4 Publications

The findings relating to the two investigations were incorporated in a Medical Research Council special report entitled *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency*. It took Pailthorpe two years to prepare the report on her findings and although she submitted the manuscript in July 1929, it was not published until September 1932. Its publication was delayed because of the dispute over matters of Pailthorpe's methodology by some of the Committee members of the Medical Research Council. This was because the Committee decided that some debatable matter should be

⁸⁶ Ibid.: 143

⁸⁷ Ibid.: 140

⁸⁸ Ibid.: 144

⁸⁹ Ibid.

looked into with respect to the report's statistical value as some of the members believed that there were several inaccuracies in Pailthorpe's statistical analysis. Even though Pailthorpe did make some alterations to obvious errors, she was reluctant to meet any objections to her method and, in July 1931, the Medical Research Council informed Pailthorpe that they would not proceed with the publication of her report unless their criticisms were met by valid alterations or rebutted. However, Pailthorpe was determined not to make any changes to the report and it was the intervention and mediation of the forensic psychiatrist Dr Edward Glover that ensured its publication.⁹⁰

Pailthorpe must have met Glover through Jones, who had worked with Glover. Together, Jones and Glover represented the British Psychoanalytical Society and Glover later became the founder and editor of the *British Journal of Delinquency* (1950) as well as the *British Journal of Criminology* (1960). At the end of the First World War, Glover had gone to Germany to study with Karl Abraham who was Melanie Klein's mentor. Although Glover later criticised Klein's work for deviating from Freudian psychoanalysis, he initially was a supporter of her study of the early development of the mind and we can assume that it was he who introduced Pailthorpe to Klein's theories, which I will be discussing in Chapter 3.

In *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency*, Pailthorpe compared the qualities of the female inmates of prisons with the qualities of the inmates of rescue homes and indicated the differences between one group and the other by examining to what degree a pathological mental state was present in the girls of each group. She also

⁹⁰ Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency. 1992. *Let Justice be done* (London, King's College): 3

noted that the living conditions and social standards of the girls differed from the standards of those who were in charge of them. Prostitution, drunkenness and thievery made up most of the charges. Because of this, in her report, Pailthorpe recommended that society form a constructive policy which would ultimately replace the existing penal system.

In her report, Pailthorpe criticised the basis on which the penal system dealt with crime and highlighted the importance of a psychological approach to the study of delinquency. Pailthorpe's *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency* demonstrates that in each case investigated there is an underlying pathological state of mind which should be treated scientifically. Her report sought to prove the great extent to which mental deficiency and instability are to blame for criminality.

Pailthorpe's book, *What we put in Prison*, drew on the findings of her report. Although Pailthorpe did her research on females for the report, her theories on delinquency took a more general slant in *What we put in Prison* and addressed criminality irrespective of gender. The book had also been ready for publication in 1929 but the Medical Research Council had not permitted publication before the report. In spite of its delayed publication, for over two years copies of the manuscripts had been available for study by any interested individuals and as Dr. Ernest T. Jensen, the Chairman of the Organising Committee of the 'Association for the Scientific Treatment of Criminals' (to be discussed shortly) said: 'Her contention that much crime can be prevented by diagnosis of causes in the individual, and by treatment in many cases on psychological, physical and sociological lines, impressed

those who read the Report and her book *What we put in Prison* before their publication'.⁹¹ His comments attest to the impact that this book made at the time.

In the Author's note to her book, Pailthorpe wrote, 'if I can claim to be original at all in what I have presented, it is, perhaps, in focusing attention on the *law-makers* as having to come under investigation *in addition* to the law-breakers'.⁹² In her book, Pailthorpe asserted that Great Britain in the 1920s still had a tendency to regard the criminal 'as a member of a separate class; a class apart, inherently and permanently evil'; it had little sympathy for the notion of the criminal as a human being.⁹³ Criminals were treated with contempt and the origins of criminal behaviour were never investigated. She implied that treatment by imprisonment or detention in institutions had little effect in curing the delinquent and results were not being obtained due to the lack of correct analysis of the causes of crime and consideration of the appropriate treatment of the criminal.⁹⁴

What we put in Prison maintained the idea of preventing crime by means of psychoanalysis. The offender's life style would be examined and the offender would then be made to follow the typical lines of treatment by a psychoanalyst. Pailthorpe declared that psychoanalysis was the only cure for all psychological maladjustments: 'It has been proved, again and again, that with psychoanalysis not only has the personality of an individual changed for the better, but also by the freeing of inhibitions and psychological difficulties, hitherto undiscovered, potential capacities

⁹¹ Ibid.: 2

⁹² Pailthorpe, Grace. 1932. *What we put in Prison* (London, Williams & Norgate Ltd): 1

⁹³ Ibid.: 21

⁹⁴ Ibid.

have been released'.⁹⁵ She also stressed the importance of differentiating between biological and sociological perspectives:

Sociologically the offender against the law of a country is termed a criminal. Biologically he can be no more and no less than an individual. The question is not whether the criminal should be regarded as a type, a member of a class apart, but whether biologically he shows mental characteristics from a scientific examination of which conclusions might be drawn that could be utilised practically, for the benefit both of the individual and of society. Instead of asking ourselves, "What punishment is here merited?" would it not be wiser to attempt to solve the more complicated and difficult problem of "What treatment" - using this word in its widest sense - "would be beneficial in restoring these 'criminals' to the ranks of 'normal' people?"⁹⁶

Pailthorpe argued that 'As long as punishment is our only means of dealing with crime we shall have the nauseating spectacle of court procedure'⁹⁷ and, at the end of her book, questioned how a 'fair-minded public' can 'accept complacently such judgement by variable, personally prejudiced (even if well-meaning) unscientific standards in deciding irrevocably the fate of any human being?'.⁹⁸ Thus, Pailthorpe concluded *What we put in Prison* by announcing that offenders should be treated as sick persons and that there must be a change of attitude towards the prisoner in order for society to progress. This would mean replacing prisons and reformative institutions with hospitals and research and therapeutic clinics.

Pailthorpe ended her book by highlighting the need for a 'central clearing station' where first-time offenders would be physically and psychologically examined before being sent for their treatment in one of its four units. Here, patients could be

⁹⁵ Ibid.: 153

⁹⁶ Ibid.: 22

⁹⁷ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe on 'law procedure', not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 78 'Autobiographical notes by Grace Pailthorpe; text on legality of punishment and legal processes'): 3

⁹⁸ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1932. *What we put in Prison* (London, Williams & Norgate Ltd.): 154

permanently segregated, temporarily segregated but supervised when outside, placed in small group and individual treatment centres, or placed in the psychotherapeutic block. The results of the work at the different units would be compared at intervals.

Pailthorpe proposed that the segregation of certain cases was necessary as some of the offenders' psychoses did have the possibility of being cured, especially if they were not yet certified as insane. Segregation would be either permanent or temporary according to the individual's needs. Permanent segregation would be necessary for those classified as 'mentally defective', the incurably mentally sick, and those whose treatment in one of the other three units had failed. Pailthorpe maintained that patients who were mentally defective either showed signs of hostility or passivity. The girls who were hostile should be permanently segregated as they were asocial. Their acts tended to be instinctive and aggressive. Their crimes included offences like drunkenness, violence, pilfering and sexual misdemeanours. On the other hand, Pailthorpe believed that the submissiveness in girls showing signs of passivity made them subject to promiscuity. Pailthorpe contended that all other cases in which segregation was not necessary would need psychotherapeutic treatment, whilst recommending the need for education for those girls who were not vicious but immature, and for those whose intelligence quotient tests ranked as normal.

Simultaneously, Pailthorpe professed that it was equally imperative to undertake research as a way of determining how beneficial the various methods of treatment were. She proposed the need for small laboratories where investigators would represent different schools of psychology so that tests may cover all the known methods of scientific treatment at the time. She identified the schools as those of

Freud, Jung and Adler. The investigator would select his cases and would be given the liberty to treat them since the respective individuals would fall under the guardianship of their investigator. She asserted that through this method, it would then be possible to establish the relative value of the various methods employed by each individual school of psychology, by comparing the results the schools obtained for their respective cases.⁹⁹ Pailthorpe's liberal approach towards Freud, Jung and Adler shows that she was not a hard-line Freudian and that some evolution had occurred in her thinking and that of the circles in which she moved. This openness meant that she was very susceptible to the later influence of Klein. Clearly, by 1929, Pailthorpe was not ideologically bound to one psychologist and this may explain her later willingness to take on board the ideas of the Surrealists.

Pailthorpe's report and book demonstrate how she believed that if the criminal is approached from a psychological perspective and a mental deficiency exists, then he or she would show biological differences from the 'normal' individual.¹⁰⁰ This aspect is where the influence of the nineteenth century Italian criminologist and psychiatrist, Cesare Lombroso, can be seen as he maintained that the physical and psychic characteristics of born criminals coincided with those of the insane, and the reason why insane people commit crimes is that they are unable to discriminate between right and wrong.

It is likely that Hamblin Smith introduced Pailthorpe to Lombroso's work as in the preface to *What we put in Prison*, he wrote:

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Autobiographical notes by Pailthorpe on 'law procedure', not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 78 'Autobiographical notes by Grace Pailthorpe; text on legality of punishment and legal processes'): 3

The idea of investigating offenders, in order to ascertain the causative factors of their anti-social conduct, is comparatively modern, and the first effective step in this direction was taken by Lombroso. It is true that his hypothesis of the 'born criminal' is no longer held by students of criminology. But it was he who enunciated the proposition that the offender was worthy of study in himself, and quite apart from any specific act which he might have committed.¹⁰¹

Like Hamblin Smith, Pailthorpe acknowledged Lombroso in her book and stated that although his voice had barely been heard in England, the most recent investigations into the cause of crime confirmed the conviction of Lombroso that research must begin with the individual and that this must be psychological.¹⁰² Like Lombroso, Pailthorpe argued that society must learn more about the human mind and the factors producing asocial behaviour.¹⁰³ She claimed that the criminal must be recognized as being psychologically sick and like Lombroso, Pailthorpe also aimed to differentiate between the criminal and the non-criminal individual.

At the time, the debate within criminology centred around 'the classical school, which lays emphasis upon the free will of the offender and the consequent propriety of moral condemnation and punishment, and the positive school, which aims at a value-free approach, with punishment having merely a preventive function'.¹⁰⁴ The positivist revolution dates from the publication of Lombroso's book, *The Criminal Man* (first published as *L'Uomo Delinquente* in Turin in 1876) which focuses on the criminal and not on the crime. According to Lombroso, 'criminality is inborn' and this new tradition identified the criminal as a special member of a special class and

¹⁰¹ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1932. *What we put in Prison* (London, Williams & Norgate Ltd): 10

¹⁰² *Ibid.*: 20

¹⁰³ Pailthorpe, Grace. Typescript: 'The Association for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency', not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 72 "What we put in Prison" book and report by Dr Grace Pailthorpe")

¹⁰⁴ Glover, Edward, Hermann Mannheim and Emanuel Miller (eds.). 1965. *Criminology in Transition; essays in honour of Hermann Mannheim* (London, Tavistock Publications): 3

superseded the classical tradition. Lombroso was convinced that criminals had certain physical characteristics that predispose them towards criminal behaviour.¹⁰⁵ Lombroso was an army doctor who based his work on the scientific observation of army recruits. He claimed to have identified a category of ‘born criminals’ who were characterized by physical defects. He based his theory ‘upon the physical measurement of large numbers of criminals’.¹⁰⁶ Undoubtedly, Lombroso’s work caused a stir and appeared to open up a marked path to the control of crime as he indicated how potential criminals could be identified and, consequently, crime could be prevented.¹⁰⁷

Even though the debate continued, there was definitely a trend towards ‘positivism’ after Lombroso’s publication. Lombroso’s books became standardized texts within the field of criminology and indeed Pailthorpe’s research methods show us that his work was fundamental in shaping some of her attitudes toward the nature of the criminal mind and, as we shall shortly see, the art of the insane. Lombroso was certainly one of the first to argue that research must begin with the individual and that the subject must be approached on psychological grounds. His influence is indicated in Pailthorpe’s *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency*, which demonstrates that in each case investigated there is an underlying pathological state of mind which should be treated scientifically. Lombroso was one of the first theorists to bring scientific methods to the study of the criminal mind and this was why he attracted a lot of attention.

¹⁰⁵ Lombroso, Cesare. 1911. ‘The Born Criminal’ in *The Criminal Man* (New York, The Knickerbocker Press): 3-51

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.: 23

¹⁰⁷ Jones, Howard. 1956. *Crime and the Penal System* (London, University Tutorial Press Ltd.): 23

Lombroso's work also provides some of the first explorations of the unconscious as he indicated how the pathological ideas of patients found expression in their art. He assembled a large collection of 'psychiatric art' and argued that artistic genius was a form of hereditary insanity. In order to support this claim, Lombroso wrote an article entitled 'L'Arte dei pazzi', in 1880, in which he established that all paintings by lunatics exhibited the same basic characteristics.¹⁰⁸ He isolated thirteen typical features of the art of the insane which related to the general behaviour of the patient, and the stylistic features and subject matter of their art. These included 'originality', 'uselessness', 'uniformity', 'imitation', 'criminality', 'minuteness of detail', 'absurdity', 'arabesques', 'atavism', 'eccentricity', 'insanity as a subject', 'obscenity' and 'symbolism'.

According to Lombroso, the insane are original in their work because they make use of strange materials and very often the underlying conception of an image is presented as being very odd. The insane patients' work can also be seen as useless because sometimes the end result is of no advantage to them. They also have a tendency to obsessively repeat the same image whereas some would just produce an imitation of a model. Many are also criminals and this is linked to Lombroso's conception of degeneracy. Others paint with elaborate detail whilst some draw objects which are out of proportion or make excessive use of certain colours. Lombroso used the term 'arabesque' to refer to paintings which were abstract but contained concealed forms or objects, like an animal or house, among the curves or lines. Lombroso also felt that some of the stylistic features were similar to those of

¹⁰⁸ Lombroso, Cesare and Maxime Du Camp. 1880. 'L'Arte dei pazzi', *Archivio di psichiatria, antropologica, criminale e scienze penali per servire allo studio dell'uomo alienato e delinquente*, 1: 424-37

earlier periods in history and referred to this as 'atavism'. Certain subjects were bizarre and eccentric. Some patients also depicted themselves or other hospital inmates as the subject for their paintings. Perverse sexual ideas, erotic or obscene subjects were also common traits, he argued. Finally, Lombroso was aware that many of his patients' subjects were symbolic and that 'the logic behind such substitutions was not always rationally justified, and was in some cases deliberately obscure or personal'.¹⁰⁹

Lombroso expanded on this idea in his book *The Man of Genius* (originally published as *L'Uomo di Genio* in 1888), which was based on his examination of 107 mental patients whom he considered to show artistic tendencies.¹¹⁰ It features the art works of criminals and the insane that he had collected. He recognized the value of the art of the mentally ill in providing evidence of mental pathology. In his approach, he sought to set the parameters of insanity by studying his patients' art works. He described a mental patient's creative activity in terms of psychological disturbance. Lombroso thought the art of the insane was a reflection of their madness and saw their spontaneity as being similar to the spontaneous act of painting among 'primitive people'. As I stated before, whilst working at Birmingham prison, Pailthorpe did use art as one of her mental tests when examining the offenders and it is possible that she was influenced by Lombroso's study as some of her methods and attitudes overlap with his.

Five years after writing *The Man of Genius*, Lombroso wrote *The Female Offender* (originally published as *La donna delinquente, la prostituta e la donna normale* in

¹⁰⁹ MacGregor, John. 1989. *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (Princeton, Princeton University Press): 99

¹¹⁰ Lombroso, Cesare. 1891. *The Man of Genius* (London, W. Scott)

1893 and co-authored with Guglielmo Ferrero).¹¹¹ It was the first and most influential book written on women and crime and, although she does not refer to it in her publications, parallels between her research and his book suggest that Pailthorpe would have used it as a source for her own work. *The Female Offender* accounted for the nature of crimes committed by females and tried to establish a theory about the origins of their supposedly asocial behaviour. As Pailthorpe would do thirty years later, Lombroso categorized his subjects into several groups: 'The Criminal Woman', 'The Normal Woman' and 'The Prostitute' to compare the physical or psychological traits of the females. But Pailthorpe used different terminology and categorized the offenders into 'The Defective group', 'The Psychopathic group' and 'The Adapted group', and then compared the qualities of each group and documented any noteworthy differences.

However, even though Pailthorpe cited Lombroso's work in *What we put in Prison*, there is a distinction in their methods as Lombroso's research also took him to police stations, prisons, and madhouses where he studied the tattoos, cranial capacities, and the sexual behaviour of criminals and prostitutes in order to establish a female criminal type and there is no indication that Pailthorpe accepted these aspects of his theories too. Moreover, Lombroso used Darwinian evolutionary science to argue that criminal women are far more cunning and dangerous than male criminals and there is no evidence that Pailthorpe also categorised women in this way.

As we have seen, the work of Lombroso allowed 'direct parallels to be drawn between the psychology of criminals and insanity' because he saw prisoners as being

¹¹¹ Lombroso, Cesare. 1895. *The Female Offender* (London, T.F.Unwin)

mentally unbalanced individuals.¹¹² Pailthorpe emphasised this notion in her research because of her belief that the criminal must be recognized as being psychologically sick. An anonymous reporter of *The Observer* quoted Pailthorpe as saying:

Under present conditions there does not appear to be sufficient recognition of the fact that incipient mental disorder is present in many people who get into trouble with the police, and because of this failure of legal recognition they end up as murderers, a fate which early treatment would have prevented.¹¹³

Pailthorpe further clarified her proposals in another article in the *Birmingham Mail* where she was quoted as saying that ‘Although this is a system to deal with crime, the buildings should be called hospitals and not prisons, since the object will be to eradicate crime by curing, through psychological treatment and other measures [...] whereas in the case of prisons the object is eradication of crime by means of punishment’.¹¹⁴

1.5 The Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency

A year before Pailthorpe’s report and book were published, Pailthorpe, Ernest T. Jensen, Victor Neuburg and his partner, Runia Tharp, met at Tharp’s house at No. 4, Primrose Hill Studios in London on 22 July 1931 and formed ‘The Association for the Scientific Treatment of Criminals’. Pailthorpe’s research had provided the backing for the endeavours of the Committee and it was both her and Glover’s initiative which had led to its formation. It was probably Glover who introduced her to Neuburg, Tharp and Jensen. Neuburg and Tharp acted as Honorary Secretaries of

¹¹² Rhodes, Colin. 2000. *Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives* (London, Thames & Hudson): 111

¹¹³ Article ‘Varsity training in crime’ in *The Observer*, writer unknown, 25.09.32. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 75 ‘Newscuttings Book 1’)

¹¹⁴ Article ‘Hospital for Crime’ in *Birmingham Mail*, writer unknown, 20.09.32. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 165 ‘Newscuttings, receipts, miscellaneous documents’)

the Association and Jensen took on the role of Chairman. Jensen, whose first interest had been in tropical medicine and cancer research, had been a clinical assistant at the West End Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System in London. Eventually, the society was to become an Institute and the name 'The Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency' was adopted and the Institute launched at 56, Grosvenor Street in early December 1932.

The Committee set up a campaign to put Pailthorpe's enquiry into the mental conditions of young women in prisons and rescue homes into action. The recommendations they made were based on the terms of the report, *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency*, which Pailthorpe had prepared at the request of the Medical Research Council.¹¹⁵ The Committee decided to establish a body that would study the psychology of, as well as offer psychotherapeutic treatment to, delinquents. However, since the Institute was founded during the political and social upheaval of the interwar years, funds were urgently needed and because of the economic slump, Pailthorpe asked her former colleague Ernest Jones for a donation. Jones provided her with the money because, as he wrote in a letter to her, he believed that her 'success was well-earned and well-deserved'.¹¹⁶

The Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency identified its aims in the 'First Annual Report' in July 1932 as follows:

1. To initiate and promote scientific research into the causes and prevention of crime.
2. To establish observation centres and clinics for the diagnosis and treatment of delinquency and crime.

¹¹⁵ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1932. *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency* (London, Privy Council/HMSO)

¹¹⁶ Letter from Ernest Jones to Pailthorpe, dated 1932. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 1 'Ernest Jones correspondence')

3. To co-ordinate and consolidate existing scientific work in the prevention of delinquency and crime.
4. To secure co-operation between all bodies engaged in similar work in all parts of the world, and ultimately to promote an international organisation.
5. To assist and advise through the medium of scientific experts the judicial and magisterial bench, the hospitals and government departments in the investigation, diagnosis and treatment of suitable cases.
6. To promote and assist in promoting educational and training facilities for students in the scientific study of delinquency and crime.
7. To promote discussion and to educate the opinion of the general public on these subjects by publications and other means.¹¹⁷

In keeping up with these aims and with Pailthorpe's recommendation to set up small laboratories and establish Remand Homes or Observation Centres, in 1933 the Institute opened the 'Psychopathic Clinic' (renamed the 'Portman Clinic' in 1937) where a group of psychoanalysts, including Pailthorpe and Glover, began treating delinquent and criminal patients through psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The first recorded appointment at the new clinical wing took place on 18 September 1933. The patient was a 47 year-old woman who was charged with assault on her female employer and told to receive help in order to control her violent temper.¹¹⁸

Apart from Pailthorpe, among the Institute's vice-presidents there were Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung, Otto Rank and Ernest Jones. At the time, the membership fee was half-a-guinea per annum and half-a-crown for an associate membership. The doctors, lay therapists and psychologists who treated the patients were in private clinical work and worked without payment.¹¹⁹ Rumney also tells us

¹¹⁷ Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency. 1992. *Let Justice be done* (London, King's College): 8

¹¹⁸ Document 'A brief History of the Portman Clinic', dated 2008 and issued by the Portman Clinic.

¹¹⁹ Cordess, Christopher. 1992. 'Pioneers in Forensic Psychiatry. Edward Glover (1888-1972): psychoanalysis and crime - a fragile legacy', *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 3: 519

that the Institute ‘was strictly non-political’.¹²⁰ This is an interesting factor because, as we will see in Chapter 7, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff were never politically aligned and this caused a lot of tension between them and internal affairs within the British Surrealist group.

Over the years, the group enlisted the support of some of the best known psychologists in the world along with many British psychologists and psychotherapists. Together, they practised what they called 'forensic psychotherapy' - a detailed, long-term treatment designed to help those who had nowhere else to go but back to jail - and they treated cases of habitual criminality, desperate addiction, extreme violence and sexual perversion. All along, Pailthorpe insisted that no matter what measures were taken when examining delinquents or criminals, they must be balanced by intensive research and treatment with an intention to cure.

In a resumé of Pailthorpe’s book and report issued by the Association for the Scientific Treatment of Criminals in 1933, it is stated that Pailthorpe’s ‘investigation demonstrates how, when these unfortunate people were approached from a scientific basis, eagerness to co-operate in the understanding of their own problems was aroused’.¹²¹ The resumé explained that Pailthorpe did not just discuss the cruelty and insufficiency of the penal system but presented new proposals to deal with crime and the delinquent. The current penal system ignored the fundamental causes of crime and only concerned itself with the effects of crime and Pailthorpe argued that society

¹²⁰ Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency. 1992. *Let Justice be done* (London, King’s College): 9

¹²¹ Resumé of Pailthorpe’s book and report issued by the Association of the Scientific Treatment of Criminals, 1933. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 169 ‘Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency [I.S.T.D./A.S.T.C.]’): 1

must learn more about the human mind and the factors producing asocial behaviour.¹²²

As part of the treatment process of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, some of the patients made drawings and paintings which, according to Pailthorpe, expressed in symbolic form the desires of their unconscious. She analysed the drawings of her patients as part of their treatment and used art as an instrument for psychological exploration, thus seeking an interactive relationship with her patients through painting. She related the forms and subjects of their art to their mental peculiarities, as their compositions often portrayed incidents and conflicts in their lives. Again Pailthorpe was using art as a therapeutic tool and her encounter with Mednikoff evidently motivated her into further research in this field.

Some years later, in a report of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency which was written in 1940, Jensen stated how:

Pailthorpe's book *What we put in Prison* attracted notice in many countries. It was my privilege to be associated with her then in regard to these publications and immediately afterwards in the foundation of the Institute of the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency which now, ten years later, has achieved a powerful and honourable position in the esteem of government, legal and medical professions as well as of the public. Besides its recognised function in assisting the Courts, treating delinquents and conducting research, it has become an authorised teaching body for the instruction of doctors and laymen working for the Courts and dependent organisations. Its seed is germinating here and in distant lands.¹²³

In addition to Jensen's praise, when recounting the origin and development of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency in *Let Justice be Done; A*

¹²² Pailthorpe, Grace. Typescript: 'The Association for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency', not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 72 'What we put in prison' book and report by Dr Grace Pailthorpe')

¹²³ Testimonial on Pailthorpe by E.T.Jensen, dated 20.07.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 129 'Grace Pailthorpe: Testimonials')

history of the I.S.T.D. (1992), Dr David Rumney, who was a longstanding member of the Institute and a consultant psychiatrist at the Portman Clinic, wrote how ‘two tendencies were joining together. One was the humanitarian aim, to remove the need for anyone to suffer by going to prison. The other was the scientific one, to find out whether the methods which Dr Pailthorpe had described as valuable in her investigation of inmates of institutions and prisons could be used in keeping a proportion of the offenders out of the prison, and what light the results would throw on the theoretical bases of the different approaches which she envisaged as being used, thus allowing comparisons to be made’.¹²⁴

What was innovative about Pailthorpe’s work for this Institute was that it gave rise to a separate brand of criminological theory with a concern for the clinical exploration of the individual personality. It sought to cure delinquents through therapy and not punishment. It originally only treated delinquent and criminal patients through psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The Portman Clinic remains open today and is a centre for individuals who consider themselves to be affected by their own violent behaviour or through sexual impulses which impel them to act in a way that may cause misery or pain to themselves or others. In recent years it has expanded its education programme and has become a specialist training facility for doctors, psychologists, nurses, social workers, probation officers and other mental health workers, working in the forensic field.¹²⁵ Although Pailthorpe was intimately connected with the beginnings of the Institute, all active connection ceased after she

¹²⁴ Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency. 1992. *Let Justice be done* (London, King’s College): 9

¹²⁵ Document ‘The Portman Clinic: A Historical Note’, dated 2008 and issued by the Portman Clinic.

met Mednikoff in 1935. However, she remained a vice-President of the Institute until her death.

1.6 Further research in Africa

In early 1934, Pailthorpe went to Africa to extend her research and look at the social problem of crime in Kenya because she wanted to study the problems experienced in less developed countries. By this time, Pailthorpe had established herself as one of the English pioneers in psychoanalytic criminology. Her report, book and the Institute accounted for this. In fact, the successful textbook, *A hundred years of Psychology 1833-1933*, which was published in 1933 and focused on progress in psychology and its development, referred to *What we put in Prison*:

Another field in which the new knowledge concerning the psychological basis of morality is proving effective is that of criminology and penology [...] Pailthorpe's *What we put in prison*, the result of personal investigation among prisoners, is creating some very considerable stir. For many years there has indeed been a growing realization of the futility of much of our punitive procedure. The recent advances of psychoanalysis have, however, for the first time revealed to us some of the more important motives underlying this procedure, and thus prepared the way for a true psychological approach to the whole problem of crime and punishment.¹²⁶

Pailthorpe's visit to Kenya coincided with an attempt by the Kenyan Government to make effective the new Juvenile Offenders Ordinance by the establishment first of places of detention, and later, when means permitted, of industrial schools, so that the younger people could be segregated from the adult criminals and be given a better chance in life.¹²⁷ The Kenyan Government had invited Pailthorpe to study the increase of crime among Africans. She was asked to visit several prisons as well as

¹²⁶ Flugel, John and Dwight West. 1933. *A hundred years of Psychology 1833-1933* (London, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd.): 286

¹²⁷ Article 'Criminal and Social problems in Kenya' in unnamed newspaper, writer unknown, 27.03.34. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 29 'Newscuttings in folder South Africa 30s')

state and private institutions. Pailthorpe was convinced that similar investigations to those she undertook in Britain could be carried out in Kenya with good results and was quoted as stating that ‘even with its mixed races Kenya offers vast scope for investigation and reforms in the handling of her criminals, and there is no reason why this Colony should not head the procession of a world-wide reform’.¹²⁸ Pailthorpe directed her research towards finding a balance between purposeless punishment and compassionate justice and formed part of the Committee of the ‘Kenya Society for the Study of Race Improvement’.

After Kenya, Pailthorpe went to Durban in South Africa and in a speech which was broadcast all over the country, on 12 September 1934, Pailthorpe spoke of the benefits of South Africa handing over juvenile offenders to the Education Department.¹²⁹ She called for the establishment of a clinic where treatment would be given to the physical and psychological state of asocial people. In her speech, Pailthorpe described Africa’s chance to lead the world and ended by saying:

I feel that Africa has an opportunity to bring in a new civilisation built on surer foundations than the old. Her problems are acute and complicated. Is she going to deal with them courageously by the free use of research and scientific methods, or is she going to trail along using the old methods of force and bring sentimentalism, and so follow in the wake of Europe together? The eyes of the world will be upon Africa if she answers to this call, and starts out to build up, along new lines, a new civilisation. In conclusion, may I say I have fallen in love with your country; not only because of its beauty, but also on account of this very opportunity, that of blazing a new trail in social organisation.¹³⁰

After her work in South Africa, Pailthorpe returned to England at the end of 1934.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.09.34. Typescript of Broadcast on ‘the Psychology of the Criminal’ in Durban; in *ibid.*: 5

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*: 6

1.7 Conclusion

By looking at Pailthorpe's early career, one can see that she was a woman who had experience in a variety of spheres in life before she met Mednikoff in 1935. After her travels and service in the First World War and following her return to England in 1922, she plunged into the issue of the prisoner who is really a patient and a case for special medical care. She publicized the idea that society must first detect mental defects in a person before accusing them of crime and made it clear that a high percentage of the girls she examined when doing her research were either mentally deficient or were suffering from some form of insanity. Moreover, because of Pailthorpe, the mental condition of offenders received an increased amount of attention when facing crime. Her research also encouraged the study of the law-makers' approach to criminals.

Without doubt, Pailthorpe was a 'courageous surgeon' who pioneered psychoanalytic treatment on delinquency and criminology during the twenties and early thirties.¹³¹ She was one of the first persons to use art as a means of aiding the diagnosis of psychiatric disturbances and in psychotherapy. This shows us how Pailthorpe had had a substantial career by the time she met Mednikoff and because, as we will see in Chapter 4, she was famous beyond psychotherapy and criminology circles, then presumably Herbert Read and Roland Penrose had heard of her.

Furthermore, various aspects of Pailthorpe's early life and work relate to her relationship with Mednikoff and the Surrealists. Her family background and childhood would have helped her in her relationship with Mednikoff and the

¹³¹ Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency. 1992. *Let Justice be done* (London, King's College): 1

Surrealists since her rejection of her religion corresponded with Mednikoff's and with the Surrealists (who repressed religion). Additionally, Pailthorpe's travelling around various parts of the world, her work with international psychologists and her research in Africa in 1934 would have prepared her for her contact with an international Surrealist group. Like Pailthorpe, the Surrealists were also fascinated by hysteria, criminals and the insane.

Sure enough, Pailthorpe's use of art whilst working with Hamblin Smith at Birmingham Prison and as part of the treatment process of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency developed her interest in how art could be used as a means of therapy in curing mental problems and personal anxieties. Her work for the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency willed her to explore the individual's personality and to cure through therapy. At the same time, her professional contact with Jones left a lasting impression on her.

The details of what Pailthorpe experienced during the earlier part of her life give us an accurate measure of her as an accomplished individual. As Pailthorpe told Mednikoff's nephew Tony Black, although her family were very religious Plymouth Brethren and tried to impose their religious beliefs on her, because she was a courageous free-thinker she rejected what her family were attempting to impose, and pursued her own path in life, moving into fields that were not normally the province of women in the early part of the twentieth century. Because of this, Pailthorpe's family, so it seems, disowned her.¹³²

¹³² Conversation with Tony Black, 24.04.09.

Chapter 2: Introducing Reuben Mednikoff (1906-1934)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an account of the life, intellectual and artistic development, and career of Mednikoff before he began his collaboration with Pailthorpe in 1935. The chapter will describe his childhood, education, love experiences, early career as a designer of advertisements and as a poet, and his discovery of Surrealism and psychoanalysis.

Although Pailthorpe had had many years of professional life behind and already had a public profile by the time they met in 1935, Mednikoff's early life is shrouded in obscurity. I have searched out sources that might throw light on Mednikoff's early art career but for the most part in vain. There is almost no information about his early work, hardly any illustrations of it and an almost complete lack of critical reviews of these works. Therefore, it is difficult to define a stylistic evolution and make any judgements on his art before he met Pailthorpe in 1935, and I have had to come to hypothetical conclusions about the nature of his earlier work. Of course, this absence of evidence is detrimental to the thesis not just because there are long stretches of his life about which next to nothing is known but also because I have been obliged to rely on his highly subjective memoirs for the information that is available.

2.2 Childhood and Education

Reuben Mednikoff was born on 2 June 1906 at his parents' house at 4, Morgan Houses, Hessel Street, Tower Hamlets, London. His father, Myer, a tinplate worker, and his mother, Annie née Walter, registered his birth on 16 July 1906 in the Eastern

sub-district of St George and St John in London.¹³³ He was the fourth child of a Jewish family of Russian immigrant origin and his relationship with his family and his childhood experiences, as we will see later, were crucial to the development of his artistic career as they always remained vivid to him.

As Mednikoff's nephew, Tony Black, told me, many people from Eastern Europe moved to the West at the end of the nineteenth century for a variety of reasons, but mostly due to religious persecution. Many Jews settled in the East End of London around the inner-city working class districts of Whitechapel and Stepney, close to where their ships had docked. Although Mednikoff's parents were born in Russia, they moved to Whitechapel towards the end of the nineteenth century probably because of the large-scale wave of anti-Jewish pogroms.¹³⁴ The impact of the notorious May Laws of 1882 under the reign of Alexander III led to restrictions on Jewish landownership, the prohibition of trading on Christian holidays, and the prevention of Jews from settling in villages or studying in secular schools.¹³⁵

Despite there being no information as to which part of Russia Mednikoff's family originated from, it can be established that Mednikoff and his three sisters and two brothers were all born in London in an area which was notorious for much poverty, homelessness, prostitution, exploitive work conditions and infant mortality. Initially his grandparents also came to Britain, but decided to return to Russia. According to Tony Black, Mednikoff seems to have had very good relationships with his family, but this was interrupted by his move away from London, together with Pailthorpe,

¹³³ Certified copy of entry of birth; given at the General Register Office, Somerset House, London, 29.06.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 127 'Reuben Mednikoff: birth and childhood')

¹³⁴ Conversation with Tony Black, 20.04.09.

¹³⁵ Aronson, Michael. 1980. 'Geographical and Socioeconomic Factors in the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia', *Russian Review*, 39/1: 18–31

during the Second World War and afterwards.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, after his departure, Mednikoff did correspond with his sister Mary as some of their letters to one another postdate the outbreak of the war. There is also an undated letter from his brother Larry which was mailed to Mednikoff when he was living in Vancouver in 1941.¹³⁷

The early years of Mednikoff seem to have been very troubled. A fall at the age of two resulted in Mednikoff suffering from unusually severe headaches throughout his life and because he discussed this fall with his sister Milly in letters they sent to one another from December 1935 to February 1936, we do know for sure that he became deeply engrossed in psychoanalysis in the mid-thirties. This was probably because he believed psychoanalysis would enable him to confront his personal problems better and give meaning to his private anxieties.¹³⁸

Furthermore, several of the paintings to be discussed later reveal that many of his motifs sprang from his Jewish childhood experiences. The densely populated and poor conditions of Jewish neighbourhoods in London meant that these quarters developed into the perfect breeding grounds for Fascism and Communism and became Britain's most politicised areas. Despite this, the safety that Britain offered from persecution was a better alternative than staying in the Jew-hating societies of Eastern Europe. In his essay 'The unconscious is always right', Andrew Wilson described how, as a child, Mednikoff rebelled against any form of orthodox religion and was beaten by the local rabbi because he hated praying as 'it was a continual

¹³⁶ Conversation with Tony Black, 20.04.09.

¹³⁷ Correspondence between Mednikoff and his family, dated 1939-1942. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 180 'Reuben Mednikoff, correspondence with Charles Keane, Beth Tregaskis et al; printed cuttings')

¹³⁸ Correspondence between Mednikoff and Milly, dated 1935-1936. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 133 'Miscellaneous correspondence and writings')

reminder of killing'.¹³⁹ His revulsion is revealed in his work *Come back Soon* (to be discussed later) as it details the horror of Jewish slaughterhouses. Mednikoff's rebellion also brings Pailthorpe's rebellion against the Plymouth Brethren religion to mind even though she did not experience violence.

At the age of seven, as we learn from reading his handwritten notes which, like Pailthorpe's, are also in the form of reminiscences, Mednikoff began his education at Eleanor Road School in London and reached Standard VII. He was described as being well-behaved, intelligent, industrious, reliable, honest and punctual by the school's headmaster T.G.Dixon.¹⁴⁰ However, his early enthusiasm for painting met little encouragement. He asked for permission to study art when he was only thirteen, but was told by his parents that studying business would be wiser.¹⁴¹ During this time, for the majority of British-born working-class Jews, financial constraints meant that there were few opportunities to remain in education beyond the age of fourteen and so they would leave school with only an elementary education. Boys would then be expected to enter full-time employment.¹⁴² Despite his parents' initial opposition, Mednikoff was enrolled at St Martin's School of Art in 1920 at the age of 14. It is possible that since his family was not wealthy, he had obtained a scholarship but I have found no record of any such award. Founded in 1854, St Martin's School of Art was firmly established as one of the major fine art and commercial art schools in England. Boys from the age of thirteen onwards were admitted, and classes involved

¹³⁹ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 19

¹⁴⁰ Dixon, T.G. Certificate issued by Eleanor Road School, dated 21.07.20. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 127 'Reuben Mednikoff: birth and childhood')

¹⁴¹ Mednikoff, Reuben. Extracts from Diary, dated 1935. London: Tate Britain Gallery Archives (TAM 75 'Poems, diary and correspondence with Pailthorpe 1935-1937')

¹⁴² Pollins, Harold. 1982. *Economic History of the Jews in Britain* (Toronto, Associated University Presses): 186

drawing, painting and modelling from life, poster designing, geometrical drawing, and outdoor sketching and landscape composition.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, none of his work as a student has come to light.

The academic calendar of St Martin's School of Art shows us that Mednikoff studied there until 1923. It is difficult to trace the development of Mednikoff's work from 1923 till his meeting with Pailthorpe, as so little of it is known, but press cuttings, letters and exhibition catalogues show us that he painted and wrote poetry throughout these years.¹⁴⁴ As we will see, a letter to Mednikoff from a commercial company called Norfolk Studio, dated 1934, shows us that he specialized in illustrations for advertisements before starting his research with Pailthorpe in 1935.¹⁴⁵

Apart from his medical history, Mednikoff's experience of love may also have prompted his interest in psychoanalysis. Although no records relating to his early sexual development have surfaced, a marriage certificate proves that Mednikoff married Marie Louise de Sousa on 14 December 1932, at the Register Office in Hampstead.¹⁴⁶ Nothing, however, is known about de Sousa's social or national background. There is no information on how or where they met, but arranged marriages were customary among Jewish families at the time. After their marriage, they lived at 28, Belsize Square, Hampstead. Sometime after their marriage, Mednikoff introduced his wife to his friend Harold Botcherby and the pair committed adultery. After admitting it to him, De Sousa left Mednikoff on 17 May

¹⁴³ St Martin's School of Art prospectus, dated 1920-23.

¹⁴⁴ Poems and drawings by Mednikoff. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 62 'Mednikoff personal file')

¹⁴⁵ Letter to Mednikoff from Norfolk Studio, dated 1934. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 121 'Correspondence concerning Reuben Mednikoff's marriage and his work as an artist'). Efforts to discover more about Norfolk Studio have not yielded anything.

¹⁴⁶ Certificate of Mednikoff's marriage to De Sousa issued by the Hampstead Register Office, 1932; in *ibid.*

1933, and went to live with Botcherby at 16a, Willoughby road, Hampstead. She was pregnant and had Botcherby's son on 7 February 1934. Mednikoff's marriage was dissolved on 28 January 1935.¹⁴⁷

2.3 Discovery of Psychoanalysis and Surrealism

As stated in Chapter 1, Ernest Jones founded the centre for psychoanalysis in London in 1920 and brought Freud to the attention of a wider public in England. Although I have found no evidence that Mednikoff underwent psychoanalysis prior to his meeting with Pailthorpe, as we will see his knowledge of Surrealism through his connection with the poet David Gascoyne in 1933 makes it highly likely that he was aware of the influence of Freudian psychoanalysis on Surrealism by that time at least.

Perhaps one of the major influences on Mednikoff's early artistic and intellectual career was Hampstead itself where, as we have seen, he was resident by 1932. Hampstead was a substantially developed area and had established its reputation as a healthy and attractive place to stay because of its fresher air, pleasant views and its sense of separation from central London. Britain in the 1930s was in economic and social turmoil because of the slump and the threat of war. Aesthetic discussions were engulfed in new theories and movements with artists being caught up in political and social uncertainties.¹⁴⁸ They turned Hampstead into the headquarters for avant-garde art of every stamp. It was 'the cradle of the modern movement in English art' and its residents included left-wing intellectuals, writers and a group of committed

¹⁴⁷ Form containing petition for Divorce; in *ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Harrison, Charles. 1981. *English Art and Modernism 1900-1939* (New Haven & London, Yale University Press): 231-253

modernist artists like Roland Penrose, Ben Nicholson, Henry Moore, Herbert Read, Barbara Hepworth and Christopher Nevinston.¹⁴⁹

Furthermore, the Nazis' persecution of the Jews sent many artists into exile and several émigrés moved to Britain because they were fleeing religious persecution and totalitarian regimes. Walter Gropius, Eric Mendelshon, Marcel Breuer, Naum Gabo and Maholy-Nagy all took up residence in Hampstead in the 1930s.¹⁵⁰ Other famous artists of Jewish descent living in London were Mark Gertler, Jacob Epstein and William Rothenstein. Their parents, like Mednikoff's, were all Jewish immigrants. These artists belonged to an earlier generation and there is no firm evidence that Mednikoff had had any personal contact with them, but it is likely that he benefited from their example and was following a route that had already been mapped out.

Rothenstein was born into a Jewish family from Germany and became well known for his paintings in which he recreated scenes of Jewish religious life. He was an official War artist in World War 1 and then served as principal of the Royal College of Art between 1920 and 1935. Two of his students were Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, whose works I will be comparing to Mednikoff's in a later chapter. Epstein was also a student there and had obtained a grant on Rothenstein's behalf from the Jewish Educational Aid Society in 1907. This society no longer exists but, at the time, it provided financial support to poor Jewish students of outstanding academic ability.¹⁵¹ Epstein's parents went to live in New York as persecuted Polish Jewish immigrants, seeking refuge from anti-Semitic pogroms, but Epstein moved to

¹⁴⁹ Hampstead Artists' Council, 1975. *Hampstead in the thirties: a committed decade*. Exh. Cat. (Hampstead, Arkwright Arts Trust): 5

¹⁵⁰ Spalding, Frances. 2002. *British Art since 1900* (London, Thames & Hudson): 112

¹⁵¹ Database of Archives of Non-Governmental Organisations.

London in 1905.¹⁵² His controversial subjects were characterized by the themes of maternity, commemoration and religious suffering and were inspired by the Jewish community in East London. Similar themes are also displayed in Mednikoff's work, as we shall see in the following chapters. Epstein had one-man shows at the Leicester Galleries in 1920, 1924 and 1926 and it is possible that Mednikoff had attended them.¹⁵³ Epstein's works display an expressive distortion of the human figure and this is often seen in Mednikoff's drawings and paintings in the 1930s. Epstein's sculpture *Woman Possessed* (1932) (Figure 10), for instance, can be compared to the three-dimensional form in Mednikoff's *The Stairway to Paradise* (1936) (Figure 11). Since *Woman Possessed* was exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in 1933, Mednikoff had an opportunity to see it. It depicts a woman who lies with her body arched upward and whose 'Angular clenched fists, flanking the crisply carved, mask-like face, create a symmetrical rhythm of incised lines and planes'.¹⁵⁴

Like Mednikoff, Gertler, the son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, was born in the densely populated and predominately Jewish community of the East End. He had also received financial support from the Jewish Educational Aid Society to study at the Slade School of Art in 1908. Just as with Epstein, it was Rothenstein who recommended him. Gertler's art focused on the enclosed world, poverty and hardship of a Jewish ghetto. It often revealed a struggle between identification with Jewish selfhood and alienation from it. As happened to Mednikoff during the Second World War, Gertler was excused from military service in World War I because of his

¹⁵² Cork, Richard. 1999. *Jacob Epstein*. Exh. Cat. (London, Tate Gallery): 10

¹⁵³ Silber, Evelyn. 1986. *The Sculpture of Epstein* (Oxford, Phaidon): 39

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.: 52

conscientious objection and Polish origins.¹⁵⁵ His famous painting *Merry-Go-Round* (1916) (Figure 12) illustrates his refusal to support Britain's involvement in the First World War as it shows a group of military and civilian figures caught on the vicious circle of the merry-go-round. As Mednikoff would later do, Gertler moved to Hampstead in 1915. Gertler had six one-man shows between 1921 and 1930 at prestigious galleries in London. Roger Fry wrote valuable supportive reviews of the exhibitions and Gertler was accounted as being one of Britain's leading painters.¹⁵⁶ He also exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in 1932 and 1934. Therefore, Mednikoff had many opportunities to familiarise himself with Gertler's art.

Hence, in the thirties, Hampstead became a refuge for Jewish European artists fleeing the Nazi-dominated continent and, as a Jew himself, Mednikoff had good reason to find Hampstead and its inhabitants congenial and inspiring. One important Jewish figure who sought refuge in Hampstead subsequent to the Nazis' invasion of Austria was Freud himself in June 1938.

A significant friend and influence for Mednikoff in the early thirties was David Gascoyne and it seems that they met through Mednikoff's friend, Elizabeth Tregaskis.¹⁵⁷ Although I do not know when Mednikoff first met Tregaskis, they seem to have been close friends as he called her Beth and, some years later in a letter dated 28 January 1938, even asked her to correct the grammar of his and Pailthorpe's

¹⁵⁵ Camden Arts Centre. 1992. *Mark Gertler: Paintings and Drawings*. Exh. Cat. (London, Camden Arts Centre): 82

¹⁵⁶ Fry, Roger. 12.02.21. 'The Goupil Gallery', *New Statesman*, 560; Fry, Roger. 18.02.22. 'The Goupil Gallery', *New Statesman*, 561; Fry, Roger. 24.03.28. 'Mr Gertler at the Leicester Galleries', *Nation and Athenaeum*, 221-4

¹⁵⁷ Efforts to discover more about Tregaskis's background have not yielded anything.

psychological notes.¹⁵⁸ Even though he offered to pay her, she declined the task because, at the time, she was busy working on music in Switzerland. Nevertheless, she replied that she was grateful for his trust in her.¹⁵⁹ As Pamela Hansford Johnson would do later, Tregaskis would sometimes send Mednikoff manuscripts of her poems.¹⁶⁰

A letter, dated 23 March 1933, confirms that Tregaskis asked Mednikoff to visit her as Gascoyne was anxious to meet him.¹⁶¹ Therefore, it seems that Gascoyne was well acquainted with Mednikoff's writings and drawings. Both Gascoyne and Mednikoff had some of their poems published in the poetry section, 'The Poet's Corner', of the *Sunday Referee* between 1933 and 1934. Victor Neuberg edited this weekly column. Tharp, who was also known by her maiden name Sheila Macleod, was the column's sub-editor. 'The Poet's Corner' first appeared in April 1933 but was brought to an end because of the reorganisation of the *Sunday Referee* in November 1935.¹⁶²

'The Poet's Corner' encouraged new talent by awarding prizes to poets whose work was judged to be the finest published in the column over a period of six months. The prize was publication of the winning poet's work in book form.¹⁶³ Although

¹⁵⁸ Letter from Mednikoff to Tregaskis, dated 28.01.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 180 'Reuben Mednikoff, correspondence with Charles Keane, Beth Tregaskis et al; printed cuttings')

¹⁵⁹ Letter from Tregaskis to Mednikoff, not dated; in *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Poems from Tregaskis to Mednikoff, not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 179 'Reuben Mednikoff, correspondence from misc. authors including Henning Nyberg; poetry cuttings')

¹⁶¹ Letter from Tregaskis to Mednikoff, dated 23.03.33. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 146 'Documents and Correspondence: Reuben Mednikoff')

¹⁶² Neuberg, Victor E. 1983. *Vickybird: a memoir of Victor B. Neuberg* (London, London Polytechnic): 7

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Mednikoff was not a winner, two of his poems were published in 'The Poet's Corner' with the titles *Acquiescence*¹⁶⁴ and *Tradition*:¹⁶⁵

Acquiescence

The saturated aspect of a wide City
street
The grey-sad silhouette of a tree,
lopped of all branches,
against a background
of rising stone.
The abject submission is felt in the
very angle at which the trunk
falls
to meet the earth...
but stamps of all that had been
branches
still persist
in raising their cropped heads
to the sky.

Tradition

Tradition, maternal spirit, is an harlot unsuspected...
feathering away the dust of cosmic years from memories cold stored in time..
coaxing with procurant eyes aged souls to untimely seeding...
with senile eyes watching frail thought unseemly straining in forgotten dust.
This vigourless moiety, from wearied age reborn, is uncomely
and too soon do time's disintegrating fingers tatter the vital strain.
Can limbs without life still mock the gestures of agonised pain
or vision the warmth they would kindle in frigid veins?
Or does Death, the toothless scoundrel, desire
a more brittle bone to ease his labouring gums?

The quality of the imagery, content and structure of *Acquiescence* and *Tradition* demonstrates that Mednikoff was already influenced by Surrealism. Both poems convey a lyrical element of human thought and his use of free verse allows the structure to follow a looser pattern than what would be expected in a traditional form.

¹⁶⁴ Mednikoff, Reuben, 'Acquiescence', *Sunday Referee*, dated 01.10.33. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 134 'Surrealism in Britain: Reuben Mednikoff: newscuttings')

¹⁶⁵ Mednikoff, Reuben, 'Tradition', *Sunday Referee*, dated 02.12.34; in *ibid*.

It is an open-ended poetry freed from the normal confines of logical structure as it portrays an irrational stream - of - consciousness.

In *Acquiescence*, Mednikoff abandons himself to the meandering flow of thought as he views the landscape whereas in *Tradition* he breaks clauses into fragments. In both poems, Mednikoff manipulates words and images, turning them into subjects of reflection. Both poems contain the displacement that is associated with Surrealist poetry and there is an interplay between conscious perception and dream. Furthermore, we can also compare the style and imagery in *Acquiescence* and *Tradition* to two of Gascoyne's poems titled *Seaside Memories* and *Slate*:

Seaside Memories

The Pattern the jelly-fish left behind;
a pocketful of sand;
a dead, pressed leaf;
the woven rhythm of 3 days;
these are their traces, faded, indistinct.

The cliff's wide boulders, the immense
rocking of ocean through the bay;
the lighthouse beam that stabbed the rainy
night:
these are the memories of three days and
more,
not separate, but one – and quite distinct.

Slate

Behind the higher hill
Sky slides away to fringe of crumbling cloud;
out of the gorse-grown slope
the quarry bites its tessellated tiers.
The rain-eroded slate packs loose and flat
in broken sheets and frigid swaths of stone, like withered petals of a great grey
flower.
The quarry is deserted now; within
a scooped-out niche of rubble, dust and silt
a single slate-roofed hut to ruin falls.
A petrified chaos
the quarry is; the slate makes still-born waves,
of crumbling clouds like those
behind the hill, monotonously grey.

Seaside Memories was published in 'The Poet's Corner' on 7 May 1933 and it is likely that Mednikoff had read it. And we can be certain he knew *Slate* because Gascoyne gave a copy of this poem to Mednikoff.¹⁶⁶ The stylistic and thematic similarity between Mednikoff's and Gascoyne's poems is striking and both bear the hallmarks of Surrealism. The words and images in the poetry of Gascoyne and Mednikoff create new meaning as they transform reality into surreality. The extended metaphors in their poems appear to work through the accumulation of observed details, and this visual description derives in part from the poets' recognition that images are an element common to both the waking and sleeping states.

Mednikoff's and Gascoyne's use of automatic writing is evident in *Seaside Memories* and *Acquiescence* as each text consists of two long sentences. The juxtaposition of verbal elements, such as the earth and the wind in *Acquiescence* and

¹⁶⁶ A copy of *Slate* addressed to Mednikoff and signed by Gascoyne survives in the Dean Gallery archive.

the ocean, the rain and the cliffs in *Seaside Memories*, permeate the lyrics. The events which appear before their questioning gaze hint at some displaced meaning.

On the other hand, *Tradition* and *Slate* present the reader with a morbid setting that depicts a painful isolation within a homeless environment. Mednikoff and Gascoyne write in a form that eliminates end rhyme. The concreteness of the sensory detail is anchored within a grammar that reinforces the mystery of the monologues. The fusion of description, narration and setting blurs the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious. As we can see, the techniques of Mednikoff and Gascoyne evoke the enigmatic qualities of things by placing them in eerie surroundings or a verbally created scene. Their dominating visual details create settings that are oddly dream-like in that the visual imagery is grounded in a precise observation of natural detail, yet the uninterrupted accumulation of those details form settings which seem to emerge from a dream as well as encompass the external world.

‘The Poet’s Corner’ was a resounding success and other poets whom Mednikoff befriended and who also published their works in the column included Dylan Thomas (who was the second recipient of the poetry prize), Julian Symons, Pamela Hansford Johnson, Edward Milne, Herbert Corby, Idris Davies, Leslie Daiken, Laurie Lee and Ruthven Campbell Todd.¹⁶⁷

In 1932, a year before meeting Mednikoff and at the age of sixteen, Gascoyne had bought from the Zwemmer Gallery back copies of the founding journals *La Révolution Surréaliste* (1924-29) and its successor *Le Surréalisme au service de la*

¹⁶⁷ Neuberg, Victor E. 1983. *Vickybird: a memoir of Victor B. Neuberg* (London, London Polytechnic): 8

révolution (1930-33).¹⁶⁸ He had also purchased collections of poetry by Breton, Eluard and Tzara during his first trip to Paris in 1933 and his translations of these works introduced Surrealist poetry to English readers. In October 1933, Gascoyne published a poem called 'And the seventh dream is the dream of Isis' in the literary periodical *New Verse*.¹⁶⁹ According to Dawn Ades in her preface to the reprint of Gascoyne's text *A short survey of Surrealism*, which is discussed further in Chapter 4, the poem was recognized as the first 'purely automatic' English Surrealist poem.¹⁷⁰ Gascoyne himself described it as 'the result of my first attempt to produce a sequence of poetry according to the orthodox surrealist formula'.¹⁷¹ Gascoyne's membership of the Surrealist movement and his association with its leading members placed him in an ideal position to witness and record the development of its leading writers and artists. Thus, it was probably through Gascoyne that Mednikoff became involved with the first stirrings of Surrealism in England as letters in the Edinburgh archive (dated 1933 to 1936) show us that they often corresponded and had several friends in common.

Such was their intimacy, that Mednikoff wrote to Gascoyne proposing himself as a reviewer of *A short survey of Surrealism*. Gascoyne replied that, much as he would have liked this to happen, another reviewer had already been chosen.¹⁷² We can assume that Mednikoff first heard about the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition from Gascoyne as, in the same letter, Gascoyne wrote:

¹⁶⁸ Gascoyne, David. 2003. *A short survey of Surrealism* (London, Enitharmon Press): 10

¹⁶⁹ Gascoyne, David. 1988. *Collected Poems* (Oxford, Oxford University Press): 14-15

¹⁷⁰ Gascoyne, David. 2003. *A short survey of Surrealism* (London, Enitharmon Press): 14

¹⁷¹ Gascoyne, David. 1996. *Selected Verse Translations* (London, Enitharmon Press): xvi

¹⁷² Letter from Gascoyne to Mednikoff, dated 31.12.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 103 'Surrealism in Britain: correspondence with David Gascoyne')

Did you know that there is to be a very large surrealist exhibition at the Burlington Galleries next June? I do hope you'll be up in town to see it. André Breton and Paul Eluard are to visit London and deliver various lectures. Salvador Dalí is to visit London at about the same time, and is having a show of his own at Lefevres [...] We hope to be able to bring out an occasional English surrealist "bulletin" during 1936. I'll let you know whether this comes out [...] It seems I haven't seen any of our mutual friends for a long time.¹⁷³

Therefore, it seems that Mednikoff's and Pailthorpe's invitation to participate in the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936 may have occurred through Gascoyne. Gascoyne's awareness of Mednikoff's research with Pailthorpe is at all events illustrated in the above letter as he ended it by saying: 'What is it exactly that you are doing down there in Cornwall? Research work? It sounds most exciting and mysterious. Do write to me [...] and let me know more about yourself'.¹⁷⁴ Another letter from Gascoyne to Mednikoff, written on 20 July 1936, also reveals the closeness of their relationship and that they shared common interests:

I imagine you both to be hard at work in your seclusion, and am most interested to know how it is all going [...] Taking you at your word, I am wondering whether it would be possible for you and Dr. Pailthorpe to take me as a paying-guest for a few weeks, if convenient just now. You were kind enough to offer me your hospitality and, feeling in need of a change of air and scene, it would be most pleasant to stay with people with whom I share so much interest in common, and in such a congenial part of the country.¹⁷⁵

Although I have been unable to trace any of the works of art which Mednikoff produced before he met Pailthorpe in 1935, I do know that in May 1933, soon after meeting Gascoyne, he exhibited four drawings, four landscape watercolours and another two watercolours entitled *Cactus* (Figure 13) and *Conscious to the Subconscious* at the exhibition 'Today's Art' at the Keane Galleries in London. He

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Gascoyne to Mednikoff, dated 20.07.36; in *ibid.*

signed these works 'Reuben'. The paintings were for sale and five were sold. Two of the watercolours were bought by Sidney Schiff Esq. whereas *Cactus*, *Conscious to the Subconscious* and another watercolour were bought by Mrs Hayter Preston.¹⁷⁶ I have no information about Sidney Schiff but Hayter Preston was the wife of the literary editor of the *Sunday Referee*. Today, all of these works' whereabouts are unknown but, at the time, they, in particular *Cactus* and *Conscious to the Subconscious*, received praise in the *Sunday Referee*. The newspaper also illustrated an image of *Cactus* and, when referring to it, an anonymous reviewer wrote:

One of the finest paintings in the exhibition is a large decoration - Cactus - by an artist who disguises himself under the name of Reuben. I cannot understand why an artist should follow the fashion of caricaturists, jazz drummers, and dictators, in using one name only. Reuben is a painter of great originality, with a bold imagination, an artistic daring, and a fine paint quality at his disposal. His "Cactus" decoration is one of the most interesting works I have seen for a long time.¹⁷⁷

The art critic also described *Conscious to the Subconscious* as a 'non-representational design that is best to allocate the title to the category of unsolved mysteries, and to be content with appraising the suggestive form and colour of a work which is boldly realised and firmly handled'.¹⁷⁸ The title *Conscious to the Subconscious* points towards the influence of Surrealism on Mednikoff and their shared interest in the psychoanalytic theories of Freud.

Apart from Gascoyne, another important figure to Mednikoff at the time was Pamela Hansford Johnson, who was one of Dylan Thomas's lovers. Mednikoff would have met her through 'The Poet's Corner' as she also published her poetry in the *Sunday*

¹⁷⁶ Exhibition catalogue, dated 18.05.33. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 134 'Surrealism in Britain: Reuben Mednikoff: newscuttings')

¹⁷⁷ Article 'Today's Art: Fashion in Painting' in *Sunday Referee*, Ywain, 21.05. 33. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 181 'Reuben Mednikoff, Correspondence with Pamela Hansford Johnson')

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Referee and won the *Sunday Referee*'s first poetry prize. Her book, *Symphony for Full Orchestra*, was published in early 1934 whereas Thomas's *18 Poems* was published in December 1934.¹⁷⁹ A letter to Mednikoff, dated 8 October 1934, shows us her gratefulness for his praise of her prize-winning book.¹⁸⁰

From time to time, Mednikoff and Hansford Johnson sent letters to one another. These letters date from around 1933 and give us insight into Mednikoff's work.¹⁸¹ Although their relationship never developed into a romance, they often flirted with one another in their letters and one can tell that Hansford Johnson admired Mednikoff's art and poetry. She frequently asked him for his opinion of her poetry. Thus, in a letter dated 29 October 1933 she wrote: 'You know what I think of your work without my telling you. I can't find parallels for it because I've never seen anything like it. To my mind it has distinction without eccentricity. The indispensable spark without insanity'.¹⁸² In another, dated 27 October 1933, she wrote:

Funny you liked the 'Requiem for Spring'. Runia [Tharpe] rang up the night I was with you and said Victor [Neuberg] was keen on it too. I can't understand it at all but am very keen anyway. You have inspired the poet [...] you're an amiable critic [...] Please let me see any more stuff you write, won't you? The phrase 'the thin past' has remained with me. I wish I'd said it.¹⁸³

Two other letters reveal that Hansford Johnson had met Gascoyne through Mednikoff. In one, Hansford Johnson wrote 'I'm happy you liked my poetry [...]

¹⁷⁹ Neuberg, Victor E. 1983. *Vickybird: a memoir of Victor B. Neuberg* (London, London Polytechnic): 8

¹⁸⁰ Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 08.10.34. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 181 'Reuben Mednikoff, Correspondence with Pamela Hansford Johnson')

¹⁸¹ Letters between Mednikoff and Hansford Johnson, dated 1933-37; in *ibid.*

¹⁸² Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 29.10.33; in *ibid.*

¹⁸³ Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 27.10.33; in *ibid.*

Since reading David's Rimbaud I have an urge to come over all Surrealist, but haven't produced anything along that line so far. You and David must have had a good effect on me',¹⁸⁴ and in the other 'I think I shall make a surrealist bon mot something in the style of – was it Andre Breton? – 'The beauty of a fortuitous meeting between a hatchet (?) and a cherry tree on a dissecting table''.¹⁸⁵ Clearly, Surrealism was a regular topic of discussion between the two friends at this time.

The regular letters between the poets included short descriptions of what they saw in one another's work as they added comments and illustrations of their own. Their exchange of letters went on for a few years and must have been very fruitful to Mednikoff as her encouraging words certainly inspired confidence in him. She tells him how his 'talent will enhance her poems rather than detract from them' and how grateful she is for his offers of help.¹⁸⁶ Several of the letters also show us that Hansford Johnson kept asking Mednikoff to draw her and in a letter dated 14 November 1933, she thanked him for doing so. At the end of this letter Hansford Johnson wrote:

Reuben my lamb [...] How would you like to be nice and obliging and come on straight from business tomorrow to eat up some [...] to please mother? You will? Splendid. I'm just going to settle down and make you a lovely (I trust) cake. Love from the Goth, Vandal & Visigoth, Pamela Hansford Johnson¹⁸⁷

Even though Hansford Johnson was six years younger than Mednikoff, this and certain of her other letters to him do suggest a mother-child relationship. In this sense, she apparently prepared the way for his relationship with Pailthorpe.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 08.10.33; in *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 31.10.33; in *ibid.* She is misquoting Lautréamont's famous 'beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella!'.
¹⁸⁶ Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 03.11.33; in *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ Letter from Hansford Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 14.11.33; in *ibid.*

On Monday 17 September 1934, Mednikoff started working for Norfolk Studio Ltd. This was a company of designers and copy-writers of advertisements. A letter from Norfolk Studio to Mednikoff proves that the latter had prepared some illustrations and shown them to the director, who then offered him the job.¹⁸⁸ However, Mednikoff's work for Norfolk Studio lasted no more than a few months, as he left his job soon after meeting Pailthorpe. In quitting so rapidly, he may have been influenced by his awareness of the Surrealists' deep disapproval of all forms of commercial art.

Whilst working at Norfolk Studio, Mednikoff exhibited twenty drawings and paintings at another exhibition at the Keane Galleries in London. The exhibition opened on 23 November 1934 and also included thirteen wood engravings by George Elmslie Owen and four tapestries by Olive Barker. His works were on sale and the prices ranged from £3 to £15.¹⁸⁹ The fate of the majority is unknown, but they were praised in *The Times* by Charles Marriott, who claimed that, 'Besides having good taste in colour, well shown in the still-life painting of 'Bowl' and the small 'Landscape', Mednikoff is an excellent draughtsman, realizing his effects - including recession - with great economy of means. The studies of the dog 'Patch' and the landscapes 'Hedges' and 'Devon Lane' may be quoted'.¹⁹⁰ In contrast to his previous exhibition, this review and the titles of the works suggest that they were not markedly Surrealist in imagery or style. What is clear, however, is that Mednikoff's

¹⁸⁸ Letter to Mednikoff from Norfolk Studio, dated 1934. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 121 'Correspondence concerning Reuben Mednikoff's marriage and his work as an artist')

¹⁸⁹ Exhibition catalogue, dated 23.11.34. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 134 'Surrealism in Britain: Reuben Mednikoff: newscuttings')

¹⁹⁰ Untitled exhibition review in *The Times*, Charles Marriott, dated 29.11.34; in *ibid*.

art was gaining positive critical attention. Hansford Johnson also praised his works in a letter about this exhibition:

I went to your show this morning and greatly enjoyed it [...] I loved the 'Bridge over the River Axe' and 'Hedges'. I noticed that the latter was sold [...] It was really lovely line and composition and so terribly sure. I think – and I speak as the ultimate layman – that line drawing of the type you favour must be one of the most difficult forms of art.¹⁹¹

Even before the famous 1936 International Surrealist exhibition, Surrealism had already caused some stir in magazines and newspapers in London. April 1933 saw the reopening of the Mayor Gallery marked by an exhibition of the works of Miró, Ernst, Klee, Picabia and Arp and another Ernst exhibition was mounted a year later.¹⁹² The Zwemmer Gallery featured Dalí's first two exhibitions in London in the Spring and Autumn of 1934.¹⁹³ Given the familiarity with Surrealist imagery and the practice of automatism revealed in Mednikoff's poems, and his friendship with Gascoyne, it is highly likely that he saw these exhibitions, and thus had firsthand knowledge of Surrealist theory and poetry and Surrealist art before he first met Pailthorpe in February 1935.

2.4 Conclusion

Unlike Pailthorpe, who was the daughter of a stockbroker and had travelled extensively, Mednikoff was the son of a poor tinplate worker, had spent most of his time in London and then entered the commercial art world for financial reasons. He was very different to Pailthorpe in social class, age, temperament, religious

¹⁹¹ Letter from Johnson to Mednikoff, dated 08.12.34. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 181 'Reuben Mednikoff, correspondence with Pamela Hansford Johnson')

¹⁹² Remy, Michel. 1986. *Surrealism in Britain in the thirties: angels of anarchy and machines for making clouds*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds City Art Gallery): 23

¹⁹³ Ibid.

background and professional training. However, as we shall discover, his quick understanding of the use and interpretation of symbols in art motivated Pailthorpe into further research of the unconscious and made her see him as the most suitable colleague for the research. Furthermore, at the time of their meeting, his art and poetry were already attracting attention and receiving praise from critics and friends alike. As we will see, in spite of their differences, each complemented the other in talent and knowledge and, through a process of deliberate absorption, may be said to have completed each other, forming eventually an indissoluble unit.

Chapter 3: The beginnings of the couple's research project (1935-1936)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe how Pailthorpe and Mednikoff first met and began their work together. I will be looking at Pailthorpe's methods as an analyst, Pailthorpe's knowledge of Janet, her rejection of Freud and the influence of Klein on her work as an analyst. My aim is to examine what Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's joint research project entailed: their resurrection and expression of childhood memories, fears and wishes through baby talk, infantile verse or surreal, child-like paintings, and the course of their experiments on themselves and one another. I will also be providing a detailed account of their 'satiation-analysis' technique.

3.2 First meetings

Mednikoff (Figure 14) first met Pailthorpe (Figure 15) on Thursday 21 February 1935 after going to a party, given by Pailthorpe at her house in Dorset Square in London, with Neuberg and Tharp. As noted in Chapter 1, Pailthorpe knew Neuberg and Tharp because they had all been on the founding committee of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency whereas Mednikoff knew Neuberg and Tharp through 'The Poet's Corner'. Pailthorpe's former patient Cecilia Dimsdale, of whom more will be said later, was also at this party and it was there that Mednikoff first met her.

At the time, Pailthorpe was a surgeon and practicing psychoanalyst and Mednikoff was a commercial artist. He was 29 and she was 52. Extracts from Mednikoff's diary of their first meeting tell us that each was interested in the other's career and

they began to discuss the scientific and artistic exploration of the unconscious mind. About a month later, Pailthorpe went to Mednikoff's flat to see his paintings and drawings. As Mednikoff wrote in his diary notes, it was here that he introduced her to the use of automatism in Surrealist art, and encouraged her to produce her own paintings and poems which, alongside his own, eventually became the basis of their research.¹⁹⁴

As we saw in Chapter 2, Pailthorpe already had some form of preliminary research plan when she first met Mednikoff. When referring to her first meeting with Mednikoff in a memoir, dated 13 October 1935, 9.25pm, Pailthorpe wrote:

I had sensed in him, a sensitive sympathetic nature - less self-complacent and megalomaniac than one is given to suppose (quite erroneously) most artists to be. My *patient* needed exquisitely sensitive handling if he was to succeed in prizing open, into full flood, this avenue of approach to the unconscious.¹⁹⁵

From this, we can see how Pailthorpe's encounter with Mednikoff motivated her into further research of the unconscious. Although she had already practised a form of art therapy as part of her treatment of some of her patients before meeting him, his response to her interpretation of his art when she visited his studio on 20 March 1935 seems to have inspired her to use art as an instrument for psychological exploration. Pailthorpe's use of the word 'patient' also tells us that the project was first and foremost an analytic experiment and that it is likely that she already had some sort of preliminary project in mind when she first met Mednikoff.

¹⁹⁴ Extracts from Mednikoff's diary, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 19 'Extracts from Mednikoff's diary')

¹⁹⁵ Typescript of memoir by Pailthorpe, dated 13.10.35. London: Tate Britain Archive (TAM 75 'Poems, diary and correspondence with Pailthorpe 1935-1937'). The use of the word 'patient' is her emphasis.

In her memoir, Pailthorpe described how, during their meeting at Mednikoff's studio on 20 March, he 'expressed his views on art and the development of that in an individual and his ideas of free expression, in theory at least, coincided with my own'.¹⁹⁶ When referring to her visit in his diary notes, Mednikoff wrote:

At 8pm Dr Pailthorpe came along to my flat to see my paintings and drawings. It was on this occasion that I suggested the possibility in writing similar to freedom in drawing.¹⁹⁷

In fact, after Mednikoff's response to her interpretation of his paintings and drawings during her visit, Pailthorpe said:

I felt that there must be somewhere a quicker way to the deeper layers of the unconscious than by the long drawn-out couch method, and I had a feeling that it was through art. At any rate it should be used in conjunction. R.M.'s quick understanding of the use and interpretation of symbols made him seem to me as probably the most suitable colleague for the research.¹⁹⁸

It was during this visit that Mednikoff first urged Pailthorpe to draw anything that came into her head and told her to give free play to her intuition. She responded positively, feeling that doing so would enable her to bring her research project to fruition, and acknowledging the vital role played by Mednikoff himself in liberating her in this way:

As my artist friend's pet phrase asserted 'The unconscious is always right'. If this were so in art, and it was proving itself so, it was also true in relation to my own work just as long as I allowed free association between one and the other, I had found, at any rate for the time being, an outlet for my free expression and gradually in my mind was formulated the idea, the vision, of what research into the inter-relation of art with the science of mind might bring about.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Extracts from Mednikoff's diary, dated 1935; in *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Notes on Mednikoff by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 19 'Extracts from Mednikoff's diary')

¹⁹⁹ Typescript of memoir by Pailthorpe, dated 13.10.35. London: Tate Britain Archive (TAM 75 'Poems, diary and correspondence with Pailthorpe 1935-1937')

At that time, Mednikoff's marriage to de Sousa had only recently been dissolved (January 1935). As we saw in Chapter 2, his love experiences together with his medical history and Jewish upbringing prompted his interest in psychoanalysis. As we also saw in Chapter 2, letters to his sister Milly show us that he was so willing to comply with Pailthorpe's suggestion for an immediate collaboration because he believed that undergoing psychoanalysis would give meaning to his private concerns.²⁰⁰ At the same time, we must bear in mind that Mednikoff was already familiar with the influence of psychoanalysis on Surrealism and, although this is hypothesis, may have also seen Pailthorpe as somebody who could provide maternal support which, in turn, would have motivated him to work with her.

Furthermore, the couple's decision to work together intrigued friends like Gascoyne, as the letter cited in Chapter 2 shows, but before describing the fruits of the couple's collaboration, I will now discuss the major influences on Pailthorpe's therapeutic practice, which predate her encounter with Mednikoff.

3.3 Pierre Janet

Unlike Mednikoff, Pailthorpe had had no art training. It was Mednikoff who encouraged her to paint and to express herself through art. Still, one must note that long before any encounter with Surrealism, Pailthorpe already had an interest in art and its use as a form of mental therapy. Her discussion of her belief in the liberating value of automatism with Mednikoff, when they first met in February 1935, suggests her knowledge of an established tradition of medical psychology, dating back to 1889 when the French psychiatrist Pierre Janet first advocated the therapeutic use of

²⁰⁰ Correspondence between Mednikoff and Milly, dated 1935-1936. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 133 'Miscellaneous correspondence and writings')

automatism in his thesis *L'automatisme psychologique*. This book contained Janet's research from 1882 to 1888 and it was in its ninth edition by 1921. This indicates how available the work was to students of psychology.²⁰¹ It was hailed from the start as a classic of the psychological sciences. Although there was no English translation of the text, thanks to Janet's friendship with William James, his work became available to the English-speaking world.

During the early twentieth century, William James's *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) was universally regarded as the single most important text in the history of psychology.²⁰² In this book, James refers to Janet's work on hysteria.²⁰³ James's acquaintance with Janet facilitated the latter's introduction of courses in scientific psychology at Harvard University. Janet gave fifteen lectures at Harvard Medical School in 1906 describing his therapeutic approaches to hysteria. He was then asked to give some of these lectures at Colombia University in New York and at John Hopkins University in Baltimore.²⁰⁴ These lectures were published as *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* in 1907 in America and garnered much attention in both America and Britain. Janet started his text by stating that he wanted 'to show how the study of the mental state of the patient can sometimes be useful to explain many disturbances and to give some unity to apparently discordant symptoms'.²⁰⁵ Going beyond the ideas expressed in *L'automatisme psychologique* he emphasized that hysteria was not an absence of sensibility, but a dissociation which resulted in the

²⁰¹ Balakian, Anna. 1971. *André Breton: Magus of Surrealism* (New York, Oxford University Press): 28

²⁰² Miller, George. 1964. *Psychology. The Science of Mental Life* (London, Penguin): 183

²⁰³ James, William. 1890. *The Principles of Psychology* (New York, Dover): 1072

²⁰⁴ Janet, Pierre. 1907. *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (New York, Macmillan Co.): vii

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: 1

splitting off of certain sensations from the rest of the person's consciousness and which, in turn, forms a secondary self.

As we have seen, Pailthorpe's professional interest in hysteria probably stemmed from the First World War when she encountered a great number of cases which were then usually described as 'shell-shock'.²⁰⁶ The condition of trench warfare provoked hysteria. Some patients recovered rapidly whereas, in other instances, the persistence of specific fears delayed recovery until psychopathological aid was required.²⁰⁷ Although she never specifically cited James's *The Principles of Psychology*, it is likely that Pailthorpe was familiar with this work because it had gained widespread recognition. It was probably through James that she encountered Janet's work on hysteria, and consequently the theory that there is a connection between events in the subject's past life and his or her present-day trauma. Her interest in hysteria indicates that she had probably come across Janet's *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* too. Her fluency in French meant furthermore that she could have read Janet's *L'automatisme psychologique* in the original.

In his introduction to *L'automatisme psychologique*, Janet maintained:

It is human activity in its simplest and most rudimentary forms that will be the object of this study. This elementary activity, whether noted in animals or studied in man by psychiatrists, has been designated by a name that is important to maintain – that of automatic activity.²⁰⁸

Janet explained that the term 'automatic' refers to a movement with two characteristics: (1) it is spontaneous because it moves itself and does not need an

²⁰⁶ Mayo, Elton. 1948. *Some Notes on the Psychology of Pierre Janet* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press): 39

²⁰⁷ Ibid.: 40

²⁰⁸ Janet cited in Crabtree, Adam. 2003. "'Automatism" and the emergence of Dynamic Psychiatry?', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, 39/1: 66

impulse and (2) the movement is regular and operating in a predictable, determined way. When defining ‘psychological automatism’, Janet stated:

We believe that one can accept simultaneously both automatism and consciousness and thereby give satisfaction to those who note in humans an elementary form of activity as completely determined as an automaton and to those who want to conserve for humans, in their simplest actions, consciousness and sensibility. In other words, it does not seem to us that in a living being the activity that manifests on the outside through movement can be separated from a certain kind of intelligence and from the consciousness that accompanies it inside, *and our goal is not only to demonstrate that there is a human activity that merits the name of automatic, but also that it is legitimate to call it a psychological automatism.*²⁰⁹

L’automatisme psychologique was based upon detailed studies of a number of hysterical patients. It describes psychological phenomena observed in hysteria. Janet stated that in psychological automatism, consciousness is not connected to personal perception and lacks the personality’s sense of self. This consciousness exists at a subconscious level. Thus, Janet was the first person to introduce the term ‘subconscious’ and the concept of the existence of consciousness outside of personal awareness, as he differentiated between levels of consciousness.²¹⁰

As was also the case with Freud, Charcot’s teachings on symptoms of hysteria formed the basis of Janet’s early theories. Janet’s thesis *L’automatisme psychologique* brought together a variety of abnormal mental states which he divided into total and partial automatisms. The former implies that the mind is completely dominated by a reproduction of past experiences and the latter occurs when part of the personality is split from awareness and following its own psychological existence. Janet believed that psychological automatism is the result of dissociation

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Van der Hart, Omno & Barbara Friedman. 1989. ‘A reader’s guide to Pierre Janet: A Neglected Intellectual Heritage’, *Dissociation*, 2: 2

between behaviour and consciousness and that its study could lead to a new grasp of the relation between the conscious and the subconscious. According to him, patients suffering from hysteria exhibit psychological automatism in extreme degrees. He discovered that there were many mental activities occurring independently of the patient's consciousness and employed automatic writing and hypnosis in order to identify the traumatic origins of these mental activities and explore the nature of automatism.²¹¹

As Henri Ellenberger explains in *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, in his book Janet showed that, under hypnosis, two sets of psychological manifestations can be elicited: on one side are the 'roles' played by the subject in order to please the hypnotist, on the other side is the unknown personality, which can manifest itself spontaneously, particularly as a return to childhood.²¹² A comparison can be drawn with the couple's satiation analysis technique, described below. Moreover, Janet's therapeutic method involved him placing a pencil in the hand of a patient and keeping the patient's attention elsewhere. The patient would, in turn, start to write things of which he was not aware and elicit large fragments of subconscious material. In his method, Janet examined patients without there being any other witnesses in the room, kept an exact record of everything they said or did, and would also scrutinize the patient's life history and past treatments. Pailthorpe's methods in the work she did for the Medical Research Council, described in Chapter 1, bear a resemblance to Janet's procedure.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ellenberger, Henri. 1981. *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (London, Allen Lane): 358-9

Janet contended that certain symptoms in a patient can be related to the existence of subconscious fixed ideas and show their origin in traumatic events of the past. He believed that memories had to be traced back to the patient's first significant traumatic event. Apart from the manifestation of forgotten memories in dreams and in a hypnotic state, Janet elicited his patients' memories by telling them to produce automatic writing or by letting them talk aloud at random. Again, as we will shortly see, we can draw parallels between Pailthorpe's practice when working with Mednikoff and Janet's therapeutic method. Yet, she used drawings rather than writings or speech to provide the spontaneous 'unconscious' imagery as the raw material for the research.

Janet's works were the intermediary between Charcot on the one hand and Freud on the other. His views on the treatment of hysteria went out of fashion when hypnosis fell into disrepute. This retreat from hypnosis was due to the publication and popularity of Freud's early psychoanalytic studies. Janet's work was neglected in favour of the acceptance of Freud's psychoanalytic observations and although Freud had initially acknowledged Janet's research, he later became critical of it.²¹³ Furthermore, Janet's report on psychoanalysis at the London Congress in 1913, at which he claimed priority for the theory of subconscious fixed ideas that are related to intrusions of some dissociated emotion, thought, sensory perception or movement, resulted in Ernest Jones accusing him of dishonesty and asserting that Freud's discoveries owed nothing to Janet.²¹⁴

²¹³ Ibid.: 41

²¹⁴ Jones, Ernest. 1914-15. 'Professor Janet on Psychoanalysis: A Rejoinder', *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 9: 400-10

None of Pailthorpe's writings suggest that she used hypnosis in her practice and this was probably because of her training with Jones in the 1920s and initial acceptance of Freudian theory. Still, despite her association with Jones, Pailthorpe's reference to automatism when she met Mednikoff in 1935 suggests that she had discovered the concept through Janet years before she encountered Surrealist theory. It was in other words only after meeting Mednikoff that she associated automatism specifically with Bretonian Surrealism.

3.4 Rejection of Sigmund Freud's methods

It is interesting to see how, in spite of her seven years of training in Freudian psychoanalysis with Jones between 1923 and 1930, Pailthorpe eventually rejected his method of conducting analysis. Her comments on the shortcomings of the Freudian method suggest that she was concerned with improving techniques of psychoanalysis in order to help patients. This is illustrated in Pailthorpe's notes on how essential physical and mental contact between the analyst and the patient is. When relating this aspect to Freud's approach, Pailthorpe wrote:

In the Freudian technique it is held to be an ideal that social and physical contact with an analyst should be eliminated absolutely. This is inviting the patient to express himself into a void, or, as the analysts say, painting a picture of himself on a blank sheet.²¹⁵

Furthermore, Pailthorpe's reference, on 3 November 1935, to her unsatisfactory analysis with Ernest Jones demonstrates that her dissatisfaction with the Freudian technique stemmed from direct personal experience. She wrote that, 'In reviewing my analysis with E.J. it seems to me, in the light of what has transpired in my

²¹⁵ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 05.08.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure'): 155

analysis since, that the slough into which I got and which E.J. was unable to get me out of has been due to a fault in the Freudian psychoanalytic technique'.²¹⁶ After making this comment, Pailthorpe often remarked upon what she believed were the poor results obtained through the Freudian technique. An example is when she stated:

I feel that the strict Freudian technique of conducting an analysis in a state of deprivation, particularly in relation to the analyst, is a reason why so many analyses end in 'stale-mate', or I should say, in the patient's condition being very often considerably worsened.²¹⁷

Whilst discussing her and Mednikoff's analytic procedure, Pailthorpe highlighted the effect of the physical life on the mental. She spoke of how, from the moment of birth, one has the natural ability to breathe, cry, suck, urinate, defecate, touch and show sensitivity to sound and light. Yet, restraining these activities would affect one mentally in a negative manner:

The restraint of the free activity of these natural functions in some directions forces them to take other directions for expression. They invade the mental life of the individual. The interaction and accommodation between the physical and the mental is of vital importance and the fullest and freest expression of the physical in the mental and the mental in the physical should be our aim. Those most free to act in every direction find least difficulty in social adaptation. If there is a lack of this freedom then social adaptation brings about a crippling of the individual.²¹⁸

According to Pailthorpe, satiation, signifying the gratification of desire, was ultimately the solution, and she considered the principle of satiation as opposed to the fundamental principles of Freud. The unconscious can only surface when

²¹⁶ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 03.11.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 65 'Technique'): 12

²¹⁷ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 27.11.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure'): 85

²¹⁸ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 31.05.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 65 'Technique') (Notes accurately transcribed)

unconscious desires are satiated, but not if it is in a state of frustration. She deemed that the unconscious responds to reassurance which brought about the lessening of anxiety. Thus, the unconscious will only reveal its thoughts and fantasies when it is assured of protection. When referring to their research method, Pailthorpe wrote that:

From the moment RM and I got together for work we have worked on the principle that 'the unconscious is always right,' and we have allowed the unconscious, in fact have encouraged persistently to declare what it has wanted and, wherever possible, it has been given what it has wanted. Our technique is the opposite of the Freudian. The Freudian technique is based on deprivation. Ours is based on satiation.²¹⁹

She continued her notes on their analytic procedure by saying that:

The Freudian technique is largely negative in results because it is based, one-sidedly, on a negative process – on pure analysis; that is on a splitting-up. The unconscious cannot understand that release from its fears and difficulties can be obtained that way, and the resistance to such handling is terrific; and necessarily so since, to the unconscious, it means a final destruction of its right to live.

By the psychorealist satiation method every little self-realisation (through unconscious material brought to light) is immediately rewarded by a greater capacity for self-expression. Thus every step of the analysis automatically reduces unconscious fear and unconscious material is allowed a quicker access to consciousness.²²⁰

Nevertheless, in spite of her criticisms of the Freudian analytic method, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff did not object to Freud's conclusions about the driving forces of human psychology. As we will see, the analyses that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff made of their drawings and paintings indicate that they accepted axiomatic Freudian theories on, for example, the castration complex.

²¹⁹ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 19.11.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure'): 72 (Notes accurately transcribed)

²²⁰ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 06.12.36; in *ibid.*: 96-7 (Notes accurately transcribed)

3.5 Melanie Klein

Pailthorpe's reorientation and abandonment of Freudian methods were due in large part to the influence of Klein, and her subsequent work was based on methods which Klein used in her analyses. Klein saw the baby as relating to the world via its physical relationship with the mother. She believed that the mother's breast forms the basis of the super-ego which is formed in the oral phase. We can draw parallels with Pailthorpe and Klein's work as, in her notes on the analytic procedure she and Mednikoff adopted, Pailthorpe highlighted how:

...in the early years of the infant's life, from the moment of birth, its first love contact is through grasping the nipple in its mouth. Everything the baby is given it will put into its mouth. Its first test of the external world is through the mouth. The baby is accepting the love gift of the mother's milk, experiences the flow of life through its little body, knows and experiences in itself its first act of love.²²¹

Although it is clear that, from the start of her work with Mednikoff, Pailthorpe's method as an analyst was modelled on Klein's, to my knowledge, Pailthorpe's first written mention of Klein's ideas occurs in notes which she wrote at the start of 1937 about the couple's 'psychorealist technique':

The psychorealist technique is, in effect, a play technique for the adult (which the adult will not find difficult to accept). (It is comparable with Melanie Klein's play technique for children). Analysis is of the repressed child in us and, consequently, play is the natural medium for children to express themselves through. Quite obviously the child can come out of its cage (repressions and fears) all the quicker if it has the means provided of expressing itself in a manner natural to children – in play. In analysis we are dealing and talking with a 'child' of anywhere between the ages of a few weeks to three to five years of age, even though the patient be a fully grown man or woman of the world.²²²

²²¹ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 27.11.35; in *ibid.*: 83

²²² Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 28.02.37; in *ibid.*: 157

Like Klein, Pailthorpe investigated how the unconscious anxiety at birth forms the basis of later anxieties or fears and, together with Mednikoff, wrote extensive notes on this subject:

The mind begins to function prior to birth, at the point when the foetus is first affected by certain intra-uterine experiences. The birth processes and the early events of post-natal life continue this shaping of the way the mind functions. The first significant experience is the beginning of uterine contractions, which according to GWP/RM are a counter-reaction by the muscular walls of the womb to the lively kicking of the foetus in the late stage of pregnancy. "Birth is an agony of indescribable tortures for which the infant's rudimentary mind can find no explanation". Pain is its lot from the various handlings it undergoes in its early days, and sleep provides its only relief [...] This limbo of forgotten ideas, desires, memories, fantasies and fears, this storehouse of infantile suffering, the repressed part of the mind, has been named the 'unconscious'. Although forgotten, it remains active throughout adult life.²²³

Although there is no information as to how Pailthorpe met or first came across the teachings of Klein, it can be assumed that it was either through Jones or Edward Glover. As we learnt in Chapter 1, Pailthorpe founded the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency together with Glover. Glover knew Klein because he was the analyst of her daughter Melitta, and Klein had met Jones at a conference on Psychoanalysis in Salzburg in 1925. Jones was very impressed by Klein's lectures on the technique of child analysis and, subsequently, invited her to London where she became a member of the British Psychoanalytic Society that same year.

Klein was warmly welcomed in England, where she settled permanently early in 1926. At that time, psychoanalysis was an established body of thought concerned with the formative importance of early childhood and intense interest in the mother-child relationship has continued to dominate psychoanalysis in Britain until the

²²³ Notes by Pailthorpe and Mednikoff, not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 9 'Draft Summary of Psychorealism: the Sluiceway of the emotions'): 1

present day.²²⁴ Klein began to develop her theories in the early twenties from her observations of child development viewed from the standpoint of the mind of a child in relation to the mother, but not from the position of a child who is dependent on the mother's care.²²⁵

The central method of Klein's child analysis was her 'play technique'. Klein noticed that the child's natural way of expressing itself was through play and, therefore, she used play as a way of communication when analyzing children. As Julia Kristeva has said, 'for Klein, play was the royal road to the unconscious, the same function that the dream served for Freud'.²²⁶ She further clarified this by stating that 'As Klein continued to expand her analytic practice with children, it became clear to her that play affords the same ability to access the unconscious as does an adult's free association or an analysis of a dream, perhaps even more so because play is more amenable to the expression of a pre- or transverbal unconscious'.²²⁷

By using her 'play technique', Klein demonstrated how the way that children play with toys revealed the beginning stages of infantile 'phantasies' and anxieties. She also observed how children's unconscious thoughts could be understood by their nonverbal behaviour. In Klein's theory, there is a semantic distinction between 'phantasy' and 'fantasy'. A phantasy is unconscious, whereas fantasy is its conscious, symbolic representation. Phantasies are the unconscious thoughts associated with our instincts and differ from conscious fantasies. Klein's use of her 'play technique' led to her insights into the earliest preverbal ways of communication

²²⁴ Smith, David. 1999. *Approaching Psychoanalysis* (London, Karnac Books): 127

²²⁵ Scharff, Jill. 1998. *Object Relations Individual Therapy* (London, Karnac Books): 49

²²⁶ Kristeva, Julia. 2001. *Melanie Klein* (New York, Colombia University Press): 48

²²⁷ Ibid.: 50

and to her account of the phantasies and psychic contents of the neonatal and infantile mind.²²⁸ Thus, child's play was used as the equivalent of an adult's 'free association'. It was a means of gaining access to the unconscious modes of thought which contained all that has been repressed from consciousness. Through this method, Klein came to the conclusion that the infant is haunted by the 'death instinct', terrified of the resulting aggression and its effects on the self and the other, and, at the same time, motivated by the 'life instinct' to feel concern and to undo the damage caused from directing omnipotent phantasies of excessive aggression against the primary objects.²²⁹

Klein focused on the feelings of anxiety and guilt induced in a child by the experience of birth. She discussed how the threat of anxiety can cause a lasting effect on the child in her paper 'The Development of a Child', which was published in the fourth volume of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in 1923. Here, Klein described how expulsion from the safety of the womb sets the psychological pattern for all later anxiety situations and is an influence on the infant's first relations with the external world. For this reason, trauma marks the beginning of the infant's life.

Klein's basic model of mental development is that the neonate brings into the world two main conflicting impulses: love and hate. Love is the manifestation of the life drive; hate, destructiveness and envy are emanations of the death drive. Both drives are two innate instincts in conflict with each other. As Mitchell writes, 'From the very beginning the neonate tries to deal with the conflict between these two drives, either by bringing them together in order to modify the death drive with the life drive

²²⁸ Mitchell, Juliet. 1991. *The Selected Melanie Klein* (London, Penguin Books): 18

²²⁹ Ibid.: 51

or by expelling the death drive into the outside world'.²³⁰ Thus, 'The relationship between the ego and the impulses, drives and body-feelings on the one hand, and between these and the outside world on the other, are the two poles whose interaction Klein describes'.²³¹

In Kleinian psychoanalysis, 'the womb was seen to first stand for the world; and the child originally approached this world with desires to attack and destroy it' because it perceived the 'real, external world as more or less hostile to itself, and peopled with objects ready to make attacks upon it'.²³² Klein was concerned with the impact of the life and death instincts on the infant's perceptions of 'primary objects' which correspond to the satisfaction of needs and wishes resulting from the first mother-infant encounter. As Juliet Mitchell says, in Klein's theory, 'the ego works with both the death and the life drive, fending off annihilation, moving towards integration; expressing envy, feeling gratitude'.²³³

Klein deemed that a phantasy expresses itself in symbolic forms. According to her, phantasies are the means by which infants make sense of the external world and hence relate to it through 'projection' and 'introjection'. 'Projection' takes aspects of one's internal world and projects them onto external subjects, whereas 'introjection' occurs when a subject takes into itself the behaviours, attributes or other external objects, especially of other people.²³⁴

²³⁰ Ibid.: 19

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Klein, Melanie. 1975. 'The Early Development of Conscience in the Child', *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works: 1921-1945* (New York, The Free Press): 254

²³³ Mitchell, Juliet. 1991. *The Selected Melanie Klein* (London, Penguin Books): 32

²³⁴ Wright, Elizabeth. 2006. *Psychoanalytic Criticism* (Cambridge, Polity Press): 72

The term 'Object Relations' in Kleinian psychology refers to the idea that the ego-self exists only in relation to other objects, which may be external or internal.²³⁵ The internal objects are internalized versions of external objects, primarily formed from early interactions with the parents. This theory claims that human beings are relationship-seeking rather than pleasure-seeking, as Freud had suggested. Klein directed most of her attention to the importance and value of the first good object relation that an infant experiences and this was the relation to the mother and the mother's breast. The infant's first experiences of feeding and of his mother's presence initiate an object-relation to him.²³⁶

Klein's 'Object Relations' theory differs from Freudian theory because it places more emphasis on interpersonal relationships, stressing the infant's relationship with the mother rather than the father, and because it suggests that people are motivated primarily by the desire for human contact rather than for sexual pleasure. Klein agreed with Freud's concept of the id/ego/superego, but felt that the superego was operating during the oral phase of development.²³⁷ Like her mentor Karl Abraham, she postulated that the superego was present from birth rather than something that was attained during the development of the Oedipus Complex at the age of five or six. Moreover, Klein believed that the mother's breast was the basis for the Oedipus Complex.²³⁸

²³⁵ Klein, Melanie. 1948. 'The psychogenesis of manic-depressive states', *Contributions to Psychoanalysis 1921-1945* (London, Hogarth Press): 284

²³⁶ *Ibid.*: 305

²³⁷ Klein, Melanie. 1948. 'The early development of conscience in the Child', *Contributions to Psychoanalysis 1921-1945* (London, Hogarth Press): 267

²³⁸ Klein, Heimann, Isaacs & Riviere. 1952. *Developments in Psychoanalysis* (London, Hogarth Press): 239

Therefore, as the couple's work together demonstrates, Pailthorpe's criticism of the Freudian method because she no longer believed in its efficacy was due to her conviction that close human contact was of supreme importance and, like Klein, placed emphasis in its therapeutic value.

3.6 The couple's research project

Although Pailthorpe and Mednikoff eventually began to reverse the roles of analyst and patient, a letter to Mednikoff, dated 10 May 1935, shows us that, at first, Pailthorpe intended to follow the conventional model for psychoanalysis:

...of course I realise the artist in you, and that impulsiveness is native to the artist, and also that you had no training in the discipline of science; but this work we are going to do is a scientific experiment, and as such demands absolute obedience to the conditions of the experiment which I shall have to lay down from time to time as I see fit, for the sake of carrying out that experiment.²³⁹

Soon after this letter was sent and about three months after their first meeting, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff moved to a cottage in Cornwall (Figure 16) to carry out their research, which focused on the psychological and therapeutic value of art which they explored in drawings, oils and watercolours. Their psychoanalytic analysis of these works was at the centre of their research project. The research was primarily concerned with the recovery of their 'earliest experiences, even [going back] to those before we could talk. If that repressed child within us is to be revived, we shall find it still the infant with the infant's mode of expression'.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Letter from Pailthorpe to Mednikoff, dated 10.05.35. London: Tate Britain Archive (TAM 75 'Poems, diary and correspondence with Pailthorpe 1935-1937')

²⁴⁰ Notes by Pailthorpe on analytic procedure, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure')

Despite Pailthorpe's initial intention to make use of the conventional method in psychoanalysis, this soon gave way to a reciprocal process where Pailthorpe began painting and drawing and Mednikoff began studying psychoanalysis. In spite of the 23-year age gap, Pailthorpe was the single most important influence on Mednikoff, and he the single most important influence on her. Their relationship was symbiotic as they eventually began to reverse the roles of analyst and patient. They used their drawings as an aid to their self-analysis and each commented upon the other's work. The alternation of the patient/analyst roles was highly unorthodox, for in conventional psychoanalysis the patient verbalises thoughts from which the analyst deduces the unconscious conflicts causing the patient's symptoms, interpreting them in order to help the patient resolve his or her problems. The couple's approach was unorthodox because the relationship between the analyst and analysand involved a collaboration and exchange of roles in which Mednikoff learned more about analysis and Pailthorpe learned more about expressing herself through painting and drawing.

Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's spontaneously produced drawings and paintings acted as the pictorial equivalent to verbal free association and were used as instruments of psychic investigation. Initially, Pailthorpe was under Mednikoff's aesthetic guidance and produced fewer paintings and drawings than Mednikoff. When she did draw or paint, she 'indulged in complete freedom of line without any preconceived idea or mental image', and Mednikoff would look at the results from an artistic viewpoint whilst she interpreted the images analytically.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Ibid.

The aim of the production and interpretation of their automatic drawings was to uncover otherwise inaccessible memories. Therefore, when painting or drawing, their use of automatism consisted of allowing their hand to wander across the surface without any interference from the conscious mind. Pailthorpe and Mednikoff maintained that the resulting marks would not be random or meaningless, but would be guided by the functioning of the unconscious mind, and not by rational thought or artistic training.

Mednikoff formed a strong relation of dependence upon Pailthorpe as he was often the one under study. Moreover, the considerable age difference meant that they formed a mother-child relationship. Mednikoff often refers to Pailthorpe as the ‘mother-figure’ in his notes on his drawings as Pailthorpe had an authority which Mednikoff lacked.²⁴² For instance, soon after they began their research, he noted:

Fear was strong all the time and the thought of drawing was most abhorrent and I avoided any such proposal to this effect by GWP. I also mentioned this to her. I dare not draw for fear that I should find out more about myself that was unpleasant - that I was even more savage a murderer than had so far been disclosed. I hated to think that I should be so vicious and cruel and avoided any chance of my knowing about it again. To abstain from drawing was to avoid being reminded of it [...] GWP’s gentleness and consideration was a most vital help to me at this time and my misery and despondency must have been very patent to her at the time.²⁴³

As the art therapist and psychoanalyst, David Maclagan, says in his essay ‘Making for Mother’, Pailthorpe ‘believed that the main cause of repression was fear, and that once this fear was confronted unconscious material would surface readily, often in

²⁴² Notes on drawings by Mednikoff, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 19 ‘Extracts from Mednikoff’s diary’)

²⁴³ Notes on drawings by Mednikoff, dated 15.06.35. (TAM 75 ‘Poems, diary and correspondence with Pailthorpe 1935-1937’)

the form of art'.²⁴⁴ Thus, in their work, the images arrived at through the free play given to the unconscious became instrumental in the freeing of repression. The unconscious realisations arrived at through each drawing session were brought into consciousness through the process of analysis and allowed them to face any fear and repression. In fact, on 22 June 1935, only a week after writing about his fears in the passage just quoted, Mednikoff felt there had been an improvement, both psychologically and in his paintings, as he wrote:

I became better as the painting progressed as I found that I was able to get brighter and fresher colour into my work which had never previously been possible. This made me much happier and GWP too was elated at this sign of progress. It was sunlight that I aimed for and it was the bright light in the subject that I recall was the important factor in the painting.²⁴⁵

When referring to their use of pen and pencil as their first media, once they began working together, and their turn to watercolours some time after they started their research, Pailthorpe wrote:

It has since been discovered that water-colour painting, by the method of using it evolved in this research, is actually the speedier way of allowing the unconscious to express itself through paint. It seems most patients begin painting with designs in colour. As form is seldom required by the unconscious in the early days the use of watercolour for pattern is easy enough. The wish for form is a later development [...] Pencil and pen are obviously the very first medium of all.²⁴⁶

Pailthorpe was also concerned in analysing the relationship between the emotion experienced and the medium chosen. She noted that Mednikoff:

...reverts to pen and ink when fear and attack are rising. When it becomes extreme he will take to pencils and, in this case as will be seen, to carbon pencil. The lead pencil and carbon pencil make darker and more savage

²⁴⁴ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 41

²⁴⁵ Notes on drawings by Mednikoff, dated 22.06.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 19 'Extracts from Mednikoff's diary')

²⁴⁶ Notes on medium by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure'): C

marks and with pencils it is possible to stab, to dig into the paper; destroy. Paint is much too gentle and smooth a medium in these states of frenzied fear.²⁴⁷

Mednikoff also used ink wash in automatic drawings such as *November 27, 1935-1* (Figure 17) as a symbol for dirt and for portraying objects that are dirty. Black denoted what the parent declared unclean. As Mednikoff emphasised, when commenting on this ink drawing, ‘the fact that the drawing is entirely executed in black is a clue to the nature of the fantasy that is contained in it, namely, it is going to tell us something about forbidden and, therefore, unclean objects’.²⁴⁸ The black colour expressed negative associations such as fear.

The date and time at which each work was executed was an aid to the process of analysis and was precisely noted. An analytic description was also sometimes written on the reverse of the drawing or painting. However, while it is clear that some of the couple’s drawings and paintings were tools for analysis, eventually, as we shall see, others were being produced for exhibiting purposes. Thus, titles were only given when the works were intended for exhibitions.

Together, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff devised what they called the ‘satiation-analysis’ technique. In this technique, which they themselves came up with, the analyst would encourage the patient to produce unconscious material as well as say whatever he or she wanted without censorship. In this way, the patient would produce the material and the therapist would seek an intellectual understanding of it. They expressed their unconscious through automatic drawings and paintings and swapped the roles of

²⁴⁷ Notes on analytic observations by Pailthorpe, dated 04.08.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 138 ‘Analytical Observations and Interpretations’): 47-48

²⁴⁸ Interpretation of drawings by Mednikoff, dated 27.11.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 14 ‘Interpretation of Paintings and Drawings for Lectures to Psychologists’): 1

patient and analyst every fortnight. This meant that there were no boundaries between the analyst and the analyzed. Mednikoff would look at the drawings and paintings while Pailthorpe would interpret the images analytically and make comments on their psychological content.²⁴⁹ The aim was for the patient, whether it was Pailthorpe or Mednikoff, to return to past times in his or her life to search for the source of his or her current problems. As we have seen, Janet's therapeutic method also emphasised that certain symptoms in patients showed their origin in past events. Thus, the couple's technique enabled them to uncover repressed infantile memories by using art as a tool in which 'the patient is asked to be as free as possible and to avoid, if he or she can, a desire to alter shapes that first appear [...] to paint without caring about results [...] to be loose and free with the paint'.²⁵⁰ Additionally, as Pailthorpe maintained, 'The childlike simplicity of the paintings reveals the fact that the unconscious is making direct and simple statements'.²⁵¹

Without doubt, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's satiation technique was a method where they were dependent on one another. The analyst would give the patient food and drink before an analysis to relieve anxiety. The analyst would never help the patient whilst painting but would make gestures of reassurance, approval, permission and sympathy if he or she showed signs of needing it.²⁵² Furthermore, as Pailthorpe later stated, 'part of our analysis is in going over the analytic material again and again at

²⁴⁹ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 05.08.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure'): 4

²⁵⁰ Ibid.: C

²⁵¹ Ibid.: 91

²⁵² Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 65 'Technique'): 1

intervals during analysis. This ensures an increase in assimilation of what has come to surface before. Each time there are added details fitted into the picture'.²⁵³

The satiation technique depended upon writing notes about the drawings and paintings and every work was followed by an abundance of detailed explanations. Their procedure was to interpret and analyse the paintings in the order they were done by writing any feelings and thoughts they had about their own and one another's work, and then interpreting any symbols that they recognized. As Pailthorpe put it in research notes dated 23 June 1935:

Our habit is, after an evening's work, to go back over the paintings in the order they were done and write up any feelings and thoughts we have with regard to them. We naturally recognise many of our symbols and interpret them directly.²⁵⁴

Mednikoff's notes on Pailthorpe's drawings reveal that they aimed to separate the unconscious from the conscious mind:

Dr. P. was getting a demonstration of sketching from life, being allowed only five to ten minutes on each drawing so that there was no time to attempt to consider anything before drawing. The quickest of glances was all that there was time for. This means that in the quick glance the eye is permitted to note the object but no time is left for the conscious part of the artist to add what has been noted. Thus the unconscious is allowed to express itself to some great degree in the drawing without interference of the conscious.²⁵⁵

This same passage also reveals that although their drawings were produced automatically, Mednikoff was teaching Pailthorpe to 'sketch from life'. Mednikoff's classes at St. Martin's School of Art had involved outdoor sketching and his purpose

²⁵³ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 01.03.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 138 'Analytic observations and interpretations')

²⁵⁴ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 23.06.35; in *ibid.*

²⁵⁵ Notes on Pailthorpe's drawings by Mednikoff, dated 19.07.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 19 'Extracts from Mednikoff's diary'): 54

in giving Pailthorpe these exercises could have been to enable her to use the pencil loosely and produce a quick sketch without erasing anything in the process. This technique would have an impact on the drawings and watercolours she produced in 1938 for the 'Birth Trauma Series' (to be discussed in Chapter 5).

During the course of their research, Pailthorpe wrote:

...when, in psychoanalysis, some of the pent-up energies of repression were released, there would seem to be a natural turning towards some expression of the self through art [...] The art development helped on the analysis, the analysis helped on the art. The two, functioning together, produced greater art, greater knowledge in the science of mind.²⁵⁶

As this quote demonstrates, in their determination to analyse and explain subconscious behaviour in the course of their experiments on themselves and one another, the couple's art was an automatic expression of conflicting images which run between the conscious and unconscious and the works they made were produced in their desire to reconcile themselves with their subconscious fears and desires.

This desire is evident from the start of their work together when, following her suggestion, Mednikoff produced his first 'unconscious' painting in oils, *Transition*, on 1 April 1935 (Figure 18) at Pailthorpe's house. As he wrote in his analytic notes, it was 'The first oil painting done in which I allowed the unconscious to express itself'.²⁵⁷ He continued his analysis by saying:

The feeling of lightness, of flying, which is felt in the design is perhaps an exhilaration due to permission given to do these things to express my feelings without fear (from GWP). As yet there is not too much certainty about this expression (meaning that the unconscious is still a little uncertain as to what will happen if it let go properly) [...] The oval platform is

²⁵⁶ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 41

²⁵⁷ Notes by Mednikoff on his drawings, dated 01.04.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 138 'Analytical observations and interpretations'): 1 (Present whereabouts of *Transition* unknown. No illustrations found)

comforting and suggests permission from mother to play at the game that takes place above her (= on mother's lap). The display of penis symbols (cones and horns) is, I believe, to give myself assurance of safety.²⁵⁸

Apparently, *Transition* consisted of various body parts and, in her interpretation, Pailthorpe stated that piercing, biting and sucking were the main themes.²⁵⁹ *Transition* included not only recognisable symbols for cannibalism, she claimed, but also reflected Mednikoff's 'voracious and sadistic treatment of the mother'.²⁶⁰ As we can see, Pailthorpe's interpretation of the oil painting was modelled on Klein's theory of 'Object Relations'.

Just after Pailthorpe and Mednikoff had had their first discussion of the possibility of working together, on 4 April 1935, Mednikoff painted *Barn Dance* (Figure 19).²⁶¹ In her analytic observations, Pailthorpe described *Barn Dance* as a work that depicted a "copulation dance" [...] anal colouring and anal intercourse [...] the sadistic element biting the female is shown'.²⁶² Thus, even from the start of his research with Pailthorpe, Mednikoff's works present an experience of parts and wholes in ways that seem charged with pleasure and threat. The faeces-like coloured forms in *Barn Dance* consist of open spaces and holes. These open spaces and curvilinear forms enhance the impression of movement and the forms in *Barn Dance* are susceptible to interpretation both as two dancing figures and as a copulating couple.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Notes by Pailthorpe on *Transition*, dated April 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 35 'Chronological Digest of Notes and Drawings on Mednikoff'): 1

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Notes on Mednikoff's drawings and paintings by Pailthorpe, dated April 1935. London: Tate Britain Archive (TAM 75 'Poems, diary and correspondence with Pailthorpe 1935-1937')

²⁶² Notes on *Barn Dance* by Pailthorpe, dated 04.04.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 138 'Analytical observations and interpretations'): 2

Therefore, in Mednikoff's first two paintings, we can see how his fantasies revolved around protecting and breaking and entering the mother's body. Breasts, penises and faeces play a prominent part in the paintings and the interpretations attached to them. Similar imagery and symbolism is present in another of Mednikoff's early drawings dated and titled *April 21, 1935-4* (Figure 20). This drawing was the fourth (and final) work that Mednikoff produced that day and, in his analysis, he stated:

Here all my savagery plays the part of defending mother. Escape again – meaning that by pretending to defend mother I was escaping having my real motives discovered. The bent, double-ended penis symbol is toothed but in defence of mother [...] the desecrated walls of the womb, in turn, protect the breast symbol. This I realise is now no longer a defence of mother but me viciously attacking mother. My savage teeth are really savage – defending myself. Fear of castration. That which is to be protected (the stolen breast) is sheltered within the protectiveness of mother's shattered womb [...] The voluted platform is pleasant in character – an assumed protection of mother. The vicious tone of its edge is indicative of its defence of my own penis. The enclosing nature of the outer symbols again assumes the womb idea – castration fear sends me back into mother for protection.²⁶³

Pailthorpe's work with Mednikoff led her to link all unconscious wishes to infantile feelings. As she says in an essay she wrote in April 1937, 'sociologically we are all babies and ex-babies in our unconscious relationship to each other, and in our arrest in development, in so far as the unconscious is holding us back in any way. We are none of us parents, nor can be such to each other so long as the repressed unconscious is not fully brought up into consciousness'.²⁶⁴ The research of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff shows us that they were mainly concerned with the

²⁶³ Notes by Mednikoff on his drawings, dated 21.04.35; in *ibid.*: 3

²⁶⁴ Essay titled 'Sociological' by Pailthorpe, dated 04.04.37. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 38 'Sociological'): 42

recovery of their 'earliest experiences, even to those before we could talk'.²⁶⁵ When describing their technique, Mednikoff wrote:

Through automatic art a record of infantile experiences in historical sequence is obtained, consequently the exact order in which details appear and feelings arise in the patient during drawing are important in understanding the 'picture' being presented by the unconscious. Through automatic art the fantasies that occurred during the infancy of the patient are revived, thus making analysis a fantasy interpretation procedure.²⁶⁶

Furthermore, Pailthorpe claimed that the couple's research produced material which seven years of daily analysis with Jones had not. When referring to the progression of her work with Mednikoff, as opposed to her work with Jones, Pailthorpe stated:

...it was undoubtedly what I had been looking for, viz another method of reaching the unconscious and of bringing it up into consciousness. My own fruitless experience of seven years of psychoanalysis by the strict Freudian method had left me a complete wreck physically and psychologically. Others I knew had suffered in the same way. I had been a most efficient doctor and surgeon and came to analysis as a necessary part of my equipment when I decided to specialise in psychological medicine. My career had been everywhere successful. In the process of analysis my sublimations were all broken down, but there was the conscious realization of what was causing this, and the wrecking of my physical health, except the unrelieved tension and strain of unproductive [.....] over a continuous period of 7. years.²⁶⁷

Fundamentally, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff saw 'Satiation as the means by which the unconscious is enabled to disclose the reasons attached to its fears'.²⁶⁸ In Pailthorpe's writings on their unorthodox technique, she asserted:

Our method was to satiate first and this would be followed by anxiety because, having had what is not permitted by the parent figures, the

²⁶⁵ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 16

²⁶⁶ Notes on technique by Mednikoff, dated 1937. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 23 'Technique')

²⁶⁷ Notes by Pailthorpe, dated 19.07.37. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 120 'Pailthorpe analytical notes and poems'): 3

²⁶⁸ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 07.12.37. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 23 'Technique'): 10

infantile unconscious then expects to be punished. At this point knowing what it is we have indulged in (which previously was forbidden), we can then continue working to find out why it was not permitted – and this our drawings invariably disclose. This method was exactly opposite to the Freudian method which is that they try to create an anxiety state first, in the analytic procedure, and then to find out why and of what one was afraid. And this takes place under a state of abstinence. Not to have what you want and, at the same time, to tell of what you are afraid is to suggest that you (the patient) are still not permitted that which, in fantasy, you have taken (stolen, eaten); and so to work in a state of anxiety and fear of punishment if you should dare disclose what you want (which is to admit you have taken it). In other words to show or admit you have done something naughty, which you know is usually followed by punishment the moment the parent figures become aware of the naughty act, in a situation which does not promise anything other than punishment (=abstinence; a form of punishment frequently used by parents).²⁶⁹

Three years after they first met, when describing the process by which they produced their drawings and paintings, Pailthorpe maintained that ‘All the paintings are automatic. Nothing is changed or altered. There is no hesitation in their execution. The work is done in one swift flow. No time elapses between one drawing and another. No conscious interference takes place, or, if it obtrudes, it is set aside’.²⁷⁰ The couple had a missionary faith in the therapeutic effects of such freedom which, thus, led to Pailthorpe forming a relation between unconscious wishes and infantile feelings which eventually developed into her ideas of the ‘trauma of birth’.

3.7 Conclusion

After looking at the couple’s first year of work together, this chapter also raises questions about Mednikoff’s first-hand knowledge of the writings of Janet, Freud and Klein before he met Pailthorpe. His interest in psychoanalysis and its influence

²⁶⁹ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 07.12.37. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 65 ‘Technique’): 11-12

²⁷⁰ Introductory notes by Pailthorpe on ‘Toe Dance Series’, dated 25.02.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 166 ‘Toe Dance Series’)

on Surrealism previous to their first meeting suggests that he knew of Freud's writings. Nevertheless, even though it was Mednikoff who introduced Pailthorpe to automatism in art, the relationship between Pailthorpe and Mednikoff indicates that initially Mednikoff was dependent on Pailthorpe for his knowledge of Janet and Klein. This is because the psychoanalytic concepts and jargon he now and then uses in his notes affirms that he was identifying with Pailthorpe and absorbing what she knew. He became engaged in the theoretical ideas that marked Pailthorpe through their work together.

Indeed, the writings of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff demonstrate how they used art as an alternative to conventional analysis. Their art was 'the outcome of accumulated experiences' and provided the material for the analysis of their behaviour and fantasies as they aimed to retrace the chain of associations which manifested the images that emerged on paper or canvas.²⁷¹ As Michel Remy says, their drawings and paintings 'are the best examples of psychoanalytical examination becoming a means of liberation, based on a spontaneous outpouring of feelings, design and colour'.²⁷²

²⁷¹ Essay titled 'Sociological' by Pailthorpe, dated 24.01.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 38 'Sociological'): 16

²⁷² Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Hants, Ashgate Publishing Limited): 89

Chapter 4: Towards Surrealism (1936)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's participation in the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936 and examines their relationship with Surrealism and the critical reception of the art they displayed. All correspondences, references and events will follow a chronological structure. I will also refer to André Breton's famous reception of their paintings and drawings and end the chapter with the couple's participation in the exhibition 'Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism' at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in December 1936.

4.2 The International Surrealist exhibition

In November 1935, Gascoyne's text, *A short survey of Surrealism*, was published by Cobden-Sanderson. Gascoyne had been commissioned by Cobden-Sanderson to write a book on Surrealism, and in July 1935 he went to Paris to do the necessary research. The result was the first comprehensive work on Surrealism to be published in English. As we saw in Chapter 2, Mednikoff had asked Gascoyne whether he could write a review of the book but his offer was turned down because, as Gascoyne's letter shows us, the review had already been written by an unnamed person.¹ Gascoyne's book was proof of the growing international interest in Surrealism. Translations of poetry by Breton, Tzara, Eluard, Dalí and others provided the framework. There are also ample quotations from the Surrealist manifestos, other books and poetry collections, together with an account of Surrealism's ancestor

¹ Letter from Gascoyne to Mednikoff, dated 31.12.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 103 'Surrealism in Britain: correspondence with David Gascoyne')

Dada. The book is part history, part critique. *A short survey of Surrealism* constitutes a landmark in the history of art in Britain. Arguably, it had an immediate influence on Pailthorpe and Mednikoff because within a very short time of its publication, as Pailthorpe noted on 3 December 1935, there was the ‘first appearance of true uncontrolled unconscious writing’ in Mednikoff’s work.²

The International Surrealist exhibition, which was held at the New Burlington Galleries in London, opened six months after it was hinted at in Gascoyne’s *A short survey of Surrealism* where he ended by saying: ‘It is within the bounds of possibility that a surrealist group may be founded shortly in London. André Breton and Paul Eluard have declared their intention of visiting England in the Spring of 1936 and there is talk of a large surrealist exhibition being held at the same time’.³ However, in his article ‘Surrealism’s vertiginous descent on Britain’, Michel Remy tells us that although the first discussion about organising such an exhibition had been between Gascoyne and Breton, it was Herbert Read who took the initiative to set it up.⁴

At the instigation of Roland Penrose and Read, an organizing committee was set up and the first of eight meetings took place on 6 April 1936 in Penrose’s home at 21 Downshire Hill.⁵ Rupert Lee acted as the chair. Read, Paul Nash, Henry Moore and Hugh Sykes Davies were all present. From the fourth meeting, Man Ray, Humphrey Jennings, Gascoyne, Sheila Legge and occasionally S.W. Hayter and Edward

² Notes by Pailthorpe, dated 03.12.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 35 ‘Chronological Digest of Notes and Drawings on Mednikoff’): 2

³ Gascoyne, David. 2000. *A short survey of Surrealism* (London, Enitharmon): 92

⁴ Leeds City Art Galleries. 1986. *Surrealism in Britain in the thirties: angels of anarchy and machines for making clouds*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds City Art Gallery): 26

⁵ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Hants, Ashgate Publishing Limited): 73

McKnight Kauffer, also attended.⁶ In order to get works from other nations, contact was made with Breton, Paul Eluard and Georges Hugnet in France, E.L.T. Mesens in Belgium, and Bjerke-Peterson in Denmark. Breton and Eluard were responsible for the selection of international works whereas Penrose and Read chose works by British artists.⁷

The installation was arranged for June 8 and 9 but, two days before the private view, Mesens came to London and disagreed with the hanging. According to Remy, he 'redesigned the exhibition, alternating large and small paintings, so that the visitor was obliged to step forward and then backward, thus encountering each picture individually'.⁸ In fact, in *Scrapbook*, Penrose wrote how

...he was immensely helpful in insisting that the right method to follow in hanging the show was to abandon all thoughts of chronology or of making isolated groups of each artist's work but rather whenever possible to make contrasts of colours, dimensions and content so as to produce, by shock tactics, the maximum of excitement. The labyrinth of objects, surrealist and ethnographic, helped greatly to remove any sense of a conventionally arranged academic show and contributed greatly to the fact that surrealism was not a new artistic style but a challenge to the painstaking aesthetic approach which dominated all London art exhibitions at that time.⁹

This shows us how, from the start, Mesens played a leading role within the British Surrealist group, a point I shall expand on in Chapter 7.

The exhibition was held from 11 June to 4 July 1936, twelve years after the publication of the first Surrealist Manifesto by Breton in 1924. This large-scale, highly publicized Surrealist event consisted of an impressive series of works by all the continental celebrities of Surrealism. Breton and his wife Jacqueline attended the

⁶ Ibid.: 74

⁷ Leeds City Art Galleries. 1986. *Surrealism in Britain in the thirties: angels of anarchy and machines for making clouds*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds City Art Gallery): 26

⁸ Ibid.: 75-6

⁹ Penrose, Roland. 1981. *Scrapbook* (London, Thames & Hudson): 70

opening ceremony and Breton inaugurated the show on 11 June at 3pm with his lecture on the Surrealist object.¹⁰ Breton also delivered a lecture entitled 'Limites non-frontières du Surréalisme' at the exhibition on June 16.¹¹

At that time, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff had been working together for only a year and had never exhibited any of the works which they had so far produced. It is difficult to know for sure whether Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's invitation to exhibit came through Gascoyne or Pailthorpe's patient (from 19 April 1929 to 17 January 1930) and supporter Cecilia Dimsdale. During the early to mid-1930s, after her treatment had ceased, Dimsdale continued to send her drawings and analyses to Pailthorpe, asking the latter to analyse them.¹² Pailthorpe's correspondence with Dimsdale suggests that their relationship provided a model for the later relationship and research with Mednikoff.

We do not exactly know how Dimsdale became involved in the organisation of the exhibition but we do know that, two weeks before it opened, Pailthorpe received a telegram from Dimsdale, asking her to post examples of her work to Rupert Lee.¹³ On 31 May 1936, after having visited London with examples of their work, Pailthorpe then wrote to Diana Brinton Lee, the secretary of the exhibition, saying that they would follow Gascoyne's suggestion that they deliver their work personally on 8 June 1936.¹⁴ From two drawings by Mednikoff captioned as having been

¹⁰ Polizzotti, Mark. 1995. *Revolution of the Mind: The life of André Breton* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux): 432

¹¹ Ades, Dawn. 1978. *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed*. Exh. Cat. (London, Arts Council of Great Britain): 347

¹² Correspondence between Dimsdale and Pailthorpe, dated 1929-36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 82 'C L Dimsdale correspondence and related papers')

¹³ Letter from Dimsdale to Pailthorpe, dated 22.05.36; in *ibid.*

¹⁴ Letter from Pailthorpe to Brinton Lee, dated 31.05.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 118 'Surrealism in Britain: International Surrealist Exhibition')

executed while in London for the exhibition, we know that the couple were in London from June 3rd.¹⁵ Therefore, it seems that both Gascoyne and Dimsdale played a part in aiding the couple's participation in the exhibition.¹⁶

An undated form from the International Surrealist exhibition committee listing requirements for the exhibition also tells us that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff must have been in London at the start and end of the exhibition. However, we do not know in which part of London they were based. The form states that 'Works must be delivered to the Gallery by the artist on Sending-in Day and removed at the close of the Exhibition'.¹⁷ The form also includes a timetable of the exhibition diary dates:

Sending in Day, Monday June 8th.
Press View, Thursday June 11th, 10 o'clock.
Private View, Thursday June 11th, 3 o'clock.
Open to the Public, Friday June 12th.
Works to be removed, Saturday July 4th.¹⁸

A letter from Pailthorpe, dated 1 June, to the insurance company 'Lloyd's & Royal Exchange', shows that the works that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff exhibited were as follows:

Mednikoff:

Darts (oil on canvas)
The Stairway to Paradise (watercolour)
Come back Soon (pencil on paper)
Head-waiter (pencil on paper)
Arboreal Bliss (oil)

Pailthorpe:

Wind (watercolour)
Ancestors I (ink drawing on paper)

¹⁵ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 20

¹⁶ Efforts to discover more about Dimsdale have not yielded anything.

¹⁷ Letter from Brinton Lee to Pailthorpe, not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 118 'Surrealism in Britain: International Surrealist Exhibition')

¹⁸ Ibid.

Ancestors II (ink drawing on paper)¹⁹

In this letter, Pailthorpe listed the insurance values of these art works, which ranged from £10 to £40. She also stated that she wanted the art works to be covered from 6 June against all risks of damage or loss until three days after the termination of the exhibition.²⁰

Pailthorpe's *Ancestors* drawings, dated 5 July 1935, (Figure 21) consist of images of hairy, grotesque human and animal figures and faces packed inside one another. The Surreal images emerge through a disengagement from conscious mechanisms as she morphs one image into another. In the first drawing, there is a figure with a monstrous hairy masculine face and breast-shaped hump on its back whereas in the second there are several other ambiguous half-animal, half-human forms.²¹

Pailthorpe produced these works at a time when she had only just begun to paint and draw and, in them, she makes patterns and representations of anything that came to mind, unconsciously exploring the bounds of space with the objects she arranges and depicts. In these drawings, as she herself puts it, her use of graphic automatism brings us face to face with our ancestors because they are part of our interior transformations.²² Even at this relatively early point, Pailthorpe insisted that the couple's art was based on the assumption that 'every mark and shape is intended by the subconscious and has a specific meaning'.²³ Thus, the symbols in the *Ancestors*

¹⁹ Letter from Pailthorpe to 'Lloyd & Royal Exchange', dated 01.06.36; in *ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Hants, Ashgate Publishing Limited): 89

²² Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 05.08.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File

22 'Analytic Procedure')

²³ *Ibid.*

drawings indicate the wanderings of the subconscious mind when released from inhibitions and repressions.

Moreover, the lines and shapes in *Ancestors* are stylistically in tune with works by André Masson and it is likely that she used his art as a visual source. Many of Masson's automatic drawings were reproduced in *La Révolution Surréaliste* and *Cahiers d'Art* and Pailthorpe would have looked at such key publications when she first began collaborating with Mednikoff. Articles on Masson also featured in Surrealist journals such as *Documents* and *Transition* in 1929 and 1930.

Like Pailthorpe, Masson produced a number of works in pen and ink that consist of meandering lines and shapes. A sense of pervasive movement and violence emerges from the subject matter of both their works. Several of Masson's drawings and paintings appear abstract but also contain recognisable figures and objects as well as sexual imagery. His works range from sketchy, almost abstract marks to multiple webs of fine lines from which images of objects, animals or limbs emerge; such as in *Figure* (1926) (Figure 22).

In *Figure*, Masson's interest in metamorphosis is demonstrated as his unconsciously drawn marks or lines become recognizable shapes. As with *Ancestors*, the almost convulsive black line of automatism virtually takes over the canvas as the architecture dissolves into humanoid forms. Like Pailthorpe, Masson's figurative forms seem to have been created without any conscious control. *Figure* was published in *Documents* in 1929 so it is likely that Pailthorpe saw this work there.²⁴

²⁴ *Documents*, 1929, 1/2: 96

Just as in Pailthorpe's *Ancestors* drawings, a violent form of draughtsmanship is also evident in Masson's *Fish drawn on the Sand* (1927) (Figure 23). *Fish drawn on the Sand* was reproduced in *Documents* in 1930 and Pailthorpe could have seen it there.²⁵ In this work, Masson poured glue in patches and lines over the surface of the canvas and used his fingers to spread it here and there. He then sprinkled sand over the entire surface which remained on the gluey areas before falling away as he tilted the canvas. Thus, through his use of sand and glue, Masson created a picture that was based on random automatic gestures. Within a web of tangled lines, Masson constructed images by complimenting patches and layers of sand with drawn lines and patches of paint. Like the *Ancestors* drawings, Masson's work also consists of animal imagery, zigzag lines and entwined forms. The flowing black lines are framed with curvilinear shapes.

Although, like *Ancestors*, Mednikoff's *Come back Soon* (26.01.36) (Figure 24) also portrays a half-animal, half-human figure, his drawing is not as detailed as the patterns which we see in the *Ancestors* drawings since his forms are not packed inside one another to the extent that Pailthorpe's are. Instead, there is a combination of different graphic styles in *Come back Soon*. We can see the contrast between the representation of the legs, which are quite naturalistic, and the monstrous torso. Mednikoff had previously worked as a caricaturist and illustrator and the drawing looks like a comic sketch. Nevertheless, the drawing also represents complex autobiographical references. The images of the running boy's legs, the coffin and the beard illustrate how Mednikoff was recreating his own childhood experiences and, in

²⁵ *Documents*, 1930, 2/5: 286

the very informal and hurried account on the reverse of the drawing, he evokes the terror of Jewish slaughterhouses:

with a prayer on the lips of the officiating and religiously learned man who has been specially trained for the job. My own unc[onscious] desire to smear and mess I feel certain is due to the carnal mess in the slaughterhouse seen as a child of 3 or 4 onwards. Is it not so much shit as blood and all the interior of one's anatomy that I wish to wrench out and to smear about over everything? The men of holy learning are permitted to kill and as I thought at the time that being holy was the only way one could be allowed to kill. This at once accounts for my lack of holy learning and the difficulty I had as a child to accept the teachings of Jehovah as my parents understood it. I hated Jehovah for he was a jealous God and killed (= punished) if he was not obeyed.²⁶

Mednikoff's more pondered and formal analytical description of *Come back Soon* in notes he wrote on the couple's technique a year later also takes him back to his Jewish childhood:

The artist is depicted as having an animal head with a huge mouth. On top of the head is a cock's-comb; and attached to the lower jaw is a dark, beard-like arrangement of wavy lines. The other dark projections from the body represent feathers and are intended to convey the idea of bird's wings, outspread and flapping. On his uplifted leg is an inverted flower shape, from which some drops are falling. The cock's-comb and feathers are the link with the idea behind this depiction of the mother as a dead bird (the dead bird being in a coffin at the foot of this large figure). As a child the patient had watched the slaughter of poultry. It was evident he had been impressed with the fact that birds are creatures that can be killed. It was a permitted destruction of a living creature, since men were doing this publicly (kosher killing by priests, of a kind, wearing beards, and according to religious ritual). The beard on the lower jaw of the animal (the patient) meant he was one of those people who are permitted to kill, who may kill without fear of being punished for so doing. The cock's-comb and feathers are explaining what type of individual he is – the bearded man of the slaughter-house and none other [...] The drops are the blood that drip from the severed throat of a bird – the mother bird, who is now placed in a box for removal.²⁷

²⁶ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 19 (The text is cited by Wilson)

²⁷ Notes on technique by Mednikoff, dated 1937. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 23 'Technique'): 131-132

Furthermore, the title 'Come back Soon' suggests the fear of the parent never returning. He wrote that the title came to mind after the work was completed and believed that it represented the unconscious fear of being punished by being abandoned by the parent.²⁸ On the other hand, by producing a caricature, Mednikoff could also be holding the religious subject up to ridicule. This drawing along with some of Mednikoff's other works is entertaining as well as serious.

Although the style of both *Come back Soon* and *Ancestors* is spontaneous, the imagery is complex and, as well as drawing on psychoanalytic material, the drawings are evidently indebted to Surrealist automatism and to the metamorphic forms of typical Surrealist art by the likes of Masson and (Salvador) Dalí. As well as consisting of menacing imagery, their drawings reveal a spontaneous and integrated relationship between lines and forms.

Unlike the couple's drawings, Mednikoff's paintings *Darts*, dated 4 May 1935 (Figure 25), and *The Stairway to Paradise*, dated 20 March 1936 (Figure 11), are comparatively more solid and three-dimensional in style and are also less autobiographical in their imagery than the works he produced after 1935.

Darts consists of combinations of fragmented forms which are separated by colour and movement. The impression of movement is communicated by a spiralling composition in which there is a platform with floating angular forms balanced on it. It is an art of curves and dense fullness, of hollows, depths and voids where Mednikoff opens up shapes and combines them. Strong colours spread and interact

²⁸ Notes on drawings by Mednikoff, dated 1937. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 14 '2 lantern slide lectures: 'Interpretation of Paintings and Drawings for Public Lectures, Illustrated with Lantern Slides'): 17

without compromising the tactile properties of the individual elements. Moreover, because of Mednikoff's use of geometric solids like the cone, the cylinder and the sphere, the painting has a monumental, sculptural quality.

Interestingly, in her analysis, Pailthorpe linked *Darts* to *Arboreal Bliss*, dated 23 April 1935 (Figure 26). In her interpretation of these paintings, Pailthorpe highlighted feeding as the regular procedure before attacking:

Also feeding first, before attacking, is a regular procedure of the unconscious. It insures itself against the punishment that must follow after the attack is made. This procedure follows after an attack has been precipitated.

1st sketch 'Darts'= attack

2nd sketch 'Arboreal Bliss'= consummation of that for which attack is made.

Now comes the reverse process. Fear has arisen. In painting these two sketches RM secures his food first (by painting 'Arboreal Bliss' first) and then makes the attack (paints 'Darts' next).²⁹

Arboreal Bliss was the third painting that Mednikoff made once he started working with Pailthorpe. After painting this work, Mednikoff wrote:

My fear of the results of biting and piercing mother and the fact that the sucking motive first came into this sketch, which GWP's tacit consent permitted me to do, led me to rush at an orgy of sucking milk and faeces out of mother. The biting and piercing was being done in the unconscious so that I could get at the food and milk inside mother.³⁰

Arboreal Bliss demonstrates Mednikoff's concern with the recovery of his earliest experiences and in her notes on this painting, Pailthorpe stated that 'If that repressed child within us is to be revived, we shall find it still the infant with the infant's mode of expression'.³¹ *Arboreal Bliss* contains recognisable biomorphic forms and we can

²⁹ Analysis of Mednikoff's work by Pailthorpe, dated 04.05.35. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 138 'Analytic observations and interpretations'): 4

³⁰ Notes on drawings by Mednikoff, dated 1935; in *ibid.*: 5

³¹ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure')

make out flowers and genitalia. As with *Barn Dance*, Mednikoff uses a faeces-like colour and curvilinear forms that resemble the freely developed forms of living organisms. Yet, despite the fact that Pailthorpe linked them together, unlike *Darts*, the shapes in *Arboreal Bliss* are organic rather than geometric.

Paintings by Mednikoff, such as *Darts* and *The Stairway to Paradise*, can be compared to the abstract sculpture of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth in the early thirties as both sculptors sought a balance between concavities and convexities in their work. The geometric forms described in a distinctly three dimensional manner in *Darts* are very similar to those in the sculptures of Hepworth such as *Two Forms and Sphere* (1935) (Figure 27) and *Three Forms* (1935) (Figure 28). *Three Forms* was reproduced in *Axis* in July 1935, but it is not clear whether it predates *Darts* or not. Similarly, it is not clear whether Hepworth made *Two Forms and Sphere* before or after *Darts*. However, as we shall see, there is evidence of Mednikoff's interest in the slightly earlier sculpture of Hepworth so it is possible that he had seen *Three Forms* and *Two Forms and Sphere* before he painted *Darts* in early May 1935.

Three Forms is composed of three separate elements, a tall standing form with a flattened face stationed at the back of the plinth to the left with an egg-like form in front of it and near the centre, and a small sphere at the corner at the back of the plinth on the right. Like the separate solids in *Darts*, hovering above or standing on the circular platform, these vaguely geometric elements are carefully positioned on the rectangular plinth, and cast shadows across it that correspond to the painted shadows in *Darts*. Like Hepworth, furthermore, Mednikoff was concerned with the

interplay between space and mass in his composition. Various geometric forms are also evident in *Two Forms and Sphere*. Moreover, as in several of Hepworth's early abstract works, there is a counterplay between mass and space in *Darts* as well as the use of a platform which lies at the base of the geometric forms. At that period, Hepworth strove to harmonise interrelated but separate forms, stating that from November 1934 'all traces of naturalism had disappeared, and for some years I was absorbed in the relationships in space, in size and texture and weight, as well as in tensions between the forms'.³²

Like Hepworth, Moore was also best known for his abstract monumental pieces in the early thirties and one can see the continuing interplay of forms and spaces in his work. In characteristic sculptures by Moore such as *Reclining Woman* (1935) (Figure 29), the female figure exhibits hollows and openings and something similar is also present in the cylindrical form in Mednikoff's *Darts*. *Reclining Woman* was reproduced in *Axis* in April 1935 and this would have given Mednikoff the opportunity to see it.³³ The forms in *Darts* intertwine, recalling Moore's *Two Forms* (1934) (Figure 30) where the relationship between the two different-sized forms is the principal focus of the sculpture. *Two Forms* was exhibited at the Zwemmer Gallery in early 1935 and reproduced in *Axis* in January 1935 so it is likely that Mednikoff was familiar with it.³⁴

In *The Stairway to Paradise* Mednikoff makes use of the red, yellow and blue primary colours. He creates an impression of softness and solidity as it consists of a

³² Gale, Matthew and Chris Stephens. 1999. *Barbara Hepworth*. Exh. Cat. (London, Tate Gallery Publishing): 50

³³ *Axis*, April 1935, 2: 25

³⁴ *Axis*, January 1935, 1: 9

stairway that lies between a solid, bony, red structure and a blue liquid tongue. There is a little stairway which leads up to a box and comes out of the other side as a long pink form which reaches towards a hole situated just below where the tongue forks.

There are fewer sculptural elements in *The Stairway to Paradise* than in *Darts* as Mednikoff explores the connection between painting as an art of colour and sculpture as an art of form in his 1936 watercolour. This demonstrates his stylistic development as he does not fit together distinct sculptural forms as he had in *Darts*. However, compared to *Darts*, *The Stairway to Paradise* is also more detailed, the tints brighter and paler and the cast shadows more intense. The background in *The Stairway to Paradise* also differs to *Darts* as the forms are highlighted against a clear blue setting whereas in *Darts* the background is created with relatively dark, smudged pigments.

In *The Stairway to Paradise*, Mednikoff segments the mass of the red form with alternate concave and convex shapes. The red form looks as if it has been carved out of some solid substance. The effect is of an object situated in three dimensional space. Although it is not clear whether or not Mednikoff had seen Moore's *Four-Piece Composition: Reclining Figure* (1934) (Figure 31), there are parallels with its spatial perspective and the way in which Moore has arranged the objects in their own spatial setting on the plinth. Hepworth uses the plinth in a similar way in *Reclining Figure* (1933) (Figure 32) and the form of the reclining figure in this particular work has a very similar irregular, rising and falling shape to the red form in *The Stairway to Paradise*. Again, as with *Darts* and Hepworth's works, the forms in Mednikoff's watercolour stand on a platform. Mednikoff could have seen the illustration of

Hepworth's *Reclining Figure* in William Gaunt's article 'In search of the absolute' in *The Studio* in October 1933.³⁵ As Gaunt tells us in his article, at the time the sculpture was being exhibited at the Lefevre Galleries and it is therefore possible that Mednikoff had seen the original sculpture.³⁶

The Stairway to Paradise also bears a similarity to Hepworth's *Mother and Child* (1934) (Figure 33). Hepworth's sculpture was included in an exhibition called 'Unit One' at the Mayor Gallery in April 1934 and Mednikoff could have seen it there before he painted *The Stairway to Paradise*. In this horizontal work, Hepworth juxtaposes separate elements in which the piercing suggests that the child had come from and outgrown the vacant space in the mother's body. As Anne Wagner has observed when describing the relevance of Klein for Hepworth's work:

These are bodies made into objects which may present dangers or threats, or themselves be threatened [...] They add up to a testing and verification of a limited range of fantasmatic fears and hopes concerning the female body's presence, its contents and its voids.³⁷

Life, birth and infancy were the underlying subject of Hepworth's art in 1933 and, as we will see, were also consistent themes in Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's work.³⁸

Plans show us that the International Surrealist exhibition space was divided into six small rooms, eight large rooms, two corridors and two rooms labeled the 'drawings rooms'.³⁹ *Come back Soon* and *Ancestors II* were placed in Drawings Room 1 (Figure 34) and *The Stairway to Paradise* and *Ancestors I* in Drawings Room 2

³⁵ Gaunt, W. 1933. 'In search of the absolute', *The Studio*, 106: 271-3

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 273

³⁷ Thistlewood, David. 1996. *Barbara Hepworth Reconsidered* (Liverpool, Liverpool University press): 60

³⁸ Wagner, Anne. 2005. *Mother Stone* (London, Yale University Press): 153

³⁹ Roland Penrose's photograph album of the International Surrealist exhibition, London 1936 (Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive)

(Figure 35). *Darts* was situated in the first corridor (Figure 36). We do not know where Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's other works were located. It is interesting to see that although Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's works were part of a joint research project, with the exception of *The Stairway to Paradise* and *Ancestors I*, they were not hung side by side during the exhibition. Moreover, to my knowledge, none of the analytical descriptions were available to visitors to the exhibition and no texts can be seen hanging next to any of their drawings or paintings in photos of the exhibition.

The drawings that Pailthorpe exhibited at the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936 were sufficiently impressive to attract André Breton's attention. It is possible that Gascoyne introduced Breton to the couple as he had translated the latter's *Qu'est-ce que le Surréalisme?* in 1935. At all events, after seeing their pictures in the exhibition, Breton singled them out as being 'the best and most truly Surrealist of the works' exhibited by the British artists. He did so in conversation with them – a conversation referred to by Mednikoff in an article entitled 'A History, an exposition and an exhibition of Surrealism', published in the journal *Comment* two weeks after the exhibition closed:

In a conversation with M. Andre Breton I was given to understand that Dr. G. W. Pailthorpe's works were outstanding examples of the art. Such they clearly are, and, with Roland Penrose's work, give English Surrealism an excellent start.⁴⁰

This conversation must have taken place some time between June 11 and 20 as that was when Breton and his wife were in London.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Article by Mednikoff in *Comment*, dated 18.07.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 134 'Surrealism in Britain: Reuben Mednikoff: newscuttings')

⁴¹ Polizzotti, Mark. 1995. *Revolution of the Mind: The life of Andre Breton* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux): 432

It seems that Pailthorpe attached great weight to Breton's statement because it was often quoted by Pailthorpe herself, by Mednikoff and by journalists to whom she must have repeated it. Although they never state why Breton praised their works, it is likely that he sympathised with their medical approach (having after all had a medical training himself) or perhaps because he responded to the hard-line Surrealist imagery and style. Breton's warm reception of the couple's works at the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition also led to a correspondence with him over the years, as we shall see in Chapter 6.

Reviews of the couple's work at the exhibition were also published in *Comment*. Tharp (who signed as Sheila Macleod) and Neuberg were the editors of this journal, which was not a Surrealist magazine but the successor to 'The Poet's Corner' and published articles, stories and poems. Tharp's column in the journal was called 'The Arts' and Neuberg's was titled 'Poetry'. In a review of the International Surrealist exhibition published in Tharp's column in *Comment*, the critic Brian Crozier wrote:

So, for a few good pictures in the present exhibition, there are literally dozens of really bad ones, which are revolutionary neither in the political nor in the artistic sense. They are works which are 'superficial' and do not 'consider the unconscious mind'. Some of these works included those by Hans Bellmer and Len Lye.

On the other hand, he singled out Mednikoff's work by stating:

Of the good ones, we may mention the following: *The Child's Brain* (de Chirico), which represents a nude middle-aged Italian gazing out of a window into the evening; *The Dream* (Dalí); for its glowing super-romanticism; *Darts*, by Mednikoff, for its paranoiac tenseness of colour-expression; and several Picasso's, for their prismatic brilliance.⁴²

⁴² Exhibition review by Brian Crozier in *Comment*, dated 20.06.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 134 'Surrealism in Britain: Reuben Mednikoff: press cuttings'): 217

Pailthorpe and Mednikoff were regular contributors to the journal and often published their poetry and extracts from Pailthorpe's texts on crime and from her work on children from the unpublished manuscript *Curucuchoo*. Furthermore, Mednikoff designed the journal's masthead 'Comment'. Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's willingness to be associated with a journal which included Crozier's negative review of the Surrealist exhibition prefigured their refusal later to publish or exhibit under Surrealist auspices, an attitude which, as we shall see, led eventually to their expulsion from the movement.

During the International Surrealist exhibition, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff continued to carry out their research experiments. This analysis lasted for thirteen days from 23 June to 4 July.⁴³ It is likely that they were in London at the time. No doubt, they found the Surrealist atmosphere in London conducive to their self-analysis and did not want to interrupt the regularity of their sessions. During this period, Mednikoff drew and Pailthorpe analysed him, pointing out his persistent use of eyes in his drawings.⁴⁴ Many of Mednikoff's paintings (throughout their collaboration) reflect his obsession with eyes, a motif that was also used by many of the other Surrealists because of its association with vision, sleep and dreams.

Pailthorpe and Penrose frequently corresponded with one another after the exhibition ended. It seems that Penrose approved of Pailthorpe's work and they kept in touch over her research. In a letter dated 26 June 1936, Penrose asked Pailthorpe for her permission to reproduce *Ancestors I* in the upcoming fourth *International Surrealist*

⁴³ Analytic notes by Pailthorpe, dated June 1936. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 83

'Analytical notes for Diary, January-June 1936')

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Bulletin to be published in September 1936.⁴⁵ He told her that the publication would include ‘a few reproductions of the most outstanding paintings and drawings among the English contributors’.⁴⁶ Although Diana Brinton Lee had already asked Pailthorpe if she would exhibit *Wind* and *Ancestors I* in an unnamed exhibition of Surrealist art due to open at the Kidderminster Art Gallery and Museum during July 1936,⁴⁷ a letter to Penrose shows us that Pailthorpe prioritised the drawing’s publication in the *International Surrealist Bulletin* over the exhibition at the Kidderminster gallery:

Dear Mr Penrose,
I have been asked to loan two of my pictures to the Kidderminster Art Gallery and Museum for exhibition, and I have written giving permission provided that you have first had the use of whichever picture you require for reproduction in the *Bulletin*. Should there be any difficulties in this matter I would much prefer you to make use of the drawing than have it sent to Kidderminster.⁴⁸

In the end, Pailthorpe’s work was exhibited at Kidderminster and published in the *Bulletin*. Other exhibitors at the Kidderminster Art gallery exhibition included Dalí, Miró, Ernst, Picasso, Moore and Klee. A letter from the Borough librarian and curator of the exhibition, dated 24 July, indicates that the exhibition lasted for just over a week but attracted a large attendance. Most of the works on display had already been shown at the International Surrealist exhibition.⁴⁹ Clearly, the International Surrealist exhibition had a positive outcome for the couple as, from then on, they were often asked to take part in other exhibitions.

⁴⁵ *International Surrealist Bulletin*, No. 4, September 1936. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 719 in Roland Penrose Archive)

⁴⁶ Letter from Penrose to Pailthorpe, dated 26.06.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 118 ‘Document: International Surrealist Exhibition’)

⁴⁷ Letter from Brinton Lee to Pailthorpe, dated 07.06.36; in *ibid*.

⁴⁸ Letter from Pailthorpe to Penrose, dated 01.07.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 123 ‘Surrealist Art exhibition, Kidderminster’)

⁴⁹ Letter from librarian to Pailthorpe, dated 24.07.36; in *ibid*.

The commotion generated by the International Surrealist exhibition in London coincided with the intense interest in Surrealism in the United States, where a subsequent major exhibition, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, was held from 8 December 1936 to 17 January 1937 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The director of the museum, Alfred Barr, had attended the International Surrealist exhibition during a trip to London and decided to hold a similar exhibition in New York. It included work by Eileen Agar, John Banting, Henry Moore, Paul Nash and Penrose. Both Pailthorpe and Mednikoff also had their works displayed.⁵⁰

This exhibition differed to the one in London because, apart from the Surrealist works, it contained the most comprehensive presentation of Dada works since the Dadaists' own exhibitions.⁵¹ The main body of the exhibition represented the pioneers of the Dada-Surrealist movements of the previous twenty years but it also included the art of children and the insane.⁵² Furthermore, Barr set Dada and Surrealism into a historical context by also exhibiting examples of "fantastic art" from earlier periods. In doing so, he incurred the anger of Breton, among others, who objected to his art-historical slant on Surrealism.

Breton did not approve of Barr's approach because he was not a Surrealist and his exhibition was not intended to be a demonstration of Surrealist principles or to convert people to Surrealism, but to historicise the movement by connecting it to its predecessor Dada and beyond Dada to the tradition of 'fantastic art'. The art of the insane and Child Art were included to define other sources of inspiration. Therefore,

⁵⁰ Catalogue of 'Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism catalogue' exhibition. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 136 'MOMA, New York: 'Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism' correspondence')

⁵¹ Museum of Modern Art Online. 'A brief guide to the exhibition of 'Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism'', www.moma.org

⁵² Barr, Alfred. 1936. *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (New York, Arno Press): 7

unlike the International Surrealist exhibition in London, Barr's show was not a Surrealist exhibition curated by the Surrealists themselves but a historical survey by a non-member of the group.

Evidence of the couple's invitation can be found in a letter from Pailthorpe to Barr, on 8 September 1936, saying she would be happy to loan *Ancestors II* to the Museum of Modern Art. After repeating Breton's praise, she asked whether Barr would also like to obtain one of Mednikoff's works:

Dear Mr. Barr,
Thank you for your letter of August 27 and your kind invitation to exhibit my drawing 'Ancestors II'.
I shall be glad to loan 'Ancestors II' for the exhibition but I should like to know that the drawing will be returned to me early in the new year as it must be exhibited in my scientific exhibition when I make known my research results...
It may interest you to know that M. André Breton said of my work and that of my colleague (in my research), R. Mednikoff, that they were the best examples of English Surrealism.
Should you wish to obtain one of my colleague's works for this exhibition I feel sure it could be arranged under the same conditions as my 'Ancestors II' and that it is returned in time for my scientific exhibition.
Yours very sincerely
Dr. G.W. Pailthorpe⁵³

Barr agreed to exhibit Mednikoff's work and *The Stairway to Paradise* was also shown. He also assured Pailthorpe that their works would be insured at a cost of £25 each.⁵⁴ Following the *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* exhibition in New York, the couple's works were also shown in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and Boston.

⁵³ Letter from Pailthorpe to Barr, dated 08.09.36. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 124 'Document: Fantastic Art, Dada & Surrealism Exhibition')

⁵⁴ Letter from Barr to Pailthorpe, not dated; in *ibid.*

4.3 Conclusion

Although Mednikoff was effectively a Surrealist before he met Pailthorpe, perhaps Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's main reason for joining the British Surrealist group in 1936 was the opportunity it gave them to make their research findings available to a wider audience. Apart from this, even though their emphasis on the scientific nature of their project did set them apart from other members of the Surrealist group, as Pailthorpe claimed in the foreword to the catalogue of the couple's joint Guggenheim Jeune exhibition in 1939, their experiments had led them to discover 'the real meaning and value of surrealist art to the world'.⁵⁵ Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 6, they also wanted to be able to exhibit their work so that they could be able to afford the expenses for publishing their research.

Together with the other British Surrealists, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff helped to launch a movement that had previously been neglected and put England on the Surrealist map. No doubt, the International Surrealist exhibition had an impact on their work as it provided them with a place in the Surrealist movement not long after they first started working together. Breton's statement, which was a source of such pride to Pailthorpe and Mednikoff, appeared once again in her obituary in *The Times* (22.07.71).⁵⁶ It continues to be repeated to this day whenever their work is mentioned by writers such as Remy, Wilson and MacLagan.

⁵⁵ Foreword to Guggenheim Jeune exhibition catalogue by Pailthorpe, dated 1939.

⁵⁶ Grace Pailthorpe obituary, dated 22.07.71. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 135 'Surrealism in Britain: Grace Pailthorpe: Press Cuttings')

Chapter 5: The ‘Birth Trauma’ period (1938-1940)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore Pailthorpe’s contribution to the understanding of the ‘trauma of birth’ within the psychoanalytic field. It will provide an analysis of some of the drawings and watercolours in the ‘Birth Trauma Series’ produced in 1938 and housed in the Pailthorpe/Mednikoff archive in the Dean Gallery in Edinburgh. I have decided to focus on the ‘Birth Trauma Series’ not only because the paintings by Pailthorpe were accessible to me, and her work is, generally speaking, very rare, but also because the images of the womb and birth experience correspond closely with Pailthorpe’s public lecture given in 1938, The ‘Birth Trauma’ lecture.¹ The precise date of the lecture and where it was held remain unanswered questions. I would like to point out that the drawings and watercolours in the ‘Birth Trauma Series’ are extremely fragile and it has proved impossible to obtain high-quality illustrations. Those provided in the Appendix (Figs. 37, 38, 39, 40, 46, 48, 50, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61) were supplied by the Dean Gallery.

Furthermore, a series of watercolours by Pailthorpe titled the ‘Toe Dance Series’ can also be found in the Dean Gallery archive. They are dated 25 February 1938 and consist of 6 watercolours and one pencil drawing. Like the ‘Birth Trauma Series’, these works are also stylistically playful and naïve-like because they consist of several circular forms, zigzag lines, scribbles and bright colours. However, even though they predate the ‘Birth Trauma Series’, I have not written in detail about them because they were of secondary importance to the couple and are only briefly

¹ Pailthorpe, Grace. The ‘Birth Trauma’ lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 ‘Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages’)

mentioned in their writings about their research and are not backed up by analytic notes.

This chapter starts with a discussion of Pailthorpe's 1938 'Birth Trauma' lecture where she aimed to demonstrate the primary processes of thought in the infantile mind so as to understand the details of sensation and experience that produce the early steps in reasoning. It then gives a general outline of Pailthorpe's 'Birth Trauma Series' which places the notion of the mother and the infant at the centre of the development of the personality. The Series emphasises the interpersonal relationship between the mother and child for it attempts to give a picture of life at its early stages where the baby is dependent on the mother for life and sustenance. However, it should be recognised that Pailthorpe's psychoanalytical readings of her work, and of Mednikoff's work, are very much open to question and criticism.

The chapter then proceeds with a discussion of the relationship of the 'Birth Trauma Series' to Kleinian psychoanalysis: I have investigated the extent to which some of the pictures in Pailthorpe's 'Birth Trauma Series' represent an equivalent to the degree of linguistic articulation implicit in Klein's notion of 'infantile phantasy'. The chapter also acknowledges the relationship between Pailthorpe's work and Child Art. By doing this, it compares her style and imagery to that of Joan Miró too. It also looks at where she may have found her visual language by drawing attention to her and Mednikoff's unpublished 'Notes on Colour Symbolism' (1935), as well as to medical images of the foetus and the womb that were published at the time. The chapter ends with a brief outline of Pailthorpe's work on the 'trauma of birth' after 1938.

Together with Mednikoff, Pailthorpe investigated how the unconscious anxiety at birth forms the basis of later anxieties or fears. She postulated that intrauterine ecstasy is interrupted by the agony of biological birth and that forgotten infantile memories are responsible for many social actions in later life. Thus, she created the 'Birth Trauma Series' as a form of therapy and to uncover the infantile unconscious. Individual works in the Series were produced automatically and so was the Series as a whole: as an image surfaced, it evoked another, and this went on until a complete set in the sequence had unfolded. She never set a time limit for when each series would be completed but simply stopped when the impulse to continue was exhausted. There are six series and up to ten drawings and watercolours were created in each session where peri-natal and intra-uterine experiences were evoked. Each series was made on a different day and as the series progressed, the colours became brighter.

As we will see, the paintings and drawings in the 'Birth Trauma Series' provide the observer with images of pregnancy and birth. They demonstrate the working of the human mind during the pregnancy period. In the Series, Pailthorpe deems that even whilst the foetus is still in the womb, it is aware of every move and noise. The Series presents a complete picture of intra-uterine and birth experiences and manifests the emotions and sensations that a baby feels before and during birth. Moreover, the Series represents Pailthorpe's attempt at exploring the origins of the images that haunt us. There is a conflict between love and hate, creation and destruction, possession and the expulsion of 'good' and 'bad'. Pailthorpe was adamant in her belief that birth, following the infant's experience in the womb, was an epochal event which left deep impressions and shaped personalities, attitudes, and behaviours for many years to come, and she explores this idea in the 'Birth Trauma Series'.

5.2 The 'Birth Trauma' lecture (1938)

Pailthorpe produced the paintings in the 'Birth Trauma Series' in 1938 as a personal form of therapy but also perceived such experiences as being universal. She gave a public lecture on the 'Birth Trauma Series' that same year and professed that the unconscious material in the Series provided a thorough depiction of birth experiences and demonstrated 'that mind is active and at work even at the time of birth'.² In this lecture, Pailthorpe says that the material:

will show how at this early date the mind of the infant sought for a reason to explain to itself the transition from the comfort of a quiescent womb to the turbulence and menacing experiences of the processes of being born and those immediately following birth. It will show some of the effects of these events on the subject's subsequent life and development.³

Pailthorpe had invited the audience herself as she wanted to show them the couple's research by discussing the paintings in the 'Birth Trauma Series' and their relation to the notion of 'birth trauma'.⁴ She states that she has 'been dissatisfied for a long time with the results of psychoanalysis',⁵ asserts that she has been engaged in the research over a period of four years, and claims that 'as a result of this work, [I] have found a method by which psychoanalysis can be shortened and yet is more thorough in its exploration of the unconscious than has been hitherto possible'.⁶ The 'Birth Trauma Series' was made at the height of Pailthorpe's collaboration with Mednikoff and he is referred to periodically during the course of the lecture as 'my colleague'.

At the start of her lecture, Pailthorpe claims that her demonstration serves a double purpose for 'Not only does it show in the minutest detail the working of mind, from

² Ibid.: 3

³ Ibid.: 4-5

⁴ Ibid.: 1

⁵ Ibid.: 3

⁶ Ibid.: 1

the earliest possible moment, but it throws a very considerable light on the function of Art. It unfolds in detail what is already known in theory, viz. the work of the unconscious in the realm of Art'.⁷ We know that the drawings and paintings in the 'Birth Trauma Series' were produced by Pailthorpe, and not Mednikoff, because she says:

I have chosen as an example to present to you a fraction of my own analysis. I could have given you just as easily a section from the analysis of my colleague, but I have chosen to present my own case for several reasons. These will become obvious before the finish.⁸

Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's research aimed at tracing the general effect of 'birth trauma' in the development of the individual, particularly in childhood. As Pailthorpe says in her lecture, 'the whole of a person's life is felt in terms of its very first trauma. I was realizing that throughout life I had always felt limitations as a suffocation; as an impeding of the flow of life within me [...] In the case of my colleague, his first violent trauma was circumcision at eight days of age and throughout life he had reacted to all obstructions as attack on the penis'.⁹ As she makes clear, Pailthorpe believed that reliving the traumatic experience of birth during the analytic session had a therapeutic effect, and that was the ultimate purpose of the session:

Previous to the emergence of the birth trauma into consciousness, an episode that had occurred at the age of three days had appeared and the fears in relation to it had been resolved. It appeared that I had been fed; but continued, in spite of this, to have a hunger-pain. This was due to indigestion and a vomiting-attack. Later, when asleep, I had dreamt that I had eaten the breast and that it was inside me: and that by this device I should never again be hungry. When the time came for the next bottle-feed, the teat, and possibly the rate at which the milk came, caused me to choke to the point of blacking-out, that is, becoming unconscious. This was

⁷ Ibid.: 3

⁸ Ibid.: 4

⁹ Ibid.: 30

registered by my infant-mind as an attack on me because I had eaten the breast. This revelation was followed by the recognition of the reasons for many aspects of my reactions to life'.¹⁰

Pailthorpe displayed her paintings in front of the audience and, whilst discussing them, described how the dark background represented the darkness of the womb. She wrote that 'There is a mental assessment going on in the unconscious while in the womb. Everything is registered. The embryo or foetus is aware of every movement, jerk [...] increase in pressure (intra-uterine) and sudden noise'.¹¹ According to Pailthorpe, during birth, the foetus is conscious of the womb's pressure and it resists leaving the warm womb due to fear. In spite of this fear, the violent contractions thrust the infant into the outer world. Pailthorpe believed that these contractions are interpreted as the womb's angry retaliation at the foetus' persistent inter-uterine kicking. She was convinced that at the moment of birth, the human being is brought into a world of conflict and confusion. Unlike the warmth and comfort of the amniotic fluid, the new born feels pain at the sound of its own screams, the cutting of the umbilical cord and the slap on its bottom.

In discussing the 'Birth Trauma Series' it is essential to recognise that Pailthorpe's interpretations of the couple's collaborative work remained within the framework of Melanie Klein's theory of 'Object Relations', and that their interpretations were based on Klein's theory of early 'infantile phantasies'. At the start of her 'Birth Trauma' lecture, Pailthorpe cites the work of Klein as having influenced and inspired her own feelings and thoughts.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 5

¹¹ Ibid.: 17

As we will see, Pailthorpe's analysis of the 'Birth Trauma Series' manifests Klein's belief in the significance of the infant's relations with the breast. As the child feeds, it feels gratified and satiated when the breast produces sufficient milk, in which case the breast is loved and cherished. When the child is prematurely withdrawn or the breast does not provide sufficient food, the child is frustrated and the breast is hated and the recipient of hostile thoughts. Because of this, the mother is loved or hated according to the infant's relation with the breast. Using the ideas of Klein as a guideline, Pailthorpe emphasized the importance of the relationship between the mother and her child and related the intriguing pictures within the series to this universal experience.

5.3 The 'Birth Trauma Series'

The 'Birth Trauma Series' consists of six series, together comprising 42 watercolours and drawings. Pailthorpe started the first series on 23 April 1938 and finished the final one on 11 May 1938. They were produced automatically and analytical notes were made after each work was completed. As Pailthorpe said in her lecture: 'All the paintings are automatic. Nothing is changed or altered. There is no hesitation in their execution. The work is done in one swift flow. No time elapses between one drawing and another. No conscious interference takes place, or, if it obtrudes, it is set aside'.¹² She aimed to relive the trauma of birth and then used the drawings and watercolours she produced to illustrate her theories of 'birth trauma' and intrauterine experience during her lecture. Pailthorpe used different forms of paper according to her medium. She used watercolour paper when painting with watercolours and this had a slightly

¹² Ibid.: 5a

textured surface and was thicker and whiter than the paper she used for her drawings. In the drawings where pencil is the medium, Pailthorpe used drawing paper but it had a less durable surface and the sheets were smaller than the watercolour paper.

We can see how Pailthorpe used the techniques of blot drawing and sponging in order to stimulate subconscious imagery. The paintings show us that she put blots of paint on the paper and used them as a basis for parts of her composition (Figure 37). In some of her watercolours, Pailthorpe also used a sponge and applied it to the surface with different pressure as a way of getting lighter or darker effects (Figure 38). Her use of tapping, smudging, smearing and circular motions created the different effects and textures (Figure 39). Pailthorpe also tells the audience in her lecture that although she was the one who produced the images, Mednikoff helped her to analyse them.

In the first series there are seven drawings and watercolours. Pailthorpe makes a comparison between what the foetus feels inside the womb and what the infant feels once it is born. The first few paintings in this series convey the notion of fluidity and freedom as they suggest the happiness and safety that Pailthorpe feels whilst in the amniotic fluid. The first drawing in the series (Figure 40) has a playful and abstract quality. It is in pencil and consists of meandering, continuous lines, curved and claw-like forms. In her analysis, Pailthorpe writes:

I started this drawing by trying to put myself into the womb again (top left) but crossed it out and then did other scribbles. I felt that the large shape on (the) extreme right was me dancing or throwing myself about; partly in excitement and partly as a stretch.¹³

¹³ Ibid.

Interestingly, this drawing has connections with illustrations in specialist publications on Obstetrics. Diagrams in medical journals such as *Obstetrics* and in editions of The Edinburgh Medical Series, *A textbook of Midwifery*; which were published in the 1920s and 30s, appear to have influenced Pailthorpe's imagery. Thus, the image of the embryo in the first drawing of Series 1 is similar to the illustrations of the embryo at its earlier stages in *Obstetrics* (Figure 41).¹⁴ Because Pailthorpe had a medical background, she would have been familiar with this type of publication.

Another example of Pailthorpe's apparent adaptation of medical illustrations can be seen in the last three watercolours of Series 2 (Figure 38) as they resemble the images of the inside of the womb (Figure 42) published in the fifth edition of *A textbook of Midwifery* in 1926.¹⁵ These were standardized illustrations and this handbook went through several editions. As a trained doctor, there is every reason to think that Pailthorpe was familiar with this imagery, if not this particular textbook. Furthermore, even though she was working automatically, Pailthorpe had absorbed a language within the field of Obstetrics and the 'Birth Trauma Series' shows us that it is coming out in her work.

The fifth and sixth watercolours in Series 3 appear to provide further evidence of Pailthorpe's dependence on medical textbook illustrations such as those in *Williams Obstetrics* by J. Whitridge Williams, which was first published in 1896 (Figure 43).¹⁶

¹⁴ Williams, Whitridge J. 1926. *Obstetrics* (London, Appleton): 158

¹⁵ Johnstone, R. 1926. *A textbook of Midwifery* (London, A & C Black Ltd.): 121-122

¹⁶ Williams, Whitridge J. 1896. *Williams Obstetrics* (London, Butterworths): 413

The sequence of birth in the third series can also be compared to Williams's chart on the movements of labour (Figure 44).¹⁷

Pailthorpe's visual language in the first drawing in Series 1 also points towards her interest in Child Art. The naïve quality of this drawing (replicated in many of the other works within the series) demonstrates that Pailthorpe was a self-taught artist and had had no academic training. Her scribbled forms, simple geometrical outlines and her diagrammatic composition are features that are usually attributed to the creativity and spontaneity of children's drawings. The unsophisticated style of Pailthorpe's 'Birth Trauma Series' reflects how she willed childishness in her desire to regress to the stimulus Child Art provided.

Characteristics that are typical of Child Art can often be seen in Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's art and it was a topic that they frequently turned to. Their method encouraged one to be as spontaneous and childlike as one wished. Pailthorpe and Mednikoff collected children's drawings and could possibly have used them as a model for their own works.¹⁸ Sadly, these drawings have not come to light.

In the early twentieth century, there was a great interest in the child and in Child Art through the work of psychologists and educational theorists. G.-H. Luquet's explanation of the acquisition of drawing in *Les dessins d'un enfant* (1913) proved to be extremely influential as he hypothesized four stages in the infantile development of draftsmanship: 'fortuitous realism', 'failed realism', 'intellectual realism' and

¹⁷ Ibid.: 381

¹⁸ Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 005 'Various children's drawings' n.d.)

‘visual realism’.¹⁹ At the stage of ‘fortuitous realism’, children come to recognise resemblances to objects among their messy scribbles. Their inaccurate portrayals of the shapes they recognised in their messy scribbles form part of the second stage, that of ‘failed realism’, which ends when the child begins to depict the more salient features of the object concerned, and thus reaches the third stage which is ‘intellectual realism’. The child then enters the final stage of ‘visual realism’ when they begin to depict objects according to their position in the real world. Although this book was not available in an English translation at the time, as we know, Pailthorpe’s French was fluent.

Luquet’s ideas were popularised by Jean Piaget in several of his publications in the twenties in which he set out to demonstrate how the way children know or represent the world is distinct from adult thought. In *The Language and Thought of the Child* Piaget investigated the way that children reason and cautions against interpreting the child mind in terms of the adult mind. He expanded on Luquet’s stage of ‘intellectual realism’ in draftsmanship and wrote that the:

..child, as we all know, begins by drawing only what he sees around him - men, houses, etc. In this sense, he is a realist. But instead of drawing them as he sees them, he reduces them to a fixed schematic type; in a word, he draws them as he knows them to be. In this sense, his realism is not visual, but intellectual. The logic of this primitive draughtsmanship is childish but entirely rational.²⁰

Piaget further expands on Luquet’s concept of ‘intellectual realism’ in *The Child’s Conception of the World*. When writing about nominal realism, where he tested whether seven and eight year old children knew the meaning of a name, ‘to call

¹⁹ Costall, Alan. 2001. *Children’s Drawings* (New York, Free Association Books) [original edition: Luquet, Georges Henri. 1913. *Les dessins d’un enfant* (Paris, F.Alcan)]

²⁰ Piaget, Jean. 1924. *The Language and Thought of the Child* (London, Routledge & K. Paul) [originally published as *Le langage et la pensée chez l’enfant* in 1923]: 182

something by', Piaget wrote how this 'phenomenon is analogous to the "intellectual realism" which M. Luquet has so clearly demonstrated in children's drawings. They draw what they know about an object at the expense of what they see, but they think they are drawing exactly what they see'.²¹

Once again, Piaget further expanded on Luquet's notion of 'intellectual realism' in children's drawings in *Judgement and Reasoning in the Child*. He stated that for the child, reality is 'made up almost in its entirety by the mind and by the decisions of belief' and 'the child's picture of the world is always moulded on his immediate, sectional, and personal point of view'.²² Piaget wrote how Luquet pointed out that a characteristic of children's drawings is the inability to portray the relations existing between the different parts of the model because, due to lack of synthetic relations, they are simply juxtaposed as the child artist is unable to connect them together. Thus, an eye will be placed next to a head, a leg next to an arm and so forth.²³

Although no firm evidence has come to light that Pailthorpe read the works of Piaget and Luquet, it is in this context that the representation of the artist as child must be seen. Moreover, illustrations of children's drawings in Luquet's *Les dessins d'un enfant* look similar to some of Pailthorpe's drawings in her 'Birth Trauma' pictures. Some of the drawings in Luquet's text (Figure 45) can be compared to the second drawing in Series 4 (Figure 46) as the form of the foetuses in Pailthorpe's work resemble the forms in the child's drawings. The shape and outlines of the figures in

²¹ Piaget, Jean. 1929. *The Child's Conception of the World* (London, Routledge & K. Paul) [originally published as *La représentation du monde chez l'enfant* in 1926]: 70

²² Piaget, Jean. 1932. *Judgement and Reasoning in the Child* (London, Routledge & K. Paul) [originally published as *Le jugement moral chez l'enfant* in 1928]: 248

²³ *Ibid.*: 3

another of Luquet's illustrations (Figure 47) and the images of the baby in Series 5 (Figure 48) are also alike.

Another theorist who worked on Child Art at the time was Helga Eng. She presented the results of her study of the characteristics of children's drawings in *The Psychology of Children's Drawings*. She claimed that 'a child's drawing is the expression of its feelings, its strivings, and we might add, the play of its imagination with objects, its aesthetic sense,'²⁴ and also stated that a child's scribbling 'is altogether automatic and is the foundation of those forms which the child develops and applies in representation later on'.²⁵

Because Eng's book was published in English in 1931 and was part of the 'International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method' Series, it is very likely that Pailthorpe knew of her work. Eng's reference to the process of automatism suggests this:

After a sufficient number of repetitions, the process of drawing finally becomes quite mechanical. It becomes an automatism. The child when drawing tends to repeat simple automatized movements rhythmically and frequently [...] when a movement is automatized, it is made more quickly and easily.²⁶

Just as Luquet did with his eldest daughter Simonne, Eng observed the drawing of her niece Margaret. She draws attention to the latter's cursive, zigzag and wavy scribbling (Figure 49) and it is noticeable that Eng's niece's work is very much like the zigzags in Figure 1 of the first series as well as in the second drawing in Pailthorpe's third series (Figure 50). Even though Eng's text does not tell us if

²⁴ Eng, Helga. 1931. *The Psychology of Children's Drawings* (London, Butler & Tanner) [originally published as *Barnetegning* in 1926]: 130

²⁵ Ibid.: 137

²⁶ Ibid.: 139

children's use of zigzags expresses anger or whether they are purely reflexive, we can see that the quick scribbles in Pailthorpe's pencil drawing have a similar stylistic freedom to Margaret's drawings. Furthermore, Pailthorpe's drawing is a portrayal of her as a foetus that is about to be born and suggests that the womb is compressing her. The image of the foetus being inverted manifests it resisting the womb's attempts to turn it over. The pressure is conveyed at the head of the foetus and, with every contraction, the foetus kicks in anger and retaliation. The jagged forms indicate the contractions and pressure as the baby is being squeezed out of the womb. As Pailthorpe says in her lecture, there is a fear that is compared to being buried in a coffin where one is in a static position and unable to move.²⁷

Developmentally, images precede language. Drawing is a spontaneous activity for a child and it is the unconscious that guides the child's hand. Dreams, fantasies and memories are all pictorial and the idea of the child's proximity to the vivid emotions of the unconscious mind attracted Pailthorpe. Her work in the 'Birth Trauma Series' demonstrates how she painted with the directness and innocence of a child's vision. Like a child, it is almost as if she was becoming aware of the story-telling possibilities in a picture.

As we will see in Chapter 7, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff also corresponded with Herbert Read, whose work on Child Art may have been another source for their own. For example, in his article, 'From the First Stroke', in *The Listener* (1934), Read describes how infantile drawing 'develops like a voyage of discovery; out of a sea of tangled scribbles emerge forms which the child recognises with delight as having

²⁷ Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 'Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages'): 17

some resemblance to the visual images of things seen which are stored in the mind'.²⁸ Just as in Read's statement, the intuitive aspect of childish doodling in Pailthorpe's drawing (Figure 50) is conveyed by the impression of the pencil never leaving the paper but tracing and retracing marks over and over again.

At the time, Read frequently wrote about the art of children in journals such as *The Listener*. In his article, 'Writing into Pattern: A new way of teaching art to children', Read stated that 'The child 'naturally' prefers its own colour sensations to any extraneous standard [...] the sense of rhythm, both as linear flow and as sequence of shapes, so fully practised in pattern-making, is also carried over into the other activity. For with these two elements fully developed – rhythm and colour – we have the foundations of every kind of artistic activity'.²⁹ Pailthorpe's own use of colour and sequence of shapes and lines in the Series demonstrates that her professional relationship with Read, who, in 1940, attempted to publish her work, would have provided her with several opportunities to see how he presents Child Art. Another article in *The Listener* discussing an exhibition of children's art was published a few months before Pailthorpe produced the 'Birth Trauma Series'. There he states:

It is said that a short time ago the works of some of these children were sent in to an exhibition of modern painting without any indication of the artists' ages; and that they were accepted. The story proves two things – that the selection committee of the exhibition were honest in their aesthetic reactions; and that there is a close resemblance between certain types of modern art and the art of children.³⁰

The 'Birth Trauma Series' can also be compared to Joan Miró's work. In *Discovering Child Art*, Fineberg writes how 'the painting of Miró is an accumulation

²⁸ Read, Herbert. 1934. 'From the First Stroke', *The Listener*, 6: 693

²⁹ Read, Herbert. 19.06.35. 'Writing into Pattern: A new way of teaching art to children', *The Listener*, 13: 1035-36

³⁰ Read, Herbert. 26.01.38. 'The Art of Children', *The Listener*, 19: 180

of spontaneous gestures that condensed into the image [...] and at the same time proceeded by the association of ideas to the grafting of forms and to elliptical reminders of the real'.³¹ In Miró's work, as in Pailthorpe's drawing, the 'automatic' method of execution is exemplified in the seemingly random movement of the hand across the surface. *Painting* (1925) exemplifies this (Figure 51). Yet, we must note that Miró frequently made preparatory drawings and his works were not always automatic. He willed naivety and ineptness. His series of *Circus Horse* pictures (1927) demonstrates this as they are all enlarged from pencil drawings (Figure 52).

Like Pailthorpe, Miró collected children's drawings³² and Child Art seems to have instigated his recourse to spontaneity. As Fineberg says when referring to Georges Hugnet's article on Miró, 'Joan Miró ou l'enfance de l'art', in *Cahiers d'Art*, 'At its most basic, the metaphor of the artist as child became, in the case of Miró, the metaphor of the modern artist as *first* artist'.³³

In addition, at that time, Miró's work was described as spontaneous and child-like in publications which Pailthorpe may have known of.³⁴ One example is Breton's *Surrealism and Painting* (1928) in which he identifies Miró's art as spontaneous and child-like and states that 'his output placed on record an innocence and freedom that have remained unrivalled'.³⁵ Breton outlines how, in his work, Miró aimed 'to demand nothing from reality but the superexpressive, the expressive in its most childlike sense, and to devise nothing beyond the limits of this expressiveness'.³⁶

³¹ Fineberg, Jonathan. 1998. *Discovering Child Art* (Princeton, Princeton University Press): 205

³² A drawing by Miró's daughter Dolores survives in the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.

³³ Fineberg, Jonathan. 1998. *Discovering Child Art* (Princeton, Princeton University Press): 213

³⁴ Reproductions of several of his works can be found in *Axis* (1935: 2), (1936: 5), (1937: 8).

³⁵ Breton, André. 1928. *Le Surréalisme et la peinture* (Paris, Éditions Gallimard): 70

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 37-8

Other articles in journals which Pailthorpe may have read include Michel Leiris's article on Miró in *Documents* in 1929, in which he described Miró's effort to rediscover childhood as a central issue in his art.³⁷ Leiris also spoke of Miró's return to childhood and regaining of innocence in his art in another issue of *Documents*:

...if one looks at them hard, one can see that the artist has achieved a void within himself in order to rediscover true childhood, childhood at once so serious and so comical, shot through with a mythology so primitive, founded on the metamorphosis of stones, plants, animals...³⁸

Because he worked with a spontaneity of the same nature as that of a child, which resulted in him producing geometric shapes, animals and stick-figures in works like *The Hunter (Catalan Landscape)* (1923-24) (Figure 53) that are very similar to those in children's drawings, Miró would have been as important to Pailthorpe and Mednikoff as Child Art and the illustrations in manuals on Obstetrics.

Miró's painting *Animated Landscape* (1935) (Figure 54) can be compared to Pailthorpe's first drawing in Series 1 (Figure 40). Pailthorpe would have seen this painting when it was exhibited at the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition in London, and it may have been at this moment that she saw Miró's work in the original for the first time. (She could, however, have seen reproductions in journals such as *Axis* at an earlier date). Here, the similarity between Miró's work and the 'Birth Trauma' image is evident since both pictures have an animated expressivity that recalls Child Art because of their child-like playfulness. Both works have a

³⁷ Leiris, Michel. 10.29. 'Joan Miró', *Documents*, 5: 264

³⁸ Ibid., 'Toutefois, en y regardant bien, on peut s'apercevoir que ce peintre a du réaliser un vide bien complet en lui pour retrouver une pareille enfance, à la fois si sérieuse et si bouffonne, brochée d'une mythologie si primitive, reposant sur les métamorphoses des pierres, des plantes, des animaux...' [Author's translation]

seemingly naïve, diagrammatic simplicity and we can picture the spontaneity with which the two artists captured the imagery.

Even though Miró's *Animated Landscape* consists of facial features and Pailthorpe's 'Birth Trauma' drawing is derived from imagery of the body, they both suggest a subject that was improvised through automatism. The rhythmic disposition of Miró's distorted linear forms suggests a freedom similar to Pailthorpe's playful technique. He produces suspended, silhouetted and outlined forms and paints the principal elements in black whilst including a few accents of bright colour. He accentuates the roundness of the forms with acid colours. *Animated Landscape* is a particularly child-like work and its lines, curves, geometric forms, angles and zigzags are very much like the forms of the children's drawings in *Les dessins d'un enfant* (Figure 45).

Both Pailthorpe and Miró initiated the basic conditions of creation that exist in the natural state of the child. Fineberg tells us how Miró 'looked for the excitement provoked by the contact with the material and, intent on submitting to its fascination, he pursued the tracks left behind by this encounter; because he has created, as much as is possible, a spontaneity of the same nature as that of a child, unavoidably what enters into his work are his own desires, his own phantasms'.³⁹ As in Pailthorpe's drawing, one can see the zigzag lines in the top left hand corner of the surface of *Animated Landscape* as well as the simple shapes which float in an ambiguous space. Similarly, Miró does not have a polished technique and his work consists of linear configurations and patches of colour that look almost as though they had been set

³⁹ Fineberg, Jonathan. 1998. *Discovering Child Art* (Princeton, Princeton University Press): 204

down randomly. However, there are limits to this comparison as his work is not about the pregnancy period or the process of birth.

Other works by Miró such as *Maternity* (1924) (Figure 55) seem to have influenced Pailthorpe. We can see this in the seventh drawing in the first series (Figure 56). Like *Animated Landscape*, *Maternity* was exhibited at the International Surrealist exhibition so Pailthorpe would have seen it there. Although it is reduced to its basic forms, the central figure in Miró's work is female. Miró provides us with a reference to the female figure's procreative powers by depicting a black skirt perforated by a hole. We can see the profile of one of her breasts and the front of the other on either side of her. She carries her offspring in the form of two male and female insect-like infants which are suspended from her breasts and are floating in space along with a sperm-like shape. Because of its title and subject, a work like *Maternity* would have interested Pailthorpe and Mednikoff at the International Surrealist exhibition. Nonetheless, *Maternity* does not focus on the foetus and the process of birth, whereas even from the first series, Pailthorpe highlights the notion of 'birth trauma' during the process of birth as she ends this series with another very abstract pencil drawing in which there are colourless circular lines. As Pailthorpe tells us, in the seventh drawing the baby sees its expulsion from the comfort of the mother's womb as a punishment, and it is traumatised because it feels it has done something wrong. Prior to its birth, the baby was happy and safe in the amniotic fluid but it now experiences new sensations in a different environment. Thus, the small figures at the bottom right

of Pailthorpe's pencil drawing reveal the process of the baby's final fading away to a complete black-out.⁴⁰

The second series is made up of six paintings. The focal point is the warmth and sensation of being inside the mother's womb and it is in this series that Pailthorpe's use of colour symbolism is exemplified. The couple's comprehensive, unpublished 'Notes on Colour Symbolism' (1935) demonstrate their remarkably articulate theory of colour, in which each colour symbolised something. They believed that colour was therapeutic and that the unconscious refuses to work without colour.⁴¹ In fact, when describing the colours of the mother's womb, Pailthorpe states that the blue, red and green colours refer to warmth, the uterine water, the comfort of being cushioned and body odour. She also refers to the colour blue as a symbol of the mother figure because of its strength and richness, yellow as representing the outside light, and black as the symbol of death.⁴²

Pailthorpe's professional relationship with Read makes it likely that he introduced her to theories of colour symbolism as he wrote several articles in *The Listener* on the subject. In 'Colour in Painting', published in *The Listener* in 1933, Read describes the different symbolic meanings of the various shades of colour.⁴³ He also wrote how 'it is quite scientific to observe that a lively colour sense is most evident

⁴⁰ Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 'Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages')

⁴¹ Notes on colour symbolism by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 36 'Notes on colour symbolism: Yellow'): 1

⁴² Ibid.: 1-5

⁴³ Read, Herbert. 1933. 'Colour in Painting', *The Listener*, 9: 534

in primitive peoples and in children' in his article 'Teaching Art to Children', dated June 1935.⁴⁴

Pailthorpe's series demonstrates how every colour had a specific meaning. In her analytic notes on the second watercolour in Series 2 (Figure 57), she wrote:

The blue shape is the womb and the central pale pink disc with the darker pink disc in it is my head with a mouth. The larger dark pink shape below this is my body. The yellow horse-shoe shape extending from a yellow disc below my body to my mouth is a nipple feeding me from a mother-breast. The other objects are milk (yellow), blood (brown) and faecal matter (green).⁴⁵

Pailthorpe also makes use of colour symbolism in the third watercolour (Figure 37).

She tells us that she is safe within the blue womb, which lies within a green and black background:

Here I, the pink object on the left, am definitely and safely ensconced within the womb (blue). The dark surround, which is rhythmical and vibrating, is comforting because of its darkness. The pink body and head of myself is undifferentiated except for one feature:- the mouth. Into the mouth is going the yellow teat. The red and yellow shape to the right is a composite of the placenta and breast. The little yellow branch coming off the elongated nipple is equally the umbilical cord. I think this painting is saying, 'I wish the placenta-breast that fed me through my belly while inside mother would now feed me, inside mother, through my mouth'. It is interesting to note the directness of the unconscious in making a statement and its economy of language, for again the mouth is the only feature depicted.⁴⁶

In her notes on the colour symbolism in the sixth painting in the third series,

Pailthorpe associates the colour yellow with the light the baby sees after its birth:

Yellow was associated with light primarily in the birth trauma. Yellow sensation at base of my skull meant a release from the attack of compression on my life-cord, the umbilicus. Therefore yellow becomes associated permanently with a return of life-flow, comparable in slighter

⁴⁴ Read, Herbert. 1935. 'Teaching Art to Children', *The Listener*, 13: 1034

⁴⁵ Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 'Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages'):

11

⁴⁶ Ibid.: 12

form with the relative increase in life-flow after a feed. This is of interest. Yellow is, therefore, associated permanently with pleasure-sensation.⁴⁷

The final three watercolours (Figure 38) in the second series render a more distinct image of the inside of a womb. The smiling baby in the fourth picture emphasizes the unconscious pleasure experienced by the foetus, whilst the fifth painting also presents the idea of the warm sensation felt by the foetus but here the background is a bright red and the circle is blue. The foetus is also smaller and there are fewer facial features. The same idea is expressed in the sixth and last painting in which the foetus glows with bright colours. There is an orange-coloured foetus held by red cords to the red placenta in a blue and brown background.

The third series includes 7 paintings and illustrates the process of birth. Jagged forms in the first few pencil drawings indicate the contractions and pressure as the baby is being squeezed out of the womb. When describing the fifth painting (Figure 58), Pailthorpe stated:

Here my head seems to have come through the tightest part of the canal and is about to come right outside. I am still colourless from compression but aware of a tremendous lot of light through the top of my head.⁴⁸

On the other hand, in the sixth painting, Pailthorpe has come out of the womb and, in comparison to the previous paintings in this set, there is a change of colour in the face and the body (Figure 59). In her analytic notes, she stated:

In this I appear to be well out. The strain of compression is removed and some degree of colour is coming back. The background is all the blood and faeces and moisture that surround me. At this moment I think I am actually aware of these through smell and warmth.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Notes on colour symbolism by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 36 'Notes on colour symbolism: 'Yellow'): 9-10

⁴⁸ Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 'Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages'): 22

⁴⁹ Ibid.

The fourth series, which consists of only three pencil drawings, illustrates the ‘birth trauma’ itself. There is very little colour as Pailthorpe mostly uses pencil. The series portrays the foetus kicking in the womb and there is an overall feeling of being attacked. This is exemplified in the second pencil drawing in the series where nine foetuses are either kicking or stretching (Figure 46). The four foetuses depicted with zigzag lines indicate that she is kicking whereas in the others she is stretching. The unborn or about-to-be-born infant is aware of its aggression in its spasmodic kicks and sees the ‘throwing out’ of the womb at birth as a punishment because being born is accompanied by compression and severe shock. As Pailthorpe stresses when describing this drawing, ‘Punishment is easier to bear than reasonless attack’.⁵⁰

The overall theme of the fifth series, which includes nine paintings, is that of the new born baby’s first screams. Several of the paintings in this series show a new born baby being cut from the mother’s umbilical cord (Figure 60). When describing these works, Pailthorpe notes that in the fourth painting, she is being bathed in water. Her mouth is open and she is yelling. The red arrows are the painful noises at her head. The ring of red around her legs and the red arrows beneath her represent the nurse who pulls her up to wash and smack her bottom.⁵¹ The fifth watercolour also shows Pailthorpe being bathed. Bright red contrasts with pale pink and blue. The blue outline of the baby is the water.⁵² The red band bound around her legs is the major point of pain. The red arrows coming out of her mouth suggest the sound that she is making. In the sixth painting, Pailthorpe’s feet are bound by a red cord and indicate

⁵⁰ Pailthorpe, Grace. The ‘Birth Trauma’ lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 ‘Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages’): 9

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Notes on colour symbolism by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 36 ‘Notes on colour symbolism’): 1

the fierce grip on her legs which causes pain. The baby is a bright pink. Her cries are getting quieter. In the seventh watercolour, Pailthorpe is crying a lot less. The grip of the red ring is gone. Still, as she says, the towel and hands that rub her are rough.⁵³ The top of the paper is a light yellow background. The rest of the paper depicts water.

The final series illustrates Pailthorpe as a new born baby and her first experiences of the environment around her. The series, which consists of ten paintings, portrays, according to her, Pailthorpe awakening from her sleep following the birth trauma. The paintings purport to depict her first experiences of being awake as she acknowledges the kaleidoscopic effects of the colours around her which she registers as a stored memory. We can see this in the first watercolour (Figure 39) which consists of Pailthorpe being carried. The blue and mauve colours around her represent her cot. The blocks and two balls on the top right are all that Pailthorpe can see. She is aware of her new environment. The discomfort and molestation of the nurse no longer exist. As she writes in her analysis:

This is me. I feel I am being carried. I have a bunch of brightly coloured things in my hands. The blue and mauve around me is my cot. My posture makes me feel I am being lifted out of it. The two blue eyes and the faint outline of blocks, to the right, seem all that my eyes are seeing. My face is older than my usual baby faces and has a far-away-not-there look. I think the flowers are merely the sensation of many colours around me.⁵⁴

Most of the paintings in the sixth series have luminous colours and there is no use of pencil. Moreover, the image of Pailthorpe as a baby presents her as looking bigger and with clearer facial features than in the previous series.

⁵³ Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 'Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages'): 10

⁵⁴ Ibid.: 32

In line with Kleinian psychology, the 'Birth Trauma Series' highlights how the foetus is aware of every move and noise. Pailthorpe was convinced that there is a biological importance in every vibration felt by the embryo or foetus and asserted that there 'is a mental assessment going on in the unconscious while in the womb. Everything is registered. The embryo or foetus is aware of every movement, jerk, increase in pressure (intra-uterine) and sudden noise'.⁵⁵

Several of the works in the 'Birth Trauma Series' show us how the ambiguous forms in Pailthorpe's art have a close relationship to Klein's theory of 'trauma at birth' in that, as we have seen, they equally articulate the idea that the transition from the womb to the outside world during birth causes tremendous anxiety in the infant and that this anxiety was the model for all anxiety experienced afterwards.

Klein's famous theory of 'Object Relations' explicates the dynamic process of developing a mind as one grows in relation to others in the environment. The 'objects' referred to include both others in one's world and also one's internalized images of others. It is these internalized images which Pailthorpe presents us with in her belief that such relationships are formed when the infant is still in the mother's womb. Through repeated experience, internal objects are formed by the patterns emerging in one's subjective experience of the care-taking environment.

In both Klein's and Pailthorpe's work, the instincts of the body and the tensions and conflicts they give rise to are a central concern. Their work allows the unconscious its due place in the interaction of the infant's body with the external world. Furthermore, because the infant has at first no means of distinguishing the external

⁵⁵ Ibid.: 16-17

world, it is this interaction that establishes its 'Object Relations'. At the core of their theories is an awareness that good and bad can alternate and coexist within a single concept. Pailthorpe and Klein focused on the mother-child rapport and emphasised the early development of the ego as it goes through a number of phases and responds to perceived kindness and threats emanating from the physical world. Pailthorpe demonstrates the infant's response to kindness in the fourth watercolour of the second series (Figure 38). Here there is a foetus in the later stages of development attached by the umbilical cord to the placenta within a blue background. Unlike the previous paintings in the second series, Pailthorpe uses brighter colours and in the fourth watercolour, we can see that there is a smile on the baby's face. The picture shows the sensation the baby feels inside the mother. This is denoted by the rhythmic purple lines on the body and purple and pink blobs around the head. The setting evokes warmth and protection.

By contrast, Pailthorpe illustrates the baby's perceived threats in the fourth watercolour of the fifth series (Figure 60) where a crying new born baby has just had its umbilical cord removed. The infant is being bathed in water. Her mouth is open and the red arrows are the painful noises at her head. Here, Pailthorpe also describes how the colour of the infant's legs shows that they are numb.⁵⁶ Another example in the 'Birth Trauma Series' in which Pailthorpe purports to depict the infant's response to external threats is the sixth painting of Series 1 (Figure 61) where she dramatizes the effect of her expulsion from the womb. In this painting, 'finis' is written in black block letters at the bottom of the picture and expresses her wish not to return to

⁵⁶ Ibid.: 9

consciousness. The black colour symbolizes death whereas the yellow background represents the outside light.⁵⁷

Pailthorpe and Klein focused on how the baby encounters a world which is both satisfying and frustrating. They believed that images and phantasies are associated with biological and environmental conditions and claimed that the foetus' and infant's feelings for reality are structured by certain fantasies to do with the child's relation to the mother's body. Klein pushed back the infant's capacity to 'think' into the first few months and located the origins of anxiety and guilt in the infant's oral cannibalistic drives. She claimed that hostile impulses are aimed at the maternal breast and then give rise to the earliest feelings of guilt. However, Pailthorpe's analysis of the 'Birth Trauma Series' illustrates how she attempted to push the frontiers of unconscious mental life back even earlier, to life in the womb, and it is because of this that she will be remembered as a genuine pioneer.

5.4 The 'Birth Trauma' lecture (1940)

Even after leaving the Surrealist group in 1940 and heading to America, Pailthorpe continued to develop her ideas on the 'trauma of birth' as well as illustrate it in other art works such as *Blazing Infant* (1940) (Figure 62) and *Spotted Ousel* (1942) (Figure 63). The primary colours in *Blazing Infant* give full view to organs of reproduction as one can see eggs and ovaries floating about. In *Spotted Ousel*, there is a young bird feeding from the seemingly fearful maternal figure, thus emphasising the mother-child relationship.

⁵⁷ Notes on colour symbolism by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 36 'Notes on colour symbolism: Yellow'): 1

The 'trauma of birth' is highlighted in *Blazing Infant* in which there is a womb-like circle with floating eggs. The womb lies between what looks like two legs, one holding a uterine pouch and the other phallic claws. Two ovaries are floating at the top of the womb and by illustrating these reproductive organs, Pailthorpe provides us with a vision of the process of giving birth. The 'mother-child' relationship that Pailthorpe had with Mednikoff appears to have influenced much of her work, becoming a frequent leitmotif, and this is manifested in the adult mother feeding her chick in *Spotted Ousel*. In this painting, there is a confrontation between two birds that are linked by a winding thread that looks like an umbilical cord. As Remy writes, 'the spotted ousel appears to have been begotten by the bigger bird and is now being fed by its mother'.⁵⁸ The grey ousel has given birth to a spotted one and Pailthorpe's depiction of the birds suggests their surprise which comes from the sudden realization of the difference in the colour of their plumage.⁵⁹

The stylistic differences between *Blazing Infant* and *Spotted Ousel* and the 'Birth Trauma Series' are particularly significant, and reflect the fact that the drawings in the latter series were not created with any thought of exhibition, or indeed of art as such. They exist in a different category to Pailthorpe's oil paintings and, unlike *Blazing Infant* and *Spotted Ousel*, are very rudimentary in appearance. In their sloppiness and innocence, the 'Birth Trauma' drawings and watercolours reflect Pailthorpe's desire to regress to infantile painting, as the appropriate model for the depiction of uterine experiences.

⁵⁸ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Hants, Ashgate Publishing Limited): 264

⁵⁹ Ibid.

In 1940, Pailthorpe gave another public lecture which also, as she asserted, illustrated Klein's theory of the experience of birth.⁶⁰ In this lecture Pailthorpe presents an analysis of the birth experience of a male patient, but no date is given so we do not know whether she gave the lecture whilst still in England or after her move to New York in July 1940. The analysis occurred between 4 February and 22 February 1940 and, every day, Pailthorpe would study her patient's automatic drawings and interpret his dreams and unconscious fears of being born. (The whereabouts of these automatic drawings is unknown). For ethical reasons, Pailthorpe does not name the patient in her lecture but we can be sure that he was Mednikoff because Pailthorpe starts her lecture by stating that she had previously analysed the same patient's experience of circumcision when he was only eight days old.⁶¹ (In the 'Birth Trauma' lecture she gave in 1938 she had referred to this analysis, as we saw in section 5.2 above).⁶²

In the 1940 lecture, however, Pailthorpe deals with the time prior to his circumcision. It was discovered that before the operation, the infant had one of his breastfeeds withheld so that he would not require a nappy change or urinate during the cutting of the organ. It also transpired that in one of his earlier breastfeeds, the infant had bitten his mother's nipple with his gums because he could not get the milk to flow. Thus, when breastfeeding was withheld, the child imagined it was because he had previously bitten the nipple and the nipple now refused to allow milk to flow. The infant began to fantasise biting the nipple to force the milk out. This dream fantasy

⁶⁰ Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1940. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 21: 'Birth Trauma')

⁶¹ Ibid.: 1

⁶² Pailthorpe, Grace. The 'Birth Trauma' lecture, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 69 'Lecture on Drawings. Being an extract from research that is Now in its Final Stages'): 30

occurred in his sleep. The pain felt in circumcision was seen to be a punishment for the baby's aggression towards the mother's nipple and for wanting the breast's milk.⁶³

Pailthorpe's 1940 'Birth Trauma' lecture gives a summary of the analytical work that was carried out over the two weeks. The unconscious material relates the baby's fantasy, which was revealed through automatic drawings that were then interpreted. She discusses her interpretations of the fears, defence mechanisms, fantasies and modes of infantile reasoning that were revealed during the analysis. The 1940 lecture makes no reference to the 'Birth Trauma Series' paintings or the 1938 lecture. Although Mednikoff transcribed Pailthorpe's 1940 lecture, it remained unpublished. On the other hand, in 1941, Pailthorpe published a paper called 'Deflection of Energy as a Result of Birth Trauma and its bearing upon Character Formation' in *The Psychoanalytic Review*.⁶⁴ In this paper, she reports the case of the same "young man" and describes how his character disturbances and symptoms were 'cured' by an analysis of the traumatic events immediately preceding and during birth and of the first period of infancy.

5.5 Conclusion

Pailthorpe was inspired by Klein in her scientific understanding of the human psyche, but used the Surrealist practice of automatism as a means of therapy in order to attempt to bring the unconscious and infantile mind to the surface. Clearly, Pailthorpe was convinced that her psychoanalytic research with Mednikoff would

⁶³ Ibid.: 1-2

⁶⁴ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1941. 'Deflection of Energy as a Result of Birth Trauma and its bearing upon Character Formation', *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 27: 305-326

ensure therapeutic results and, together, they tried to push the frontiers of unconscious mental life back to the womb. They asserted that psychoanalysis should include the recollection of birth and constantly believed in the existence of an unconscious memory of embryonic days which persists throughout life and may determine all adult behaviour.

Although she operated within the framework of Klein's 'Object Relations' theory, Pailthorpe inevitably differed from Klein's in that she did not work principally with children. Klein developed the technique of play therapy to uncover children's unconscious motivations. She believed that children, through the use of play and drawings, projected their feelings in therapeutic sessions and revealed earlier infantile fantasies and anxieties. She maintained that children's unconscious lives could be understood through their non-verbal behaviour. In Pailthorpe's case, we know that she started using images as therapy in World War One and in her work for the Medical Research Council and this was reinforced through her contact with Mednikoff, Surrealism and automatic drawing, and her use of Child Art. Like Klein, Pailthorpe also made use of images in her therapeutic sessions and referred to these images in her writing too. Furthermore, both Klein and Pailthorpe believed that the child comes to view the mother's presence as the sole determining factor in whether he or she is going to get his or her needs met, or not, and responds to the mother as a magically powerful figure, defining her as either all-good or all-bad, idealising and denigrating her in turn.

But however much she may have owed to Klein, it can be argued that Pailthorpe went even further than Klein in attributing to the foetus in the uterus the capacity to

fantasise about rewards and punishments and construe its experiences in those terms. The fundamental feature of Klein's picture of infantile experience is that it is split between violently incompatible impulses of love and hate and creation and destruction. For Klein, this split is the root of psychic anxiety. Klein did not say much about the impact of peri-natal events but she certainly pushed back the infant's capacity to 'think' into the first year, and there are fascinating issues about what kind of 'thought' this might be and whether or not it implies linguistic development. What is interesting about Pailthorpe is that she asserts the experiential reality of intrauterine bliss and suffering, whereas Klein was more inclined to see these as retrospective phantasies. Moreover, Klein's work focuses on the development of the infant's earliest interactions with its environment whereas Pailthorpe insinuated that peri-natal events impinge on the development and experience of the infant. This said, if one considers the kinds of polymorphous phantasy exemplified in Klein's writings, it is obvious that they have a close relationship to Pailthorpe's pictures in the 'Birth Trauma Series' which, as Pailthorpe believed, enable us to experience an underlying dimension of humanity that exists within all of us.

Chapter 6: On Surrealism and Psychoanalysis (1938-1939)

6.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter will look at Pailthorpe's article 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' which was published in *London Bulletin* in 1939 and demonstrated the couple's closer allegiance to scientific research than the Surrealist pursuit of 'the marvellous'. I will also be discussing the public reaction to the article. The chapter will then focus on Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's first joint exhibition at the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery in London in 1939 which featured art works that resulted from their psychoanalytic research. I look at who proposed the exhibition, what works were shown and whether there were any changes in the critical reception of the couple's work from that of the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition. I comment on any developments and changes in Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's art during the years that separate the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936 from their own exhibition in 1939. I compare Mednikoff's style and imagery to that found in works by Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst and also discuss the influence of the theories of Freud and Klein on the couple's work.

6.2 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism'

Pailthorpe's famous article 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' was published in *London Bulletin* No. 7, December-January (1938-9) and presented the scientific and therapeutic nature of her and Mednikoff's joint project.⁶⁵ At that time, *London Bulletin* was the main outlet for Surrealist ideas in Britain and her article elicited

⁶⁵ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 10-16

letters from the public to the editor. As we will see, a month later, the couple mounted an exhibition of their works at the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery in Cork Street, London. This issue of *London Bulletin* was also on sale in the gallery throughout the period of the couple's exhibition⁶⁶ and Pailthorpe refers to 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' in her foreword to the catalogue.

Pailthorpe began her article by stating that:

Surrealism is one of the outcomes of a demand, on the part of those dissatisfied with the world, for the complete liberation of mankind from all fetters which prevent full expression. Humankind demands full expression. It is a biological necessity.⁶⁷

She then quoted Breton's definition of Surrealism from Gascoyne's English translation of Breton's *Qu'est ce-que le Surréalisme?*

Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally in writing or by other means, the real process of thoughts. Thought's dictation in the absence of all control exercised by the reason and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.⁶⁸

After quoting Breton's definition, Pailthorpe informed the reader that, like Surrealism, psychoanalysis 'also strives to free the psychology of the individual from internal conflict so that she or he may function freely. Thus it can be assumed that the final goal of Surrealism and Psychoanalysis is the same - the liberation of man – but that the approach to this end is by different means'.⁶⁹ She then stated that during the course of the couple's research 'a considerable amount of interesting material was collected and in it some of the real values of Surrealism became manifest'.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Pailthorpe writes this in the foreword to the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition catalogue, dated 1939. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 113 'Guggenheim Jeune exhibition')

⁶⁷ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 10

⁶⁸ Gascoyne, David. 1936. *What is Surrealism?* (London, Faber & Faber): 59 [original edition: Breton, André. 1934. *Qu'est ce-que le Surréalisme?* (Bruxelles, René Henriquez)]

⁶⁹ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 10

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Pailthorpe's article sought to demonstrate how the couple's experiments with psychoanalysis and art were similar to the Surrealists' preoccupation with the role of the unconscious. She claimed that since 'unconscious fantasy is at work in all Surrealist creations', one of the purposes of the article was to use five of the couple's automatic drawings and paintings to support her argument and asked the audience to bear in mind that '*the infantile fantasies underlying the pictures are not in consciousness at the time of painting or drawing [...]* Conscious interference in the painting can always be detected, since it invariably distorts the story in the fantasy-creation'.⁷¹ In this way, the couple's drawings and paintings were, as she says, a means of liberation as they were based on a spontaneous outpouring of feelings.

Two of the works which Pailthorpe draws upon in her article, and which I have already discussed in Chapter 3, include her pen drawing, *June 28, 1935-1* (Figure 64) and Mednikoff's *Come back Soon* (Figure 24). Pailthorpe also referred to her oil painting *April 1 (1938)* (Figure 65) and one of her untitled pencil drawings, dated 1938 (Figure 66), and discussed Mednikoff's oil painting *The Blue Hill, September 19 (1935)* (Figure 67).

In her discussion of the drawings and oil paintings, Pailthorpe drew attention to the meaning of the imagery described, how that meaning is produced and analysed and the role such an interpretation held within a therapeutic context. When describing their works, Pailthorpe asserted that 'Not a line or detail is out of place and everything has its symbolic meaning. This also applies to colour. Every mark, shape and colour is *intended* by the unconscious and has its meaning'.⁷² Thus, when

⁷¹ Ibid.: 12

⁷² Ibid.: 15

analysing each work, Pailthorpe was retracing the chain of associations in order to explain the images that emerged.

Apart from *Come back Soon* and *June 28, 1935-1*, the rest of the works which Pailthorpe illustrated in her article are relatively serene in their imagery despite referring to the couple's childhood experiences. Pailthorpe's *April 1 (1938)* depicts herself as a baby lying in her cot and dreaming, whereas *The Blue Hill, September 19 (1935)* and her pencil drawing consist of little figures that represent Mednikoff and Pailthorpe respectively.

Although Melanie Klein is not mentioned in Pailthorpe's article, it is clear that the argument is informed by Klein's school of thought as her analyses remain within the frame of Klein's theory of early infantile phantasies. This is evident in her first analysis of *June 28, 1935-1*, where Pailthorpe describes how 'early enforced restrictions on the infant's excretory functions inhibits fantasy life and, therefore, its imagination'.⁷³ She states that the drawing illustrates an attack upon a father figure and describes the psychological harm that can result from early religious nurturing.⁷⁴

She summarises its content as follows:

This drawing of a man having his eye gouged out has in it the wish to get into the father to find a safe place from an unsafe external world. The reason for the need for flight is also stated in this picture. The man's tongue is torn by his own teeth, in disapproval of himself. The drawing is expressing fear of a man who would do such a thing to himself as punishment for his own misdoings, and "If," it is argued, "this is what he does to himself for his bad behaviour, what would he do to me if he caught me wanting to behave badly? I must find a good way to escape his anger". And so a hole is bored into the man and a hideout is found in his body. The act portrayed by the infantile unconscious, about which this fear had arisen, was that of stealing milk from the mother.⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid.: 11

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

June 28, 1935-1 consists of violent and sadistic imagery and Pailthorpe wrote that she felt very:

Sick while doing it – sweated a lot. Felt I was attacking the eye gouging it out. Was surprised at the way in which the man had cut his own tongue [...] I felt savage with the man for cutting his own tongue – that was why I was attacking his eye – fury that he had destroyed what I wanted (penis) i.e. I castrated him through the eye for being impotent – self-castrated. Next I suddenly feel I am looking into that eye as though a hollow tube – I see a vast cave as if the whole of the inside of the man is hollow – then I feel I am inside at the bottom curled up and safe. “In my Father are one”. If I am inside (heaven) I cannot be cast out. Once inside always inside once saved always saved. I refused a God of Hate in the P[lymouth] B[rethren] religion. Outside meant F[ather] could attack me. If he castrated himself for his sexual desires how furiously would he destroy me for mine. And yet I wanted his penis & it filled one with impotent rage his destroying that which I wanted.⁷⁶

According to Andrew Wilson, this analysis is on the reverse of Pailthorpe’s drawing, which I have not unfortunately seen.⁷⁷ However, the differences between the text on the back of the drawing and the one which was published in *London Bulletin* are evident. In the text that was published, we can see how Pailthorpe was attempting to retrace the chain of associations that account for the images which emerged onto the paper. She was analysing the images she produced so that the unconscious realisations arrived at through each drawing session could be brought into consciousness where fear and repression are then faced.

On the other hand, the text on the reverse of the drawing shows us how writing also found a place within the unconscious production of her images. The Surrealist practice of automatic writing was produced in tandem with the flow of visual images to aid the freeing of repression. Here, Pailthorpe also described the circumstances surrounding her attempt to release and bring into consciousness her unconscious.

⁷⁶ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 18

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Unlike Mednikoff's own analysis of his drawing *Come back Soon* (discussed in Chapter 4), in which he describes his childhood experiences, in her analysis of this drawing, Pailthorpe writes about Mednikoff's underlying unconscious fantasy:

[he]...has killed his mother and is now enjoying himself with playing with the mess the kill has provided for him. To do this he has first to decorate himself with a cock's-comb and the beard. By doing this he is putting himself into the position of *those who are permitted to kill*. In his childhood he has witnessed 'kosher-killing' of poultry. Priests with beards become to his child-mind *the people who may kill*; therefore, in his fantasy, he first makes himself into a priest with a beard. To make doubly sure he is this kind of priest and none other he puts the cock's-comb on his head. Thus he is saying, 'I am a priest who kills chicken'.⁷⁸

Again Klein's influence is evident in Pailthorpe's account of her oil painting *April 1* (1938), as she writes of 'the wish-fantasy to be back in the infantile situation when sleep and feeding merged blissfully into one, and where wishes were quickly fulfilled'.⁷⁹ She describes how the artist (herself) is represented as a baby in a cot and says that the rest of the painting is what she dreams of as she sends forth her hand on a journey. The baby first seeks the sun, a symbol of the breast, and then, in the top right corner, climbs into the mother's bed; where it has also experienced feeding. The baby's third effort is to get milk from the glass to the left of the cot. She ends her analysis by stating, 'I wish to be fed. I must find that breast that feeds me'.⁸⁰

Pailthorpe's emphasis on the supreme importance of the relationship between the mother and her child is demonstrated in her analysis of Mednikoff's oil painting, *The Blue Hill, September 19* (1935), in which she says:

This unconscious fantasy-picture depicts the artist as a child running behind a house. The house is a symbol of mother. He has stolen the ball, a breast symbol, and the father tree is after him to punish him for his theft [...] The

⁷⁸ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 13

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 14

⁸⁰ Ibid.

hill is the mother's skirt. He can run round behind her and dodge father this way, a thing the artist frequently did as a child when trying to escape the father's wrath and punishment [...] The roof is the mother's head. In other words a child is safe only when it is high up in the mother's arms where it is level with the mother's head.⁸¹

This interpretation defines the father as typically a threatening, tyrannical figure and the mother-child relationship as crucial to human development.

In her final analysis in 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', Pailthorpe looked at her own pencil drawing, dated 1938. The little figures standing on the jaw-bone, climbing up behind the jaw and the monkey on the ball shape represent her. The jaw which the figure stands on is the mother's face. Once more, the mother-child relationship is highlighted as Pailthorpe ended this analysis by writing that the figure, who represents her, 'can get no relief except in being held close to the mother's head, neck and shoulder'.⁸²

Pailthorpe ended her article by maintaining that the infantile content of early Surrealist art would be gradually eliminated through a maturation of fantasy:

...fantasy or imagination bound by early infantile inhibitions and fears remains infantile in what it creates. In the process of becoming free Surrealist paintings, drawings and sculpture will necessarily be infantile in content. This does not preclude its right to be called art. The infantile fantasy, as it becomes freer and experiences more as a result of that freedom, will grow increasingly more adult in character and its creations will show it.⁸³

Evidently, 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' presented the scientific and therapeutic nature of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's project. Freud and Klein had inspired Pailthorpe's scientific understanding of the psyche but Mednikoff and the

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.: 15

⁸³ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 15

practice of Surrealist automatism allowed her to use visual imagery from the subconscious mind to create art. Thus, Pailthorpe turned to making art because she considered it vitally important that the repressed part of our minds should find expression, and claimed that fantasy material in art could appear in a form that was ‘inherently organised’ because where ‘complete freedom has been possible the results are perfect in balance, design, colour, rhythm and possess a vitality that is not to be found anywhere else than in Surrealism’.⁸⁴

To my knowledge, the first published response to ‘The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism’ was an article written by Jan Gordon in the newspaper *Christian Science Monitor* entitled ‘The Nature of Surrealism’. This newspaper, which is still in circulation, was published in Boston but focused on international as well as American events. Despite its name, it is not a religious-themed newspaper. Gordon, the author of the ‘Art and Artists’ column for *The Observer*, quoted from Pailthorpe’s ‘The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism’ and argued that ‘There is really no means of teaching how; nor is there any aesthetic method or theory which will hinder the genius, or help the second-rate artist to create a masterpiece’.⁸⁵ He claimed that this statement was inspired by the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition and stated that the stress he had ‘laid on the essentiality of the artist as creator against the potentiality of the art theory as creative impulse was roused by the attitude in Dr Pailthorpe’s exposition of the basis of Surrealism’.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Notes on technique by Pailthorpe, dated 10.12.37. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 65 ‘Technique’): 13

⁸⁵ Gordon, Jan. 11.02.39. ‘The nature of Surrealism’, *Christian Science Monitor*. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 132 ‘Miscellaneous Correspondence and Notes’)

⁸⁶ Ibid.

On 29 March 1939, Pailthorpe responded to Gordon's article in a letter to the editor of *Christian Science Monitor*.⁸⁷ She wrote that Gordon:

...began by raising an interesting point when he differentiated between the artist's thought in his work and the spectator's thought with regard to the same work. 'Art change' is argued as being present in the case of a Constable drawing because Blake discovered inspiration in it. In other words, it 'spoke' to Blake because it was more than just drawing, as Constable apparently thought it to be - it had, incorporated with it, something of Constable and was alive. It is on this very basis that I made my claim which Jan Gordon quotes;- "Surrealism is ushering into the world an art greater than has hitherto been known, for its potentialities are limitless. And this Art of the future will arrive when completely freed fantasy evolves from uninhabited minds. It will be the dawn of a new art epoch".⁸⁸

Pailthorpe then goes on to describe how:

The aim of Surrealism is sound. It is a means to an end. That end includes greater freedom in art. Jan Gordon senses this, for he does not categorically deny my statement. He says, "My contention is that it won't make a scrap of difference unless a great artist happened to see in surrealism an opportunity". I agree. Surrealism will not make great artists of us all. It can, however, enable everyone to become a hundred per cent good, according to his or her potentiality.⁸⁹

Pailthorpe ended her letter by stating that Surrealism is a means by which one can discover oneself and make the art of the future greater, as the freedom gained through Surrealism will give increased vitality to all creative work. She believed that 'It will make the significant artist more significant and the great artist greater' and 'will also reveal the existence of artists among those who have never previously entered the field of art'.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, since 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' demonstrated the couple's devotion to scientific research rather than the Surrealists' pursuit of 'the marvellous',

⁸⁷ Letter from Pailthorpe to the editor of *Christian Science Monitor*, dated 29.03.39; in *ibid*.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

which encapsulated the notion that the world of dream and fantasy ran parallel to the everyday rational world, some reactions to Pailthorpe's article were hostile. Indeed, their scientific approach did much to set them apart and to cause their eventual departure because, as we will see, other British Surrealists saw their work as an inappropriate method of exploring the unconscious.⁹¹

After Pailthorpe's article was published, the couple's approach to unearthing the components of their, as well as our, fears and obsessions came under assault, in particular, in two articles published in *London Bulletin*. The first article by Werner von Alvensleben, and entitled 'Automatic Art' was published on 15 April 1939 in *London Bulletin* No. 13.⁹² Von Alvensleben was an Austrian artist who moved to London in 1938. He knew several European Surrealists. His dismissive attitude to Pailthorpe's interpretations presumably stems from his own very different attitudes to the nature of art and its function and his comments suggest that he was sceptical about the couple's work and indeed about Surrealism.

Von Alvensleben's article was published in German and English, in a translation by Mrs Winkworth.⁹³ 'Automatic Art' was a critical attack on 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' in which von Alvensleben questioned the liberating power of art and claimed that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's art was merely a literal representation of their own interior worlds.⁹⁴ A letter, dated 16 April 1939, confirms that Pailthorpe wrote to Mesens enclosing a letter in answer to von Alvensleben's criticism of her

⁹¹ Buck, Louisa. 1988. *The Surrealist Spirit in Britain* (London, Whitford & Hughes): 12

⁹² Von Alvensleben, Werner. 1939. 'Automatic Art', *London Bulletin*, 13: 22-4

⁹³ Efforts to discover more about Mrs Winkworth have not yielded anything.

⁹⁴ Von Alvensleben, Werner. 1939. 'Automatic Art', *London Bulletin*, 13: 24

article and the couple's paintings, and asking him to publish it in the next issue of

London Bulletin:

..it would be most valuable to work up discussions along this line. Everything that clarifies the issues of Surrealism is of use. Later I will let you have another article from me, but at the moment this letter is as good as one; and it is excellent that von Alvensleben has set the ball rolling.⁹⁵

Mesens agreed and Pailthorpe's reply was published in *London Bulletin* in July 1939.⁹⁶

In 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', Pailthorpe had stated that both psychoanalysis and Surrealism strive towards psychic liberation from internal conflict, but Alvensleben argued that the aim of psychoanalysis 'is to make known the nature of the conflict. That does not mean that the dynamic operations of the original conflicts can be annihilated, nor yet that new conflicts can be prevented by it'.⁹⁷ Moreover, when referring to the dream as being the only 'psychic automatism' that we know of, Alvensleben stated that 'the more literally we try to interpret a dream in its manifest form, the further we are from its inner truth'.⁹⁸ In her rejoinder, Pailthorpe contradicted Alvensleben by reminding the reader that her interpretations of the pictures in her article were of the latent and not manifest content. She wrote:

So far as the 'manifest' content of a picture is concerned, every spectator would give a different interpretation, according to his or her own unconscious workings.⁹⁹

In 'Automatic Art', Von Alvensleben opposed Pailthorpe's analysis of Mednikoff's oil painting, *September 19 (1935)*, by claiming:

⁹⁵ Letter from Pailthorpe to Mesens, dated 16.04.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archive (File 132: 'Miscellaneous Correspondence and Notes')

⁹⁶ Letter from Pailthorpe to the Editor, dated June - July 1939. *London Bulletin*, 17: 22

⁹⁷ Von Alvensleben, Werner. 1939. 'Automatic Art', *London Bulletin*, 13: 22

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Letter from Pailthorpe to the Editor, dated June - July 1939. *London Bulletin*, 17: 22

There is no element in it that requires any explanation other than the obvious one. The tree is a tree, the house is a house and nothing else: on the contrary, the representation is so unequivocal that one has no wish to speculate on other meanings. The house is as much or as little a house as in hundreds of other paintings, as much or as little, if you like, a mother-symbol. The attitude of the spectator before this picture will be determined far more by the question whether it is well or badly painted.¹⁰⁰

Von Alvensleben questioned Pailthorpe's ideas by writing: 'from what does Dr. Pailthorpe wish to liberate the unconscious? From the original fixation? That is the function of all art; she cannot suppose that she has made a new discovery there'.¹⁰¹ In her response, Pailthorpe argued that his question was 'absurd, for my article implies the idea as having previous origin. My quotations from André Breton alone suffice to demonstrate this'.¹⁰² Instead, she maintained that 'The pleasure in Surrealist art for the spectator is that he is left to see what he likes in the pictures. The freer the individual is from unconscious fears the more he is able to enjoy them'.¹⁰³

Another reaction to Pailthorpe's article was published in the seventeenth issue of *London Bulletin* (June – July 1939), along with Pailthorpe's answer to von Alvensleben's criticism. It was titled 'Letter from Parker Tyler to Charles-Henri Ford, our American Representative'. The pair were members of New York's early twentieth century avant-garde and co-edited the magazine *View*, in 1940, which became an important publication for both the Surrealist and abstract expressionist movements.

Like von Alvensleben, Tyler criticised Pailthorpe's article. However, unlike von Alvensleben who found fault in Pailthorpe's theoretical argument, Tyler also

¹⁰⁰ Von Alvensleben, Werner. 1939. 'Automatic Art', *London Bulletin*, 13: 23-4

¹⁰¹ Ibid.: 23

¹⁰² Letter from Pailthorpe to the Editor, dated June - July 1939. *London Bulletin*, 17: 23

¹⁰³ Ibid.

criticised the quality of the couple's paintings, which he saw as unskillful, and accused her of making exaggerated claims about the quality of their works since he thought that they were talentless artists. He began his letter to the Editor by writing that...

these two painters are to be called artists only by a kind of courtesy with which I have no sympathy. Mrs Pailthorpe's article, 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', with the accompanying illustrations, reveal too too harrowingly the mummified and perverted conception of Surrealism to be feared and deplored. I cannot believe that the *really talented* English Surrealists need this sort of co-operation or this dubious kind of advertising.¹⁰⁴

Pailthorpe's article asserted that the couple's notion of liberation in psychoanalysis was based on the idea of therapeutic cure through automatism. In response to this, Tyler differentiated between Surrealism and psychoanalysis and wrote that the madman who paints will never be cured of his madness. When referring to Pailthorpe's article, he claimed that the 'flaw in her psychology should be stressed. Surrealism, to her and Mednikoff, is not specifically an instrument for the person who is *first* an artist but who is *first* a sick person. But Surrealism never was, isn't, and never will be the clinical equivalent of psychoanalysis'.¹⁰⁵

Tyler stated that there was a great gap between the way in which Pailthorpe spoke of art and Freud's definition of it, and said that from:

an artistic viewpoint, it is not a primary question of establishing a *logical* connection between conscious and unconscious fantasy, but one of establishing a *creative* connection; in other words, not a question of psychology or philosophy or morals but of *painting*. Mrs. Pailthorpe's interpretations of paintings say nothing about their painting values; she seems indirectly to understand that her own paintings are mere literary illustrations.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Tyler to Ford, dated June - July 1939. *London Bulletin*, 17: 21

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Tyler then ended his article by saying:

If Mrs. Pailthorpe's thesis were actually correct, the "unconscious" paintings of the insane would become the cause of their behaviour, not remain the result, since this form of painting is supposed to be liberating. But *any* kind of art liberates, for it is the *conscious* that liberates, that creates moral behaviour.¹⁰⁷

According to Andrew Wilson, Tyler attacked the couple's work without having seen the originals and his judgement of its quality was based purely on the poor photographs reproduced in *London Bulletin*.¹⁰⁸ It is nevertheless interesting that his and von Alvensleben's criticism turns largely on the issue of aesthetic value – on the (presumed) inadequacy of the couple's works as art – rather than just focusing on Pailthorpe's argument alone. To my knowledge, Tyler's letter and von Alvensleben's article were the only published criticisms of 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism'. None of the other British Surrealists published any direct criticisms of Pailthorpe's article, and no private responses from the British Surrealists are recorded in Pailthorpe's surviving correspondences.

6.3 The Guggenheim Jeune exhibition (1939)

Four years after their first meeting in 1935, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff exhibited their paintings and drawings at the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery in Cork Street, London. This exhibition was held between 10 January and 11 February 1939, a month after 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' was published. It was the couple's first joint solo exhibition and the exhibition catalogue confirms that they exhibited 65 art works in total. The works were for sale (ranging from 5 to 70 guineas) and consisted of pen and pencil drawings, watercolours and oil paintings.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.: 21-2

¹⁰⁸ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 29

The Guggenheim Jeune art gallery was opened by the American art collector, Peggy Guggenheim, in London on 24 January 1938 with an exhibition of works by Jean Cocteau. Shows by notable Surrealists, Cubists and other contemporary artists made the gallery one of the most important to show avant-garde art in London until it closed in June 1939. Shows there included the first solo exhibition in London by Kandinsky and the 'Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture', which featured works by Arp, Brancusi, Calder, Moore, and Pevsner.¹⁰⁹

Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's exhibition was Guggenheim Jeune's first show in 1939 and it brought the gallery a lot of attention, drawing a lot of press and a sizable public.¹¹⁰ The purpose was to raise sufficient funds to cover the heavy production cost of the couple's projected colour illustrated book in which they intended to publish their research, as Pailthorpe explains in the foreword of the catalogue. It was, she says, 'not our intention to exhibit our work (as artists) until after the publication of the history and findings of the research' but it had become 'necessary' to 'try to sell our works in order to raise the money for the expenses of publication'.¹¹¹ Mednikoff's art seems to have been valued more highly than Pailthorpe's as his most expensive painting, *The Anatomy of Space* (1936) (Figure 68), cost 70 guineas whereas Pailthorpe's most expensive works cost 25 guineas.

It seems that Guggenheim was the person who suggested that the couple exhibit their works at her gallery. Guggenheim met Pailthorpe through the former's close friend and assistant Wyn Henderson, who had helped Guggenheim and her second husband, the writer John Holms, to find a place to live when they moved to London in 1933.

¹⁰⁹ Dearborn, Mary. 2006. *Peggy Guggenheim: Mistress of Modernism* (London, Virago Press): 78

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: 178-9

¹¹¹ Foreword to Guggenheim Jeune exhibition catalogue.

Henderson managed the gallery and designed its posters and catalogues. She also named the gallery 'Guggenheim Jeune'.¹¹²

The first record of Pailthorpe's correspondence with Henderson is a letter, dated 13 August 1937, in which Henderson suggests that Pailthorpe meet Guggenheim and talk to her about her work.¹¹³ However, judging by the letter Pailthorpe sent Henderson on 15 June 1938, the first meeting did not take place until July 1938:

Dear Wyn Henderson,
Many thanks for your letter and the enclosed Bulletin.
I expect to be up in London the last week of July and would like very much to come to lunch with you and meet Miss Guggenheim.
Is this Peggy or another Guggenheim?
R. Mednikoff and I have been asked to show our pictures at all surrealist shows since the International in 1936, both at home and abroad - New York, Chicago, Washington, Boston. We were asked to show in the Belgium show, but the show eventually did not come off, I forgot why. I am interested to see that you are showing surrealist works.
I shall look forward to seeing you soon.¹¹⁴

Therefore, it was probably during their meeting in late July in 1938 that plans for the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition were first drawn up. Moreover, letters between Pailthorpe and Breton, some of which were written in French, let us know that she met Breton in Paris that month and that, during their meeting, Breton offered to write the foreword for the catalogue.

In the French version of one of the letters, Pailthorpe wrote:

November 1938

Cher Monsieur Breton,
J'avais l'intention de vous ecrire depuis quelques temps mais j'attendais vous donner des nouvelles.

¹¹² Gill, Anton. 2006. *Peggy Guggenheim: The life of an art addict* (London, Harper Collins): 186

¹¹³ Letter from Henderson to Pailthorpe, dated 13.08.37. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 113 'Guggenheim Jeune exhibition')

¹¹⁴ Letter from Pailthorpe to Henderson, dated 15.06.38; in *ibid.*

Maintenant j'ai ces nouvelles. M. Mednikoff et moi aurons une exposition de peintures et dessins le 5 Janvier au 6 Janvier a 'Guggenheim Jeune Gallery', Cork street, London.

Quand nous nous sommes rencontres a Paris vous disiez que vous serez assez aimables de nous ecrire un avant propos a notre catalogue de l'exposition. Maintenant je vais vous demander si vous auriez le bonte de le faire au plut tot possible.

Puis ce que nous sommes si pres de Noel je serez bien reconnaissante si vous pouvez me l'envoyer avant le fin de ce mois, autrement je craint ne pas pouvoir le faire imprime a temp a cause des fetes de Noel et de la Nouvelle Annee.

Je regrette beaucoup d'etre si presse mais malheureusement je n'aie pas pu vous ecrire avant ne sachant pas moi meme quand je reussirai a arranger l'exposition.

Si vous vous trouvez en Angleterre avant l'ouverture le 5 Janvier si vous viendrez avec Madame Breton me voir a Cornwall.¹¹⁵

In the English version of the same letter, Pailthorpe also told Breton about her article, 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', and included a resumé of the couple's psychoanalytic research:

I have written an article on 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealist Art' which is appearing in the next issue of the 'London Bulletin'. I will send you a proof copy of the article the moment I get one. I am sure you will be interested in it apart from the use it can be in helping to give you a little more information about the research.

You may possibly want certain information from me in writing the foreword to the catalogue. As there is little time to spare I will give you a brief resume of the research. I can let you have any further particulars if you will let me know what you require in addition to the following.

"The research began in May 1935. You first met us at the International Exhibition of Surrealist Art held at the New Burlington Gallery in London in 1936. This was the first time that any work from the research was exhibited and was also our introduction to Surrealism. All our Surrealist paintings and drawings are the outcome of a psychological research. Every exhibit is telling an unconscious story which it has been part of the research to discover and collect. Therefore, the works that will be on show have a double interest:-

- (1), as works of art.
- (2), as scientific data.

¹¹⁵ Letter from Pailthorpe to Breton, dated 11.38; in *ibid.* The letters which Pailthorpe wrote to Breton exist in French and English versions in the archive and, although they are dated, there are no envelopes and no addresses. However, the quality of the ink tells us that they are carbon copies of the originals.

As a result of the findings of the research important information of value to the educational and sociological world, as well as in relation to the psychology of art, have accrued. These, as well as other aspects of the research, will be revealed on the publication of our work. It is perhaps a unique event that a scientific research has not only led to art but also created an artist out of a scientist”.

The above information is for your selection only and does not mean that I feel any of it should be included in your introduction. That is entirely for you to decide.

With all good wishes to both Madame Breton and yourself from R. Mednikoff and myself.

Yours very sincerely¹¹⁶

However, in the end, it was Pailthorpe who wrote the foreword to the catalogue, probably because Breton was too busy to meet the deadline. She began by writing about the couple’s psychological research:

The paintings and drawings in this exhibition are works created during the progress of a psychological research. Four and a half years ago I asked Reuben Mednikoff to join me in a research along psychological lines. At that time I had no idea it would lead me into Surrealist art. In fact, I knew practically nothing about any kind of art. It was not until 1936 that we were discovered as Surrealist artists and then only by chance. The paintings and drawings we were producing were part of the psychological experiments we were undertaking and they are an important part of the research material. The findings of the research are of vital consequence educationally, sociologically and therapeutically, and are full of facts that can be scientifically proved.¹¹⁷

Pailthorpe also claimed that Surrealist art was ‘a transitional art’:

It is my belief, based on the scientific material amassed during these years of research, that Surrealist art will surpass any previous form of art in the richness, quality and vitality of its creations when it reaches its more mature stage of development.¹¹⁸

She then ended the foreword to the catalogue by describing Surrealism as both the art and language of the infantile unconscious:

Each one of the pictures in this exhibition contains within it a complete story. Every colour, every line is intended; and it is an essential part of the

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Foreword to Guggenheim Jeune exhibition catalogue by Pailthorpe, dated 1939; in *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

story. The full story of these and other works that were done during our experiments will be revealed in the publication of the research findings which will be given to the medical and scientific world when ready.¹¹⁹

Letters between Henderson and Pailthorpe confirm that they frequently corresponded with one another prior to the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition and were soon on first name terms. A letter from Pailthorpe to Henderson, in which the matter of expenses was discussed, also shows us that Guggenheim agreed to meet advertising costs. In this letter Pailthorpe wrote:

Dear Wyn,
Many thanks for your letter. Does the advertisement continue in the London Bulletin? You have not mentioned it. If not, I suppose that would be another item to add to the expenses that would fall due to me. And if so, how much does that come to? I am sorry to have to ask all these questions; but as I said previously, we can only show on these conditions if we can find someone to foot the bill; and I want to be sure of every expense before we make the final step. I hope you will explain this to Peggy. It is jolly nice of her to make us this offer and I would not like her to feel we were not appreciative.¹²⁰

A week later, Henderson replied by saying that the gallery would charge one third commission on all sales. She also asked Pailthorpe for reproductions of their work which she would use when advertising the show.¹²¹ The exhibition was advertised in *London Bulletin* as an 'exhibition of works forming part of a unique scientific research'. However, to my knowledge no illustrations were used in advertisements for the show, possibly because this proved too costly.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Letter from Pailthorpe to Henderson, dated 20.10.38; in *ibid.*

¹²¹ Letter from Henderson to Pailthorpe, dated 27.10.38; in *ibid.*

On 1 December 1938, Pailthorpe sent a draft of the exhibition foreword and catalogue to Henderson and Guggenheim.⁴⁵⁶ In an accompanying letter, Pailthorpe stated that the sale of their works was subject to the reproduction rights being retained by the couple because she wanted to reproduce the works when publishing her writings and for lecturing purposes.⁴⁵⁷ She also sent Henderson a list of names and addresses of people whom she wanted to invite to the exhibition. This list included Nash, Moore, Penrose, Read, Jennings and Burra.⁴⁵⁸ Plans for the exhibition confirm that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff went to London to prepare it on 1 January 1939.⁴⁵⁹

Of the paintings and drawings exhibited at the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition, only *Ancestors I and II*, *Headwaiter*, *Darts*, *The Stairway to Paradise* and *Wind* had been exhibited at the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936. The rest postdate the 1936 exhibition. Unlike the paintings and drawings they exhibited at the International Surrealist exhibition, a framed card giving an analysis of the trauma or obsession that related to the work in question accompanied each of the couple's Guggenheim Jeune exhibits probably because they wanted to exhibit the findings of their work from when they first met. The analyses were not published in the catalogue but appeared on labels, which hung alongside the art works, in the show itself.⁴⁶⁰ Only a draft of one of these analytic descriptions survives in the archive, Mednikoff's explanation of *July 3 1936, no. 2* (Figure 69):

‘M [Mother] is the top left large head which is crowned with pubic hairs and two breasts. Her lower lip extends down to a head (myself) which is refusing to take the dummy which the lower lip has become. The dummy is covered with my saliva. The dummy was no good I knew; it had no real

⁴⁵⁶ This draft of the exhibition catalogue foreword was identical to the published version.

⁴⁵⁷ Letter from Pailthorpe to Henderson, dated 01.12.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 113 ‘Guggenheim Jeune exhibition’)

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Exhibition plans, dated 1939; in *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ Walsh, Nigel. 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 29

food value to it. The hairy clawed legs attached to this head are holding down two shit babies – one is male. The nose to this head is also an anus and the head is covered with shitty hairs. From this head, on the right, are three pubic hairs stretching up to a father animal. At the end of these hairs are pellets of shit. These are trying to detract F's [Father] attention away from what the centre animal (myself) is doing and also I am offering him something of what I consider valuable. F. [Father] possesses two attractive breasts whereas M's [Mother] lower breast is useless, it has a nail in its teat and her breasts above contain faeces and this I am lapping up'.⁴⁶¹

As we shall see, Mednikoff's works tend to be more violent than Pailthorpe's relatively sedate images and this ink drawing exemplifies this. Moreover, as noted in Chapter 3, we can also see Pailthorpe's influence on Mednikoff as he was adopting what seems to be a Kleinian stance. His analysis illustrates the tension between protectiveness and the need to facilitate the child's independence of its mother. The five faces indicate how the human interplays with the animal and the drawing consists of various body parts and secretions. In this drawing, Mednikoff makes use of a smearing technique and such an approach is in keeping with Pailthorpe's view at the start of 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' that:

[...] painting freely, that is Surrealistically, may, in the unconscious, mean either the making of a mess, a diarrhoea or a preference for making stools all over the place instead of into the chamber [...] But whatever the act of painting may symbolise there is always an underlying reason for it.⁴⁶²

However abstract the works of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff appear, they always relate to or at least suggest a figurative subject and this is primarily because of the psychological content of the work. Their works tell stories through the condensation and fragmentation of their obsessions. Most of their art is grotesque and crude and consists of images of foetuses, as in Pailthorpe's *The five Firemen*, 1938, (no. 2 in the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition catalogue), (Figure 70) and sharp-toothed animals

⁴⁶¹ Notes on own drawings by Mednikoff, dated 1936. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 35 'Chronological digest of notes and drawings')

⁴⁶² Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 10

painted in bright colours as in Mednikoff's *The King of the Castle*, 1938, (cat. no. 45), (Figure 71) and *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies*, 1936, (cat. no. 49), (Figure 72).

Like *Darts*, 1935, (cat. no. 41), *The Anatomy of Space*, 1936, (cat. no. 57) also suggests the influence of the abstract and Surrealist sculpture of Moore and Hepworth on Mednikoff. These two works are abstract in form but very illusionistic in style. The geometric, quasi-architectural forms make the paintings less susceptible to an autobiographical or psychoanalytic reading than his later works and there are no obvious symbolic elements. Although the imagery in *Darts* and *The Anatomy of Space* is so similar, *The Anatomy of Space* has a more meticulous painterly technique.

Technically Pailthorpe's style is more naive than Mednikoff's. Her inexperience is, for instance, evident in her patchy application of paint in *The veil of Autumn*, 1935, (no. 38 in the Guggenheim Jeune catalogue), (Figure 73), one of the first works she produced following her meeting with Mednikoff. In *The veil of Autumn*, Pailthorpe used the simple technique of blot drawing and sponging, favoured by amateurs, which involves first laying down blots of paint and then applying a sponge to the surface, smudging and smearing the paint in a circular motion and achieving different effects by means of varying the pressure of the hand.

When looking at the paintings made during the years that separate the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936 from their own exhibition in 1939, a change in both Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's imagery is evident in that several of their later paintings illustrate Klein's theories about anxiety in infantile phantasies where, as I have previously stated, the expulsion from the safety of the mother's womb sets the psychological pattern for all later anxiety situations and is an overarching influence on the infant's first relations with the external world. One example is Mednikoff's

painting *The King of the Castle* (1938). It is painted with bright colours and represents the child's hesitation between leaving or staying within the mother's womb or bed. The sharp-toothed beast's mouth thrusts out a huge, long tongue with a crowned child at its tip and its tummy displays a bed with a mother and child holding onto one another. There is also a cot with a baby tucked safely away under the bed, symbolising the good, protective mother. Similarly, Mednikoff's *The Gastronomic Optic*, 1938, (cat. no. 8), (Figure 74) makes a contrast between the image in the bottom right corner of the loving, protective mother who rocks the baby to sleep, and the monstrous figure that looms over the mother and child. It was only after Mednikoff started working with Pailthorpe that he began to adopt this type of mother-child, Kleinian imagery and shed his illusionistic style.

Just as in his painting *The King of the Castle* and Pailthorpe's *The five Firemen*, Mednikoff's portrayal of the two nipples and the lips in *Caucasian Blancmange* (1938) can be associated with Klein's theory of 'Object Relations' in which the breast stresses the infant's relation with the mother. Like the paintings of the 'Birth Trauma Series', the images of the breasts and the circular form in *Caucasian Blancmange* give us the impression that the eye, which represents the foetus in several of the couple's other compositions, is inside the mother's body.

The same change in imagery can be seen in Pailthorpe's exhibit *The five Firemen* (1938) which was produced just a month after she completed the 'Birth Trauma Series'. *The five Firemen* reflects her attempt to capture the importance of intra-uterine experience through the process of automatism. In the bottom half of this painting, there is a womb containing a smiling baby and in the top half five orange amoeboid figures. Another exhibit with a similar style and imagery to the 'Birth

Trauma Series' is the watercolour, *Avaunt*, 1938, (cat. no. 6), (Figure 75), which was painted only three days after she completed the Series. *Avaunt* is similar to the first few paintings in the first of the 'Birth Trauma Series' which suggest the happiness and safety that Pailthorpe feels whilst in the amniotic fluid. Pailthorpe's use of subtle colours in *Avaunt* can be also likened to those in 'Birth Trauma Series 1 and 2'.

On examination of the works Mednikoff produced after the 1936 Surrealist exhibition in London, it becomes apparent that Dalí had had a particularly strong impact on the young man, who may have felt instinctively that there was an affinity between them, not only as artists but also at the level of personal experience. Mednikoff's earlier paintings and drawings seem, at all events, less Dalínian in subject matter and technique.

The paintings of Dalí and Mednikoff are a synthesis of the tensions and anxieties that were tormenting them at the time. The two artists also retrace their childhood experiences and incorporate Freudian imagery into their work. Furthermore, both Dalí and Mednikoff were not very sexually experienced when they met Gala and Pailthorpe. Just as Pailthorpe was for Mednikoff, Dalí's wife, Gala, represented his vision of total liberation as she opened the way to self-analysis in his art by means of which he was able to express his anxieties and fears. Both Mednikoff and Dalí revert repeatedly to the same objects in their imagery. They depict disturbing, monstrously enlarged limbs and organs, reliving childhood memories, experiences and fantasies as they worked, presenting their personal obsessions and making use of their knowledge of psychoanalysis.

Like many of Mednikoff's paintings, *Caucasian Blancmange*, 1938, (no. 32 in the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition), (Figure 76) reflects his obsession with eyes. Closed

eyes also feature in Dalí's *The Great Masturbator* (1929) (Figure 77), which suggests the state of dreaming. *The Great Masturbator* was illustrated in the second issue of *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* in October 1930 so Mednikoff could have come across the painting there. The individual images that crowd *Caucasian Blancmange* and *The Great Masturbator* are autobiographical. Just like Dalí's imagery in *The Great Masturbator*, Mednikoff retains his typical elements of violence in *Caucasian Blancmange* where the black monster-like figure assumes the role of the father as a threatening or menacing figure.⁴⁶³ Similarly, the grasshopper in *The Great Masturbator* represents an object of extreme terror whilst the symbol of the lion expresses violence, passion and authority, all of which can be linked to the fearful father. The bird in Mednikoff's watercolour also has several meanings as it can signify conception, whilst also playing on Freudian phallic symbolism where the menacing bird may have sexual connotations.

Caucasian Blancmange and *The Great Masturbator* are a startling conjunction of ideas and images drawn from psychoanalysis and Surrealism. The paintings are concerned with sexual desire, fears, obsessions, phobias and problems of sexual identity. In both paintings, a swelling yellow shape fills the centre of the composition around which we can see a cluster of sexual symbols.

The shifting identity in *The Great Masturbator* reveals Dalí's sexual anxieties as the composition relates to the events of August 1929, when Dalí met Gala, and it symbolises his conflicting attitudes to sexual intercourse. It is apparent from accounts of Dalí's encounters with Gala that the anticipation of making love to a woman filled him with anxiety and fear of impotence. Possibly, masturbation was the source of the

⁴⁶³ Notes on defence mechanisms by Mednikoff, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 64 'Defence Mechanisms')

guilt which thrust him to produce this picture. The female figure represents Gala, and is probably the masturbatory fantasy suggested by the title.

The focal point of *The Great Masturbator* is a distorted face that looks downwards and is a self-portrait. This foetus-like self-portrait head, with closed eyes, occupies nearly the whole canvas. Dalí's soft structures emerged from his obsession with the edible and eroticized shapes of Art Nouveau. As Dalí himself noted when discussing *The Great Masturbator* in 'The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí':

It represented a large head, livid as wax, the cheeks very pink, the eyelashes long, and the impressive nose pressed against the earth. This face had no mouth, and in its place was stuck an enormous grasshopper. The grasshopper's belly was decomposed, and full of ants. Several of these ants scurried across the space that should have been filled by the non-existent mouth of the great anguishing face, whose head terminated in architecture and ornamentations of the style of 1900.⁴⁶⁴

The picture reflects Dalí's tensions and anxieties. The mouth of the head is replaced by a decaying grasshopper. The grasshopper is both a cannibalistic and sexual threat. Its own decay is signalled by the swarming ants infesting it. We know that Dalí had a childhood phobia of grasshoppers and he uses the image to express a near hysterical state of panic.⁴⁶⁵ The petrified woman's face and the shells, ants and colourful feathers all mark a return to Dalí's childhood fears. Death and sexuality interact as the lion's head symbolises destruction whereas the red phallic tongue evokes a fear of castration. The blood on the male figure also suggests castration.

The Great Masturbator, together with a group of other paintings he produced in 1929, marked Dalí's entry into Surrealism. Around this time, Dalí was also devising his paranoiac-critical method. In his essay 'Paranoiac-Critical Interpretation of the

⁴⁶⁴ Dalí Salvador. 1949. *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (London, Vision): 248

⁴⁶⁵ Radford, Robert. 1997. *Dalí* (London, Phaidon): 128

Obsessive Image of Millet's Angelus' published in *Minotaure* in 1933 and his diary, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, Dalí dates the birth of 'critical paranoia' to 1929.⁴⁶⁶ It is possible that Dalí read, or had his attention drawn to, Freud's 'Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis' in which Freud reiterates his conviction that paranoia 'regularly arises from an attempt to fend off excessively strong homosexual impulses'.⁴⁶⁷ Knowing Dalí's fear of being homosexual, one can easily imagine that his paranoiac-critical method, as well as being a bid to preclude paranoia and harness the unconscious, was designed as a deliberate defence against a sexual temptation that racked him with anxiety.⁴⁶⁸

Dalí's delve into his psyche required the propagation of a latent hysteria which he described as paranoiac sensibility. He went beyond the Surrealists' emphasis on free association by simulating a paranoiac delirium and using it as a basis for artistic creativity. Dalí was convinced that he had a paranoiac sensitivity since any given image signified countless other images to him. He postulated that he could apply a conscious paranoiac reasoning to his art. Paranoia is a mental illness that causes the person to 'see things' and interpret visual information and Dalí simulated paranoia in order to use the resulting 'misinformation' as a basis for painting. He imitated the behaviour characteristic to a paranoid person and changed it to an experimental method of research. Hence, Dalí's art conveys the mind of a paranoid psychotic aroused by horrific images that are stirred from the unconscious.

⁴⁶⁶ Martin, Jean-Hubert & Stephan Andreae. 2003. *The Endless Enigma* (Düsseldorf, Hatje Cantz): 112

⁴⁶⁷ Freud, Sigmund. 1966. *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York, Norton & Co.)

⁴⁶⁸ Gibson, Ian. 1998. *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí* (New York & London, WW. Norton & Co.): 256

According to Dalí, the paranoiac mind perceives alternate meanings of individual signs, and interpretations displace one another almost instantaneously.⁴⁶⁹ When describing the ‘double image’ in his essay ‘The Stinking Ass’, Dalí wrote that ‘By a double image is meant such a representation of an object that it is also, without the slightest physical or anatomical change, the representation of another entirely different object’.⁴⁷⁰ ‘The Stinking Ass’ was first published in *La Femme Visible* in 1930 and then translated by J. Bronowski in *This Quarter* in 1932. Because *This Quarter* was accessible in London, it is possible that Mednikoff may have read Dalí’s essay.

In his famous essay, ‘The Conquest of the Irrational’ (1935), which appeared simultaneously in New York and Paris, Dalí established the primacy of the paranoiac-critical method.⁴⁷¹ The text also included 35 reproductions of his works. Dalí’s essay was translated by Gascoyne in 1936, and it may well have been through Gascoyne that Mednikoff first encountered it. In ‘The Conquest of the Irrational’, Dalí gave a detailed description of paranoiac-critical activity:

It was in 1929 that Salvador Dalí brought his attention to bear upon the internal mechanism of paranoiac phenomena and envisaged the possibility of an experimental method based on the sudden power of the systematic associations proper to paranoia; this method afterwards became the delirio-critical synthesis which bears the name of “paranoiac-critical activity”. Paranoia: delirium of interpretive association bearing a systematic structure. *Paranoiac-critical activity: spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based upon the interpretive-critical association of delirious phenomena.*⁴⁷²

Dalí’s text focuses on how there is a potential infinitude of interpretations of a given image. He also highlights how the primary function of the paranoiac-critical method is to produce images of a startling and unknown nature.

⁴⁶⁹ Dalí, Salvador. 1932. ‘The Stinking Ass’, *This Quarter*, 5/1: 50

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.: 51

⁴⁷¹ Dalí, Salvador. 1935. *The Conquest of the Irrational* (Paris, Éditions Surréalistes)

⁴⁷² Ibid.: 15

The paintings Mednikoff and Dalí created as adults show them re-experiencing the terrors they felt as a child. We can see Mednikoff's and Dalí's obsession for creating objects charged with sexual symbolism in their urge to express human feelings. Their paintings parade an obsessive fear of sex and the threat of castration. We know that Mednikoff often discussed his castration complex with Pailthorpe who would then trace it back to his birth experiences.⁴⁷³ *Caucasian Blancmange* and *The Great Masturbator* could almost be an illustration to a psychoanalytic case study.

The images in Mednikoff's works also present multiple meanings. His paintings *The Flying Pig* (1936) (Figure 78) and *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* demonstrate this as we see terrifying beasts of fantasy hybrids possessing human and animal attributes. *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* reflects Freudian preoccupations of childhood as Mednikoff dives into his past. The polymorphic multiheaded monster represents the threatening father resting upon a little child's crushed head, yet could also be the little nigger boys visiting the child in his bed at night. The painting's strange melting forms are both playful and threatening. Strange melting forms are also depicted in Dalí's *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) (Figure 79), which was one of the reproductions in 'The Conquest of the Irrational'. Like *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies*, we can also recognise a strange monster in the centre of Dalí's composition that represents the artist himself.

In *The Flying Pig*, Mednikoff morphs one image into another and mouths, eyes, animals, claws and genitals are all detectable. There is a trickling flow of excrement, blood and sperm. A wolf's head turns into a breast and the space between the flying pig's legs is both a cow's udder and a fish's head. The flying pig seems to float above

⁴⁷³ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 'Analytic Procedure')

the smoke coming out of a hybrid form that is a cross between Aladdin's lamp and a shoe. The use of illusionism and a recessive landscape background are also portrayed – as in Dalí's most typical works.

The imagery in several of the paintings that Mednikoff exhibited at the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition can be compared to that of Max Ernst too. Ernst became one of the Surrealist movement's founding members in Paris in 1925 and took part in the first Surrealist exhibition in 1925 at the Galerie Pierre in Paris.⁴⁷⁴ He played a prominent role in the Surrealist circle from the start and became famous for his frottage and grattage techniques. He had his first major one-man exhibition at the Galerie Van Leer in Paris in 1926.⁴⁷⁵

In 1926, Ernst also met Penrose and the pair formed a deep friendship. Through Ernst, Penrose became familiar with Surrealist theories and was influenced by the former's painting techniques. In fact, years later, whilst having lunch with Penrose in Paris, on 26 June 1938, Eluard proposed that Penrose should buy the greater part of his collection which he had gathered over the years mainly as gifts from artists or in exchange for things he had written for them. The paintings and objects he offered Penrose included forty works by Ernst. Penrose bought this collection for £1,500.⁴⁷⁶

As I stated before, Ernst was exhibiting his works at the Mayor Gallery in 1933 and 1934. Because of the range and depth of his work, *Cahiers d'Art* devoted a whole issue to Ernst in 1936. Mednikoff would have also seen Ernst's works at the International Surrealist exhibition that year which included works on the Loplop theme (described below) and Freudian dream imagery.

⁴⁷⁴ Schneede, Uwe. 1972. *The Essential Max Ernst* (London, Thames & Hudson): 71

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.: 82

⁴⁷⁶ Penrose, Anthony. 2001. *Roland Penrose: The friendly Surrealist* (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland): 88

According to Werner Spies, Ernst was the first artist to read Freud.⁴⁷⁷ The narrative implications of a mix of recognizable and ambiguous shapes can be seen in the art of Ernst and Mednikoff. Mednikoff's *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* exemplifies this. Like Mednikoff's, Ernst's works revolve around the figure of the father. One can draw parallels between *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* and Ernst's painting *Pietà or Revolution by Night* (1923) (Figure 80), which addresses Ernst's problematic relationship with his father by mimicking the image of the Pietà and replacing the Virgin Mary with his cold, distant father and Christ with a self-portrait in the form of a cold, hard marble statue. The son, who levitates in his father's arms and is perceived as dead, is withdrawn into a private world.

It is likely that Mednikoff had encountered Ernst's painting before he painted *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* since *Pietà or Revolution by Night* was a well-known work at the time. Dalí noted Ernst's painting in his article 'The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment' in *This Quarter* in 1932 when referring to the motifs of dreams and night:

In my fancies, I like to take as the point of departure for surrealist experiments the title of a Max Ernst picture, "Revolution by Night". If in addition to how nearly quite dream-like and almost overwhelming these experiments were originally, one considers the nocturnal, the splendidly blinding, power of the word more or less summing up our future, the word "Revolution", nothing could be less subjective than this phrase, "Revolution by Night". After all, that the review which for several years recorded the experiments should have been called The Surrealist Revolution must be significant.⁴⁷⁸

Pietà or Revolution by Night was illustrated in *Minotaure* in 1936 so it is possible that Mednikoff saw it there.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Spies, Werner (ed.). 1991. *Max Ernst: a Retrospective* (Munich, Prestel-Verlag): 33

⁴⁷⁸ Dalí, Salvador. 1932. 'The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment', *This Quarter*, 5/1: 197

⁴⁷⁹ *Minotaure*, no. 6, 1936 (Paris, Albert Skira)

Ernst's reading of Freud's book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, enabled him, in *Pietà or Revolution by Night*, to symbolise his own traumatic relationship with his father. According to Malcolm Gee, in *Pietà or Revolution by Night* the Virgin Mary holds the dead Christ but the figure sports a prominent moustache and, thus, the man who is in the place of the mother is God - the father of Christ. Furthermore, Ernst makes the father specifically his own father by adding the turned-up moustache of his father Philippe. Therefore, this strange Pietà represents Ernst's father, who identifies himself with God, holding his curly-haired son.⁴⁸⁰ Moreover, by replacing the grieving mother with the solemn and impassive father, Ernst gives his work both a comic and sinister effect.

In *Pietà or Revolution by Night*, Ernst employed a method of composition that was inspired by Freud's theory of dream formation. The scene in the painting startles the viewer through its dislocated and absurd character. The secondary title 'Revolution by Night' and the atmosphere reinforce the impression that this is a dream. In *Pietà or Revolution by Night*, Ernst uses Freudian symbols to produce his cryptic images. The painting represents the compression of ideas and associations which Freud considered typical of dreams. The Pietà figure has a hat and tie. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud identified hats and ties as symbols of male genitalia.⁴⁸¹ He also saw staircases as an indication of sexual activity.⁴⁸² Therefore, there is an affinity between *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* and *Pietà or Revolution by Night* because of their use of Freudian symbolism and the image of the father figure.

Ernst integrated Freudian psychoanalysis in his paintings and writings. One of the most significant representations of the father in Ernst's writings is his account of a

⁴⁸⁰ Gee, Malcolm. 1986. *Ernst, Pietà or Revolution by Night* (London, Tate Gallery): 19

⁴⁸¹ Freud, Sigmund. 1976. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (London, Penguin): 473

⁴⁸² Ibid.: 472

dream published in *La Révolution Surréaliste* in 1927. In this dream, Ernst's father assumes the monstrous identity of the 'father' of the psychoanalytic oedipal myth. Furthermore, the dream expresses the ideas and images that appear in Ernst's paintings from 1921 to 1924, with *Pietà or Revolution by Night* being one of them:

In front of the panel, a dark and shiny man makes slow gestures: comical, and, according to my recollections of a very distant period, joyously obscene. This funny little fellow has my father's turned-up moustaches [...] He accentuates the resemblance to fierce or slimy animals, to such a degree that he extracts living beings from it, who inspire me with horror and anxiety [...] Now I recognize that this strange painter is my father. He wields the whip with all his might and accompanies his movements with terrible gasps of breath, comparable to the puffing of an enormous enraged steam engine. With unbridled exertion, he sets this abominable top, containing all the horrors my father is capable of genially evoking from a panel of false mahogany, to spinning and leaping around my bed.⁴⁸³

In this deliberate Freudian account of his early paintings, the father is described as 'this funny little fellow' – a dismissively comic figure. Ernst's enraged 'father' who huffs and puffs like a steam engine, has the robotic absurdity discussed by Freud as a feature of the comic in *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*.⁴⁸⁴ Like the hat and tie, the whip is an example of a Freudian phallic symbol. Moreover, the father who huffs and puffs and whips also alludes to another Freudian situation: the 'primal scene' which is where the child overhears or sees his parents' sexual activities.⁴⁸⁵ Even if Mednikoff could not read the articles and writings in *La Révolution Surréaliste*, it is very likely that he looked through it carefully.

The works of Ernst and Mednikoff do not only show us how the artists saw the world but also how they saw themselves. Because of their reading of psychoanalysis, Mednikoff and Ernst were able to search their own pasts and their own personalities

⁴⁸³ Ernst cited in Legge, Elizabeth. 1989. *Max Ernst: the Psychoanalytic Sources* (London, Ann Arbor): 6

⁴⁸⁴ Freud, Sigmund. 1916. *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious* (London, Unwin): 190-93

⁴⁸⁵ Gee, Malcolm. 1986. *Ernst, Pietà or Revolution by Night* (London, Tate Gallery): 23

and this allowed them to produce a combination of visual symbols in their art. One example is the image of a bird, which frequently appears in their paintings. In standard Freudian dream symbolism, any bird of prey represents forbidden passionate impulses and the feared disciplinarian father who prohibits fulfillment of sexual wishes.⁴⁸⁶ Mednikoff's watercolour *The Gastronomic Optic* (1938) depicts a menacing bird with sharp claws looking down at the small image of a mother who rocks her baby to sleep. When referring to this work in his notes on defence mechanisms, Mednikoff described how the painting expresses the idea of the capacity for love versus the capacity for greed, in the form of the bird-like monster figure, which in turn, points towards the split ego of the baby.⁴⁸⁷ As well as his use of Freudian symbolism in the painting, Mednikoff's explanation shows us how, once again, he is also adopting Kleinian thought since Klein describes how the young ego split in this way experiences the threat of annihilation both from internal persecution arising from its destructive instincts and, at the same time, from reprisals by its own internal objects under attack.⁴⁸⁸ Apart from the images of the bird, mother and baby, in *The Gastronomic Optic*, there are also menacing beasts, eggs (both human and birdlike), bodily liquids, claws and sleep. Strong colours interact and there is an almost underwater or submarine feeling to the painting.

Ernst's fascination for birds was equally prevalent in his own work. By analysing the symbolism of his dreams, Ernst discovered that birds had a personal significance and bird imagery became an important part of his paintings and collages. Between 1929 and 1934, in addition to large-sized pictures in the grattage and frottage techniques,

⁴⁸⁶ Freud, Sigmund. 1976. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (London, Penguin): 410

⁴⁸⁷ Notes on defence mechanisms by Mednikoff, dated 1938. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 64 'Defence Mechanisms')

⁴⁸⁸ Klein, Melanie. 1935. 'A contribution to the psychogenesis of manic-depressive states', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 16: 262-289

Ernst created three 'collage novels', *La femme 100 têtes* (1929), *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* (1930) and *Une semaine de bonté* (1934).⁴⁸⁹

These 'collage novels' consisted of a series of collages formed from assembled cut-outs from illustrations culled from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century magazines which he had accumulated. A single magazine illustration formed the basis of each image to which 'alien' elements were then added. Ernst completed the images with enigmatic captions which added further layers of ambiguity. These 'collage novels' had no text.

La femme 100 têtes depicts human life from conception, birth and childhood to adult experiences of sexual identity, aggression, old age, fear and death. Mednikoff's imagery also illustrates these themes in works such as *Caucasian Blancmange*, *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* and *The Gastronomic Optic*. *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* exposes the evil effects of the Church, especially with regard to sexuality, and reveals the transformative power of liberated desire and passionate love. Like Mednikoff's influence by psychoanalysis, this collage novel was influenced by Ernst's study of Freud's writings. The collages in *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* are visualisations of the nightmarish dreams the young girl has at night and such images are depicted in Mednikoff's work too. *Come back Soon* and *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* exemplify this. *Une semaine de bonté* appeared in five separate volumes. Unlike the previous collage novels, it has no written captions. Instead, the title-pages of each volume provide detailed indications of the content. Ernst's sources for this work were engravings from late-nineteenth

⁴⁸⁹ Ernst, Max. *La femme 100 têtes* (Paris, Éditions du Carrefour), *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au Carmel* (Paris, Éditions du Carrefour), *Une semaine de bonté* (Paris, Éditions Jeanne Bucher).

century pulp fiction, scientific journals, natural history magazines, and encyclopaedias.

It was in these ‘collage novels’ that the character with the strange name of ‘Loplop’ appeared, who may be a bird or a man with the head or wings of a bird. Loplop took on the role of a narrator and commentator. As Charlotte Stokes says, ‘Loplop is not only the artist’s personal symbol, but the presenter of Ernst’s interpretations of his own world’.⁴⁹⁰ She describes the way Ernst ‘may show him as a human figure with bird attributes, Loplop can take on the supernatural power or winged creatures – angels, cupids, and Lucifer himself’.⁴⁹¹

Ernst’s fascination with birds developed when he was a child. With Loplop, Ernst created for himself an alter ego, an artist in the third person. His series of collages entitled *Loplop Presents* ensured that he differentiated between this bird and the other birds in his oeuvre as it had a specific role in the painter’s creative life. Ernst himself claimed that Loplop was an extension of himself, engendered by a childhood confusion between birds and humans that arose when the death of his pet bird coincided with the birth of his youngest sister.⁴⁹²

Many of the images in the ‘collage novels’ were reproduced in Surrealist journals such as *Minotaure*, *Documents* and the Belgian journal *Variétés*. Penrose could have also introduced the couple to Ernst’s works as he had funded *Une semaine de bonté* before it went into print in 1934. Moreover, an illustration from *Une semaine de bonté* is reproduced in the *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme* (Figure 81).⁴⁹³ It shows the

⁴⁹⁰ Stokes, Charlotte. 1983. ‘Surrealist persona: Max Ernst’s “Loplop, superior of birds”’, *Simiolus*, 13/3/4: 225

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.: 226

⁴⁹² Ernst, Max. 1937. ‘Au Delà de la peinture’, *Cahiers d’Art*, 6/7: 24

⁴⁹³ *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme*, 1938, (Paris, Galerie des Beaux-Arts): 36

Loplop figure and we can see a woman with two sets of wings. This dictionary was published in 1938 and the entry on Ernst describes him as being ‘‘The Vogelobre Loplop’, Surrealist painter, poet and theorist from the beginning of the movement to the present day’.⁴⁹⁴

One of Ernst’s painting’s of Loplop, *Loplop introduces a young girl* (1930) (Figure 82), was exhibited in the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition. It was also illustrated in *Axis* in July 1936 and Mednikoff could have seen the work there too. The painting depicts an anthropomorphic bird with a gold bow tie holding a rectangular frame within which one can see metal, string and stone objects surrounding the medallion of a young girl’s profile. Just as in *The Gastronomic Optic*, Ernst’s work condenses images and ideas. His collage is stripped of any logical connections as he brings the figurative imagery into the realm of the Freudian dream image with its reliance on displacement, condensation and alterations of the sense of time and space. The objects within the frame are presided over by the figure Loplop as Ernst forms spatial relationships between the foreground and the background. Even though Ernst also depicts images of an egg and claws, unlike *The Gastronomic Optic*, he does not make use of bright colours in his work. Moreover, although the imagery in Mednikoff’s watercolour is similar to *Loplop introduces a young girl*, the media is different since, with the aid of frottage, Ernst created a picture comprised of structures which are very different from each other and do not morph into one another.

Just as it had been at the time of the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition, the critical reception of the couple’s first joint exhibition was relatively positive. Several

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.: 11

critics referred to them as ‘psychologist painters’. In one press review, an unnamed journalist wrote:

Consensus of opinion among visitors to the Guggenheim show proved interest to be almost equally divided between the scientific and the artistic. A minority held that, divorced from all meaning, the pictures justify themselves by good painting and drawing, striking and original design, brilliant colour [...]Scientific workers hold that they form a “document” of immense importance to psychological science, since they preserve in permanent pictorial form a series of fantasy-stories drawn from people stamped with the common psychological marks of the present epoch.⁴⁹⁵

The journalist ended the article by saying:

...the Guggenheim show lives more vitally than any other art exhibition in London. Visitors from the Scottish Exhibition at the Royal Academy, with its faded memories of a past age, are flocking to see the art of the new epoch for which a deep revolutionary motive is claimed. Attempts to reconcile Surrealism with the Marxist political programme of action have hitherto broken down largely as the result of a paucity of “documents”. The Pailthorpe-Mednikoff show, certainly the most complete statement of Surrealism ever seen in this country, is likely to lead to new attempts from the intellectual Left.⁴⁹⁶

Another journalist described the ‘technical excellence’ of the couple’s painting:

Mednikoff possesses, perhaps, greater technical ability in the formal co-ordination of the various elements of his design, but Dr. Pailthorpe’s work is extraordinarily fresh and vigorous and her colour sense is excellent.⁴⁹⁷

On the other hand, there were some negative reviews. An anonymous critic wrote:

One may accept as a possibility the idea put forward in the preface to the catalogue of ‘unconscious creation’ but, studying the exhibits, I did not feel in any instance that artistic creation had, in fact, occurred.⁴⁹⁸

Whilst another opined that ‘it would be a waste of time for the critic to say what he thinks of it as art’.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁵ Article from unknown newspaper titled ‘Surrealist show: Painters tell fantasy stories in line and colour’, anon, dated 14.01.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 134 ‘Reuben Mednikoff: press cuttings’)

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Extract from article in *Architects’ Journal*, anon, dated 26.01.39; in *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁸ Extract from *Studio Extract*, anon, dated 04.39; in *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ *The Sunday Times*, anon, dated 22.01.39; in *ibid.*

Despite the mixed reviews, the works which Pailthorpe and Mednikoff exhibited at the 1939 Guggenheim Jeune exhibition reveal a distinct development in their imagery and technique. After producing several drawings during the early stages of their research, the couple started using watercolours because as Pailthorpe stated, watercolour painting was ‘the speedier way of allowing the unconscious to express itself through paint’.⁵⁰⁰ Automatism served as a catalyst for their analysis of their behaviour and fantasies and allowed them to portray Surreal images through ‘pure psychic automatism’, in works like Mednikoff’s *September 29, 1937, 1.30pm (Orgiastic Melody)* (1937) (Figure 83), as well as their own personal experiences, as in Pailthorpe’s *Avaunt*.

As we can see, the visual detail in the couple’s art works at the exhibition presented the viewer with the worlds of birth and death as well as images of suspended falling or flying figures, the eye, the egg, conception, torture, powerful and menacing figures, little children, nightmares, hallucinations, violence and sexual confusion. Infantile images of figures urinating, vomiting and defecating along with sperm, ova and uterine shapes also thronged their work.

6.4 Conclusion

Pailthorpe was one of the few Surrealist artists well-equipped to draw on psychoanalytic theory and practice when discussing art. In her famous article, she stressed how ‘Surrealism can lead to a greater understanding of the world around and within us, and it is a matter of time only before this will be recognised’ because it is ‘impossible to create a well-organized world *unless at the same time* the internal

⁵⁰⁰ Notes on analytic procedure by Pailthorpe, dated 1935. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 22 ‘Analytic Procedure (C)’)

mental world is harmonised'.⁵⁰¹ Together, with this statement in mind, the couple's works focused on forms of their obsessions - excretion, fetuses, images of ingestion - and the result was a grotesque form of childhood regression.

Like the works they showed at the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936, the works exhibited at Guggenheim Jeune aroused the interest of other artists and the public, and there was much discussion of the claims made for its 'research' value, and some disagreement about its value as 'art'. As we have seen, a development in the couple's work is evident as they both now employed 'Object Relations' symbolism. In pushing back the time frontier of the pre-verbal stages of development, their work became less abstract. Their purpose was, as Maclagan has observed, to 'discover in their freewheeling doodles a kind of unconscious lingua franca, every ingredient of which they could subsequently identify and locate, either in terms of formative personal memories or in terms of a preconceived Kleinian lexicon'.⁵⁰² But in choosing the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery as the venue for their exhibition, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff signalled a degree of independence from their English Surrealist associates, and in the following chapter the divisive implications of their decision will be discussed in some detail.

⁵⁰¹ Pailthorpe, Grace. 12.38-01.39. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 12

⁵⁰² Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 45

Chapter 7: The War Years (1938 – 1940)

7.1 Introduction

The following chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on Mesens's move to England in 1938, Breton and Trotsky's manifesto, internal tensions and factions within the English and French Surrealist groups, the outbreak of war and the growing importance of Mesens and his divisive demands. The second part outlines Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's efforts to reform the Surrealist group in England after the outbreak of war, the abortive Stafford Gallery exhibition, the Barcelona meeting, the publication of Pailthorpe's book, the couple's expulsion and their move to New York.

7.2 Part 1

In March 1938, the Belgian Surrealist E.L.T. Mesens, former secretary of the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts, came to England and replaced Penrose as the leading force in the British Surrealist group. He had played a crucial part in the early development of Belgian Surrealism, acted as a pivotal figure in relations between the Brussels and Paris groups, and, as we saw in Chapter 4, had had an important role in the extension of the movement to Britain in 1936. Following his move to England, Mesens assumed the role of group leader and without doubt caused a redefinition of the aims of the group. Yet, his militancy caused factions within the group and this was manifested in the meeting at the Barcelona restaurant in 1940, which is discussed in Part 2.

A letter from Mesens to Penrose on 27 January 1938 outlined the difficulties to be overcome in order for him to take over the London Gallery which he had launched with Penrose the year before. In the letter, Mesens defined the gallery's policy: to exhibit young Surrealists on the first floor, and on the second, artists representing

avant-garde tendencies from Fauvism to Abstraction.⁵⁰³ The primary goal of this policy was to try to attract well-known artists from Britain and abroad, so that the second floor would not be run at too great a loss.

Two months after sending this letter to Penrose, Mesens left his job at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels and settled in Downshire Hill in Hampstead. Because Penrose was frequently absent, Mesens took over the management of the London Gallery in April and, together with Penrose, launched the *London Gallery Bulletin* that same month.⁵⁰⁴ By taking over the gallery, Mesens aimed to establish a centre which could unite the activities of French, Belgian, Spanish and English Surrealists in exhibitions and in *London Bulletin*, as it was later renamed. The *Bulletin* gave ample publicity to exhibitions at the Mayor Gallery, the Zwemmer Gallery and the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery. Mesens took on the post of the *Bulletin*'s editor and his three successive assistant editors were Humphrey Jennings, Penrose and George Reavey. It was published almost every month and contained many reproductions, poems and articles. The London Gallery also operated a lending library that became a magnet for artists, poets and writers and contributed to the development of Surrealist activities in England.⁵⁰⁵ In June 1938, Penrose left England for Paris, and then joined Lee Miller in Athens. Still, because of Mesens's many contacts abroad and those of Penrose in Britain, Mesens succeeded in maintaining a solid Surrealist presence in London during Penrose's absence.⁵⁰⁶

Meanwhile, the political atmosphere in Europe was becoming increasingly tense and repressive. In France, the Communist party was banned and many of its leaders were

⁵⁰³ Letter from Mesens to Penrose, dated 27.01.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 708 'correspondence with E.L.T. Mesens')

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*: 218

⁵⁰⁵ Penrose, Anthony. 2001. *Roland Penrose: The friendly Surrealist* (London, Prestel): 87

⁵⁰⁶ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing): 156

either jailed or forced into exile. Although the struggle between Republicans and Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War had begun for purely internal reasons in 1936, the conflict played a significant role in shaping Great Power politics. However, it seems that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff showed no interest in the Spanish Civil War but merely retreated away from public events and into their own private world. Their art also demonstrates this as, unlike artists such as Dalí, none of their works seem to carry political overtones.

No doubt, the Spanish war profoundly influenced the two major alliances of the interwar period: that between Italy and Germany on the one hand and between Britain and France on the other. The Nationalists in Spain appealed to Germany and Italy and the Republicans to France and the Soviet Union. Through events in Spain, ties between Germany and Italy became closer and the French found themselves bound tightly to their British allies.⁵⁰⁷ Thus, the differing decisions over intervention or non-intervention clarify the conditions under which the great powers were willing to go to war. The growing threat of Germany pushed France and Britain closer together in the 1930s and their union was the best and only solid hope in Europe that peace might be saved. Because Belgium feared that Germany was a menace to its security, the Belgians announced that they favoured neutrality. They overturned the military agreement of 1920 to co-operate with France and reduced France's security by leaving the Franco-Belgian border unprotected. However, Britain and France both expressed their determination to defend Belgium against unprovoked aggression.⁵⁰⁸

Throughout this period, the Surrealists did not abandon their political activities and supported all the left-wing groups in the Spanish struggle except the Stalinists. Unlike

⁵⁰⁷ Martel, Gordon (ed.). 1999. *The Origins of the Second World War Reconsidered* (London, Routledge): 206

⁵⁰⁸ Overy, Richard. 1994. *Inter-War Crisis 1919-1939* (London, Longman): 397

so many disillusioned ex-Communists, the Surrealists never turned to the Right and Breton's next political move was to align the movement with Trotsky, with whom he established close personal ties after his visit to Mexico in 1938.

It is likely that the strife within the Surrealist group in England began just after Breton's meeting with Leon Trotsky, which came about through Diego Rivera, at whose house Breton stayed during his visit to Mexico between April and September 1938. Breton had gone to Mexico after accepting a cultural mission from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give a series of lectures on French art and literature.⁵⁰⁹ However, his chief motive for accepting was that it would give him the opportunity of meeting the exiled revolutionary Trotsky in person. As Polizzotti wrote in *Revolution of the Mind*, the Stalinists regarded Breton's visit to Mexico with evident suspicion and, before his arrival, a French Communist organization sent a letter to the major Mexican writers and artists calling him a 'propaganda envoy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs'.⁵¹⁰ Aragon also sent a letter to the A.E.A.R. (Association des écrivains et des artistes révolutionnaires) urging the Mexican Stalinists to effect a 'systematic sabotage of all Breton's activities in Mexico'.⁵¹¹ However, despite these attempts to discredit him, it seems that Breton was warmly received in Mexico.

Breton found in Trotsky an understanding man who believed that art, in 1938, in order to keep a revolutionary character, must be independent of all forms of government, must refuse all orders and follow its own line, its own process of development.⁵¹² Because of their shared concern for the freedom of art and their stand against social realism, this meeting resulted in the two of them collaborating and producing a new

⁵⁰⁹ Lewis, Helena. 1988. *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, Paragon House Publishers): 143

⁵¹⁰ Polizzotti, Mark. 1995. *Revolution of the Mind: The life of André Breton* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux): 455

⁵¹¹ Breton, André. 1967. 'Visite à Leon Trotsky', *La Clé des champs* (Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert): 55

⁵¹² Nadeau, Maurice. 1968. *The History of Surrealism* (London, Cape): 209

manifesto entitled *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* and dated 25 July 1938. It condensed many of the discussions on art and politics that had taken place between Trotsky and Breton, but because Trotsky was forbidden by the Mexican government to engage in any political activities and because he believed that the manifesto should be signed by two artists, it appeared under the names of Breton and Rivera. However, this was only revealed after Trotsky's death in 1940.⁵¹³

The manifesto addressed all leftist intellectuals who refused to follow the call of Stalinism:

We do not explain that at no time - no matter how favourable – do we feel any solidarity with the slogan “Neither Fascism nor Communism!”- a slogan for conservative and frightened philistines clinging to the remnants of a ‘democratic’ past. True art, art that does not rely on producing variations of already existing models but tries to express the innermost needs of man today [...] such art must be revolutionary; it must be aimed at a complete and radical revision of the social order.⁵¹⁴

The manifesto damned both the Fascist and Stalinist regimes for repressing and destroying progressive art and condemned the decadence of bourgeois democracies. It affirmed ‘once again the principles of freedom in the service of the revolution’, and drew upon psychoanalysis ‘to demonstrate that it is only by bringing the repressed elements of the human personality into harmony with the ego, and not by repressing them further, that man can be emancipated’.⁵¹⁵ Freudian theory was used to illustrate the psychologically damaging effects on the artist of the conflict between his ego and the hostile environment in which he must live.⁵¹⁶ Breton and Trotsky also wrote that art should be isolated from politics and demanded that, ‘In the realm of artistic creation, the imagination must escape from all constraint [...] To those who would

⁵¹³ Lewis, Helena. 1988. *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, Paragon House Publishers): 146

⁵¹⁴ Breton, André and Leon Trotsky. 1938. *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* (trans. Ian Henderson). Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 102 ‘Surrealism in Britain: André Breton text, letter from FIARI’)

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Lewis, Helena. 1988. *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, Paragon House Publishers): 146

urge us [...] to consent that art should submit to a discipline which we hold to be radically incompatible with its nature, we give a flat refusal, and we repeat our deliberate intention of standing by the formula *complete freedom of art*'.⁵¹⁷

The manifesto's purpose was to provide an alternative to all totalitarian constraints and it ended by inviting the revolutionary artists of all nations to unite in forming a new organization to be called the 'Fédération Internationale de l'Art Révolutionnaire Indépendant' (F.I.A.R.I.):

Revolutionary, independent art should unite for the struggle against reactionary persuasion and for a loud proclamation of its right to existence. Such a campaign is the aim of the 'International Federation of Independent Revolutionary Arts' which we consider necessary to create.⁵¹⁸

Thus, the manifesto sounded a call to unite all those who had decided to 'serve the revolution through the methods of art, and to defend the freedom of art against the usurpers of the revolution'.⁵¹⁹ Breton and Trotsky stated that:

The aim of this appeal is to find a common ground on which may be united all revolutionary writers and artists [...] Marxists can walk hand in hand here with anarchists provided both parties uncompromisingly reject the reactionary police patrol spirit represented by Joseph Stalin [...] Every progressive tendency in art is destroyed by fascism as "degenerate". Every free creation is called "fascist" by the Stalinists. Independent revolutionary art must now gather its forces for the struggle against reactionary persecution.⁵²⁰

Ultimately, the Breton and Trotsky manifesto called for a revolutionary art that differed from art promoted and patronised in Stalinist Russia, the Fascist dictatorships, and the bourgeois democracies. As Helena Lewis says in *The Politics of Surrealism*:

⁵¹⁷ Breton, André and Leon Trotsky. 1938. *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant*. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 102 'Surrealism in Britain: Andre Breton text, letter from FIARI')

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

The manifesto clearly rejected the doctrine of socialist realism, as well as the reactionary bourgeois 'art for art's sake' school of aesthetics. It called upon a broad coalition of left-wing artists who had also rejected both these alternatives to come together, and specifically extended an invitation to anarchists to join the F.I.A.R.I. thus emphasizing the libertarian nature of the project.⁵²¹

After returning to Paris in early September 1938, Breton learned that Eluard had been writing for *Commune*, the Stalinist A.E.A.R. journal, which had tried to sabotage his Mexican visit. Aragon, who had renounced Surrealism to become a Communist party militant in 1932 and, as a result, ended his relationship with Breton, was the editor of *Commune*. Because he saw this as an act of both personal and political disloyalty, Breton broke off relations with Eluard, who had been one of his closest friends and one of the original founders of the Surrealist group. The break between them ended a twenty-year friendship and, following this, the Paris correspondent of *Partisan Review*, Sean Neill, wrote that it was 'a shock that Eluard's sense of expediency has made so brilliant a poet prefer continuation of his connection with the Stalinist *Commune* to signing the F.I.A.R.I. manifesto'.⁵²²

Because of his split with such a greatly admired poet and much loved man as Eluard, Breton's need to establish F.I.A.R.I. became even greater and, once he was back in Paris, Breton set about creating a French section of the Federation that had been proposed by the Trotsky-Breton manifesto. He called a meeting of Surrealists in Paris to denounce Eluard's attitude towards Stalin. So vengeful was Breton that, driven by personal friendship, other Surrealists like Man Ray, Ernst and Georges Hugnet preferred to follow Eluard out of the movement in October 1938. Still, a national committee, consisting of Breton, Yves Allégret, Michel Collinet, Jean Giono, Maurice

⁵²¹ Lewis, Helena. 1988. *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, Paragon House Publishers): 149

⁵²² Ibid.: 151, unspecified source.

Heine, Pierre Mabille, Marcel Martinet, André Masson, Henry Poulaille, Gerard Rosenthal and Maurice Wullens was formed and represented revolutionary art in France. Those who agreed to collaborate with the left-wing F.I.A.R.I. in response to a questionnaire sent out by Breton included Read, Mesens, Jef Last, Francis Vian, Serge, Paul Benichou, Albert Perez, J.F. Chabrun, Nadeau, Cahun, Nicolas Calas, Michel Carrouges, Robert Blin, Marcel Duhamel, Marcel Jean, Ignazio Silone, Thirion, and Henri Pastoureau.⁵²³

On 9 September 1938, the English Surrealists received a handwritten copy of Ian Henderson's translated text of Trotsky and Breton's manifesto. However, to my knowledge, Read was the only English person to sign up. This placed him in a different political camp to Penrose, who did not sign the manifesto because he was very close to Eluard. One can see why Mesens was inclined to sign the manifesto since, together with Magritte, Nougé, Scutenaire and Souris, he had signed 'L'Action Immédiate', which was published in the special issue of the journal *Documents* 34 entitled 'Intervention Surréaliste', in June 1934, and which explored the conditions favourable to revolutionary activity outside the Communist Party.⁵²⁴

The membership of Breton's committee had reached nearly sixty by late September 1938 and began to publish its own bulletin, *Clé: Bulletin mensuel de la FIARI*, with Maurice Nadeau as editor. *Clé* was primarily a political journal, although the freedom of art was one of its dominant themes. It was also as much opposed to French government policies as to Stalinism and Fascism. Although the Paris group was the

⁵²³ Ibid.: 154

⁵²⁴ Mesens, E.L.T. 1934. 'L'Action Immédiate', *Documents* 34

most numerous and best organized, F.I.A.R.I. groups were simultaneously organized in Mexico and Buenos Aires.⁵²⁵

A letter from Breton, addressed 'To our friends in London', dated 21 October 1938 and translated by Maddox, who as we will see supported Breton, stated that the British group must define its position towards Trotskyism:

At the moment we expected to hear of the constitution of the English section of the FIARI, Penrose informs us that you have not been able to agree on a plan of action. The question which seems to worry you most is what attitude to adopt towards the USSR.⁵²⁶

Breton emphasised 'that to unite with all the creative forces of man, by all critical and effective means - and we do this when we take as a starting point the class struggle - is the highest task to which an artist and an intellectual, worthy of the name of revolutionary, can aspire'.⁵²⁷ He wrote that 'if the leaders of the proletariat had not committed errors, there would never have been Fascism either in Italy or in Germany' and as a consequence, 'not to react when faced by the faults of the Third International would be tantamount to acceptance of the responsibility for its errors and its crimes'.⁵²⁸ He ended the letter by writing: 'We fight for the Independence of Art by the Revolution, as we fight for the Revolution by all effective means'.⁵²⁹

According to Michel Remy, in a previous exchange of letters with Breton, Penrose had defended an alliance with the Communist party to prevent any isolation in the fight against Fascism.⁵³⁰ Because of his work for the cause of the Spanish Republic, Penrose had been on good terms with the British Communist party but did not become

⁵²⁵ Lewis, Helena. 1988. *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, Paragon House Publishers): 154

⁵²⁶ Letter from Breton to British Surrealists, dated 21.10.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 286 'Correspondence with Conroy Maddox')

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing): 157, unspecified source.

a member. Due to his links with Paris, he became the political spokesman for the British Surrealists but refused to allow any political disagreement to come between him and Eluard. Moreover, he could not assure Breton of the support of the British group, which tolerated a wider range of political attitudes, with some members being Communists, Marxists or sympathisers of one shade or another.⁵³¹ Breton refused to sanction such unorthodoxy and stressed that unity amongst the Surrealists was crucial:

Certain Surrealists in London, it appears, hesitate. We hope that this letter will help them to dispel their fears. If this is not the case, it is obvious that they will only be surrealists in name. We are not deceived by words or labels, no more by the label 'communist' or USSR.⁵³²

Breton and Trotsky's shared ideas on art and politics in their manifesto gave voice to the drift of British Surrealism away from Stalinist Marxism towards Trotskyism. *Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant* was published in French in *London Bulletin* in October 1938.⁵³³ Beneath the heading, a note to the reader states (in English):

We reproduce here the full text of a Manifesto by Andre Breton and Diego Rivera, written during Breton's recent visit to Mexico. We hope to publish an English translation in our next number.⁵³⁴

Sure enough, an English translation of the manifesto was published in the next issue of *London Bulletin*, which also included Pailthorpe's article on 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism'. Beneath the heading there is another note to the reader:

In accordance with our promise to readers in the preceding number, we now publish the English translation of the Manifesto by Andre Breton and Diego Rivera. We print this text from a documentary point of view.⁵³⁵

⁵³¹ Penrose, Anthony. 2001. *Roland Penrose: The friendly Surrealist* (London, Prestel): 92

⁵³² Letter from Breton to British Surrealists, dated 21.10.38. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 286 'Correspondence with Conroy Maddox')

⁵³³ Breton, André and Leon Trotsky. 10.38. 'Pour un art révolutionnaire indépendant', *London Bulletin*, 6: 25-31

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*: 25

⁵³⁵ Anon. 12.38-01.39. 'Towards an independent revolutionary art', *London Bulletin*, 7: 29-32. A different English translation by Dwight MacDonald was also published in *Partisan Review*, New York, IV, no. 1, Fall 1938: 49-53. The *London Bulletin* translation was not the one which Henderson translated but another version. It does not state who translated the text.

By publishing the manifesto in *London Bulletin*, the English were adhering to Breton's requests. However, in spite of the French attempts to make the English conform, it seems that the English group could come to no agreement due to their shock at the violently uncompromising attitude expressed in the manifesto and the "note to the reader" registers as much by explicitly stating that the manifesto is printed 'from a documentary point of view' and not as a sign of allegiance.⁵³⁶ Thus, it is likely that the beginnings of the collapse of English Surrealism as a unified movement can be dated from this period, and from Breton's attempts to extract greater political commitment from the British contingent. Although there was agreement about the need to oppose Fascism in Spain, the main conflict centred on the attitude the Surrealists should take towards the Communist parties controlled by Moscow.⁵³⁷ No articles on internal disagreements within Britain following the publication of Breton and Trotsky's manifesto, the expulsion of Eluard and the formation of F.I.A.R.I. were published in *London Bulletin* at the time, however.

Like Breton, Read was sympathetic to Trotsky's insistence on a separation of the artist from the state. He abhorred Stalinism and saw Communism as a stifling political system. His reaction to Breton's attempts to make the English conform was printed in the first issue of *Clé* in January 1939:

Dear friend,
 Today Mesens has shown me your letter and the manifesto. I hasten to say I completely agree. I have already expressed myself in that sense. Certain pages of my recent book *Poetry and Anarchism* are almost word for word those of the manifesto.
 Needless to say that I am ready to adhere to the Federation which you are now forming
 Affectionately yours,
 Herbert Read⁵³⁸

⁵³⁶ Ray, Paul. 1971. *The Surrealist Movement in England* (London, Cornell University Press): 226

⁵³⁷ Penrose, Anthony. 2001. *Roland Penrose: The friendly Surrealist* (London, Prestel): 87

⁵³⁸ Read, Herbert. 01.01.39. *Clé, bulletin mensuel de la FIARI*, 1: 4-5

After visiting Eluard, Ernst and Hugnet in Paris, who were all alienated from Breton and who also became Communists, Penrose sent a letter to Read on 27 January 1939 in which he advocated the publication of another manifesto which would 'help English intellectuals to clarify their own position' and build 'a group of revolutionary anarchist intellectuals with a very definite programme behind it'. He concluded that 'The idea of a united international surrealist activity is now a thing of the past [...] my feeling is that we should do well to soft pedal on all issues which might enfeeble even further revolutionary tendencies, some sort of unity must be attained and self-criticism which prevents this looks like a kind of neurosis, a self-destructive force'.⁵³⁹

This letter proves that the disorientation felt by artists encouraged them to form different factions. German troops were occupying Czechoslovakia from 14 January 1939 and the general consensus among the Surrealists was that neither liberty nor the creative spirit could prevail against the power of the state. We can see this in Read's article 'L'Artiste dans le monde moderne' published in *Clé* (II), February 1939:

In our decadent society [...] art must enter into a monastic phase [...] Art must now become individualistic, even hermetic. We must renounce, as the most puerile delusion, the hope that art can ever again perform a social function [...] This is equally true in Russia and in the West. Art has become nonsense (because) it matters little whether your army is military or industrial; it is still an army and the only art appropriate for an army is the music of a military marching band.⁵⁴⁰

However, after only two issues, *Clé* became one of the many casualties of the Second World War.⁵⁴¹ Breton later commented: 'the unity necessary for the success of the F.I.A.R.I. was lacking by a great deal, so that *Clé* disappeared after its second number. Yet, this failure, at such a moment, was compounded by so many others:

⁵³⁹ Letter from Penrose to Read, dated 27.01.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 718 'Correspondence with Herbert Read')

⁵⁴⁰ Read, Herbert. 02.39. 'L'Artiste dans le monde moderne,' *Clé*, 2: 7

⁵⁴¹ Nadeau, Maurice. 1968. *The History of Surrealism* (London, Cape): 209

intellectual activity in general came to a halt because thinking men had already decided that nothing could turn back the scourge of war'.⁵⁴² Despite its belief in the freedom of the individual and artistic expression and in the international character of culture in opposition to nationalism of any kind, F.I.A.R.I. failed to resolve the problem of how the revolutionary artist was going to function. Moreover, apart from Maddox, Mesens, Read and Penrose, it seems that Breton did not get any other replies from England to his call to join F.I.A.R.I. Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's failure to adhere to F.I.A.R.I. also illustrates their lack of concern in political events. Additionally, although Breton had called for Surrealists to boycott Eluard or face expulsion, Penrose remained loyal to Eluard, who was his closest friend in the movement. Perhaps because he was buying art from Breton, Penrose escaped the latter's disapproval, however, and managed to remain on good terms with both him and Eluard.

Meanwhile, after closing the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery in Spring 1939 because it was losing money, Peggy Guggenheim began making plans to open a bigger modern art museum. She approached Read about establishing a museum based on the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which had been founded in 1929 and was intended to function in relation to the Metropolitan.⁵⁴³ Since it first opened, its director, Alfred Barr, had organized a series of loan exhibitions which acquainted Americans with major currents in modern European Art. The Museum did not have a permanent collection at the time and was dependent upon the generosity of donors in building its collections. By 1931, it had been running so successfully as an

⁵⁴² Lewis, Helena. 1988. *The Politics of Surrealism* (New York, Paragon House Publishers): 159, unspecified source.

⁵⁴³ Dearborn, Mary. 2005. *Peggy Guggenheim: Mistress of Modernism* (London, Virago): 142

experimental institution that it started building a permanent collection of painting and sculpture.⁵⁴⁴

Although Guggenheim used the term ‘museum’ in correspondence with Read, she envisaged selling art via temporary exhibitions, (as we shall see in Part 2). Guggenheim’s relationship with Read was always friendly but remained on strictly business terms. She offered him a five year contract to act as director of the proposed museum and accepted his request for a year’s salary in advance, which would give him the capital to buy enough shares in the successful London publishing house of George Routledge & Sons and become a partner there. This would provide him with security if the projected museum did not work out. After coming to terms with Guggenheim, Read left his editorship of *The Burlington Magazine*.⁵⁴⁵

As Guggenheim told the Press, the plan was to create a museum that would be more than a place to hang pictures. Artists would be able to interrelate with the public and with each other. The collection that Guggenheim had begun to amass from her own gallery shows and neighbouring galleries was to form the nucleus of the permanent collection. In imitation of MOMA, Guggenheim’s aim was to secure donations and borrow as many works for the London museum as possible.⁵⁴⁶

Guggenheim and Read intended the museum to be a centre for visual and performing arts. In one communication with Guggenheim, Read referred to the proposed museum as ‘a sympathetic linking of all the arts in their modern aspects’.⁵⁴⁷ Read wrote:

⁵⁴⁴ British Museum. 1982. *A century of modern drawing from the Museum of Modern Art, New York*. Exh. Cat. (London, British Museum): 9

⁵⁴⁵ Gill, Anton. 2002. *Peggy Guggenheim: The life of an art addict* (London, Harper Collins): 218

⁵⁴⁶ Weld, Jacqueline Bograd. 1986. *Peggy the wayward Guggenheim* (London, Bodley Head): 177

⁵⁴⁷ Quotations taken from correspondences in Peggy Guggenheim archives and cited in Vail, Karole & Thomas Messer. 1998. *Peggy Guggenheim: a Celebration* (New York, Harry.N. Abrams): 40-1

It is quite conceivable that, as it may develop, paintings will play only a subordinate part in the scheme. The idea is rather to create a focus for whatever creative activity and critical appreciation there is to be found in this country, to define and defend the modern tradition; to create an atmosphere in which that tradition can develop [...] it will be a historic sequence in which each picture is a necessary link, and historical significance will be even more important than aesthetic significance.⁵⁴⁸

The pair's association was reported in *The Sunday Times* in late May 1939. When referring to the purpose of the museum, Read stated:

The new museum, which according to present plans will open [in London] in the autumn, will not be limited in its scope by any narrow definition of modern art, though special attention is to be paid to those movements that have grown out of cubism. Nor will it necessarily confine itself to painting, but will aim at showing the interrelation of all the modern arts, including architecture, sculpture and music. The basis of its activities will be educational in the widest sense of the word. With this in view a permanent collection is to be formed as a background for temporary exhibitions of a special nature, as well as for a regular programme of lectures, recitals and concerts.⁵⁴⁹

The art collector and cosmetics entrepreneur Helena Rubenstein was interested in backing this enterprise, but wanted Mesens to be director, and had preliminary talks with the latter and Penrose in her salon in Berkeley Square.⁵⁵⁰ A letter from Penrose to Lee Miller, dated 15 April 1939, confirms that he wanted to be associated with the project:

Peggy Guggenheim has been all honey to me and what she wants in return is that I should be one of the three big bugs on her selection committee. She is starting a Museum of Modern Art in London. Herbert Read is to be director and it is to be a grand effort to establish a 'home' for art in this barbarous country.⁵⁵¹

Knowing that Guggenheim and Read were considering buildings in Soho and Portland Place, Penrose and Mesens offered Rubenstein's building in Berkeley

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Gill, Anton. 2002. *Peggy Guggenheim: The life of an art addict* (London, Harper Collins): 218

⁵⁵⁰ Dearborn, Mary. 2005. *Peggy Guggenheim: Mistress of Modernism* (London, Virago): 185

⁵⁵¹ Gill, Anton. 2002. *Peggy Guggenheim: The life of an art addict* (London, Harper Collins): 220, unspecified source.

Square, with Mesens as a senior member of staff. However, on 15 July, Read reported back to Mesens saying that, after considering their proposal, he and Guggenheim had rejected it. Although numerous reasons, such as lack of space and expenses, were given, letters from Penrose to Read show us that the circumstances were more personal; Guggenheim wanted to retain overall control.⁵⁵² Clearly, the fact that Penrose and Mesens saw the proposed museum as an opportunity to exhibit Surrealist works irritated Guggenheim. As she said in her undated memoirs:

It seems that they had been offered free a whole floor in a building of a famous dressmaker's in Berkeley Square. If we accepted the gift and Mesens with it on a small salary, Penrose promised to lend several of his Picassos. All this seems unnecessary to me, as Mesens and Penrose were my avowed enemies by then.⁵⁵³

A letter from Mesens to Penrose, dated 23 July 1939, tells us that after receiving Read's letter, Mesens met Read and learnt more about Guggenheim's personal interests: she regarded Mesens as her enemy, she could not work with Rubenstein because she was a woman, and she wanted to be the only person supporting the museum and could 'do without Penrose's collection'.⁵⁵⁴

Together with Read, Guggenheim decided upon the residence of the art historian Kenneth Clark on Portland Place as a site for the proposed museum. Mesens was annoyed that his plans with Rubenstein had gone awry and that there was to be no part for him.⁵⁵⁵ In early 1938, Mesens had had a brief fling with Guggenheim and this may have nurtured personal resentments. When describing this fling with Mesens, in her undated memoirs, Guggenheim wrote:

⁵⁵² Letter from Read to Mesens, dated 15.07.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 718 'Correspondence with Herbert Read')

⁵⁵³ Guggenheim, Peggy. 1980. *Out of this Century* (London, André Deutsch): 199

⁵⁵⁴ Letter from Mesens to Penrose, dated 23.07.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 718 'Correspondence with Herbert Read')

⁵⁵⁵ Dearborn, Mary. 2005. *Peggy Guggenheim: Mistress of Modernism* (London, Virago): 187

E.L.T. Mesens was a Surrealist poet and the director of the London Gallery, my neighbour in Cork Street. We had a united front and we were very careful not to interfere with each other's exhibitions. I bought paintings from Mesens. He was a gay little Flamand, quite vulgar, but really very nice and warm. He now wanted me as his mistress, so we were to have dinner together. Before Beckett went back to Paris I went off with Mesens and took a diabolical pleasure in doing so.⁵⁵⁶

Mesens remained opposed to the museum as he also saw Guggenheim's proposal as a means of making money. The London Gallery was a commercial venture too and, therefore, a rival.

Because of his respect for Read, Penrose was caught between the two parties: he had offered to lend his significant collection of Picassos to the new museum, but he had a longstanding alliance with Mesens.⁵⁵⁷ On 29 July 1939, Mesens wrote to Penrose, who was in Antibes with Eluard, and tried to convince him not to agree to Guggenheim's plans. He also set forth detailed plans for his own Museum of Modern Art as, like Read and Guggenheim, he had his own commercial interests.⁵⁵⁸ Mesens's plan was for a Museum of Modern Art containing a collection on long-term loan from both Penrose and the London Gallery. This was supported by Nash, Moore, Davies, Jennings, McWilliam, Laughton, J.M.Keynes, Edward James, Zwemmer, Freddie Mayor and Sybil Thorndike. Clearly, rival plans for a Musuem of Modern Art in London were creating further divisions within the English Surrealist group.

Meanwhile, Read continued to press Penrose to join forces with him and Guggenheim by lending them his collection. Penrose's response came in a letter, dated 4 August 1939, which he wrote during his trip to Antibes:

⁵⁵⁶ Guggenheim, Peggy. 1980. *Out of this Century* (London, André Deutch): 202

⁵⁵⁷ Dearborn, Mary. 2005. *Peggy Guggenheim: Mistress of Modernism* (London, Virago): 188

⁵⁵⁸ Letter from Mesens to Penrose, dated 29.07.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 708 'Correspondence with E.L.T. Mesens')

My dear Herbert

Your letter and a long letter from Edouard arrived almost on the same day. The failure of the Berkeley Square proposal is very disappointing to me, especially as I feel that the personal aspect has excluded any fair judgement. I still believe that the premises are adequate for the opening of the museum and as it was due to your ideas to open as soon as possible and attract wider support by doing so the somewhat limited scale would not have been an obstacle.

Also the wider collaboration that it would have brought seems to me an all important factor. I still am convinced that it is impossible for the scheme to have the influence it should if it is under the supervision of one sole patron, and personally I cannot see my way to collaborating in any shape or form to a scheme which has shown itself already to be so limited by personal considerations.

If Peggy Guggenheim is to be in a position to dictate the policy of the Museum your position will not be an enviable one since her dislike of surrealism which is no secret and her judgement of the merits of young painters will certainly undermine the work you have been doing to educate the public.

As you know since I have been living in London I have counted a great deal on collaborating with you and am very disappointed to discover now that in this scheme, which should have been the most important so far attempted, insuperable difficulties of a personal nature should be dragged in to separate us by a third person.

So far I have not mentioned Mesens, his exclusion seems to me equally lamentable. I know no one in England apart from you who is more fitted in every way for some employment in the Museum and the fact that he was able to bring a definite proposition which I still consider practicable more than justified his inclusion.

After long consideration I must ask you with real regret to tell Peggy Guggenheim that I cannot accept the post of advisor and patron of which you spoke to me some months ago.

I hate writing to you like this but for some time past I have felt the inevitability of taking this step dawning upon me....

We called on Max Ernst on the way here and are now - enjoying the sea - back in London by way of Paris early in September. I hope we shall meet.

All best wishes to Ludo,

Yours ever Roland⁵⁵⁹

This letter to Read demonstrates how, at the time, there was fundamental disagreement about the degree to which free choice was acceptable, not only on the political front but also on the exhibiting front. Penrose's letter encapsulates his dilemma as it shows us how he is caught in the middle. The proposed Museum of

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from Penrose to Read, dated 04.08.39. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 718 'Correspondence with Herbert Read')

Modern Art was modelled on the New York institution yet Guggenheim had one version of it in mind and Mesens another. These included commercial considerations; Mesens's purist approach concerning exhibitors contrary to Guggenheim's laissez-faire approach; and an art gallery versus a cultural centre.

Furthermore, this letter, along with others which Penrose exchanged with Mesens and Read, shows us his attempts to dispel any clouds in Mesens's and Read's relationship. It highlights the problematic character of Guggenheim and her personal conflict with Mesens. Unlike Mesens, who was a hard-core Bretonian, Guggenheim was not a Surrealist and Read (who was an anarchist) was on her side.

In the end, Penrose agreed to Mesens's interest in setting up their own museum and insisted that the enterprise should be as free as possible from private interests and wrote that 'it is on this point that we shall be able to gain ascendancy over P.G. and Co.'. ⁵⁶⁰ However, Mesens's museum opening project was abandoned due to the outbreak of war.

On the other hand, Read and Guggenheim set up the British Art Centre in London in October 1939. Its aim was to exhibit work of any style by contemporary British artists. In order to join the British Art Centre, members would have to fill out an application form and the annual subscription fee was 1 guinea. Ala Story founded the Stafford Gallery within the British Art Centre and, here, works were traded commercially. Artists who wanted to exhibit at the Stafford Gallery were asked to pay a subscription fee of half a guinea. Sending-in-dates were always on the first of each month and the selection committee would judge the exhibits the following day and announce their decisions immediately. In the first few months, more than sixty art

⁵⁶⁰ Letter from Penrose to Mesens, dated 03.08.39; in *ibid.*

works were sold, and the membership had grown to over 1300. Among the members were Moore, Epstein, James Gunn, Frank Dobson, Duncan Grant, Philip Connard, Reginald Eves, Matthew Smith and Augustus John. This varied constituency reflects Guggenheim's non-commitment to Surrealism – her 'dislike of Surrealism' as Penrose termed it in his letter to Read.⁵⁶¹

The war in any case led to the dispersal of the Surrealist group. Many artists either joined the army or left London and galleries closed as the art market collapsed. Gabo, Hepworth and Nicholson had moved to St Ives, Cornwall in August 1939 just before the declaration of war.⁵⁶² Penrose stayed in London throughout the war and his home in Downshire Hill was frequented by many Surrealist friends from France. He first served as an air-raid warden on night duty in Hampstead and then as a War Office instructor in camouflage to the Home Guard. On the other hand, Mesens was given a job at the BBC on the Belgian radio in exile whilst, in France, Breton was mobilised as a medical auxiliary.⁵⁶³

The Fall of France in June 1940 inevitably led to further disruption of the Surrealist group headed by Breton. The slide in Britain was more pronounced in France because of the Occupation and caused difficulty in maintaining group ethos and action. Because of their involvement in what the Nazis had condemned as 'degenerate' art, as well as their affiliation to Communism, the Surrealists in France were in a particularly vulnerable position and a number of them, including Breton, Duchamp, Mabile, Masson and Dominguez, made their way to Marseille in an attempt to reach the

⁵⁶¹ Letter from Penrose to Read, dated 04.08.39; in *ibid.*

⁵⁶² Read, Benedict and David Thistlewood. 1993. *Herbert Read: A British Vision of World Art* (Leeds, Leeds City Art Galleries): 156

⁵⁶³ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing): 213-4

United States.⁵⁶⁴ Two months later, on 21 August, Stalin's agents assassinated Trotsky in Mexico.

The political arguments, alliances and biases within the British and French Surrealist groups make up a complex history. Political solidarity was short-lived as alignment shifted among the various factions. The main conflicts centered on the attitude Surrealists should take towards the Communist party as well as the growing divisive demands of Mesens in England and Breton in France meaning that there could never be any hope of agreement. These conflicts led to internal tension and hostility within both groups and resulted in various alliances being formed. As we will see in Part 2, the dogmatic views of Mesens as well as Breton allowed no compromise. Splits, expulsions and defections occurred, while the decision of leading figures including Breton, to choose exile in North America, inevitably made the pursuit of group activity extremely difficult, if not impossible.

7.3 Part 2

Once war was declared in September 1939, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff left Cornwall and moved to Hertfordshire. Although we do not know why they moved to that specific area, we do know that Mednikoff was excluded from any military duties because of his medical history.⁵⁶⁵ Their move to Hertfordshire also meant that they had easier access to London.

As we have seen, the Surrealist group had already started to fragment due to the various factions within it, and the war which led to the financial collapse of the art market. Moreover, in 1939, due to his work on French broadcasts for the BBC during

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.: 483

⁵⁶⁵ Document on Mednikoff's military services, dated 1939. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 62 'Mednikoff personal file')

the war, Mesens had had to close the London Gallery, which hitherto had acted as a nerve centre for Surrealism in Britain, and then the *London Bulletin*, which had become the British Surrealist mouthpiece, also ceased publication in June 1940.

Pailthorpe and Mednikoff now tried to rescue the situation by promoting the reformation of a cohesive group and discussion of the position of Surrealism within the art world. However, their main motive may have been their desire to participate in as many exhibitions as possible and in some degree to restore the failing art market. Their plans to organise a Surrealist group exhibition at the British Art Centre at the Stafford Gallery in St James' Place in London during the months of June and July in 1940 suggest this.⁵⁶⁶ The couple favoured the British Art Centre over other galleries because of their existing relationship with Guggenheim. Unlike Mesens and Penrose, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff had no personal entanglement with her and, furthermore, were close to Read who was himself close to Guggenheim.

Although we are not sure of the exact date, it seems that the organization of the intended exhibition began at the start of 1940. A form written by the gallery's founder and secretary, Ala Story, on 3 March 1940 stated that no work would be accepted or judged unless the artist was a member of the British Art Centre and that the gallery would also charge a commission of 33.3% on the actual price paid for any work of art sold at the exhibition.⁵⁶⁷ On 14 March, Mednikoff wrote a letter to Story saying he would delay sending application forms to potential exhibitors until he received her authorisation to organise the proposed exhibition. In another letter to Mednikoff dated 25 March 1940, Story suggested that the Stafford Gallery and the couple should split

⁵⁶⁶ Walsh, Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 32

⁵⁶⁷ Letter from Story to Mednikoff, dated 03.03.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 112 'Stafford Gallery; The exhibition that never was')

the percentage on sales and also halve the cost of printing the catalogue.⁵⁶⁸ The correspondence reveals their personal motives as, besides being determined to save the Surrealist group, they also wanted to show their art in order to generate sales so that Pailthorpe could publish her work. Moreover, the fact that they were splitting proceeds with the British Art Centre meant that they were eager to promote sales.

On 16 March 1940, Mednikoff sent invitations to various members of the Surrealist group in which he wrote that the exhibition provided the possibility 'whereby the activities and works of Surrealist creators can resume, as a body, a vital contact with the public'.⁵⁶⁹ Mednikoff continued:

We are, therefore, taking the liberty of enclosing details of the 'British Art Centre' (which, we hope, will interest you) as only members of this group are permitted to submit works (three from each member).

As your co-operation will enable us to encourage the organising of the exhibition we would be glad if you will let us know, as soon as possible, whether you feel inclined to become an 'artist member' of the B.A.C.

We are enclosing a signed 'application form' to save time; and this should be sent direct to the Stafford Gallery if you decide to join. But whether you accept or decline this opportunity, we would greatly appreciate a postcard informing us of your decision as there is little time left for us making the necessary arrangements.⁵⁷⁰

In a letter to Story dated 4 April 1940, Pailthorpe stressed the fact that the couple's own works were intrinsic to their research project, and therefore required control of illustrations:

I wish to state again, as a reminder, that the conditions of sales of my works (and Mr Mednikoff's works) are that we retain the reproduction rights, and before a painting or drawing leaves your hands that we are permitted to have colour blocks, or half-tone blocks, or line blocks (as the case may be) and photographs made. We, of course, pay for blocks and photographs.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁸ Letter from Story to Mednikoff, dated 25.03.40; in *ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ Invitation from Mednikoff to Surrealist group, dated 16.03.40; in *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷¹ Letter from Pailthorpe to Story, dated 04.04.40; in *ibid.*

The Stafford Gallery exhibition was to be held between 12 June and 6 July 1940. It seems that the catalogue of the exhibition was never printed as only a handwritten draft can be found in the Dean Gallery archive. The draft of the catalogue is headed 'An exhibition of Surrealist paintings and drawings'. The first part of the catalogue was supposed to include an introduction by Read, called 'An interesting article' but no trace of this essay – if it was ever written – has survived.

After listing the names of the exhibiting artists, the draft catalogue ended with a typescript of Mednikoff and Pailthorpe's article: 'Will Surrealism survive?'. In this article, they wrote that 'More literature has been written on this movement by the creators themselves than has been the case with any other change in the trend of art'.⁵⁷² They claimed:

When the emotional content of a work is great it possesses power and vitality; and it maintains an active control of the onlooker's interest. If such a work is created with skill, and stirs one deeply, it is called 'immortal'. Some of the works of El Greco, Turner, Blake, Van Gogh, Picasso and numerous primitive carvings possess a high degree of affective content. It is the richness of this quality which makes them 'live'. In other words, it is the intensity with which the artist has manifested his or her deepest feelings that decides whether a work of art shall survive the varying moods and opinions of humanity.⁵⁷³

They ended by stating that, 'Because Surrealist art gives a legitimate, or socially tolerated, outlet to the inner emotions, it, like religion, will endure; for the need of mankind for an emotional outlet is a dynamic force which will ensure its survival'.⁵⁷⁴

This article clarifies how Pailthorpe and Mednikoff were driven by their conviction of the importance of their own work.

Artists who agreed to exhibit and who are listed in the draft catalogue include: Mednikoff, Pailthorpe, Ruth Adams, Eileen Agar, Cecil Collins, William Johnstone,

⁵⁷² Typescript by Pailthorpe and Mednikoff titled 'Will Surrealism Survive?', not dated: 2-3; in *ibid.*

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*: 6

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 7

Rita Kernn Larsen, Len Lye, Alastair Stewart, Edith Remington, Robert Baxter, Leslie Hurry, Charles Watson and Ithell Colquhoun. Each artist was asked to exhibit three works. Artists who refused to exhibit included F.E. McWilliam, who pointed out that he was a sculptor and not a painter and stated that he disliked the British Art Centre, and two others who signed as 'Charles' (and gave no reason) and 'Pat' (who was not keen on parting with her works).⁵⁷⁵

Penrose was one of the artists whom they invited to exhibit and four days later he replied:

Dear Mednikoff,
Thank you for your letter. The prospect of a surrealist exhibition in June at the Stafford Gallery is of course of great interest to me. I should certainly like to participate in it but there are certain points which I would like to elucidate first.
Since there are a good many questions that I should like to ask, would it be possible for us to meet in London if you are by any chance coming to town soon?
In order that the show should be genuinely surrealist and not dominated by the atmosphere of the B.A.C., it is essential that the choice of the artists and the exhibits should remain entirely in the hands of the surrealists. If you have been given a free hand in this way I have great hopes of this show being a success.
Have you made out a list of painters who you are inviting? If so it would interest me to know who they are. I am not sending my application for membership of the B.A.C. until I have been able to discuss these matters with you.
I shall be very glad if Dr Pailthorpe and yourself could manage to lunch with me in town. Could you let me know when you are likely to be able to come?
Yours ever
Roland Penrose⁵⁷⁶

Penrose's circumspect reply suggests that he knew that the exhibition would create tension within the Surrealist group and that he feared it would not be an exclusively Surrealist exhibition. As we saw in his reaction to Read and Guggenheim's proposal

⁵⁷⁵ Letters from Charles and Pat to Pailthorpe, dated 1940; in *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁶ Letter from Penrose to Mednikoff, dated 20.03.40; in *ibid.*

in Part 1, Penrose knew that the British Art Centre was not a strictly Surrealist gallery and surely feared that all sorts of 'conservative' artists would be allowed to exhibit. Perhaps he suspected their motives: to make money in order to publish their research, rather than altruistically wishing to aid the reformation of the Surrealist group by organising an exhibition.

In the end, Penrose must have refused to participate because his name is not listed in the catalogue draft. Following the couple's meeting with Penrose in London, Mednikoff wrote to the members of the Surrealist group on 1 April announcing a meeting at the Barcelona restaurant in Soho:

At a meeting between Dr Pailthorpe, Roland Penrose, W Hayter and myself, it was decided that arrangements be made for a gathering of Surrealists for the purpose of planning the reforming of the Surrealist Group in England.

Dr Pailthorpe and I suggested the reforming of the group with freedom from political bias or activity as part of its constitution. As it was felt by us all that Surrealism's vital purpose would benefit considerably by the reforming of the group, it was agreed that arrangements be made for a dinner, to be followed by a discussion in which all views could be made known and a constitution formulated.

The plans for this are now in progress. The dinner will be held on Thursday, April 11th, at 7.15pm, and the price will be 3/6 per person.

The final arrangements cannot be made until the exact number of people who will be present is known, therefore, it is essential that I am quickly notified of your intention to be present. As soon as I receive this information the address of the rendezvous will be sent to you. Because there is very little time to spare an immediate reply will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely⁵⁷⁷

Although there is no evidence as to which Surrealists he sent the invitation to, Mednikoff received a reply from the Birmingham group of artists. It is interesting to see that, at the time, Surrealist activity developed most outside London probably because of the difficulties met by London artists due to their various political alliances, the effects of war and the closure of the London Gallery. London was also a

⁵⁷⁷ Letter from Mednikoff to Surrealist group, dated 01.04.40 and sent from Hertfordshire. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 108 'Surrealist Group and dinner at Barcelona restaurant')

target for enemy attacks and very dangerous. Initially, Birmingham was seen as a provincial, Quaker city with limited opportunities for a contemporary artist. However, a group of like-minded Birmingham artists - among whom were Conroy Maddox, John Melville and his brother Robert - overcame second-city inferiority and tackled the art scene in London. As Remy says, the creation of the Birmingham group in 1935 was partly a form of reaction against the city's parochial nature and the conservatism of its official art organization and, thus, the group maintained a spirit of artistic rebellion.⁵⁷⁸ Together with Maddox, John and Robert Melville, Eric Malthouse, Desmond Morris, Emmy Bridgwater, Oscar Mellor, Stephen Gilbert and William Gear formed the nucleus of the Surrealist group in Birmingham.

According to Silvano Levy, for over half a century Maddox reiterated the view that in their haste to gather a sufficiently large number of exhibitors, the English organizers of the International Surrealist exhibition had solicited artists who were not committed to the movement:

No doubt it was possible to perceive this Surrealist imagery in a lot of paintings, but that hardly made them surrealist. There is a big difference between the imagery and the philosophy. It is easy to confuse imagery with purpose. Surrealism is concerned with expanding our definition of reality, not with producing images that are merely fantastic or nonsensical.⁵⁷⁹

Melville also stated that, as far as the Birmingham trio were concerned, there was an ideological gap between them and those who had been eager to exhibit at the International Surrealist exhibition and that the Birmingham group had deliberately distanced themselves from what they regarded as less than purist tendencies. He satirically wrote: 'Birmingham was at the end of the earth but it's one of the

⁵⁷⁸ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing): 220

⁵⁷⁹ Levy, Silvano. 2003. *The scandalous eye: the Surrealism of Conroy Maddox* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press): 40

privileges of provincials to be extremely purist, and if London was trying to make a contribution, we were not interested'.⁵⁸⁰

In an interview with Robert Short in 1978, Maddox stated that 'Paris was the fountainhead of surrealism' and that the Birmingham group 'were concerned only with the creative source, the small Parisian sect'.⁵⁸¹ The Melvilles and Maddox avidly followed news of developments, quarrels and defections among French Surrealists and this made them conscious of the 'orthodoxy' of their position as 'we were always on the side of Breton'.⁵⁸² This caused the Birmingham group to distance themselves from the arrangements initiated by Read and Penrose in England in 1936 and in his interview with Short, Maddox claimed that they 'did not join the English group until 1938 when it had undergone significant changes'.⁵⁸³ He stated that Read was to be blamed for 'the seed of destruction that was going on around 1936 and after'.⁵⁸⁴ On the other hand, Maddox approved of Mesens:

When the International Surrealist exhibition ended, Surrealism in England almost disappeared. It was due to Mesens that a limited activity continued through the London Gallery with exhibitions and meetings.⁵⁸⁵

Because of their protests at the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition, Maddox and the Melville brothers were conspicuously absent from all British Surrealist exhibitions. In fact, the first documented public connection of Maddox and John Melville with the Surrealist group in London was in January 1939 when they participated in the 'Living Art in England' exhibition.⁵⁸⁶ Pailthorpe and Mednikoff

⁵⁸⁰ Fischer Fine Art Limited: London. 1976. *Conroy Maddox, Gouaches of the 1940's*. Exh. Cat. (London, Fischer Fine Art Ltd.): 1

⁵⁸¹ Short, Robert. 1978. *Surrealism Unlimited* (London, Camden Art Centre): 2

⁵⁸² Levy, Silvano. 2003. *The scandalous eye: the Surrealism of Conroy Maddox* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press): 34, unspecified source.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*: 40

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: 41

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*: 37

also exhibited their works there. The exhibition was organized by Mesens who pointed out that 'This exhibition was intended to present a united front of the most radical moderns as an opposition to the growing decay in Europe under the pressure of the Nazi art politics and intolerant attitude of the tenets of Socialist Realism'.⁵⁸⁷

Like Pailthorpe and Mednikoff, the Birmingham group were not party-political. In fact, the major Birmingham Surrealists were relatively unaffected by the onset of war since they all had reserved occupations and this made them exempt from military service. In their letter to Mednikoff, Maddox and the Melville brothers wrote:

Dear Mr Mednikoff,

We are extremely interested to hear that you are attempting to resuscitate the English Surrealist group on a non-political basis, and wish you every success. It would of course give us great pleasure to attend the meeting on April 11th, but we feel that at this stage anything we might have to say would be an unnecessary intervention and that nothing should be allowed to hinder the immediate aim of uniting Surrealists in and about London.

We take it for granted that you are not calling upon Surrealists only for the purpose of holding group exhibitions - and on the face of it there is no easy solution of the problem of how Surrealists in the provinces can usefully co-operate with the main group. All the same, we would appreciate the opportunity of meeting you at a later date, to enable us to state a case for the provinces.

Meanwhile, we hope that you will let us know the results of next Thursday's meeting, and we ask you to accept our assurance that we are always ready to do anything within our power to propagate the movement.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Melville

John Melville

Conroy Maddox⁵⁸⁸

According to Levy, a few days before the 'Living Art in England' exhibition, Maddox attended a private view of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's art exhibition at the Guggenheim Jeune Gallery and was, thus, already familiar with their research before

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Letter from Conroy Maddox, John and Robert Melville to Mednikoff, dated 06.04.40 and sent from Sparkhill, Birmingham. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 108 'Surrealist Group and dinner at Barcelona restaurant')

writing the above letter.⁵⁸⁹ Yet, despite their will to eventually ‘state a case for the provinces’, it seems that the Birmingham group remained sceptical about the Surrealist credentials of any artists who had participated in the 1936 exhibition. Moreover, the Birmingham group’s letter to Mednikoff illustrates how the couple’s plans were an attempted non-political reformation of the Surrealist group and this risked them causing another division between themselves and other members of the Surrealist group because it can be presumed that they wanted to form a faction with other non-political Surrealists.

On the other hand, Read expressed approval of the couple’s efforts to reform the group in a letter written on 1 April 1940, the same day that Mednikoff issued his invitation to the Barcelona meeting:

Dear Mr Mednikoff,
I have to go up to Leeds next week, but I hope to be back on the 11th and will if possible come to the dinner you are arranging. I think we certainly ought to meet and consider the situation, & carry on some sort of activity.
Yours sincerely
Herbert Read⁵⁹⁰

In particular, it was Ithell Colquhoun who firmly supported the couple’s arrangements for the meeting. In a handwritten letter dated 5 April 1940, she wrote:

I shall be very pleased to come to the dinner you and Dr Pailthorpe are arranging to discuss the future of Surrealism in England. As you know I am in agreement with your idea of the non-political basis of any group which may be formed.⁵⁹¹

At around this time, Penrose sent a handwritten invitation to Pailthorpe calling her to a meeting of the Surrealist group on 7 April at his house at 21 Downshire Hill at

⁵⁸⁹ Levy, Silvano. 2003. *The scandalous eye: the Surrealism of Conroy Maddox* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press): 37

⁵⁹⁰ Letter from Read to Mednikoff, dated 01.04.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 108 ‘Surrealist Group and dinner at Barcelona restaurant’)

⁵⁹¹ Letter from Colquhoun to Mednikoff, dated 05.04.40; in *ibid.*

8.30pm.⁵⁹² This indicates that although he was not prepared to participate in their proposed exhibition, he recognised that she was now a powerful figure and could not be marginalised or ignored.

Those who gathered for the meeting at the Barcelona restaurant on 11 April included Buckland-Wright, Agar, Banting, Baxter, Brunius, Hayter, Howard, McWilliam, Onslow-Ford, Sewter, Colquhoun, Jennings, Lye, Mesens, Nash, Read, Penrose and Remington. Half of the people who attended had agreed to exhibit at the abortive Stafford Gallery exhibition. Despite McWilliam's refusal to exhibit, he attended the dinner.⁵⁹³ On the other hand, although Cecil Collins had agreed to exhibit, he could not attend the dinner but wanted to know the result of the meeting's discussion.⁵⁹⁴ Discussion focused on the Surrealists' position in, and towards, the art world and determined that the artist should be allowed to exhibit his work wherever possible, the British Art Centre being one of the possible venues. This was strongly supported by Agar and Colquhoun.⁵⁹⁵

Ultimately, the aim of the Barcelona meeting was to try and refocus Surrealist activity. According to Remy, 'Not only was it a way of seeing "who was for and who was against", but it was also an attempt to define a policy which would guarantee and protect the group's intransigence in the chaos of wartime'.⁵⁹⁶ The idea behind this meeting was 'that, in the ideological and material confusion prevailing in the first

⁵⁹² Letter from Penrose to Pailthorpe, not dated; in *ibid.*

⁵⁹³ Letter from McWilliam to Mednikoff, dated 01.04.40; in *ibid.*

⁵⁹⁴ Letter from Collins to Mednikoff, not dated; in *ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing): 209

⁵⁹⁶ Remy, Michel. 1986. *Surrealism in Britain in the thirties: angels of anarchy and machines for making clouds*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds City Art Gallery): 32

months of war, Surrealists should define their stance both as individuals and as a group'.⁵⁹⁷

Mesens had not been invited to participate in the Stafford Gallery exhibition because the couple knew that he would have seen the British Art Centre as a rival to the London Gallery, and disapproved of their association with Guggenheim Jeune. He had been scathing about the motives for founding the British Art Centre in 1939.⁵⁹⁸ But he attended the Barcelona meeting and took the opportunity to declare that 'one cannot reproach anyone for covering himself materially, that is to say for undertaking certain work without special significance but satisfying his immediate necessities' yet 'some of us have gone beyond'.⁵⁹⁹ Clearly, this was a jibe at Pailthorpe and Mednikoff, from whom he was determined to distance himself. He went on:

I assert that all flirting with the art world is the most crucial outrage against all the perspectives the surrealist movement has had in view since its advent [...] In order to give all the force necessary to a surrealist activity, are you prepared to renounce all participation in group exhibitions springing from an artistic bourgeois spirit? Are you prepared to withdraw your name from the membership list of organisations offering the kind of the AIA, the London Group, the British Art Centre.⁶⁰⁰

He thus made his hostility to Guggenheim and anything involving her crystal clear.

Confronted by the challenge to his authority as leader of the British Surrealists prevented by Mednikoff's and Pailthorpe's scheme, Mesens mounted a counter-attack at the Barcelona meeting and demanded allegiance to a number of propositions. Any one wishing to remain in the British Surrealist group would have to commit to the following rules:

1. Adherence to the proletarian revolution

⁵⁹⁷ Remy, Michel. 1999. *Surrealism in Britain* (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing): 209

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.: 164

⁵⁹⁹ Declaration to Surrealist group by Mesens, dated 11.04.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Roland Penrose Archive (File 0722 'Surrealism in Britain 1930s')

⁶⁰⁰ Dearborn, Mary. 2005. *Peggy Guggenheim: Mistress of Modernism* (London, Virago): 188

2. Agreement not to join any group or association, professional or other, including any secret society, other than the surrealist
3. Agreement not to exhibit or publish except under surrealist auspices.⁶⁰¹

Pailthorpe, Mednikoff and Colquhoun objected to the final point because, in effect, it meant not publishing or exhibiting at all now that the London Gallery had closed. *London Bulletin* was on the point of folding.

The day after the meeting at the Barcelona restaurant Colquhoun wrote another letter to Mednikoff:

Dear Mednikoff,

I hope you will let me know any developments that may arise from last night's meeting. At the finish the result was by no means clear.

My impression was that the main split was not due to differences on political theory and practice, but to divergence of view as to how Surrealism should approach the public. The view of yourself and Dr Pailthorpe is, I gather, that we should put Surrealism before the public as much as possible, exhibit, no matter neither where nor with whom. Mesens counters this with trying to prevent us exhibiting in any shows, or contributing to any reviews, without his blessing.

As regards politics, I don't think the issue is pressing - there are some members who like to mention Revolution and the Proletariat sometimes; but no one has either the desire or the ability for effective political action. Every one is, however, agreed in a basic revolutionary feeling.

As for the two views on how to give one's work to the public, most members are between the two extremes, some near to you, some to Mesens. I myself feel that Mesens cannot attempt to limit our field of activity unless he can offer some alternative. What we need is a review, and a permanent gallery which continually shows surrealist work. It would also be very useful, for those interested in the scientific side, to meet for research and discussion.

I think the first essential is for a group to be formed, and even this was not finally decided upon; next we could discuss how to act. I myself think Penrose's suggestion of an exhibition in Zwemmer's a good one; I feel, and have always felt, rather doubtful about any exhibiting at the B.A.C, which entails membership of that organization, but I am not definite by deciding against it. I think we might consider exhibiting in mixed shows, such as the recent one at Burlington House, but as a group, having a room or wall to ourselves and one or more of our members to hang our pictures and act for us on the committee. In this way a protest could be made without dissipating our efforts.

⁶⁰¹ Ray, Paul. 1971. *The Surrealist Movement in England* (London, Cornell University Press): 227

I hope what I've said may be of use. Do let me know when you and Dr Pailthorpe are next in London, and we could meet. Hoping that some definite results may be attained.

Yours sincerely
Ithell Colquhoun⁶⁰²

The letter demonstrates the two major factions within the group due to a 'divergence of view as to how Surrealism should approach the public' with Pailthorpe, Mednikoff, Agar and Colquhoun wanting to 'exhibit, no matter neither where nor with whom' and with Mesens trying to prevent members from 'exhibiting in any shows, or contributing to any reviews, without his blessing'. Penrose's counter-suggestion for an exhibition to be mounted at the Zwemmer Gallery implies that he was between the two extremes.⁶⁰³

Penrose favoured Anton Zwemmer's gallery because, with Mesens and Peter Watson, he was co-director of the gallery and, at the time, it was credited as one of the galleries that had done most to introduce Surrealism to England. Moreover, Zwemmer and Penrose had also bought the London Gallery in April 1938. Indeed, in a tribute to Zwemmer on his 70th birthday, Penrose stated how he saw Zwemmer as the one who, in the thirties, when Surrealism was belatedly coming to London 'made it possible for our small group of poets and artists to exhibit our works and publish our manifestos at a time when no one else had the courage or the foresight to do so'.⁶⁰⁴

Clearly, the Barcelona meeting resulted in loyalties being severely tested as many individual members of the Surrealist movement continued to correspond and meet privately. A letter from Colquhoun to Mednikoff, dated 3 May, makes reference to

⁶⁰² Letter from Colquhoun to Mednikoff, dated 12.04.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 108 'Surrealist Group and dinner at Barcelona restaurant')

⁶⁰³ Walsh Nigel (ed.). 1998. *Sluice Gates of the Mind: the collaborative work of Dr Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries): 35

⁶⁰⁴ Halliday Faux, Nigel. 2003. *More than a bookshop: Zwemmer's and Art in the 20th century* (London, Philip Wilson Publishers): 14

these more private meetings: 'Have you heard any more details about what happened at the 'secret' meeting; and have any more been held since? I have tried to find out, but have heard nothing from anyone'.⁶⁰⁵ Another letter, dated 8 May, from Read, who was himself to be excluded by Mesens from the Surrealist group at a date still to be established, again alludes to these secret meetings. The letter also informs us that even after Mesens's demand for Surrealists to exhibit only under the auspices of the Surrealist group, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff were still keen on organising the Stafford Gallery exhibition:

Dear Mr Mednikoff,
I did not hear very much about the secret session - Sewter was very discreet, and Penrose, whom I have seen since, very conciliatory. I shall see Moore tomorrow, and I gather he is all for avoiding an open breach in the movement. Mesens is the only disturber of the peace, though he easily influences Penrose. I am glad you are going ahead with the exhibition - I think it is the only thing to do, and you are doing it on the right line.⁶⁰⁶

These letters reveal that several 'secret sessions' were being held at the time and, because of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's refusal to agree to Mesens's terms, it is likely that these private meetings were where the future of the couple's involvement with the Surrealist group was sealed. Read's letter also reflects the dynamics of his relationship with the couple. As an anarchist, he would not have been troubled by their lack of political alignment and the letters which they exchanged show that Read believed that their scientific work was truly revolutionary in its own way.

Ironically, despite all the drama it had caused, the proposed exhibition was never held, as Story closed the Stafford Gallery on 8 June 1940.⁶⁰⁷ An undated letter to Mednikoff from Story confirms that the Executive Committee decided to close the

⁶⁰⁵ Letter from Colquhoun to Mednikoff, dated 03.05.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 108 'Surrealist Group and dinner at Barcelona restaurant')

⁶⁰⁶ Letter from Read to Mednikoff, dated 08.05.40; in *ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ Letter from Colquhoun to Mednikoff, dated 06.10.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 112 'Stafford Gallery; The exhibition that never was')

British Art Centre for the Summer months and to re-open in Autumn. The reason she gave was that the Committee had organized an exhibition of contemporary British paintings and it was being taken to the USA. Story claimed that the gallery hoped that the results of showing the artists' work in America would mean an extended market and greater appreciation for British painting in the USA.⁶⁰⁸ No doubt, the war lay behind her decision to exhibit British works in America instead of London, where it had become virtually impossible to maintain the art market.

Mesens's hard line position precipitated a general drift away from the group, headed by Pailthorpe, Mednikoff and Colquhoun.⁶⁰⁹ Read, who had been more drawn to anarchism than to Surrealism for some time, was equally unprepared to comply with the third condition Mesens stipulated, but remained loosely affiliated.⁶¹⁰

Because of their objections to Mesens's demands, Read, Colquhoun, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff were not invited to participate in the 'Surrealism Today' exhibition at the Zwemmer Gallery which was held from 13 June to 3 July 1940.⁶¹¹ By agreeing to organise and participate in this exhibition, Penrose showed that he supported Mesens's decisions and was not willing to ask the couple to exhibit. The redefined outlook of the Surrealist movement was also emphasized by the final issue of *London Bulletin* which coincided with the exhibition. It was published under the directorship of Mesens, Penrose and Onslow-Ford with Penrose financing most of it. Together with Agar, he had also designed the window display of the Zwemmer Gallery. Clearly, Penrose was still determined to further the activities of the Surrealist group.

⁶⁰⁸ Letter from Story to Mednikoff, not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 137 'Surrealism in Britain: documents and correspondence')

⁶⁰⁹ Whitford & Hughes. 1988. *The Surrealist Spirit in Britain* (London, Whitford & Hughes): 2

⁶¹⁰ Levy, Silvano. 2003. *The scandalous eye: the Surrealism of Conroy Maddox* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press): 61

⁶¹¹ Ray, Paul. 1971. *The Surrealist Movement in England* (London, Cornell University Press): 228

The triple issue included texts by Melville, Onslow-Ford and Maddox, poems by Péret and Eluard and pieces by Breton, Mesens and Mabille. The cover page read:

Fight Hitler and his ideology wherever it appears. You must.
His defeat is the indispensable prelude to the total liberation
of humanity.⁶¹²

Read's letter to Mednikoff of 8 May 1940 also confirms that, during that period, Pailthorpe was focusing on publishing her work and that plans for her to publish her book, 'The Geography of Phantasy', in America were already being suggested. He wrote:

I read the Synopsis with great interest and have now passed it on to the other directors of Routledge. But the publishing situation is now extremely difficult. We are reduced to 15% of last year's paper consumption, and there is talk of a further reduction and even a censorship of books. Meanwhile costs are going up. If the situation continues for any length of time, English literature will have to move bodily to America, and I think your best plan is to begin at that end. I don't know what Dr Pailthorpe's contacts are there, but I seem to remember that she said she did contemplate the necessity of going over to arrange for American publication.
Herbert Read⁶¹³

Read's involvement in the publication of Pailthorpe's book confirms his genuine interest in her work, as a co-director of Routledge it was natural that she appealed to him for his help. In another letter, Read goes on to say:

Dear Dr Pailthorpe,
I have had a further discussion with the Directors [of Routledge] about 'The Geography of Phantasy'. They suggest that the best plan would be for you to prepare a synopsis or description of a preliminary volume, stating the minimum number of words and of illustrations which you require. We would then write to Norton and see if we can come to some arrangement with them for joint publication.
I think you will agree that this is the better plan.
With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
Herbert Read⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² *London Bulletin*, Nos. 18-20, June 1940. London, London Gallery Ltd.

⁶¹³ Letter from Read to Mednikoff, dated 08.05.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 101 'Surrealism in Britain: correspondence with Herbert Read')

⁶¹⁴ Letter from Read to Pailthorpe, dated 14.05.40 and sent from Routledge; in *ibid*.

Pailthorpe's reply to Read was:

Dear Mr Read,

I am enclosing a descriptive synopsis of the book, as requested, for submitting to Mr. Norton (American Publisher).

I am also sending you a sort of 'blurb' about the origin of the research, adding an outline of my career and an abstract from the world-wide press publicity that my previous book brought me - all to be used at your discretion. I am still getting press notices from time to time.

Should Mr Norton not wish to co-operate with you will you kindly get him to return the synopsis.

In the meantime I sincerely hope he will come to an agreement about publication.

Kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely⁶¹⁵

Although 'The Geography of Phantasy' evidently dealt with her psychoanalytic research, there is no trace of the manuscript. For this reason, I do not know whether the book had been completed or whether she only went so far as to draft a synopsis. I also do not know whether any of the documents she refers to in the letter above still survive. Although 'The Geography of Phantasy' was not published, their correspondence demonstrates that Read played a big part in aiding her to publish her work. In addition, Read was also involved in her move to New York. In a letter to the publisher Frank Norton he wrote:

Dear Frank,

This is to introduce to you Dr Pailthorpe, a good friend of a very distinguished psychologist and mine. She is coming to New York to arrange the publication of a book dealing with her psychoanalytical researches, which are of a fundamental and perhaps revolutionary character. She has introductions to one or two other publishers, but you too may be interested, and in any case you would be interested to meet Dr Pailthorpe. Routledge is interested in the British rights, but that we can discuss later if necessary.

I wrote to you the other day, but this note may reach you earlier. So this is an opportunity to reassure you that we are all still well and not too overwhelmed by events.

Yours ever

Herbert Read⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁵ Letter from Pailthorpe to Read, dated 28.05.40 and sent from Hertfordshire; in *ibid*.

⁶¹⁶ Letter from Read to Frank, dated 18.07.40; in *ibid*.

Other letters written at the time show that Pailthorpe was making her plans to move to America. Several factors prompted their desire to move to America. In 1940 there was an exodus to America because it was seen as a safe English-speaking haven with an interest in Surrealism. Opportunities had dried up in England because of the war and many Surrealists were going to America instead. The couple's disenchantment with Surrealism in Britain and Pailthorpe's desire to publish her book also contributed towards their move. In a letter to an unknown organization, dated 29 June 1940, E.T.Jensen, the Chairman of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, wrote that Pailthorpe asked for a permit to leave the country with Mednikoff. He wrote that she was engaged upon the final stages of work in relation to new and profound medical research and that the William C. Whitney Foundation in New York had invited the couple to complete the undertaking in America.⁶¹⁷ The William C. Whitney Foundation was set up in 1937 by Dorothy Whitney, the daughter of the American businessman and statesman William Whitney. One of the wealthiest women in America at the time, she was a benefactor of the arts and of feminist and pacifist causes, and supporter of social and labour reform. She also lent financial support to progressive alternative education and scholarly research. The Foundation still exists today and consists of works collected by Dorothy and her husband Leonard Elmhirst. They were believed to be the twentieth century's most substantial private patrons of architecture, the arts and education in England.

Although we do not know who recommended the couple to the Foundation, in his letter E.T.Jensen stated:

The Foundation are supplying the necessary affidavit pledging their complete support for the period of one year.

⁶¹⁷ Letter from Jensen to unknown addressee, dated 29.06.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 003 'Miscellaneous letters re. USA/Canada (funding-Whitney)')

It is essential not only that the research material be put out of reach of destruction, but also that both Dr Pailthorpe and Mr Mednikoff be safeguarded as they alone could apply the new technique of treatment, which is the outcome of the research, and prepare the research material for presentation to the medical world, an important task which remains to be accomplished.

It is recognised that the most advanced knowledge in psychology must be basic to the understanding of social, political and economic problems. I believe that this work is so outstanding as to be of national importance and indeed to be valuable for a higher type of propaganda.⁶¹⁸

Moreover, a letter from Anna Bogue, the secretary of the William C. Whitney Foundation, to Pailthorpe on 25 October 1940 states that the Foundation had allocated a \$2000 grant to enable the couple to move to America and explore the possibilities of organizing their material and publishing her book.⁶¹⁹ Another letter to an unknown addressee from the President of the Medical Society of Individual Psychology, Sir Walter Langdon-Brown, also confirms that some publishers were interested in Pailthorpe's work.⁶²⁰

On 17 July 1940, Sir Frederick Whyte, the Director of the American Division of the Ministry of Information in London, wrote a letter to an unidentified source:

This is to certify that the bearer of this letter, Dr Pailthorpe, and her assistant Mr Mednikoff, are visiting the United States of America for the purposes of medical research work and the preparation of a book for publication. The Ministry of Information has received evidence as to the scientific importance of this work and is anxious that every legitimate assistance should be given to Dr Pailthorpe and Mr Mednikoff.⁶²¹

In a second letter, also dated 17 July 1940, Whyte asked if Pailthorpe's papers, drawings and paintings could be speedily passed for export to the United States on the grounds that they 'are of scientific value only, and are essential to the important medical research which Dr Pailthorpe and her assistant, Mr Mednikoff, are carrying

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Letter from Anna Bogue to Pailthorpe, dated 25.10.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 006 'File containing correspondence USA July-Dec 1940')

⁶²⁰ Letter from W. Langdon-Brown to unknown addressee, dated 01.07.40. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 003 'Miscellaneous letters re. USA/Canada (funding-Whitney)')

⁶²¹ Letter from Sir Frederick Whyte to unknown addressee, dated 17.07.40; in *ibid.*

on, for the purpose of which they have been given permission to visit the United States'.⁶²² The use of the word 'assistant' in both letters is interesting because it insinuates that Pailthorpe is assuming the position of the driving motor when focusing on the scientific aspect to Surrealism. Whereas before the couple's relationship was one of equals, the word 'assistant' implies that Pailthorpe, at that point, was assuming the leading role.

Apart from Whyte's letter, another letter written at a later date, 21 October 1940, clarifies that the secretary of the British Institute of Psychoanalysis, S. M. Payne, had also encouraged Pailthorpe to move to the United States and publish her research so that others may have the opportunity of considering her technique in 'the study of the unconscious origin of artistic impulses'.⁶²³ A telegram, reflecting the continuing closeness of Pailthorpe and Dimsdale, also confirms that in 1940 Dimsdale sent Pailthorpe £500 to New York to fund her research costs there.⁶²⁴ There is no record of the couple having any further contact with Read following their move to New York, or mention of the publication of 'The Geography of Phantasy'.

7.4 Conclusion

Although the meeting at the Barcelona restaurant resulted in purges and ideological splits within the English movement as well as the departure of Colquhoun, Mednikoff and Pailthorpe, it also meant a revitalization of the group, as was demonstrated by the Zwemmer Gallery exhibition of June 1940.⁶²⁵ Evidently, as Louisa Buck has said, 'In its demands for an unblinking commitment, the British Surrealist Group could not

⁶²² Letter from Sir Frederick Whyte to unknown addressee, dated 17.07.40; in *ibid.*

⁶²³ Letter from Payne to unidentified addressee, dated 21.10.40; in *ibid.*

⁶²⁴ Telegram from Dimsdale to Pailthorpe, not dated. Edinburgh: Dean Gallery Archives (File 183 'Cecilia Dimsdale correspondence')

⁶²⁵ Remy, Michel. 1986. *Surrealism in Britain in the thirties: angels of anarchy and machines for making clouds*. Exh. Cat. (Leeds, Leeds City Art Gallery): 33

accommodate many of these determined individuals who were taking their own form of Surrealism in directions that were unconventional and challenging'.⁶²⁶ Because of this, the couple's commitment to the pursuit of Science in their psychoanalytical experiments was deemed intolerable.

The couple's refusal to exhibit and publish only with the backing of the Surrealist group following Mesens's demands at the Barcelona meeting, on 11 April 1940, resulted in them never being connected to the British group again. Although Anthony Penrose and Nigel Walsh have claimed that they were expelled from the group, no record of such an expulsion has come to light. Nor are there records of who may have encouraged the expulsion or supported the couple. They may have left of their own accord. Expelled or not, they left England for New York on 24 July 1940 and were never again to be associated with the Surrealist group. After their departure, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff kept to their vow not to join any other group or organization for the rest of their lives, which they spent in close collaboration.

⁶²⁶ Buck, Louisa. 1988. *The Surrealist Spirit in Britain* (London, Whitford & Hughes): 3-4

Conclusion

In this thesis I have not presented an account of the entire relationship between Pailthorpe and Mednikoff, which lasted until her death in 1971. Nor have I written a comprehensive biography of the couple or created an inventory of all the art works they produced from when they first met. My work, I realise, is preliminary because certain areas are still to be uncovered, and the absence of any substantial publications and the dispersal into unidentified private collections of some of their most important paintings have presented grave problems and made progress slow. In spite of this, the many months I spent trawling through the Dean Gallery Archive, the contacts that I have made with the Portman Clinic in London and with the couple's family members have yielded a lot of information about Pailthorpe, Mednikoff and their work.

The story of the collaboration between Dr. Grace Pailthorpe, a psychoanalyst, and Reuben Mednikoff, an artist and poet who was twenty - three years younger, is an extraordinary one and occupies a unique position within the history of Surrealism in England. As my thesis has shown, the couple set about using 'art as a shortcut to the unconscious' from when they first met and the scientific programme that was at the centre of their artistic project demonstrates their complex relationship with Surrealism.

Following the International Surrealist exhibition in 1936, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff soon became prominent figures within the British Surrealist movement. However, what distinguishes the pair from other Surrealists is that their aims were scientific and therapeutic because they considered Surrealism to be their method of investigation into unconscious mental life.

Between 1936 and 1939, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff took part in all the major British Surrealist events, made frequent visits to London and corresponded with Penrose, Breton and other Surrealists. Although the crude imagery in their paintings and drawings was amongst the most shocking produced by any of the artists within the British Surrealist camp, Pailthorpe claimed that, in their resurrection and expression of childhood memories, fears and wishes through baby talk, infantile verse or surreal, child-like art, their experiments had led them to discover the ‘real meaning and value of surrealist art to the world’.⁶²⁷ As Pailthorpe stated before a Canadian Radio audience in 1944, ‘Surrealism is but one of the many indications of the ever-mounting insistence on the liberation of man, for the freeing of mankind can only come through the releasing of the creative spirit within each one of us’.⁶²⁸

As my research has shown, the couple’s work differed to that of other Surrealists because they looked at unconscious mental life in the womb and were depicting images of the embryos and the womb as early as May 1935. This shows us that, even then, the couple were already nursing their ideas on ‘birth trauma’. Their research looked at how the mind begins to function when the foetus is first affected by intra-uterine experiences and how the process of birth and early post-natal life continue to shape the way the mind functions. Moreover, their thorough exploration of the unconscious allowed them to focus on what they considered to be the permanent division between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind.

As we have seen, it is Pailthorpe and Mednikoff’s childhood that is at the basis of their pictorial images and their work signified how distinct this period of their life remained to them as they created images of family oppression and guilt, and images

⁶²⁷ Foreword in Guggenheim Jeune exhibition catalogue.

⁶²⁸ Pailthorpe, Grace. 10.07.44. ‘Surrealism and Psychology’, *Mirror for Women, Vancouver* (Canadian Broadcasting Company Trans-Canada Network)

of a baby's dependence on the mother for comfort and sustenance. Some of their works also illustrate glimpses of scenarios that start from fantasies of infancy rather than aiming to arrive at them.

Still, although their work was stylistically in tune with that of other Surrealist artists and revealed their unconscious, the emphasis Pailthorpe and Mednikoff placed on the scientific nature of their collaboration set them apart from other members of the group. As the title of her article 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' indicates, Pailthorpe's interests went beyond other Surrealists' concerns. This was because she saw automatism as a method by which harmfully repressed infantile phantasies could be expressed and, together with Mednikoff, used automatism as a means to study and unlock the unconscious within a therapeutic context. Their experiments aimed 'to free the psychology of the individual from internal conflict so he or she may function freely'.⁶²⁹ Therefore, even if the experimental and controversial aspects of Surrealism suited them, the therapeutic context in which they were rooted, however radical its ambitions, did not really suit the rhetoric of Surrealism. Nevertheless, even though their aims were not strictly aesthetic but scientific and therapeutic, it seems that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff chose to associate themselves with the other Surrealists because of the opportunity it gave them to make their research findings available to a wider audience. Their desire to participate in as many exhibitions as possible indicates their keenness in generating sales so that Pailthorpe could publish her work.

As I stated in my introduction to the thesis, there are no existing or proposed in-depth biographies of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff and part of my purpose in my thesis has

⁶²⁹ Pailthorpe, Grace. 1939. 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', *London Bulletin*, 7: 10

been to throw new light on who the couple were, how they met and the work they did together. I have also discussed their paintings in more detail than previous writers.

World War I produced innumerable shell-shock soldiers and because of these patients, Pailthorpe benefited from opportunities to try new methods of treatment. She was a woman who was not artistically trained and who was in her fifties when she became involved in the Surrealist movement. Pailthorpe specifically approached Surrealism through medicine and not art. She linked medicine with automatism, yet turned to art because she believed it was important that the repressed part of our minds should find expression. Breton also had a medical background and was involved in the treatment of shell shock victims in World War I too. His conception of automatism had its roots in his experience of Freudian-inspired treatments. This is perhaps one reason why he was interested in her work in 1936.

I feel that Pailthorpe and Mednikoff deserve full-scale biographies because Pailthorpe was one of the few Surrealist artists who was equipped to understanding psychoanalytic theory and its relevance to art and, together with Mednikoff, grafted the therapeutic possibilities that psychoanalysis presented onto the facets of Surrealism. Freud and Klein had inspired her scientific understanding of the psyche but Mednikoff and the practice of Surrealist automatism allowed her to use visual imagery from the subconscious mind to create art. Moreover, even though her own written commentaries accompanied each painting in her article, 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism', and at the Guggenheim Jeune exhibition, it is interesting that Pailthorpe still considered the different interpretations of the viewing public to be as relevant and revealing as hers.

By the time she met Mednikoff and became involved with the Surrealists, Pailthorpe was a middle-aged woman who was highly respected in the field of psychoanalysis and criminology. Had Mednikoff not come into Pailthorpe's life when he did, then the story of these two figures would have been different as, together, they dedicated the rest of their lives to developing radically experimental ideas which today have still not been sufficiently recognised. In fact, the only drawings of theirs for which we have any published commentary are those reproduced in 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism'.

Unfortunately, very few of the couple's works exist in permanent collections. Their paintings, watercolours, and drawings are not displayed in public galleries and have not featured in major temporary exhibitions such as *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* (1978) or *Surrealism: Desire Unbound* (2002), where by rights they should have done. The scholarly exhibition *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* centred around Dada and Surrealist magazines. These reviews reflected every emergence of a new group, every doctrinal battle or shift of position in existing groups and the intellectual and artistic history of the movements. Still, neither Pailthorpe's 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism' nor any of the couple's works are included. *Surrealism: Desire Unbound* looked at artists who did not get much coverage but Pailthorpe and Mednikoff are not mentioned, still less represented by exhibits, even though the focus on eroticism seems an ideal place for showcasing their work.

The couple have regularly been excluded from surveys where Surrealism in England is specifically given recognition. *Dada and Surrealism Reviewed* exemplifies this seeing as a whole section was devoted to *London Bulletin* and the 1936 International Surrealist exhibition. The British scholar Matthew Gale also failed to include the

collaboration of Pailthorpe and Mednikoff in his comprehensive study of the history of the Dada and Surrealist movements in *Dada and Surrealism*.

Furthermore, despite the fact that works by Pailthorpe and Mednikoff have been represented in two exhibitions in Leeds in 1986, *Angels of Anarchy – Surrealism in Britain in the Thirties*, and in 1998, *Sluice Gates of the Mind – The Collaborative work of Dr. Grace W. Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff*, it seems to me typical of their critical (mis)fortune that these have been held in a provincial city and not London.

Even today, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff still continue to be neglected or marginalised in studies devoted to Surrealism in England. Yet, far from inhabiting the margins of British Surrealism, which is where they have often been placed, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff played an important role within the movement in Britain. In spite of the age difference, their work together consisted of psychological cross-analyses which lasted several years and produced intriguing aesthetic results. Their work is one of the few examples of an artist and his painting playing an active role in a psychoanalytic context as their images call for a psychological response. Although I have sought to place their work in the context of British Surrealism, I have also shown that they responded to the theories and work of leading figures in European Surrealism which makes their history part of the larger history of Surrealism world wide and them not as marginal to Surrealism as their critical history suggests.

Even though her ideas and work as a psychoanalyst were significantly shaped by Klein's theoretical writings, Pailthorpe's theory of the persistence of unconscious, pre-natal memories and her experiments with Mednikoff on re-experiencing past traumas through painting and drawing make her achievements original, and wider

recognition is deserved for her pioneering work with Mednikoff. The Dean Gallery Archive contains a comprehensive collection of writings, analytic notes, memoirs and drawings by the couple which all warrant detailed research. No doubt, Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's collaboration resulted in them forming one of the most fascinating artistic relationships of the twentieth century and this is what makes these underrated figures important.

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Appendix

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Appendix:



Figure 1:
Photo taken at the Pailthorpe family home in Brighton Road, Redhill. c. 1890.
Left to right from back: Grace, Edward, Hugh, Alexander (known as Frank),
Edward Jnr, Annie, Arthur Leonard, Sidney, Alan, Valdemar Douglas.



Old Houses, Holborn — London

You will be glad to hear that I have at last been allowed out of my quarters of 7 ft by 3.6 m.

POST CARD

For INLAND Postage only this space may be used for communication.

The ADDRESS only to be written here.



I walked with the aid of two Eds & the nurse into the sitting room, and now lying on the couch if I believe my ally I may be even allowed to go for a drive tomorrow. The Dr will not hear of my leaving home for a fortnight at least but I may possibly be allowed to leave on Saturday. P. M. & L. all 2nd class

*Miss Pailthorpe
St. Germaines
Longquidry
N.B.*

Figure 2 (i):
Postcard from Edward Pailthorpe to Grace Pailthorpe sent from 36, Harley House, Marylebone Road, London, dated 16 February 1904.

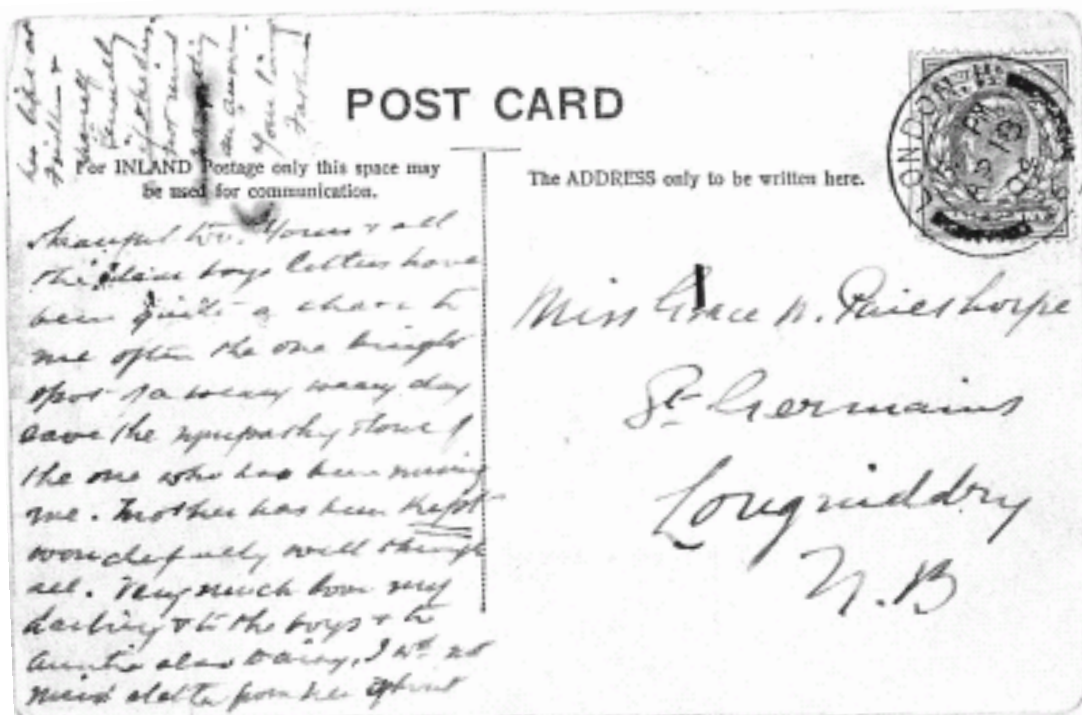


Figure 2 (ii):
 Postcard from Edward Pailthorpe to Grace Pailthorpe sent from 36, Harley
 House, Marylebone Road, London, dated 18 April 1904.



Figure 3:
Pailthorpe family holiday in Scotland, c. 1910. Left to right: Grace, Alan, Gerald, Arthur Leonard, Hugh, and two unidentified women in the back row.

steel safety pins for
my kilt; anything from
3 to 5" long. They are specially
made for them. I marked
my pipe that time along but
was rather expecting one
out.

How is the matter. I can't
believe in her so-called
love for me when she
would let me go to the
front without the least
desire to see me knowing
that I should not come
back. Unnatural brother
alright.

Well so long old girl.
Delighted you are doing
so well.

Good job you explained
Hips ~~himself~~ marriage. One
might have continued it differently!
Ye lovin' brother
Frank.

Figure 4 (i):

Extract of letter from Alexander (known as Frank) Pailthorpe to Grace
Pailthorpe sent from address marked as 'censored', dated 16 June 1915.



Do not mention your rank, battalion, brigade, or the names of places:
Expected operations, movements or numbers of troops:
Casualties, previous to publication of official lists, or make specific
reference to the moral or physical condition of troops.

WALLACE FORGIE, Secretary.

the war. He is lucky.
Am glad you heard
from Boris. I suppose
hear pretty frequently.
I note what you say
about the matter. I suppose
you are right. It's the
cursed religion, but
all the same she is very
hard hearted to let me
go to the front without
saying to me. I
wonder what she would
feel like if I had been
killed by now. Would
she have any remorse. I
think ^{she} would. Poor Mother



Do not mention your rank, battalion, brigade, or the names of places:
Expected operations, movements or numbers of troops:
Casualties, previous to publication of official lists, or make specific
reference to the moral or physical condition of troops.

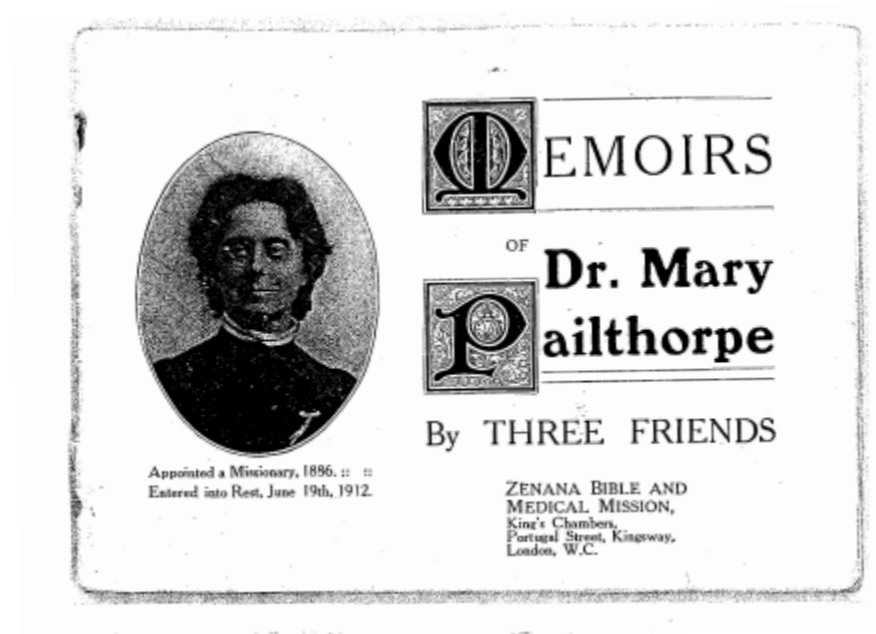
WALLACE FORGIE, Secretary.

to be bound by such
iron bars.
Thanks very much for
pims. They will do fine &
so will the laxative. Many
thanks dear girl.
Findest true old sport.
I'll be seeing you soon.
Yr loving Brother
Frank

P.S. Please remember me
very kindly to Mrs Allan. I
suppose I ought to include
"Samuel" in it but I'm not
forgiven him yet.

Figure 4 (ii):

Extracts of letter from Alexander (known as Frank) Pailthorpe to Grace Pailthorpe sent from address marked as 'censored', dated 19 July 1915.



London School of Medicine for Women, 80, HENRIETTA STREET, BRUNSWICK SQUARE, W.C.	
PRIZES AND CERTIFICATES.	
SUMMER SESSION, 1882.	
Materia Medica.	
Prize.—Mrs. DOWSON.	
Certificates.—Miss TOMS, Miss WALKER.	
Practical Chemistry.	
Prize.—Miss BELBY.	
Practical Physiology.	
Prize.—Miss BERNARD.	
Certificate.—Miss WEBB.	
WINTER SESSION, 1882-83.	
Entrance Scholarship.	
Miss HUNTLEY.	
Anatomy, 1st year.	
Prize.—Miss MEAD.	
Anatomy, 2nd year.	
Prize.—Miss PAILTHORPE.	
Chemistry.	
Prize.—Miss MILLER.	
Certificate.—Miss MEAD.	
Physiology.	
Prize.—Miss PAILTHORPE.	
Practice of Medicine.	
Prize.—Mrs. DOWSON.	
Certificates.—Miss BERNARD, Miss McCALL, Miss Miss TOMS, Miss RUSSELL.	
Surgery.	
Prize.—Miss BERNARD.	
Certificates.—Mrs. DOWSON and Miss TOMS, eq., Miss RUSSELL, Miss MORICE, Miss McGEORGE, Miss WALKER, Miss McCALL.	
June 5th, 1883.	

Figure 5:
Document listing prizes and certificates awarded to Mary Pailthorpe at London School of Medicine for Women, dated 5 June 1883.

H. J.

STUDENT'S FORM.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION
TO THE
London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women.

I hereby apply to be admitted as a Student of the School, subject to the provisions of Art. 30 of the Articles of Association of the School, and I declare that I intend to pursue a complete course of qualifying medical study, and to present myself in due course to the Examining Boards with a view to obtaining a registrable diploma.*

I undertake to conform in all respects to the regulations laid down by the Council, and in particular to abstain from presenting myself to any Examining Board until I have received from the Dean of the School full permission to do so.

Signature, Grace W. Pailthorpe
Address, College Hall, Byng Place,

TESTIMONIAL.

[To be signed, when possible, by a Teacher from the previous Place of Education, or by someone in a recognised official position]

I have known Miss Grace W. Pailthorpe
for the last 22 years, and I recommend her for
admission to the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of
Medicine for Women.

Signature, C. Stanley Smith M.D.
Address, 68 Wimpole Street

Date, Oct 29/08 London

The Dean is authorised, in any case in which she may think it necessary, to require that this recommendation should be countersigned by a Member of the Council.

*Article 30 is as follows:—"The Council shall have absolute discretion as to the admission of Students to the School, and full power to dismiss any Student attending the School or any Classes of the School, for any cause deemed by the Council sufficient."

Figure 6 (i):
Grace Pailthorpe's application for admission to the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women, dated 29 September 1908.

PARTICULARS RESPECTING APPLICATION.

Name.	<i>Grace W. Pailthorpe</i>
Age.	<i>25</i>
Birthplace.	<i>Sutton</i>
London Address.	<i>College Hall, Riving Place.</i>
Address of Parent or Guardian, or nearest relative.	<i>M^{rs} Pailthorpe Woodfield Birkdale, Lancs</i>
Previous Place or Places of Education.	<i>Private Institution</i>
University of London— Preliminary Science classes: Date of Matriculation. Intermediate M.B. classes: Date of Matriculation. Date of Preliminary Science Examination. Final M.B. classes: Date of Matriculation. Date of Preliminary Science Examination. Date of Intermediate M.B. Examination.	
University of Ireland— Date of 1st University Examination. Date of 1st Examination in Medicine.	
University of Durham— Date of Preliminary Examination in Arts.	
Conjoint Colleges of Ireland or Scotland— Date of Preliminary Examination in Arts.	
Society of Apothecaries, London.	
Whether desiring to pay: A. The Composition Fee in one sum. B. The Composition Fee in instalments. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Fees for Separate Classes.	
Whether desiring to enter for: A. School Scholarship. B. St. Dunstan's Medical Exhibition.	

Figure 6 (ii):

Grace Pailthorpe's application for admission to the London (Royal Free Hospital) School of Medicine for Women, dated 29 September 1908.



Figure 7:
World War I. Grace Pailthorpe standing below canon, location unknown.

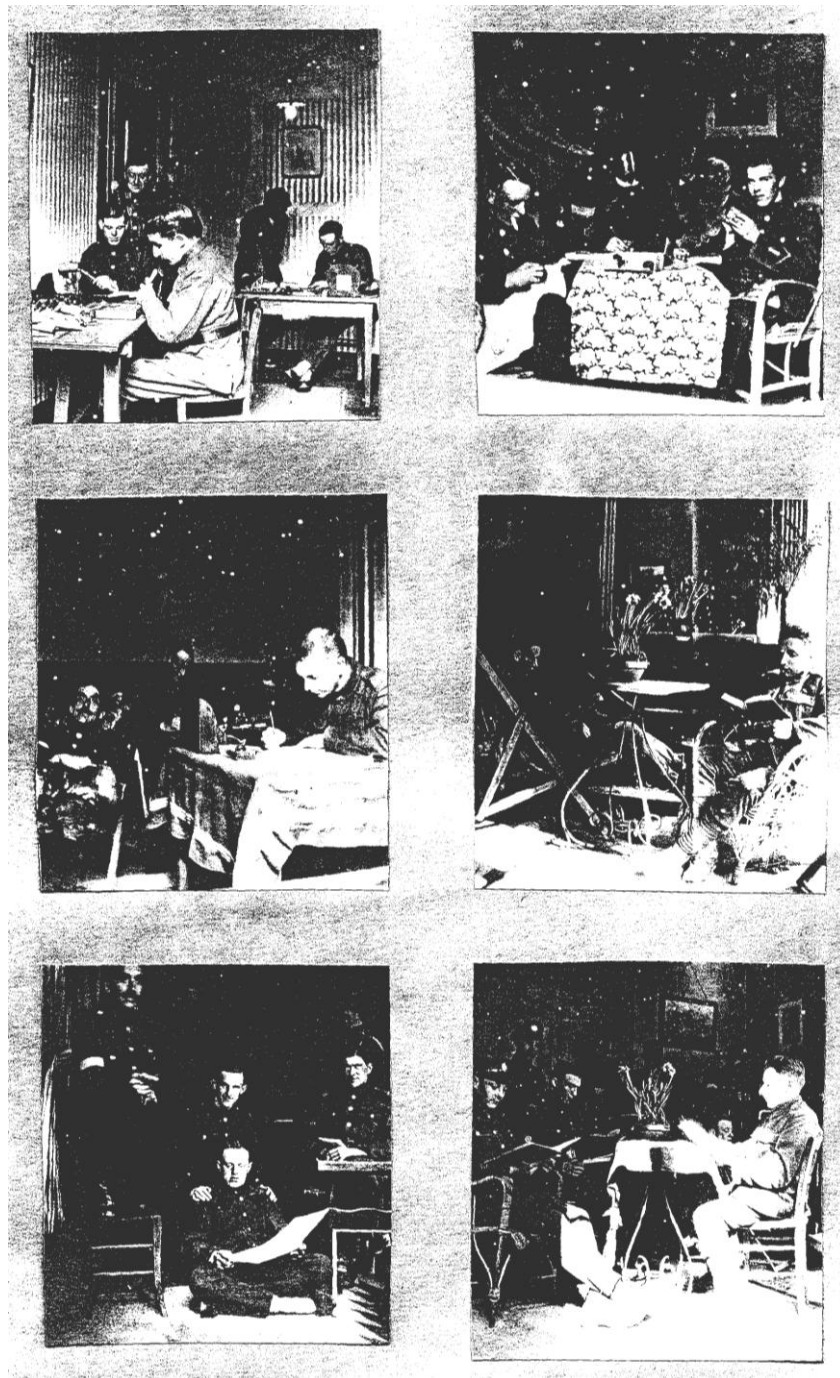


Figure 8:
 The 'Amiens Club', Amiens, 1917. Grace Pailthorpe is the figure standing at the table in the top left photograph.

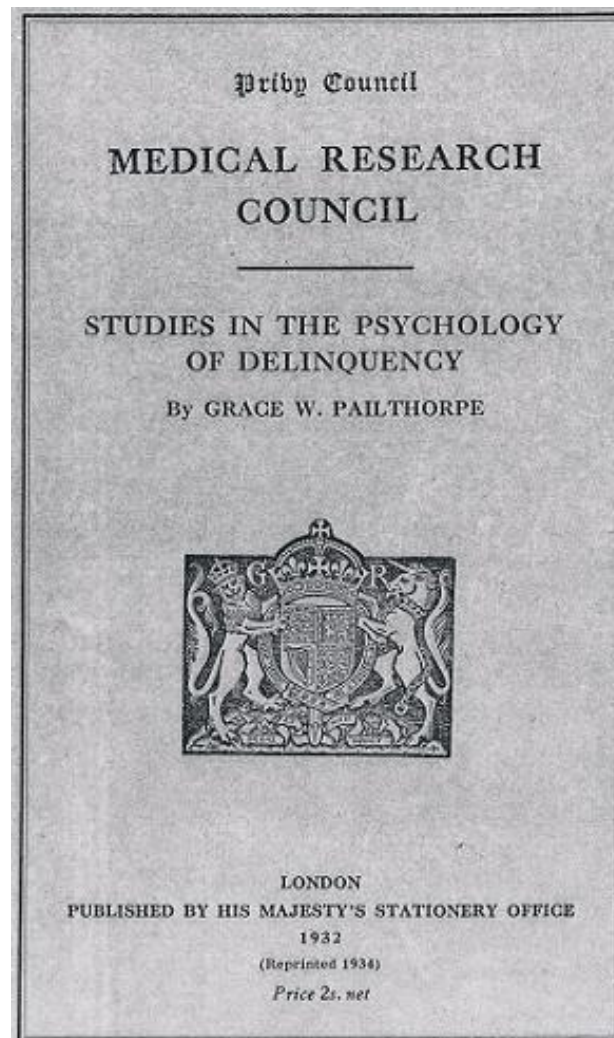


Figure 9:
Grace Pailthorpe's report, *Studies in the Psychology of Delinquency* (1932)



Figure 10:
Jacob Epstein, *Woman Possessed* (1932)

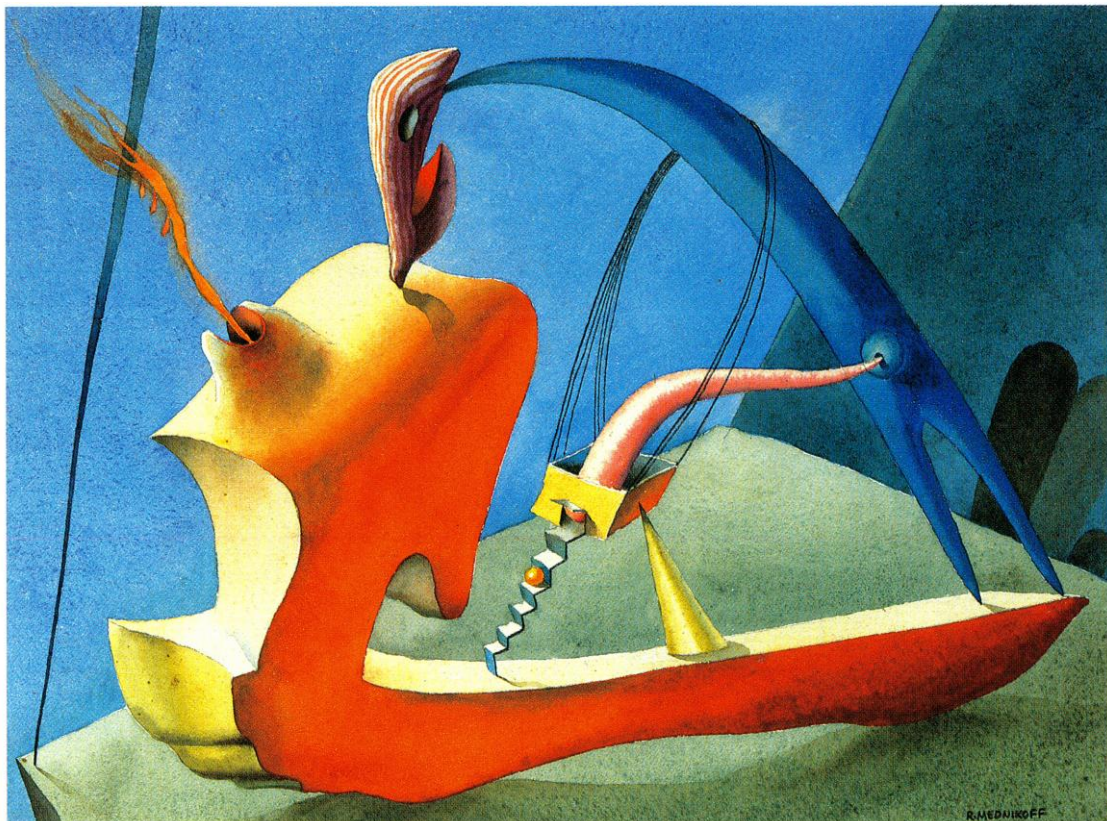


Figure 11:
Reuben Mednikoff, *The Stairway to Paradise* (1936)

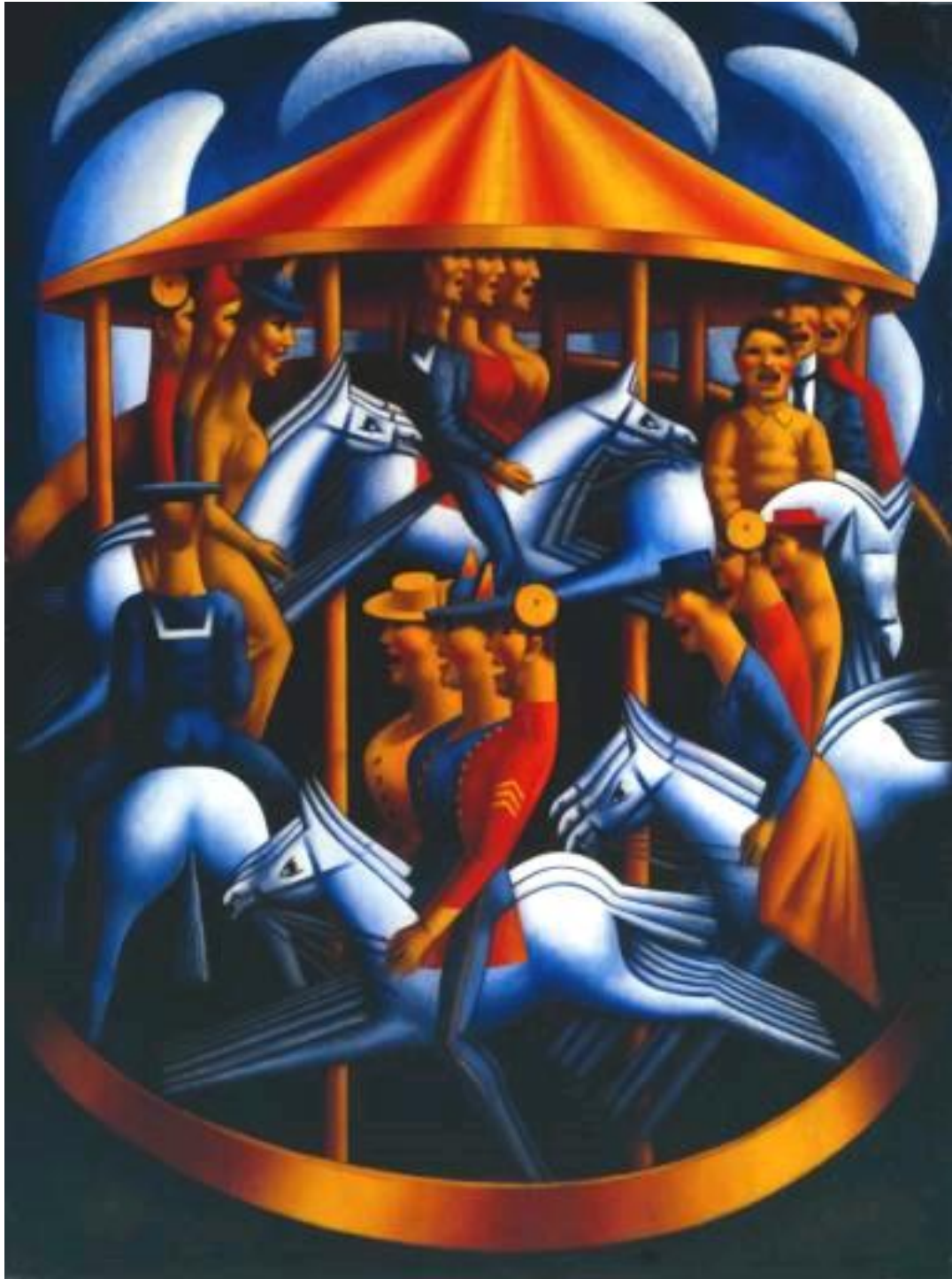


Figure 12:
Mark Gertler, *Merry-Go-Round* (1916)

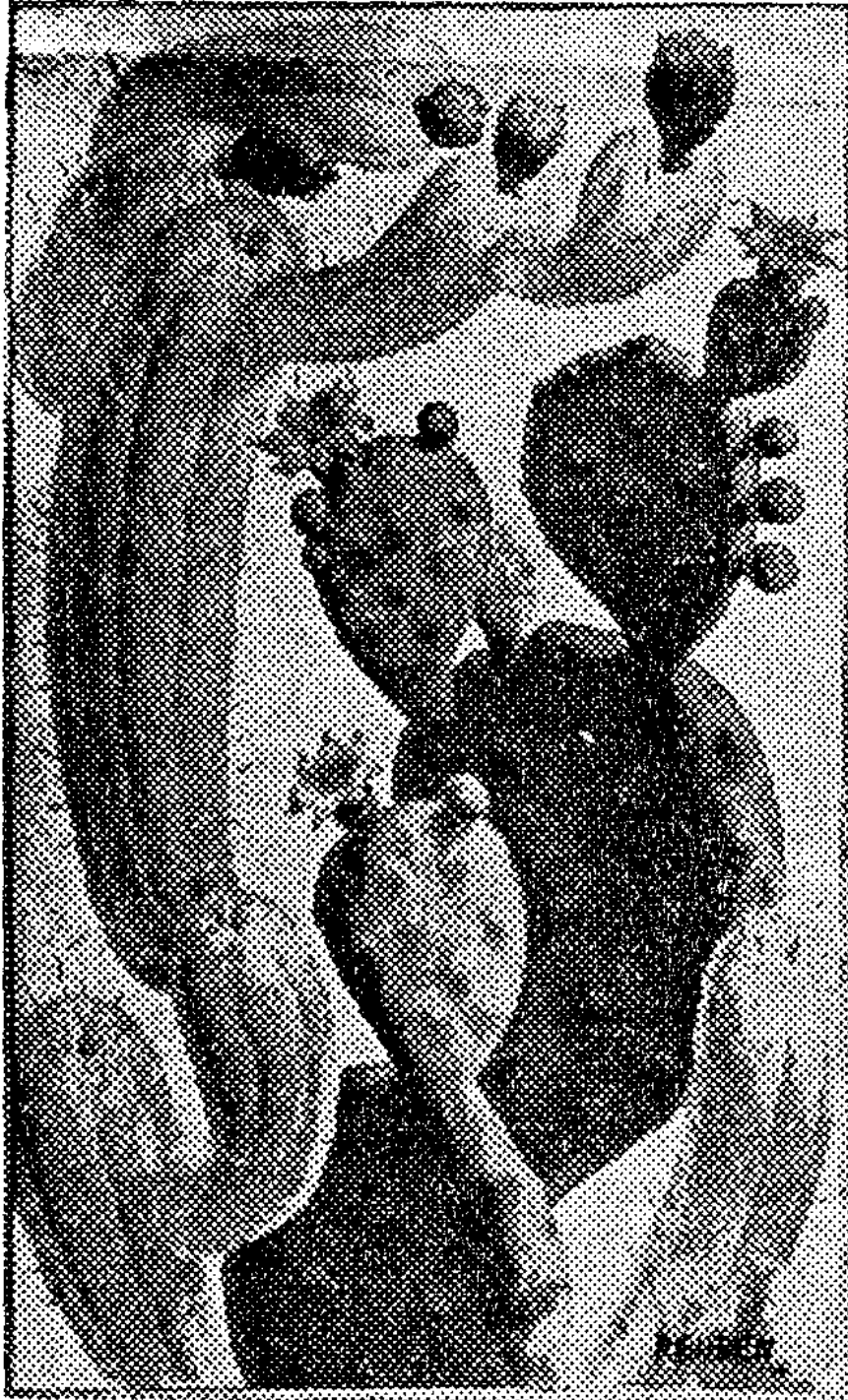


Figure 13:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Cactus* (1933)



Figure 14:
Reuben Mednikoff (1906-1972)



Figure 15:
Grace Pailthorpe (1883-1971)



Figure 16:
Pailthorpe and Mednikoff's residence in Cornwall (photograph taken in 2009)



Figure 17:
Reuben Mednikoff, *November 27, 1935-1*

April 1. 1935

Refer to Lantern slide lectures for complete detailed interpretation.

R.M.

The first oil painting done in which I allowed the unconscious to express itself. Painted at Alma Square N.W.6..

A blue panel, seen edge on and three-quarter view, in the centre of which is set a breast - the half that protrudes on the right has an attenuated penis attached to it. It is also a nipple for the tip of the penis ends in a flower round which is an halo of a sort. On left side of panel are semi-circular strip shapes curving round the breast on that side. At top left corner of the painting is a pocket like shape and out of the mouth of it is projecting a tongue-penis like shape; felt at the time to be both. On the panel, on the right side at bottom and coming out of it, is a bite shape; felt to be that at the time. It is an extension of one of the semi-circular strip shapes which pierces the panel at bottom.



*sketch
from memory*

GWP's remarks at the time:- RM piercing then biting - indication of sucking organ issuing from right breast as a penis - cannibalism indicated by breast incorporated in RM - womb symbol at the top and RM is pouring faeces into womb which contained breast inside RM. Blue board (panel) represents also defiance - a pretence that the onlooker cannot see inside him at the same time defiantly exhibiting all his voracious and sadistic treatment of the mother.

Figure 18:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Transition* (1 April 1935)



Figure 19:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Barn Dance* (4 April 1935)



Figure 20:
Reuben Mednikoff, *April 21, 1935-4*

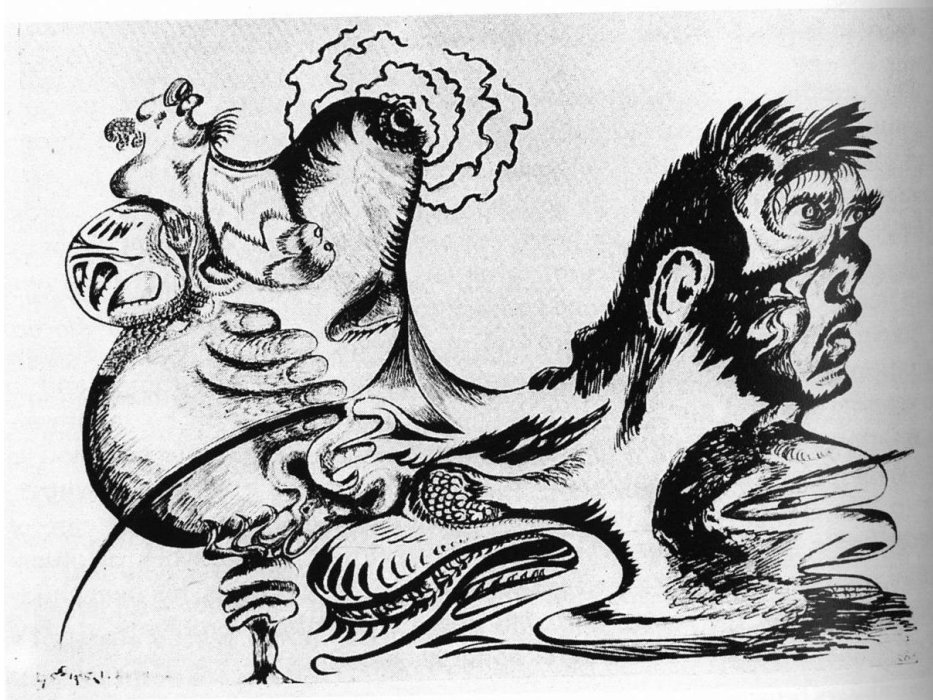


Figure 21 (i):
Grace Pailthorpe, *Ancestors I* (1935)

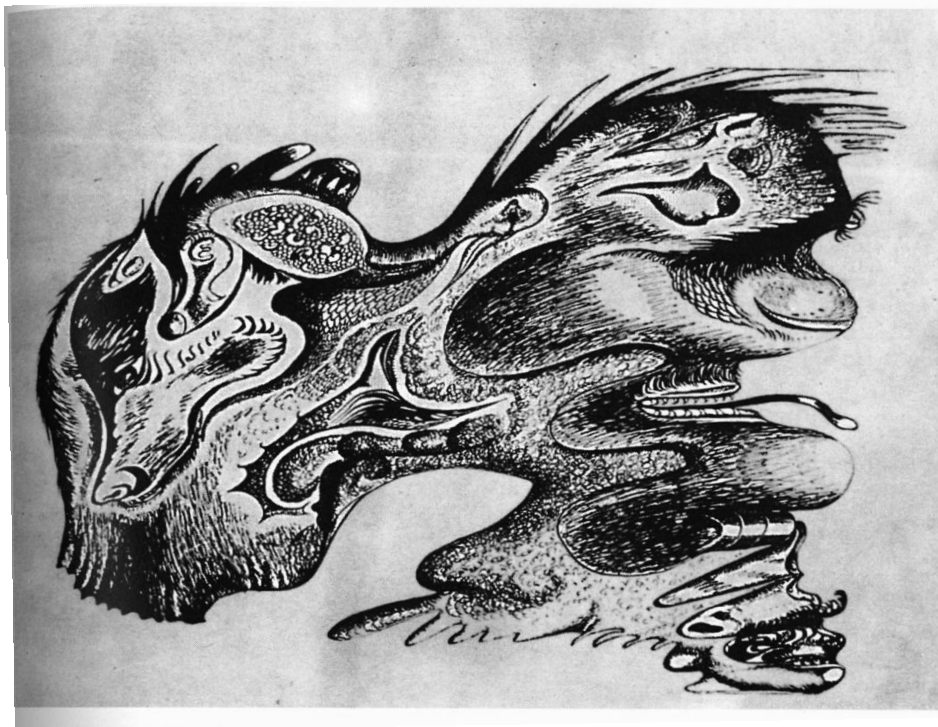


Figure 21 (ii):
Grace Pailthorpe, *Ancestors II* (1935)



Figure 22:
André Masson, *Figure* (1926)
(Reproduction from *Documents*, 1929, 1/2: 96)



Figure 23:
André Masson, *Fish drawn on the Sand* (1927)



Figure 24:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Come back Soon* (1936)

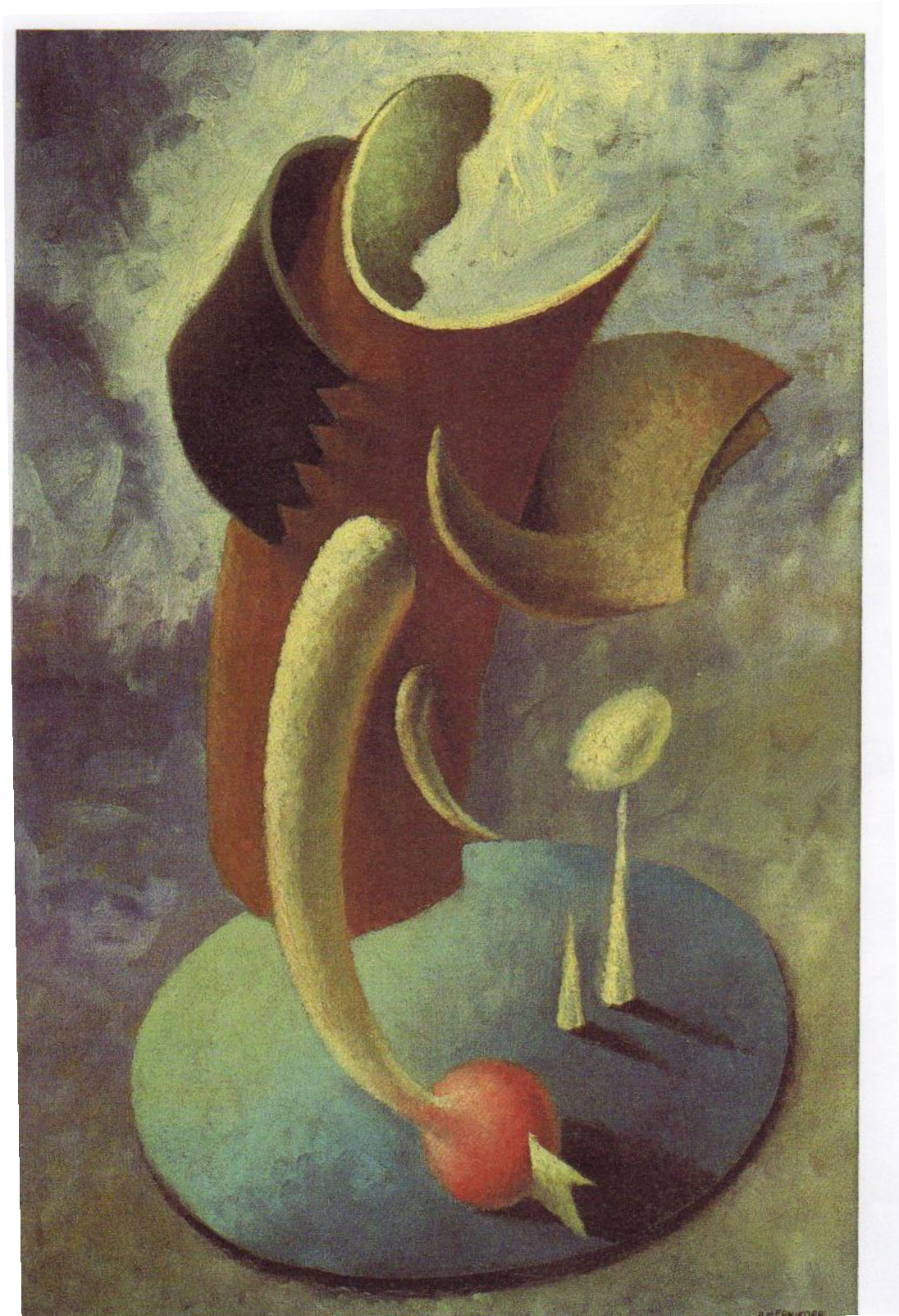


Figure 25:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Darts* (1935)

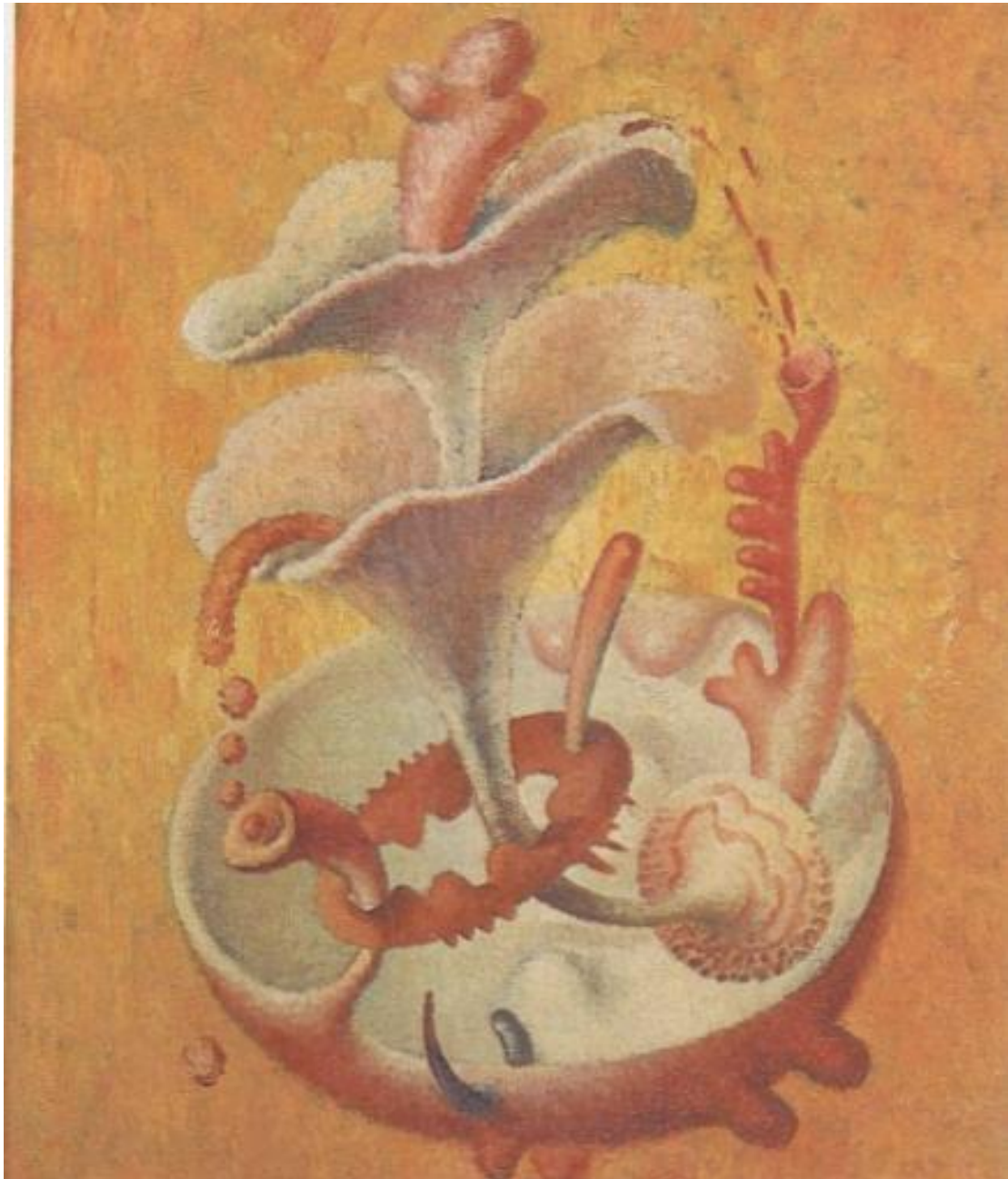


Figure 26:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Arboreal Bliss* (23.04.35)

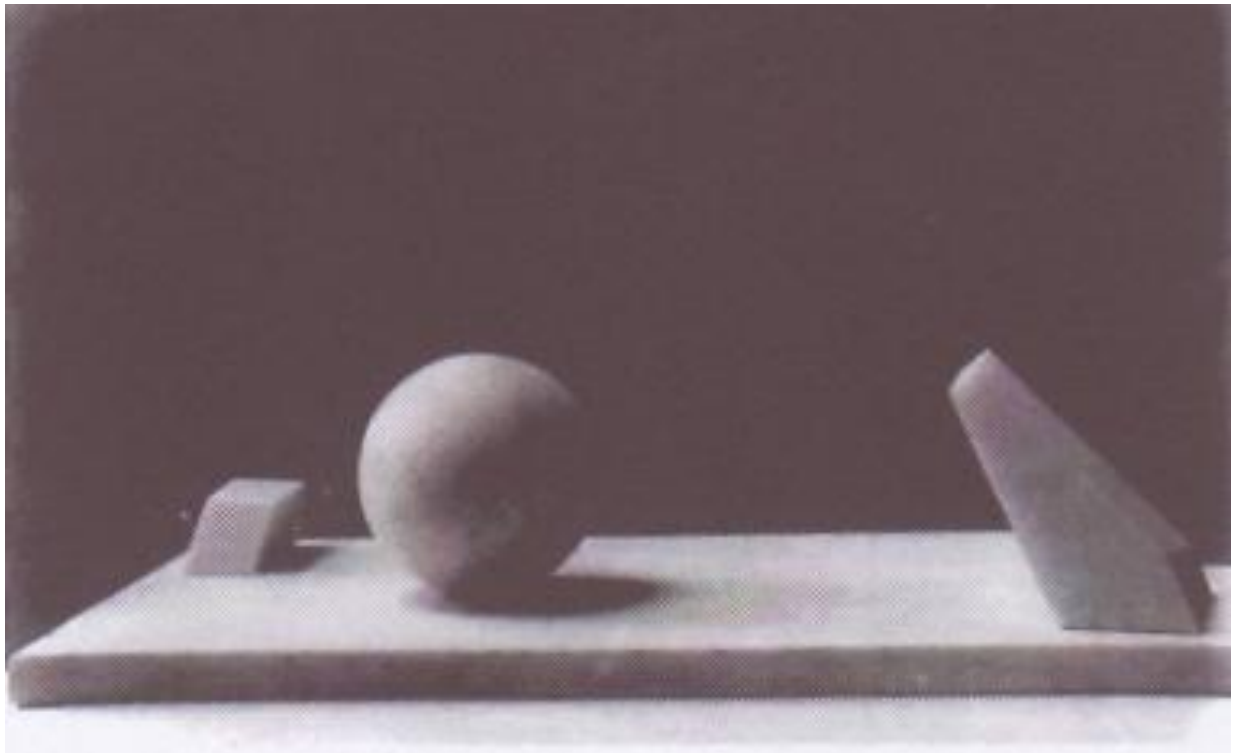


Figure 27:
Barbara Hepworth, *Two Forms and Sphere* (1935)



Figure 28:
Barbara Hepworth, *Three Forms* (1935)



Figure 29:
Henry Moore, *Reclining Woman* (1935)
(Reproduction from *Axis*, April 1935, 2: 25)



Figure 30:
Henry Moore, *Two Forms* (1934)



Figure 31:
Henry Moore, *Four-Piece Composition: Reclining Figure* (1934)



Figure 32:
Barbara Hepworth, *Reclining Figure* (1933)



Figure 33:
Barbara Hepworth, *Mother and Child* (1934)



Figure 34:
Drawings Room 1. *Ancestors II* and *Come back Soon* can be seen in the top row.
(Reproduction from Roland Penrose's photograph album of the International Surrealist exhibition, London 1936)

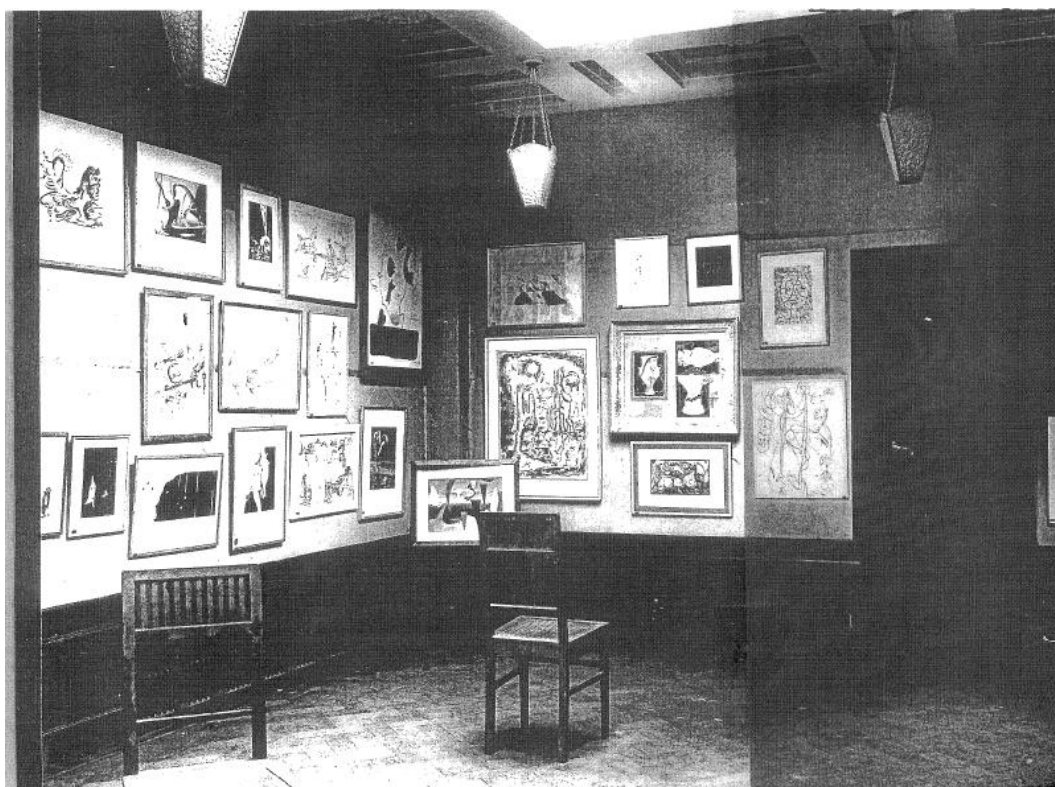


Figure 35:

Drawings Room 2. *Ancestors I* and *The Stairway to Paradise* can be seen in the top row on the left-hand side of the photograph.

(Reproduction from Roland Penrose's photograph album of the International Surrealist exhibition, London 1936)



Figure 36:
Corridor 1. *Darts* is situated on the left-hand side of the photograph.
(Reproduction from Roland Penrose's photograph album of the International Surrealist exhibition, London 1936)

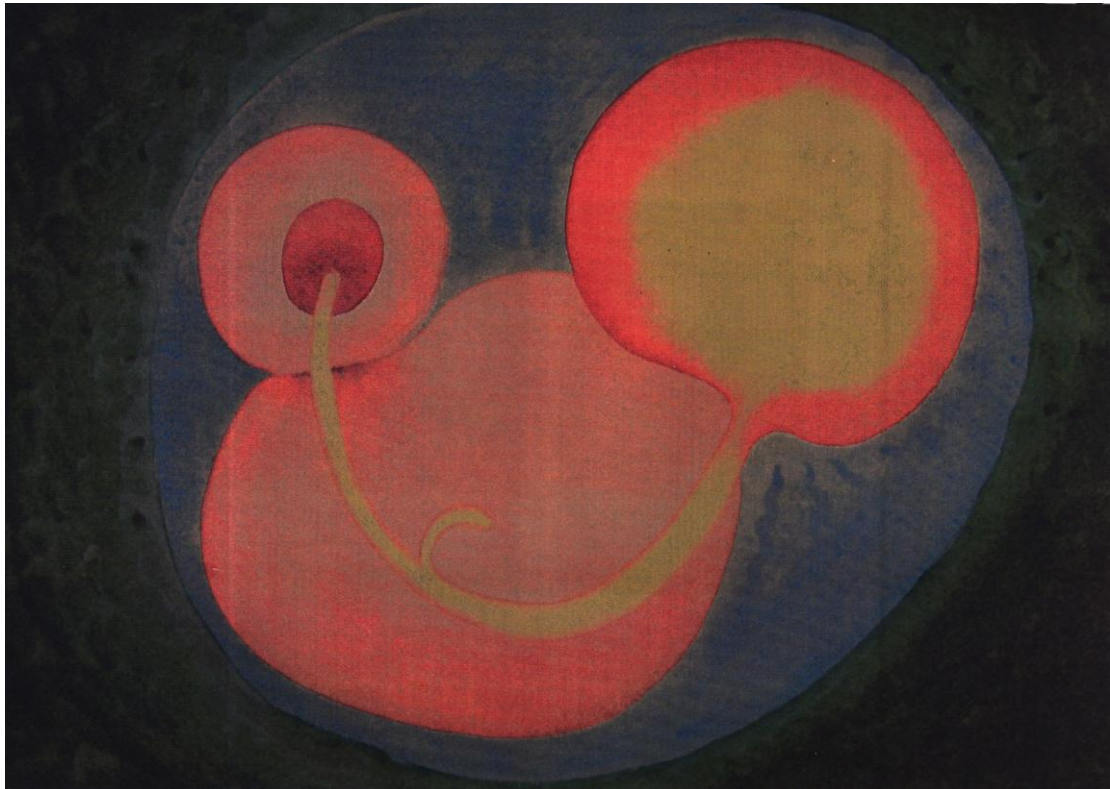


Figure 37:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 2: May 3, 1938, No. 3*

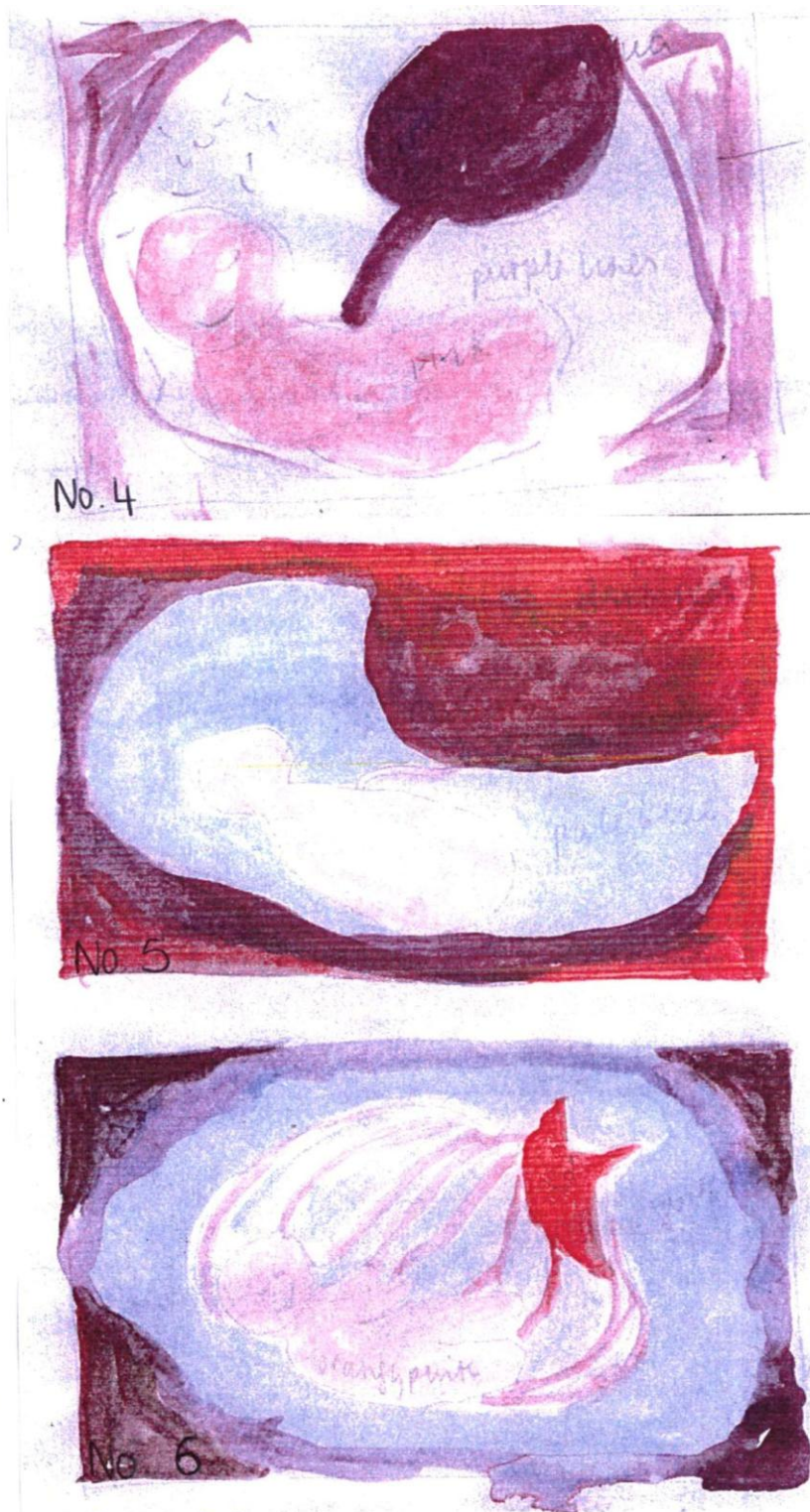


Figure 38:
 Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 2: May 3, 1938, Nos. 4, 5, 6*



Figure 39:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 6: May 11, 1938, No. 1*



Figure 40:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 1: April 23, 1938, No. 1*

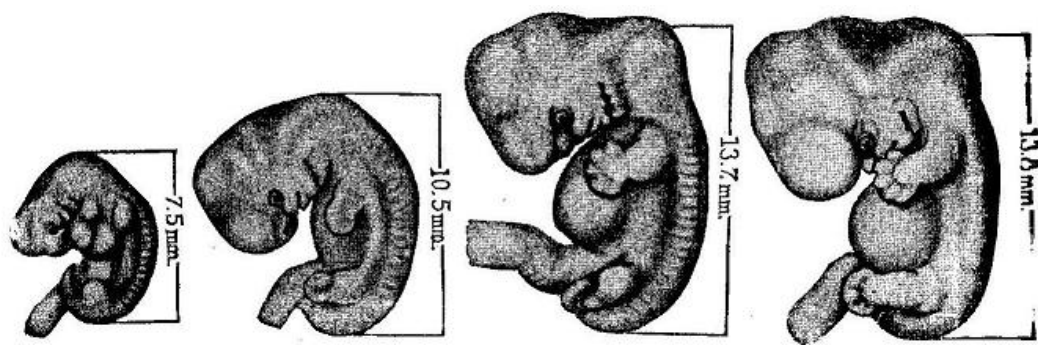


Figure 41:
Illustrations of the embryo at its earlier stages in *Obstetrics* (1926)

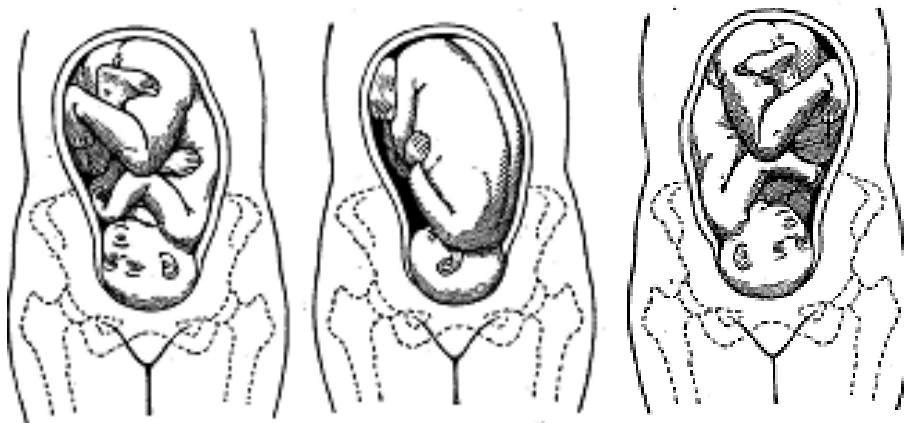


Figure 42:
Images of the inside of the womb in *A textbook of Midwifery* (1926)

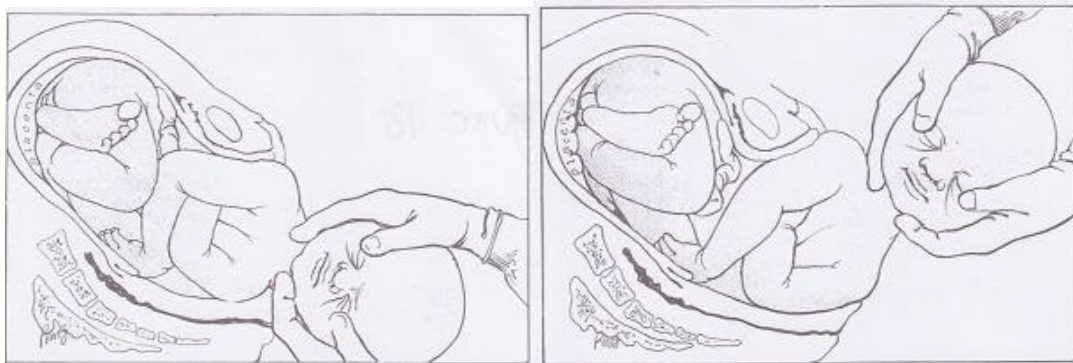


Figure 43:
Illustrations of the sequence of birth in *Williams Obstetrics* (1896)

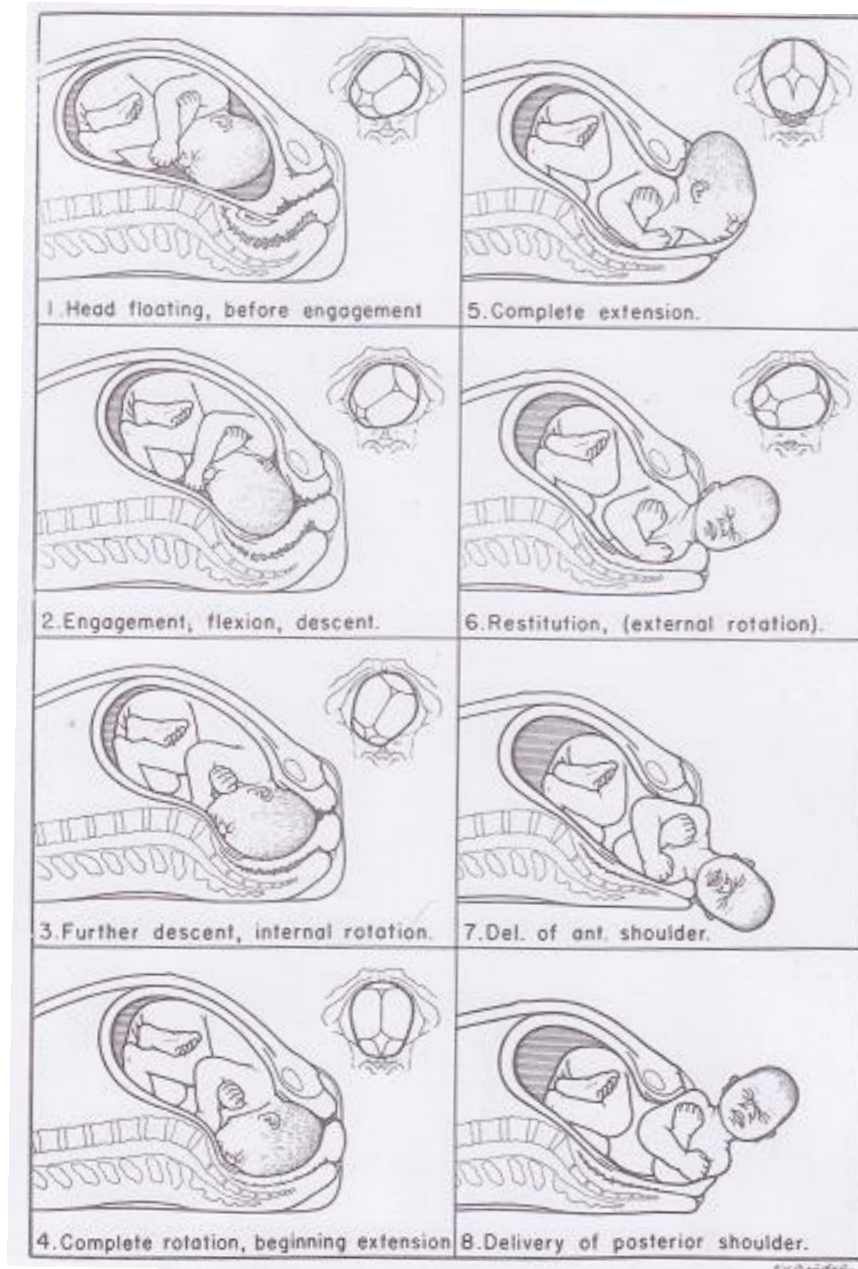


Figure 44:
Illustrations of the movements of labour in *Williams Obstetrics* (1896)

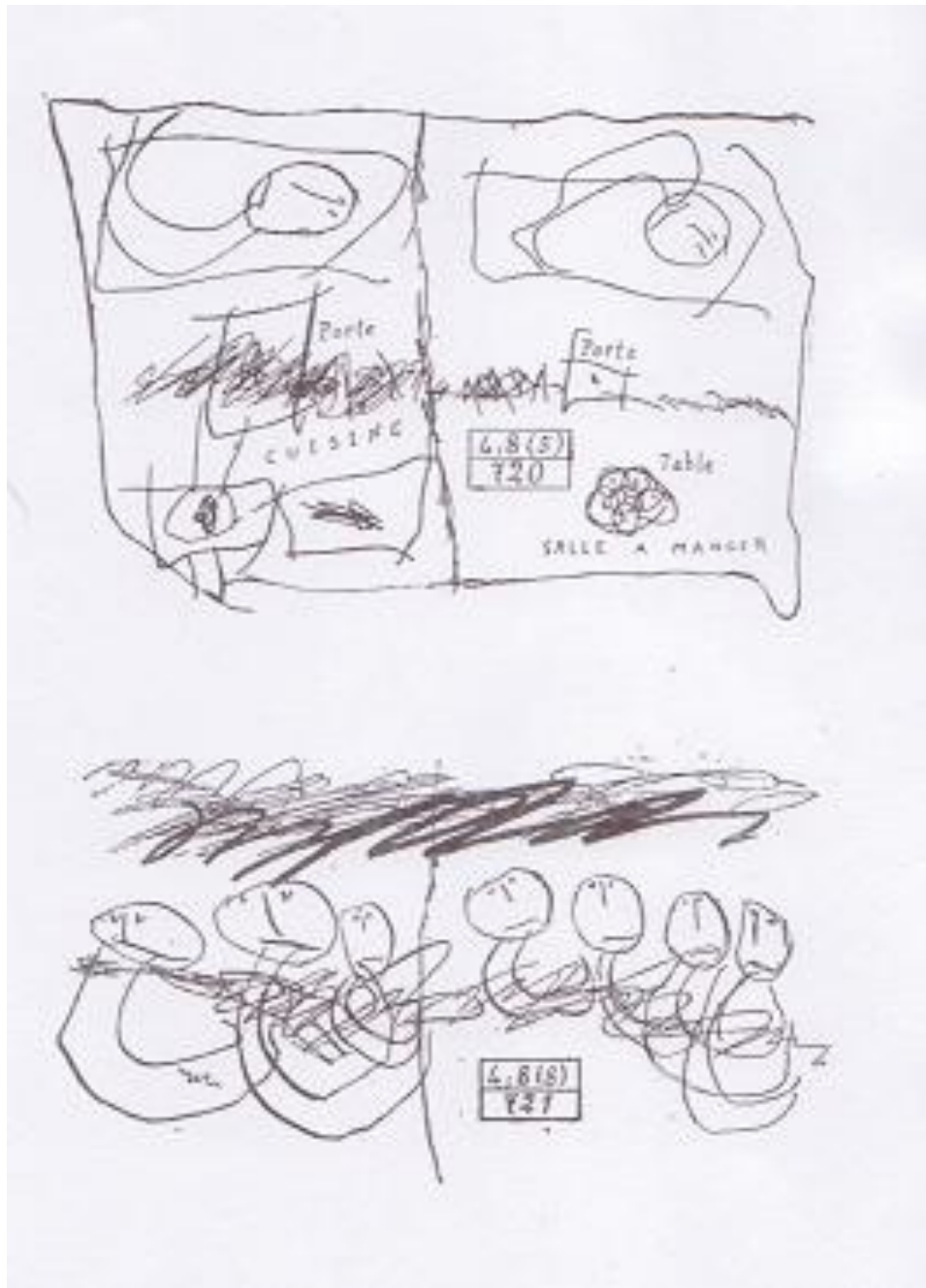


Figure 45:
 Illustrations of children's drawings in G.H. Luquet's *Les dessins d'un enfant* (1913)

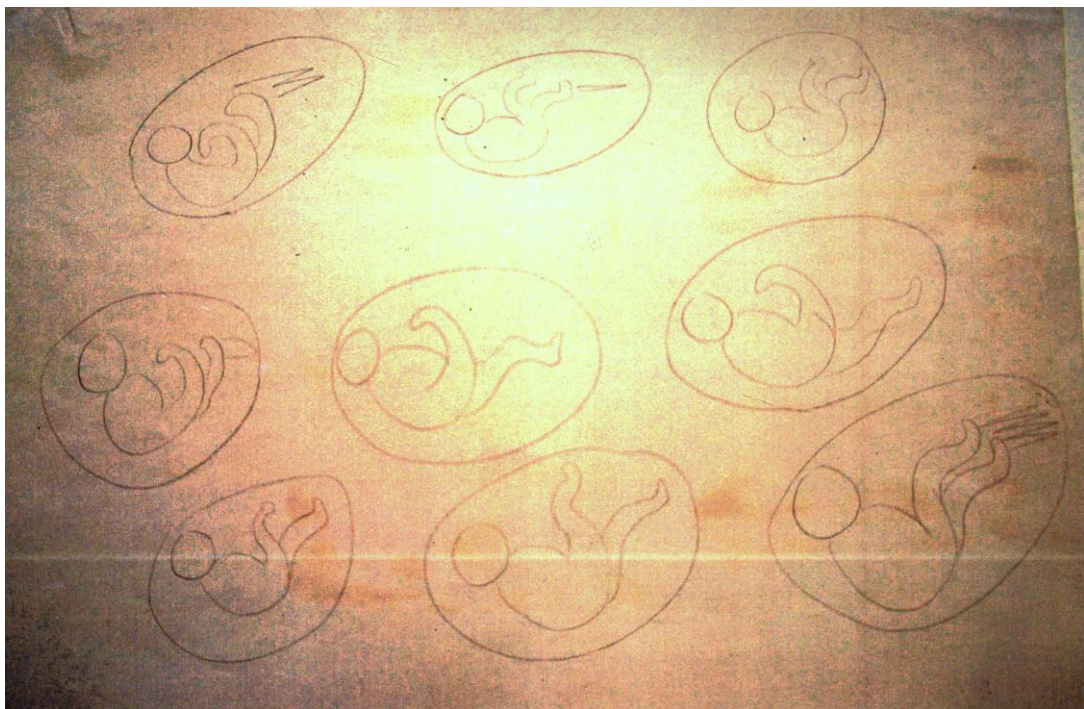


Figure 46:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 4: May 5, 1938, No. 2*

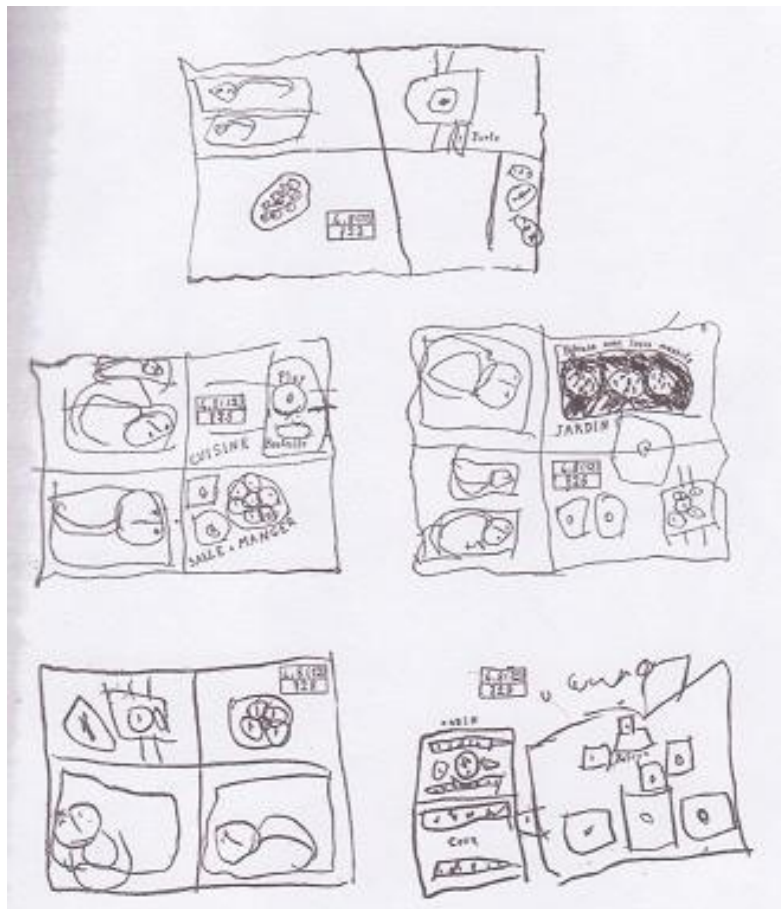


Figure 47:
Illustrations of children's drawings in G.H. Luquet's
Les dessins d'un enfant (1913)

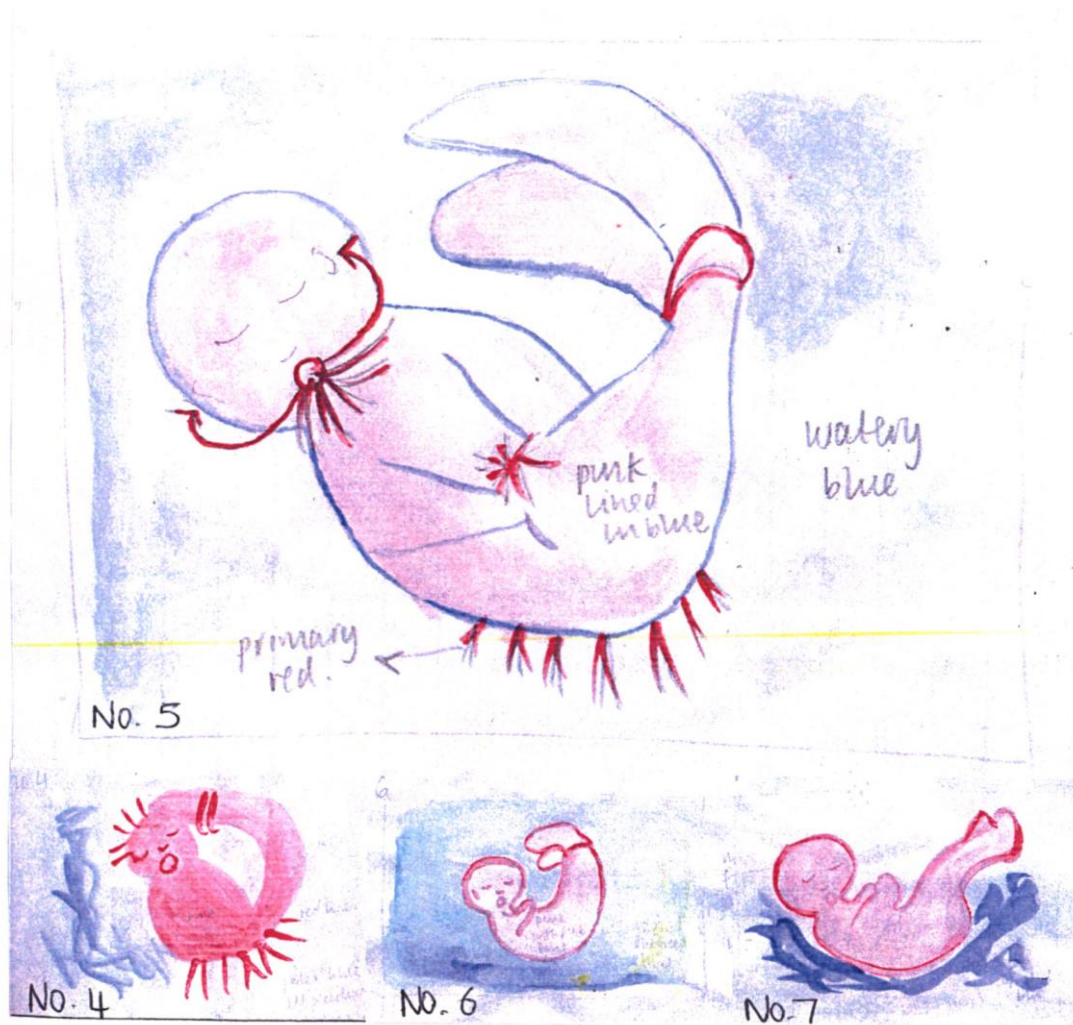


Figure 48:
 Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 5: May 6, 1938, Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7*



Figure 49:
Scribbles by Margaret in Helga Eng's *The Psychology of Children's Drawings* (1931)



Figure 50:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 3: May 4, 1938, No. 2*
(Reproduction of Pailthorpe's drawing provided by Dean Gallery, Edinburgh)

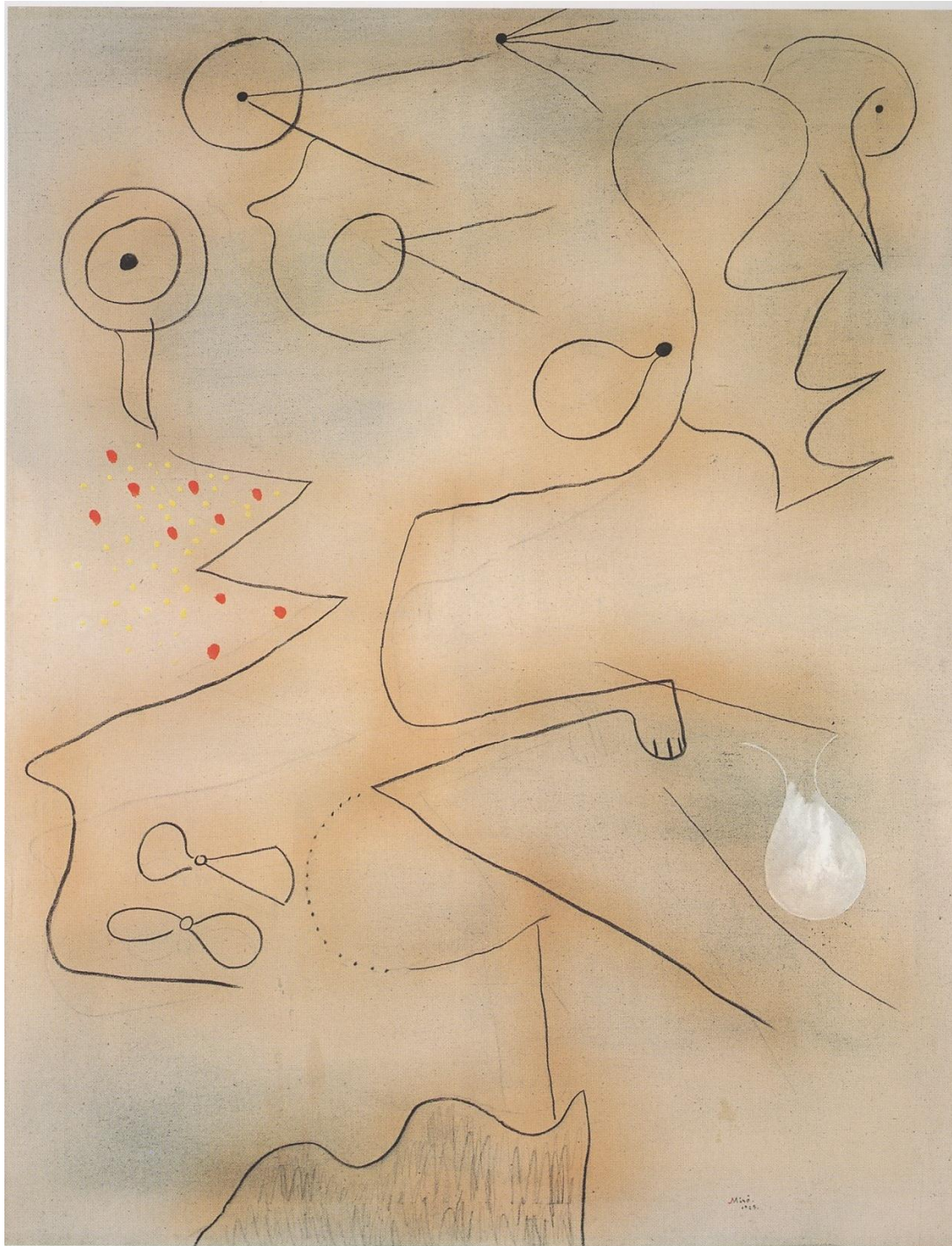


Figure 51:
Joan Miró, *Painting* (1925)

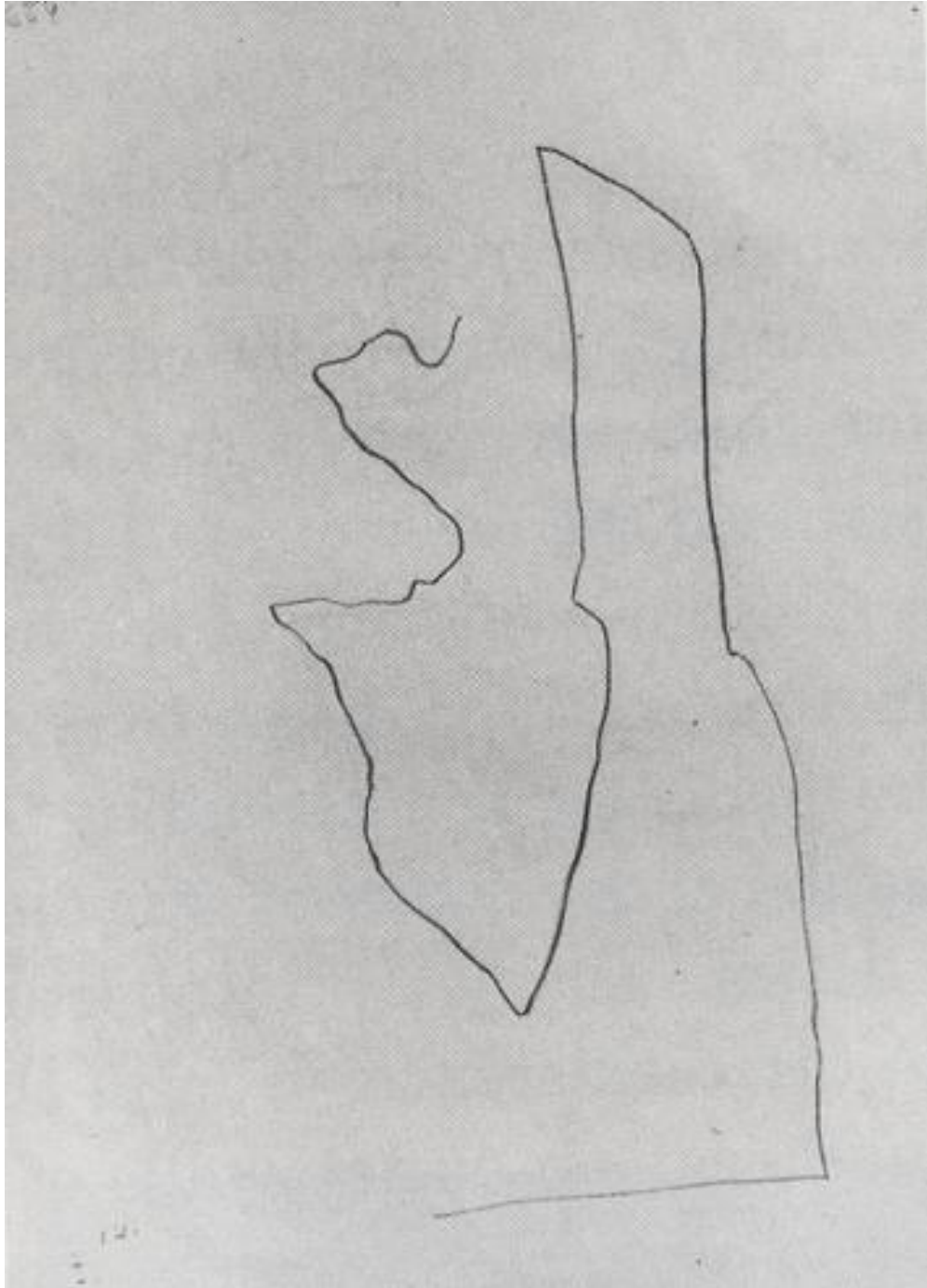


Figure 52:
Joan Miró, *Study for Circus Horse* (1926)

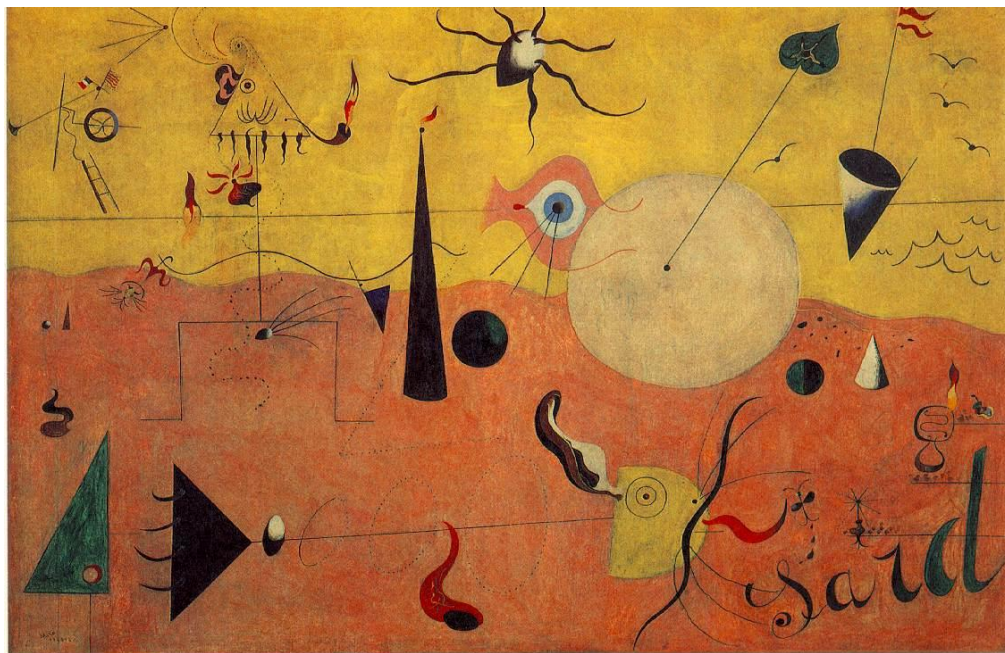


Figure 53:
Joan Miró, *The Hunter (Catalan Landscape)* (1923-24)



Figure 54:
Joan Miró, *Animated Landscape* (1935)

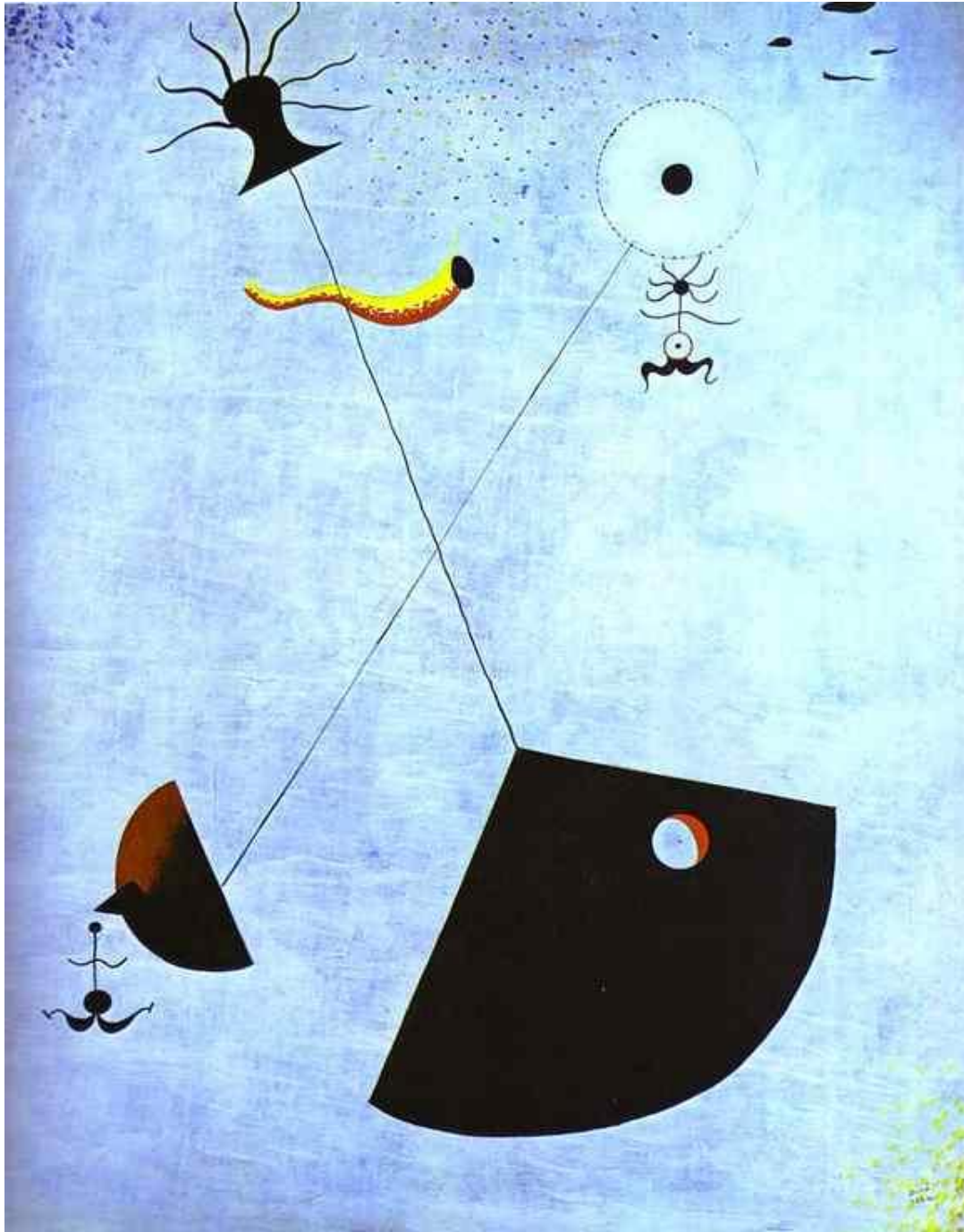


Figure 55:
Joan Miró, *Maternity* (1924)

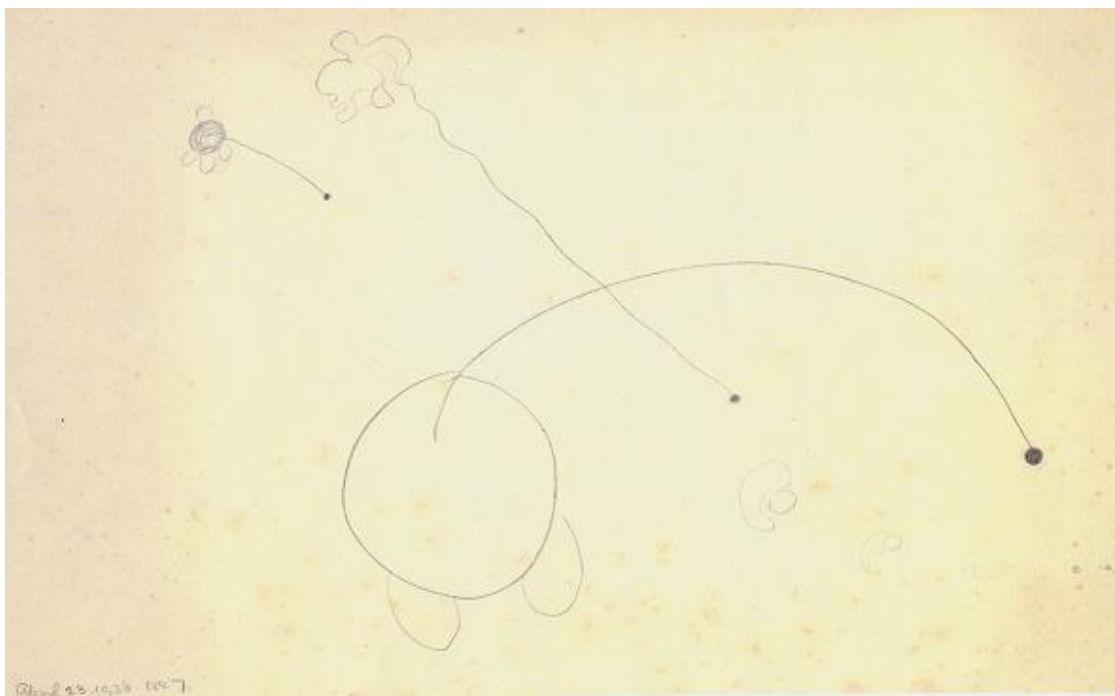


Figure 56:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 1: April 23, 1938, No. 7*

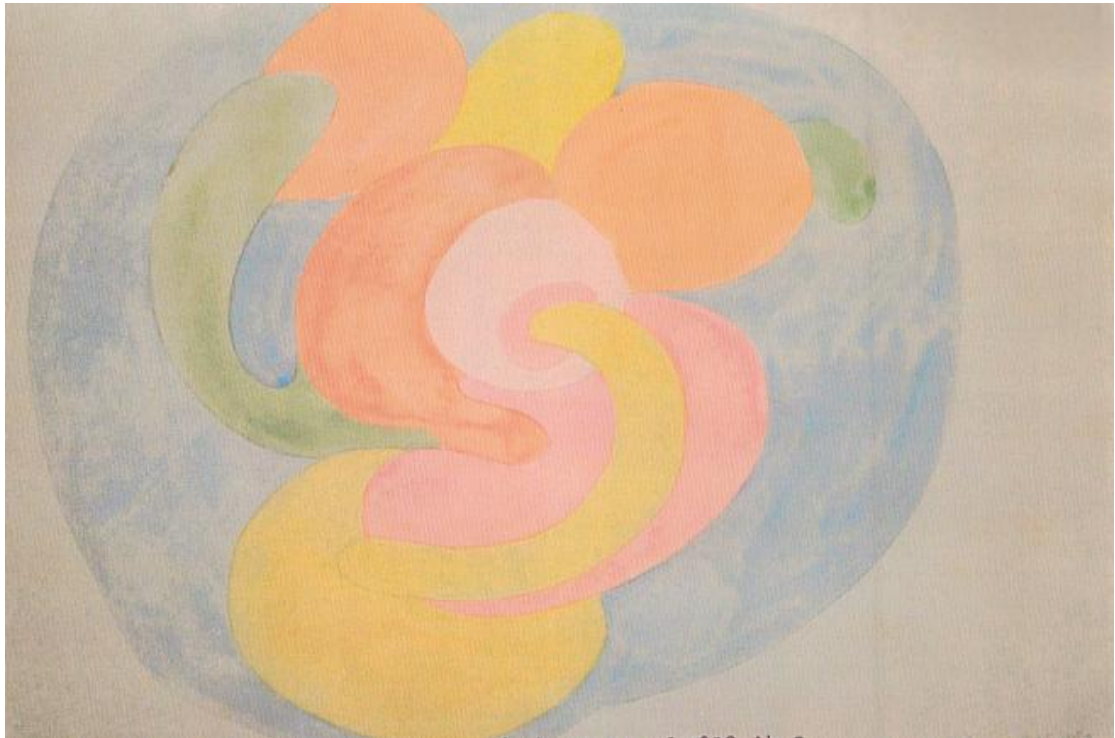


Figure 57:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 2: May 3, 1938, No. 2*

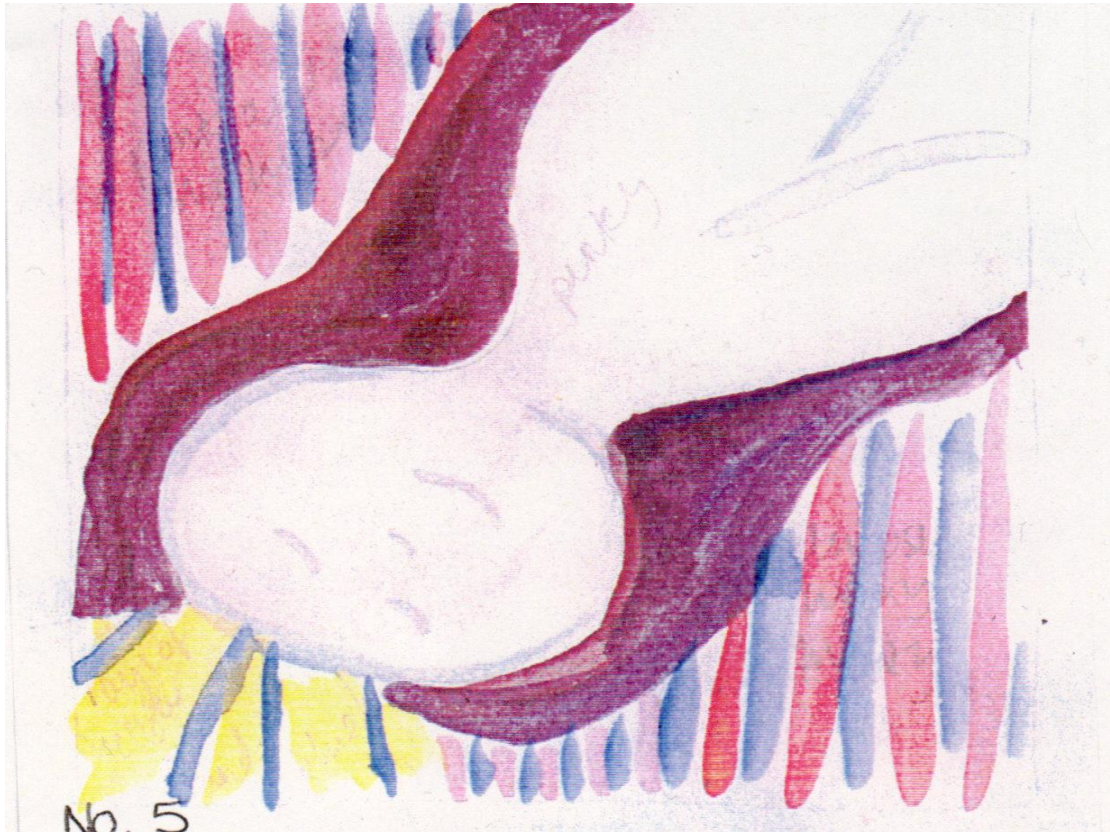


Figure 58:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 3: May 4, 1938, No. 5*



Figure 59:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 3: May 4, 1938, No. 6*

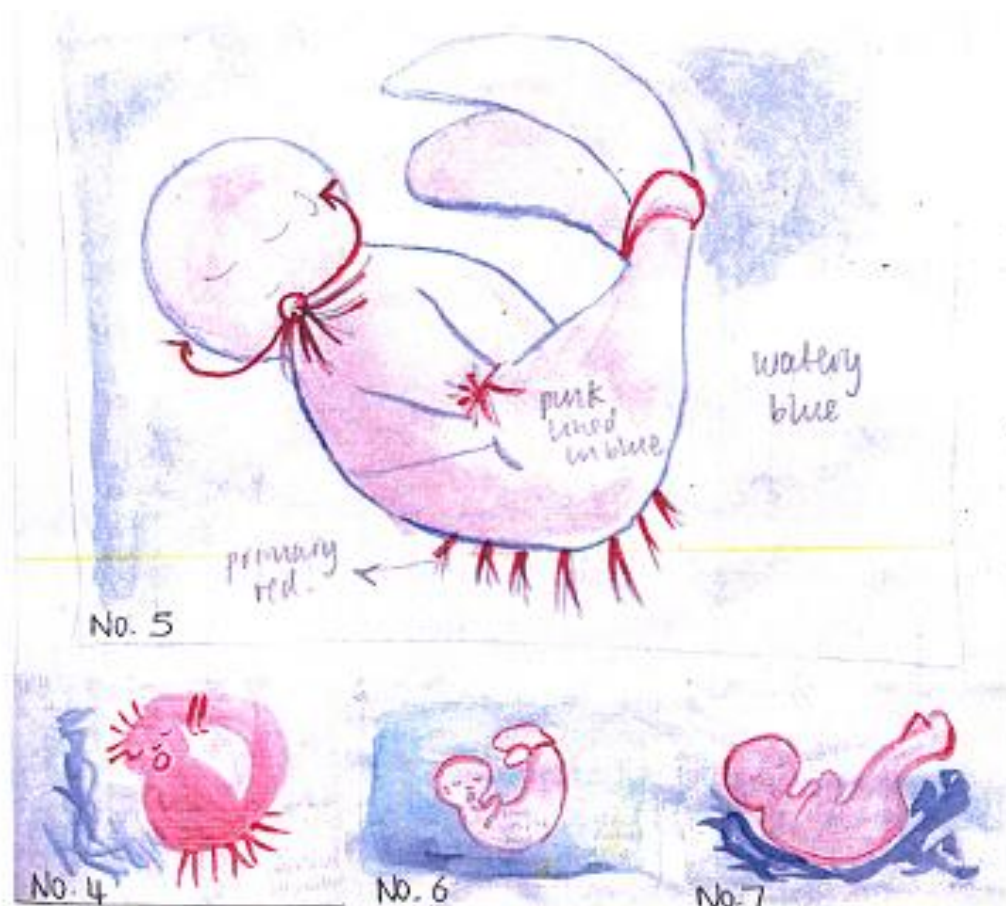


Figure 60:
 Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 5: May 6, 1938, Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7*



Figure 61:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Birth Trauma Series 1: April 23, 1938, No. 6*



Figure 62:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Blazing Infant* (1940)

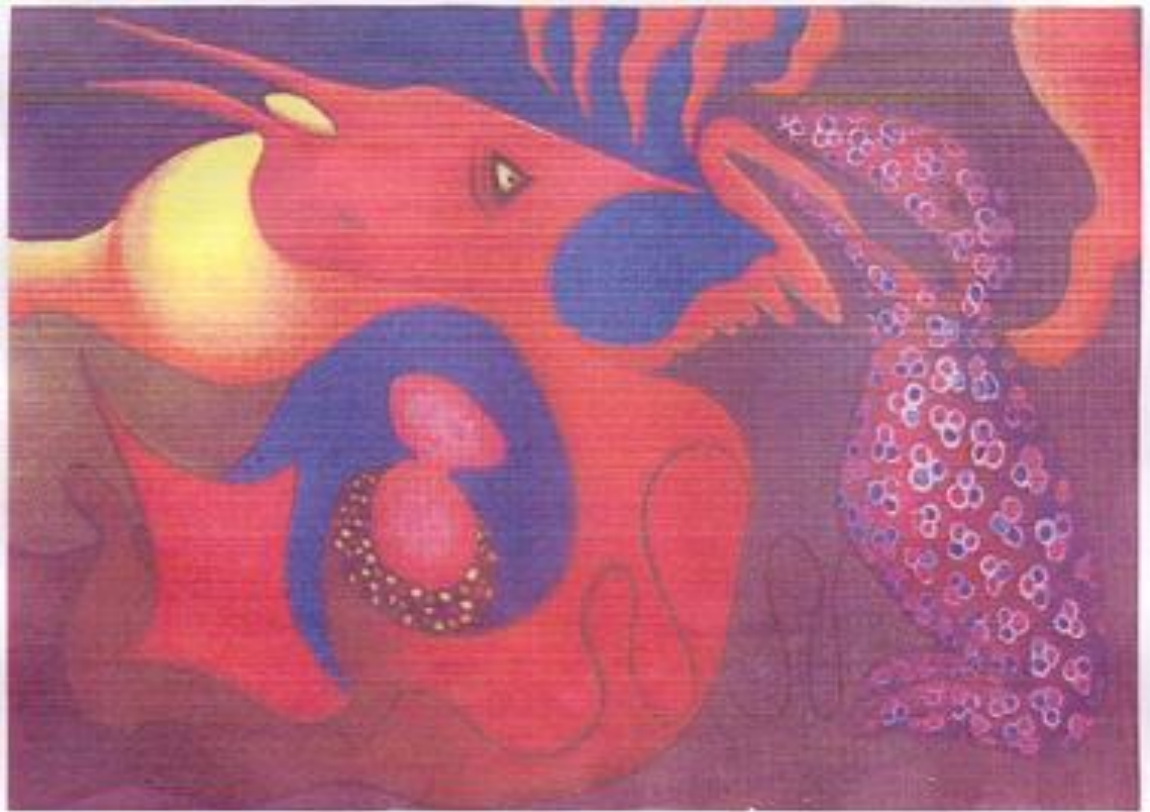


Figure 63:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Spotted Ousel* (1942)



Figure 64:
Grace Pailthorpe, *June 28, 1935-1*
(Reproduction from 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism',
London Bulletin, 12.38-01.39, 7: 10-16)

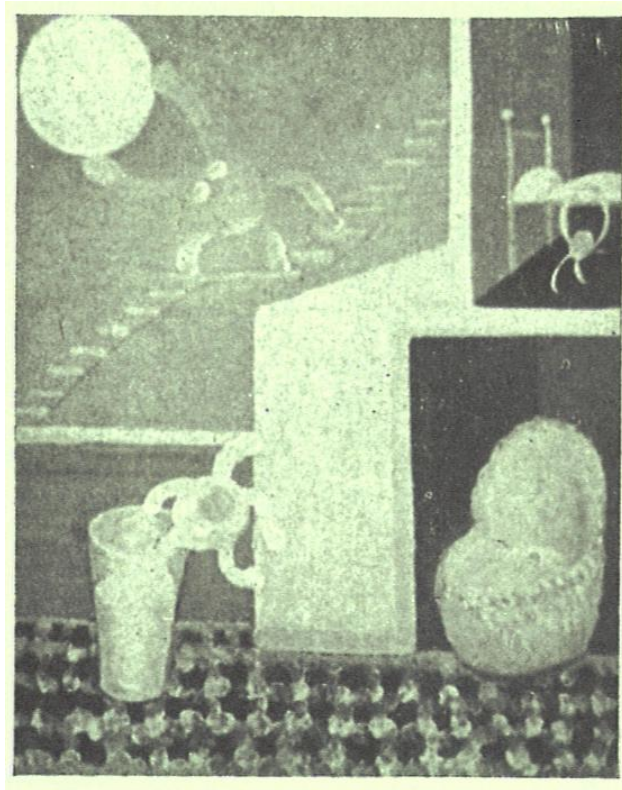


Figure 65:
Grace Pailthorpe, *April 1* (1938)
(Reproduction from 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism',
London Bulletin, 12.38-01.39, 7: 10-16)

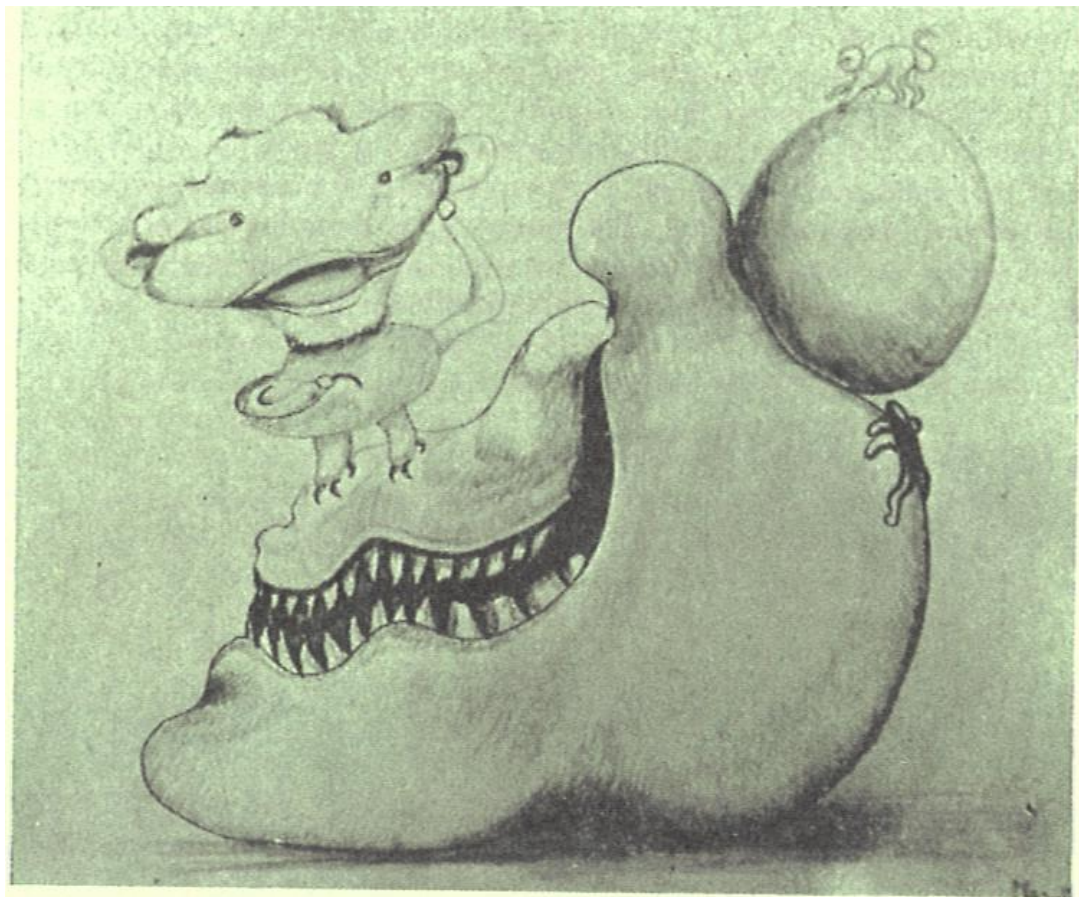


Figure 66:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Pencil Drawing* (1938)
(Reproduction from 'The Scientific Aspect of Surrealism',
London Bulletin, 12.38-01.39, 7: 10-16)



Figure 67:
Reuben Mednikoff, *The Blue Hill, September 19 (1935)*



Figure 68:
Reuben Mednikoff, *The Anatomy of Space* (1936)



Figure 69:
Reuben Mednikoff, *July 3 1936, no. 2*



Figure 70:
Grace Pailthorpe, *The five Firemen* (1938)



Figure 71:
Reuben Mednikoff, *The King of the Castle* (1938)



Figure 72:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Little Nigger Boys don't tell Lies* (1936)



Figure 73:
Grace Pailthorpe, *The veil of Autumn* (1935)



Figure 74:
Reuben Mednikoff, *The Gastronomic Optic* (1938)



Figure 75:
Grace Pailthorpe, *Avaunt* (1938)



Figure 76:
Reuben Mednikoff, *Caucasian Blancmange* (1938)



Figure 77:
Salvador Dalí, *The Great Masturbator* (1929)



Figure 78:
Reuben Mednikoff, *The Flying Pig* (1936)

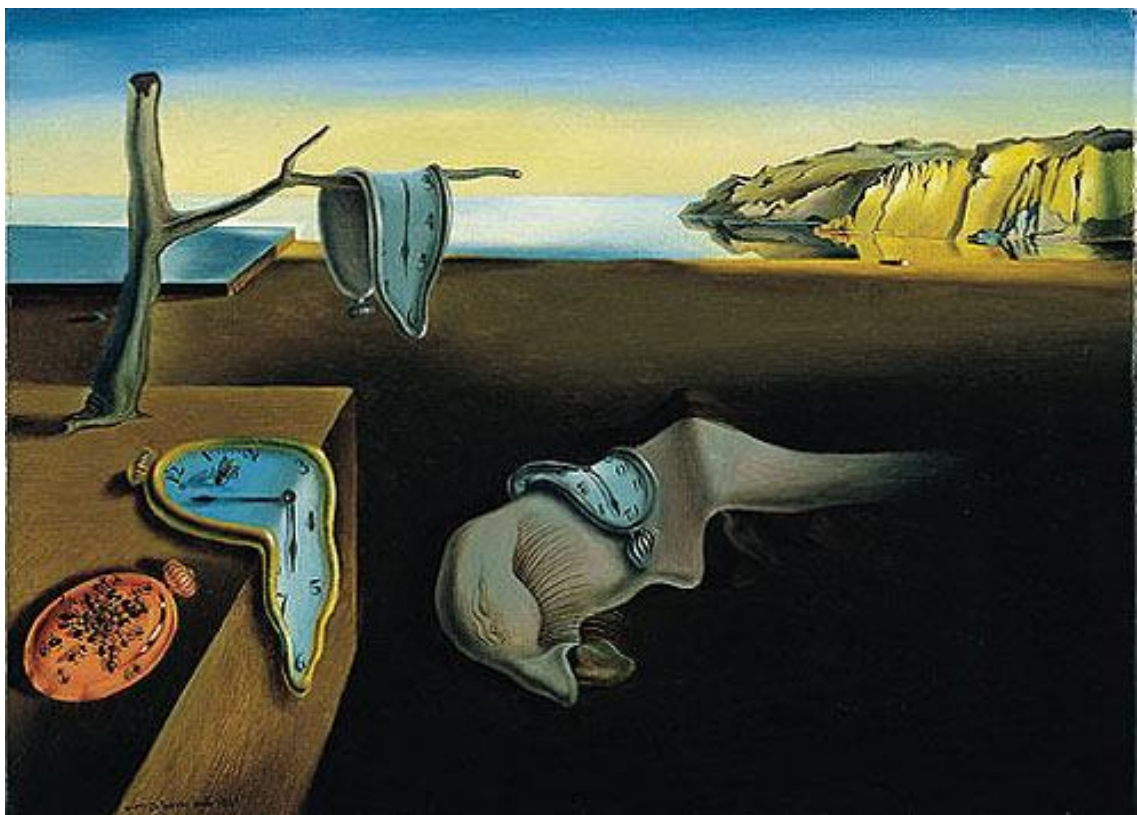


Figure 79:
Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory* (1931)



Figure 80:
Max Ernst, *Pietà or Revolution by Night* (1923)



Figure 81:
Max Ernst, illustration from *Une semaine de bonté*
(Reproduction from *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme*, 1938)



Figure 82:
Max Ernst, *Loplop introduces a young girl* (1930)



Figure 83:
Reuben Mednikoff, *September 29, 1937, 1.30pm (Orgiastic Melody)*