

ROLE OF THE SUB- CONSCIOUS IN ARTISTIC CREATION (THEORIES RELATED TO WORKS OF ART)

(Academic Script)

Introduction

Anchor: Hi all! My greetings to everyone and here I am to talk to you regarding sessions of learning in art history. So, the subject of today's session is role of the sub- conscious in artistic creation (theories relating to works of art) and the proficient is Ms. Shrishti Jha, freelancer content writer.

SOME IMPORTANT DEFINITION:

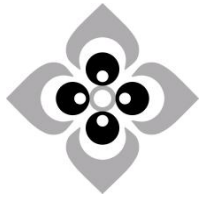
SUB- CONSCIOUS: Sub – conscious means concerning that part of the mind, which one is not fully aware but which influences one's actions and feelings.

Now, after knowing its definition, we need to know more about sub- conscious mind, the psychology, for having a deeper understanding.

SUB – CONSCIOUS:

In psychology, the subconscious is the part of consciousness that is not currently in focal awareness. The word "subconscious" represents an anglicized version of the French subconscient as coined by the psychologist Pierre Janet (1859-1947), who argued that underneath the layers of critical-thought functions of the conscious mind lay a powerful awareness that he called the subconscious mind.

FUNCTIONS OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND



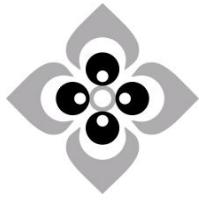
The subconscious mind performs many functions for us, most of which we're unaware of. The following is a list of many of those functions.

Caretaker--The subconscious mind takes care of our body. It helps heal us when we have an injury or contract a disease. If a bone is broken, it knits the bone back together again. If we've been cut, it reduces the flow of blood to the wound, plugs and coagulates the area to stop the bleeding, and then sends white blood cells to the area to destroy any germs that may have entered through the wound. Pretty amazing stuff.

Our subconscious also regulates our body's involuntary functions. It breathes us, circulates blood throughout our body, and is in charge of digestion and elimination.

It also protects us from traumatic memories when necessary. And brings back those memories when we're ready to be healed.

Home of Our Intuition and Imagination--Anything you can imagine can come into being. Your imagination is the seed of your genius. Every great artist, philosopher, and inventor learned to utilize their imagination through their subconscious mind. Your imagination can be used for creating wonderful things. But there's also a flip side. If we allow our imagination to be ruled by fear, negative results can occur--because our fearful imaginings can also become real. keep in mind, your subconscious mind doesn't discriminate. It does its best to create what we imagine in our minds. Your subconscious will work just as hard to create the negative imagery you present to it as well as the positive imagery you present. The good news is that our subconscious mind will follow whatever suggestions we give to it. And we can always change the ways in which we use our imagination.

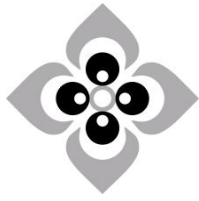


Our subconscious also provides us with those "gut feelings" or intuitions that magically pop into our minds from time to time. Thoughts that seemingly come from nowhere. Our subconscious brings those thoughts into our conscious awareness.

Our Emotional Center--Most life events and experiences come with emotional reactions or responses integrated within them. And our subconscious mind records and memorizes those emotional responses; it then encodes those responses into cellular memory. So whenever a similar life event or experience occurs, the feelings we experienced earlier in our life are expressed again through the cells of our body. And the same is true for the thoughts and beliefs we created in relationship to those events. We keep reexperiencing them whenever similar events occur. Our subconscious mind is like a bright young child who learns and memorizes things easily and recites them when needed. It learns and memorizes our reactions to life events and then recalls them for us when similar life events occur. Instantly and automatically.

And because the subconscious mind is our emotional center, it easily overrides our rational, conscious mind whenever a conflict arises. Here's how a conscious mind vs. subconscious mind conflict might play out.

Let's say there's a chore you really hate doing. Could be mowing the lawn, grocery shopping, laundry, cleaning the bathroom, doing the dishes, etc. Maybe when you were a kid, you had to do one or more of these chores every week. And you just didn't like doing them. You'd much rather have been out playing or doing something that's actually fun. Then let's say, you grow up and are on your own. You no longer have to do the chore (let's say it's doing the dishes) you've always hated doing. Maybe you do them for a while, but one day you choose to put off doing the dishes. After all, there are things you could be doing that are a lot more fun. You could go to a movie, eat out, go to a ballgame or a dance.



While the rational part of you (conscious mind) knows you should be doing the dishes, the emotional part of you (subconscious mind) that hates doing them and would rather play and have fun wins out. And you let the dishes sit.

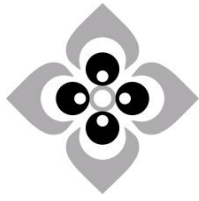
The more powerful subconscious mind has, as usual, won out. The dishes may sit till you've used them all or can no longer stand the sight of so many dirty dishes (another emotional subconscious reaction), and finally you get around to doing them. The emotional part of you will override the rational part of you almost every time. Essentially, it owns you. Runs you.

And if one day you want to change the habit you've developed of putting off doing the dishes (or other tedious chores), you're going to have to convince your subconscious mind that you no longer wish to put things off. And you'll have to figure out a way to overcome your emotional distaste for doing the dishes.

Our Higher Self--The subconscious mind is also thought of as being the gateway to higher wisdom. Most religious and spiritual traditions believe there is a higher wisdom within us, reachable through prayer. This higher wisdom has many names (Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost, Higher Self, Soul, etc.) and is often thought of as an intermediary between a human being and God.

In order to communicate with this higher aspect of yourself, you must enter into a quiet state of mind--the same quiet state of mind that is required to communicate with your subconscious mind. Learning to still your mind and body is not only is a prerequisite for hypnosis, but also for accessing the higher wisdom within.

Creating Consciously--Because we go around on automatic pilot most of the time, most of our creations are unconscious. We keep



having the same thoughts every day and keep following the same patterns of behavior. Again and again and again. If we want to make changes in our lives, then we have to create those changes consciously. In other words, we have to consciously direct our subconscious mind to help us with those changes. But first we have to understand how to facilitate change at the subconscious level. Deciding to make a change at the conscious level is pretty simple. But convincing our subconscious mind to go along with the proposed change requires some skill and knowledge. This next section will teach you different ways to create change at the subconscious level.

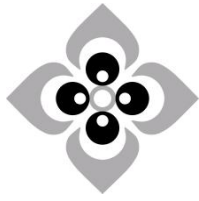
HOW DO CONSCIOUS AND SUB – CONSCIOUS MIND WORK TOGETHER:

Your conscious mind is what most people associate with who you are, because that is where most people live day to day. But it's by no means where all the action takes place.

Your conscious mind is a bit like the captain of a ship standing on the bridge giving out orders. In reality it's the crew in the engine room below deck (the subconscious and the deeper unconscious) that carry out the orders. The captain may be in charge of the ship and give the orders but it's the crew that actually guides the ship, all according to what *training* they had been given over the years to best do so.

The conscious mind communicates to the outside world and the inner self through speech, pictures, writing, physical movement, and thought.

The subconscious mind, on the other hand, is in charge of our recent memories, and is in continuous contact with the resources of the unconscious mind.



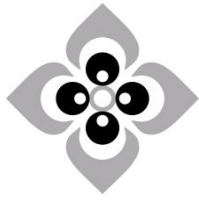
The unconscious mind is the storehouse of all memories and past experiences, both those that have been repressed through trauma and those that have simply been consciously forgotten and no longer important to us. It's from these memories and experiences that our beliefs, habits, and behaviors are formed.

The unconscious constantly communicates with the conscious mind via our subconscious, and is what provides us with the meaning to all our interactions with the world, as filtered through your beliefs and habits. It communicates through feelings, emotions, imagination, sensations, and dreams.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ARTISTIC CREATION:

Predisposition to Artistic Creation:

On the mysterious process of artistic creation Kant had this to say: "All the steps which Newton had to make from the elements of geometry to his great and profound discoveries he could represent with perfect clarity not only to himself but to anyone and could pass them on to posterity; but no Homer or Wieland can show to us how ideas full of fantasy yet replete with thought emerge and combine in his head for he does not know it himself and consequently cannot teach it to anyone. So, in the scientific field the greatest inventor differs from a wretched imitator and a pupil only in degree while he differs specifically from someone whom nature has endowed with a gift of the fine arts."¹ Modern artists may be aware of certain psychological aspects of their creative work but to this day there is much about these processes that defies understanding. The Russian poet Pushkin wrote: "Every talent is inexplicable. How does a sculptor see a hidden Jupiter's head in a piece of Carrara marble and bring it to light by breaking the shell with chisel and hammer? How does it happen that thought comes out of the poet's head equipped with four

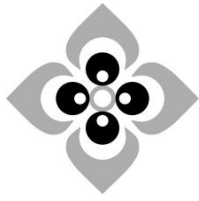


rhymes and measured in clear and uniform stanzas? – So no one except the improviser himself can grasp the quick impressions, the close connection between his own inspiration and the alien external will."

In considering the process of artistic creation aesthetics cannot afford to ignore its psychological aspects. The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, the founder of "analytical psychology", noted that psychology as a science of the processes of the psyche can be linked to aesthetics. This indicates the presence of a borderline zone between these sciences to where aesthetics is called upon to contribute as the *psychology of art*.

There is a hierarchy of value ranks describing the degree of a person's predisposition to artistic creation: capable – gifted – talented – genius. The American psychologist Guilford distinguishes six *capabilities* the artist exhibits in his work: fluent thinking, analogies and juxtapositions, expressiveness, the ability to switch from one class of objects to another, adaptation flexibility or originality, and the ability to lend desired outline to artistic form.

To be artistically *gifted* means to have a sharp perception of life, to be able to select objects for attention, to fix these impressions in memory, to extract them from memory and include them in the rich system of associations and links prompted by creative imagination. At various periods in their lives many people engage in some sort of artistic activity with varying degrees of success. But only someone with artistic capability can create artistic values of social interest. An artistically gifted person creates works that have lasting value for a given society over a considerable period in its development. *Talent* produces artistic values of intransient national and sometimes universal human relevance. A *genius* creates the highest human values relevant for all times. The measure of an artist's genius is powerful perception of the world and depth of influence on mankind.

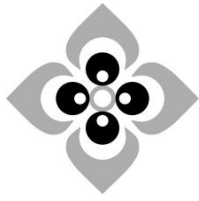


THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS OF ARTISTIC CREATION:

Artistic creation begins with a particularly sensitive attitude to surrounding phenomena and presupposes "rare impressions" and an ability to keep them in memory and to assimilate them. *Memory* is an important psychological factor in artistic creation. An artist's memory is not a mirror, it is selective and creative. Marcel Proust attached exceptional significance to memory. Believing that it is memory that confers artistic shape on reality he revived the past and then set down his memories in his works.

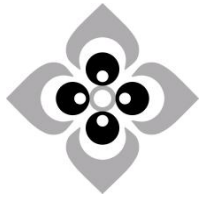
An important element in the psychological mechanism of artistic creation is *internal release* which provides an outlet for the artist's confessional urges and his wish to share profound feelings or vivid impressions with persons close to him.

The creation of a work of art involves the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious. The subconscious engenders in every creative process (and not only in artistic creation) a vast number of variants for the solution of a problem, together with images and mental associations between phenomena. The intuitive aesthetic sense, a sense of harmony and beauty makes one select the most beautiful solutions and images from this vast number. The mechanism of intuition is closely linked with aesthetics. Henry Poincare, the French mathematician, stressed that the distinguishing quality of the mathematical mind should be sought not in logic but in aesthetics. The same ideas have been expressed by a contemporary American mathematician, S. A. Papert.² The ideas that pass from the subconscious to the conscious are not always correct, since there are no logical



criteria of truth in the subconscious. Beauty is the criterion in the transfer of ideas and images from the subconscious to the conscious where the material (thoughts) received from the subconscious is subjected to rigorous testing. An idea born, selected and organized in the subconscious by the aesthetic sense, rises to the conscious. There it is checked out logically, clarified and processed by reason (which provides arguments, fills in missing links, validates and puts it in the cultural context which enriches it). From the conscious the ideas or images, checked logically and illuminated by reason, go to the superconscious where they are deepened and given a final theoretical-conceptual or artistic-conceptual shape. Logic is the criterion in selecting what is to be passed from the conscious to the superconscious. The process of selecting ideas and images in passing from intuition to the conscious and from the conscious to the superconscious is not unlike the process of natural selection. Nature produces many mutation variants of a given organism whereupon natural selection identifies the more viable variants. The best adapted specimens survive, passing on their qualities to new generations through genes. Intuition, too, produces a multitude of "mutation" variants of ideas and images. First the aesthetic sense (at the intuitive level) and then rigorous logic (at the conscious level) select ideas and images from that multitude. Only the most beautiful, harmonious, coherent, logically convincing and valid of them "survive", i.e. go on for further processing in the artist's mind.

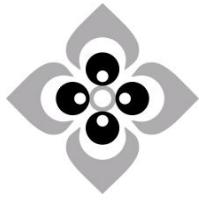
The transition from the subconscious to the conscious and to the superconscious involves a tremendous creative increment. It is not a straight or one-way process but rather a reciprocal kind of movement. The creative process proceeds from the subconscious to the conscious and then to the superconscious but the results, once they have been formed in the conscious and the superconscious, return to the subconscious. There they give rise



to new ideas and images enriched by impressions of life and new creative work of intuition. These new results of creative work are marked by still greater harmony and logical coherence. The three departments of the brain that take care of the three stages of the creative process (the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious) have then – specific languages. And the transition from one stage to the second and third, the movement back and forward again is a process of translation from one language of the brain into another. In fact translation from one language into another and back is the simplest model of the creative process. It is through such double translation that artistic thought grows. In the case of the artist this inner growth is particularly creative and effective because it involves three internal languages of the mind in back-and-forth translation. In the creative process pauses may occur which represent an incubation period during which new ideas germinate to prepare intuitive leaps of thought.

The creative process is unthinkable without *imagination* which makes it possible to rearrange the perceptions and impressions stored in the mind. Imagination produces living pictures in the artist's mind. Witness Ivan Goncharov, a Russian 19th-century writer: "...faces give you no peace, pester you, pose in scenes, I hear snatches of their conversations – and. God may forgive me, it often seemed to me that I was not imagining all this but that it was hovering about me and all I had to do was to look and think." Imagination has many varieties: phantasmagoric, as with Hoffman, philosophical and lyrical, as with Tyutchev, romantic and exalted (Vrubel), morbidly exaggerated (Salvador Dali), mystery-laden (Ingmar Bergman), starkly realistic (Federico Fellini), etc. Creative imagination gives aesthetic pleasure, and in this it differs from hallucinations.

Conscious and *subconscious*, *reason* and *intuition* are involved in the artistic process, with the subconscious processes playing a



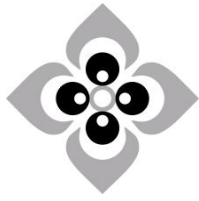
particular role.

American psychologist Frank Barron tested 56 American writers (of whom 30 were popular, original and artistically gifted and 26 merely "prolific") and came to the conclusion that in writers, emotionalism and intuition are highly developed and prevail over the rational. Of the 56 writers tested 50 were found to be "intuitive" individuals (89 per cent) which compares with just 25 per cent in the control group of persons whose professions are remote from art.³

The high role of the subconscious in artistic creation was noted already by Ancient Greek philosophers (in particular Plato) who treated that phenomenon as an extatic. God-inspired, Bacchic state. For Homer a *rhapsod* is a singer who sees light from above, and Pindar called the poet a prophet of the Muses.

The aesthetics of romanticism made an absolute of the subconscious in the creative process. Schelling wrote: "...the artist finds himself involved in the creative process involuntarily and even contrary to his inner desire... Just as a doomed man does not do what he wants or intends to do but fulfils what has been inscrutably ordained by fate in whose dominion he is, so does the artist... he is exposed to a force that draws a line between him and other people inducing him to depict and articulate things that are not fully open to his gaze possessing unfathomable depth."⁴

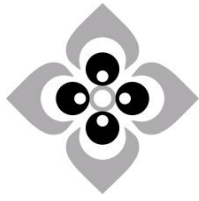
In the 20th century the subconscious in the artistic process attracted the attention of Sigmund Freud and his psychoanalytic school. The psychoanalysts turned the artist as a creative individual into an object of introspective and critical observation. Psychoanalysis assigns absolute importance to the subconscious in the creative process giving prominence to the subconscious sexual element. According to Freudians, the artist is a personality who sublimates his sexual energy in art, which is a kind of neurosis. Freud believed that through a creative act the artist



expels from his consciousness socially unrealisable needs and thus resolves the conflicts of real life.

According to Freud, unsatisfied desires stimulate fantasy. In reality, however, the subconscious, though important, is not the only cause of the creative process.

Artists themselves draw attention to intuition as an important element in their work. This is how Goethe described the process whereby verses are born: "I had no foreknowledge or anticipation of them, but they took instant possession of me and demanded immediate materialization, so that I had to write them down there and then like a lunatic." For all the significance of the subconscious and intuitive processes in artistic creation making an absolute of them is untenable in scientific terms. The creative process is an interaction of subconscious and conscious, intuition and reason, natural ability and acquired habits. Schiller wrote that "the subconscious combined with reason makes an artist-poet". Although the share of reason in the creative process is not predominant quantitatively it determines qualitatively many essential aspects of creativity. The conscious element controls its main goal, the super-task and the outlines of the artistic conception of the work, illuminates a "bright spot" in the artist's mind making it a focus for his entire life and artistic experience. The conscious element takes care of self-observation and self-control, helping the artist to analyse and assess his work critically and draw conclusions that would lead to further artistic growth. The conscious element is particularly important in the making of large-scale works. While a miniature may be entirely the result of a stroke of inspiration, a large-scale work needs profound and serious pondering. It would not be irrelevant to recall what Tolstoy wrote about his *War and Peace*: "You cannot imagine the difficulty for me of the preliminary work of deeply ploughing the field in which I am *forced* to sow. To think over and over what



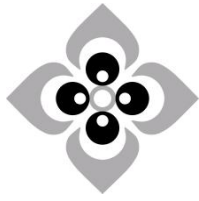
may happen to all the future people in my future work, a very large one, and to think over millions of possible combinations and select 1/1,000,000th of them is terribly difficult." Dostoyevsky, too, stressed the importance of the conscious elements describing his work on *The Karamazov Brothers*: "I am now summing up what was thought over, composed and recorded during three years... Would you believe it, although it was written during three years, some chapters I write and reject, rewrite again and again." The creative process is particularly fruitful when the artist is in a state of *inspiration*. That is a distinct psychological state of creativity when thinking is clear and intensive, associations are rich and prompt, insight into the essence of life's problems is sharp, and the life and artistic experience "erupts" powerfully and is involved in the creative process.

Inspiration generates tremendous creative energy, it is almost a synonym of creativity. It is not for nothing that Pegasus, the winged horse, has been since ancient times the poetic symbol of inspiration. The state of inspiration ensures the optimal combination of the intuitive and conscious elements in creative work.

INSPIRED POWER OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

We often hear of the legendary power of the subconscious mind. When we first become aware of this power, we immediately want to know more about it. What is it about the subconscious, also known as the subliminal mind, that makes it such a powerful creative force in our lives? How can we reprogram the subconscious mind to work for us, instead of against us as it sometimes does? How can we take hold of this power to create the inspired life changes we're after?

YOUR CREATIVE INSTINCT



Some people know they're creative; while others believe they don't have a creative bone in their body. However, looking around, and/or within if you feel so inclined, it's amazing to see how pervasive the human creative instinct really is...

Artists create drawings, paintings, sculptures, music. Craftsmen are creative in their crafts; tradesmen creative in their trades. Computer programmers create elaborate codes and algorithms. Scientists are very creative in the ways they think and experiments they carry out.

Every moment of every day we're either wittingly, or unwittingly, engaged in creating and shaping our lives. Who among us doesn't want to create a better life and future for ourselves, loved ones and perhaps even the world at large?

Using the power of the subconscious mind is instinctual to us. Our creativity finds expression in everything we say and do, whether we think about it or not; whether we're aware of it or not.

It isn't our creativity that's in question. As long as we're living, we're creating. We have no choice *but* to be creators. *What* are you going to create? *How* are you going to create what you want? Those are the real questions. The power of the subconscious mind is ours. What we do with this power and how we use it is a matter of awareness and choice.

Thus, this brings an end to the chapter; hope all the topics discussed are now clear.