Apollo come dance with me

Chaos and order; the paradigm of creation

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Fine Art

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Declaration

I certify that, except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Ray David
8/8/2012
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I dedicate this project to Mira and my children Isabel, Kisha and Ilium. This project and all that I am is due to your love.

Thank you.

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Abstract

‘Apollo come dance with me’ examines through my exegesis and three suites of paintings a discourse regarding chaos and order as a creative paradigm. To understand this discourse I have turned to Attic tragic theatre and Attic black-figure vase painting in order to see the forces of chaos-and-order reverberating as a creative paradigm.\(^1\)

The art practice engages with and explores mimesis, metaphor and metamorphosis as methods and methodology resonating with Ancient Greek Attic (tragic) theatre and Ancient Greek Attic (black-figure) vase painting. It draws from these classical art forms as a way of informing the expression of a chaos-and-order creative paradigm in my arts-led project.

My practice based research comprising three suites of paintings and an exegesis examines the relevant aspects of form, content and style that demonstrate methods and methodology used to activate a chaos-and-order creative paradigm. Such a paradigm is locatable specifically in my art practices, which are informed by chaos-and-order references from: Attic tragic theatre trilogy: the Theban plays by Sophocles; and the seventh century B.C black-figure vase painting of Ancient Greece.

The narrative engaged by referencing of the Theban plays is through figurative content, and it details a discourse regarding the psychology and philosophy of human interaction with the social and natural worlds. A second narrative regarding chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm is engaged through form by my combination of superimposition and figuration. The research draws together the links between these

\(^{1}\) Paradigm: a model, a worldview underlying the theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject. Greek paradeigma, from paradeiknunai ‘show side by side,’ from para- ‘beside’ + deiknunai ‘to show.’
two narratives or fields as a way of furthering this knowledge through art practice. In this process, the research seeks to reveal philosophical, psychological and formal aspects of these practices.

The point of engagement with Attic vase paintings and tragic theatre’s chaos-and-order duality in my art practice is through my utilisation of figuration in the form of portraits of myself and my family members to represent characters from the Attic theatre trilogy, the Theban plays by Sophocles. As Sophocles explained and explored Ancient Greek understanding of existence and the universe through three generations of the one family, I am incorporating my family members to explore these themes. The artwork investigates the depiction of the individual and society in terms of tragic theatre’s exploration of human experience. As Greek tragic theatre depicts the social, psychological and cognitive relationships of the characters with each other and the external world so my art practice examines figuration’s ability to convey aspects of that drama.

Through a practice-led methodology the artwork investigates the conditions of chaos-and-order via mimetic, metaphoric and metamorphic expressions of figurative superimposition. By these means the practice enacts multiplicity, difference and chance to precipitate an engagement with forces of chaos-and-order. Superimposition as a formal element enables an investigation of assemblage, layering, multiplicity, duality and oppositional dichotomies as philosophical systems of artistic enquiry. My employment of the rhizomatic method of consideration and construction, as described by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psycho-analyst Félix Guattari enables a visual engagement with, and deconstruction of, G.F.W. Hegel’s negating dialectic as
a philosophical system of enquiry. This project aims to achieve a shift through practice-led research into Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophical expression of affirmation through multiplicity and chance. The project researches through art practices my understanding of the physics and psychology of change, chance and metamorphoses as forces of creation.
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Introduction

An Attic sensibility

‘Apollo come dance with me’ is a research project that through art practice and an exegesis draws upon the conception and demonstration of creative forces detailed in Attic tragic theatre and Attic black-figure vase painting to investigate the use of these same forces. I have identified the hypothesis that Attic theatre as addressed by Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993) and Attic vase painting as discussed by Laporte in his journal article ‘Attic painting and pre-Socratic philosophy’ (1947) as key discourses informing my research. The commentary regarding a chaos-and-order creative paradigm detailed in these two key works is researched and drawn upon to inform the chaos-and-order paradigm within my art practice.

The research investigates Ancient Greek Attic artistic sensibility detailed in the use of mimetic, metaphoric and metamorphic expression, as methods of the tragic theatre trilogy, the Theban plays, and Ancient Greek black-figure vase painting in order to explain their expression of a duality of chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm. I investigate mimesis and metaphor as methods and methodology in my figurative art practices that resonate with narratives of Attic theatre and the painting style of Attic pottery, looking at the philosophical and psychological rationale for the use of visual representation in all three-art practices. My utilization of the devices of assemblage, multiplicity and chance through figurative superimposition in my art practice is a way
of deconstructing Attic pottery painting and Attic theatre’s use of figuration by
enacting a metamorphic precipitation of chaotic and orderly forces in my paintings.

The project’s philosophical and artistic enquiry regarding how Attic theatre and Attic
pottery work, rather than what meaning they portray, is informed by the interpretation
of the chaos-and-order paradigm described by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1993)
in relation to Ancient Greek (Attic) tragic theatre; the philosophical notion of an open
and closed ontology as the evolutionary paradigm of the universe as described by the
sociologist Cornelius Castoriadis (1987); and the forces of chaos and territorial forces
in creative practice proffered by the philosopher Gillies Deleuze and the
psychoanalyst Félix Guattari (2004). Laporte’s article, ‘Attic Vase Painting and Pre-
Socratic Philosophy’ (1947) sets out an exploration of Attic black-figure painting and
its connection to the Ancient Greek creation myth. This perspective has assisted my
understanding of visual representation in Attic black-figure pottery and its
philosophical enquiry.

My creative practice employs a chaos-and-order paradigm through the assemblage
and layering process entailed in pictorial superimposition. This references Nietzsche’s
notion of chaos-and-order as a paradigm of creation that entails multiplicity and
enacts affirmation. The process of superimposing one figurative form over another
acts as a form of metamorphosis demonstrating an evolutionary creative practice that
engages chance, and constructs the project’s philosophical and artistic enquiry.
Working through this process in my research gave me the opportunity to understand
my art practice and the art practice of Ancient Greece as visual aesthetic philosophy
that engages forces, details the deliberation and consideration (legein)\(^2\) of representation, and describes the assembling, adjusting, fabricating and constructing (teukhein)\(^3\) of expression in art practice. The project enabled me to explore specific methods and methodologies of my art practice that draw upon and resonate with Attic tragic theatre and Attic black-figure vase painting, detailing the parallel in my creative theory and process. I was able to test the hypothesis that assemblage, through superimposition, can mimic metamorphic creative forces.

**Research questions:**

The following three questions provide the basis for this research project:

1. How can chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm be manifested through figurative painting as a form of aesthetic, philosophical, human, creative expression?

2. In what way does contemporary art practice in the research project draw from mimesis and metaphor as methods and methodologies of Attic (tragic) theatre’s narrative and Attic (black-figure) painting?

3. In what ways does superimposition as a painting technique combine with philosophical ideas to create images that simultaneously invoke the forces of chaos-and-order?

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\(^2\) *Legein* is a verb that carries the sense of “to deliberate” and “to consider”. Sited in Castoriadis, C 1987, *The imaginary institution of society*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

\(^3\) *Teckhein* signifies: assembling-adjusting-fabricating-constructing. It is, therefore, making (something) be as…starting from…in a manner appropriate…Sited in ibid.
Figuration

To start addressing these questions it was important to follow the use of figuration in Attic Greek Vase painting as a formalist basis into which a psychological drama, as from the Theban plays, could be interwoven. Thus, to address this methodology the use of figuration in the form of portraits of my family members and myself becomes a significant strategy. This device is a way of researching figuration as a means of expression through the explicit referencing of my family members to represent characters from the Attic theatre trilogy, the Theban plays by Sophocles. This trilogy describes the impact of chaos-and-order on the lives of three generations of the one family. In that family Oedipus is the key bridge between the past present and future generations. His actions fulfil the exploration of chaos-and-order within the plays. Sophocles’ intention is to show that chance and fate are a duality in human existence with humanity’s desire to control existence being the order aspect and chance occurrence being the chaos aspect. Chance and chaos, order and cosmos are the bases of Greek creation mythology. Cosmos is born of chaos, the void with order being continually established and re-established as chaos continually plays its part.

The research has drawn from these relational complexities through visual reference to my family as a metaphoric device to carry a philosophical exploration of this discourse. A notion of the continuity of the paradigm of chance and design that Oedipus and his family were subjected to is alluded to by the incorporation of my own family members to explore the human susceptibility to this same paradigm. Thus in my contemporary art practice as research, I incorporate the aspect of family and utilize figuration in the form of portraiture to describe the depiction of the individual
and society in terms of tragic theatre’s exploration of human experience, which refers to the social, psychological and cognitive relationships of the characters with each other, and with an external world premised on a chaos-and-order paradigm.

Overview of chapters

Chapter one sets out the notion of style in my art practice, then examines the philosopher, Aristotle’s (Gebauer & Wulf 1995) definition of mimesis as the imitation, interpretation and expression of an object or subject from the natural world, and takes up the examination of figuration in my own practice with reference to Ancient Greek Attic theatre and Attic black-figure vase painting. I draw from Aristotle’s definition of mimesis to define my figurative images as a mimetic imitation, interpretation and expression of humanity in the natural world. Mimesis is defined as a stylistic device that, in my work, investigates the imitation of the external world through figuration, the interpretation of the natural world in Ancient Greek vase painting, and the expression of forces found in the natural world examined in Attic tragic theatre. The following writers inform my work. The art theorist, Sir Ernest Gombrich’s (1972) discourse regarding the Ancient Greek depiction of natural forms provides a theoretical framework for mimetic art; art theorist Susan Sontag (1966) explores the notion of style in art practice; art theorist Paul M Laporte (1947) provides an explanation of the theory behind Attic black-figure vase painting as a philosophical discourse regarding existence; archaeologists Sir John Boardman...
(1986) and art historian John Gage (1993) detail the exploration of colour and meaning in Attic black-figure vase painting; and Nietzsche provides the hypothesis that Attic tragic theatre expresses a chaos-and-order paradigm for human creativity and existence. The chapter is completed with a discourse regarding the incorporation of existing images and its connection to the concept of appropriation. The first suites of paintings utilize colour and figurative depiction of the human face and body to express a mood of tragic drama.

Chapter two defines metaphor in my artwork, in terms of allegory, signs, symbols and technique. Through the exploration of content and subject in my paintings this chapter will define the role of metaphor in this suite of paintings as my reflection, representation and construction of the cognitive world. In so doing I map out the visual psychology involved in the use of reflection, representation and construction in my depiction of metaphors. The chapter explores the cognition that facilitates both the artist’s mental process in art practice and the viewer’s mental process in art consumption. I draw from art theorist, Rudolf Arnheim’s (1974; 1997) description of the psychology of visual thinking to define my visual metaphors as expressive of my reflection, representation and construction of experience, and the work of Suzanne Langer, who describes the metaphor in art as cited in Feinstein (1985). Linguist, Eva Feder Kittay (1984) and art theorist, John M Kennedy (2008) inform my work through their defining of the deviation and/or
distortion of literal representation as the process that produces non-literal/metaphoric interpretation and expression. The second suites of paintings investigate the cognitive metaphorical use of subject matter to convey the narrative of the Theban plays.

Chapter three examines transformation in my work through the use of assemblage, deformation and layering. By exploring figurative superimposition as the form and style of my paintings that utilizes the creative paradigm of chaos-and-order, I am foregrounding the creative forces that manifest in metamorphosis, multiplicity and difference. Detailed in the chapter is my use of pictorial superimposition to deconstruct and disrupt Attic black-figure’s dialectic system of enquiry and to activate a rhizomatic system of enquiry. This chapter describes the philosophical and artistic engagement with, and expression of, creative forces enacted by superimposition. In this process there is a transformation of the physical and psychological representation of an image. The philosophical approaches of Friedrich Nietzsche, (1993) and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (2004) inform my understanding of how multiplicity, difference and chance, which are manifest through assemblage, generate a philosophical enquiry. The philosopher, Mohammed Zayani (1999) provides a description of the difference between the rhizome and dialectic systems; Castoriadis (1987) and the art theorist, Susan Sontag (1966) are referenced to examine the role of form and style in art; and Arnheim (1974; 1997) details aspects of visual thinking. The third suite of paintings emphasises the role of form and process to engage a
cognitive and neurological aspect of image making and reading that is inherently part of the process engaged by both the artist’s and the viewer’s mind.

Chapter four describes the use of superimposition as a trope to examine representation in figurative art practice. The theme of figurative superimposition is explored in the paintings of Francis Picabia’s *Transparency Series* (1928 –1931), John Young’s *Double Ground* (1992-2006), and David Salle’s (1970-) painting oeuvre (1970-) in order to contextualise my project’s use of figurative superimposition. I explore how chance, cultural difference and ambiguity are manifest in the figurative superimposition produced by these three artists.

My utilisation of mimesis and metaphor by figurative superimposition provides the metamorphosis of figuration and continues a form of visual expression first used by pre-historic man as seen in the pre-historic cave paintings found in Europe. In the process I engage with and examine figurative art practice and the forces used in this specific art practice detailing what Nietzsche described as ‘the supreme task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life’ (Nietzsche 1993, p.13) and a fundamental discourse of our time – creative practice as a research tool for human evolution.
Chapter one: Mimesis

1: Introduction

This first chapter begins with a discourse regarding style as defined for my art research. It then outlines the role of mimesis as a stylistic component in my art practice, and provides descriptions of three paintings that have been produced for the project to elucidate a visual connection between the definition of mimetic expression and its incorporation in my art practice. I define mimesis as the imitation, interpretation and expression of the natural world and simultaneously explore my use of figuration to depict tragic emotion.

Mimesis in my art practice is explained firstly as the transfer of an entity from the physical world into a symbolically produced world. Next, I map the interpretive aspect of mimetic expression in my depiction of Oedipus, the main character from the tragic theatre trilogy, the Theban plays by Sophocles. I conclude this chapter by describing how chance is a creative force central to Attic theatre’s mimetic expression of a chaos-and-order paradigm. The first suite of paintings engages colour and figurative depiction of the human face and body to express and draw explicitly from the emotional aspects of ancient Greek tragic drama. These paintings invoke the deeper reaches of human tragedy through their discourses of familiar relationships, with the notion of reflecting the ‘inner life’ of the human being as an aspect of Attic Tragic theatre and Attic vase paintings.
1.1: Style

This research considers stylistic aspects of Attic pottery and Attic theatre as they inform my art practice. To set up the concept of ‘style’ as it is approached in my art practice there is a requirement for a preamble to define and expand upon its use. Style being a ‘manner of doing something’, ‘a way of painting, writing, composing, building…’ (Oxford 2009) gives a particular work of art the defining ‘characteristic of a particular period, place, person, or movement (Oxford 2009). The legein (deliberation-consideration) and teckhein (assemblage-adjusting-fabrication) of my artwork defines its style. Due to my incorporation of aspects of form and content, colour and process used by Attic pottery vase painting there is a reference to ‘a particular period, place, person and movement’ (Oxford 2009). With my incorporation of stylistic aspects of Attic pottery painting there is an element of research through utilization of, and thereby an exploration of, what these stylistic components do and say within the art object. The rationale for certain expression of colour and form draws upon an aesthetic and conceptual philosophy of the time and world view of the artist and society they encapsulate. As Sontag states, ‘in almost every case, our manner of appearance is our manner of being. The mask is the face’ (1966 p. 18). Through intersecting stylistic elements of Attic pottery and Attic theatre in my art practice there is in evidence a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of specific elements.

Form and content coexist in figurative art practice acting upon each other to provide a holistic framework for the discourse of the art practice. Figurative images as used in my art practice are both stylistic in form and symbolic in content. They relate to both
the narrative threads of my research. My referencing of the Theban plays through figurative content details a discourse regarding the psychology and philosophy of human interaction with the social and natural worlds. The other narrative explores chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm engaged through form by my combination of superimposition and figuration. My incorporation of historical style of figurative expression is not a mere stylistic appropriation, but rather it is undertaken as a methodological way of researching a deeper engagement with a human philosophy and psychology of visual representation. As Susan Sontag states, ‘There are no style-less works of art, only works of art belonging to different, more or less complex stylistic traditions and conventions’ (1966, p.18). It is nevertheless through the detailing of stylistic aspects of various historic forms of figurative expression that the key to my research becomes apparent in terms of chaos-and-order as forces that are manifest by figurative superimposition.

The artwork produced for my project ‘Apollo come dance with me’ has varying degrees of figurative superimposition that encapsulate the dominant stylistic or formalist features of the practice. Sontag explains, ‘what is inevitable in a work of art is style’ (1966, p.33). The incorporation of stylistic devices from Attic vase painting and Attic theatre serves to explore discourses around style and what can be achieved through their incorporation in my work. There is, incorporated within any style a philosophical enquiry and if Arnheim’s theory holds true, ‘[i]n the arts the image is the statement. It contains and displays the forces about which it reports’(1997, p.301). Sontag also reiterates, ‘what each and every aesthetic object imposes upon us, in appropriate rhythms, is a unique and singular formula for the flow of our energy…’
(1966, p.28). How the content combines with the form (style) is a significant aspect of research through art practice. Each artwork in this project explores or investigates the potential of composite aspects of style and content in conjunction with the philosophy considered through the production process.

As such the three chapters, mimesis, metaphor, and metamorphosis expand on my research of figurative superimposition as a stylistic device for the expression of a creative paradigm of chaos-and-order. While acknowledging that superimposition, as a formalist stylistic device is not used in Attic Vase painting or Attic tragic theatre, it is crucial in my art practice to suggest the changes or reversal of circumstance, and to carry a condition of indeterminacy. It is the chaos-and-order aspects of my practice that resonate with certain chaos-and-order aspects of Attic vase painting as well as certain stylistic devices of chaos-and-order used in Attic tragic theatre. Sophocles employed *peripeteia* (Greek; ‘peripety in English’) to refer to the aforementioned reversal of circumstances or turning point. The reversal of fortune that tragic theatre exposes does not necessarily have to be negative as Nietzsche so aptly showed particularly through his character Zarathustra (Nietzsche, MobileReference & Ebooks Corporation 2008). My superimposed figurative works explore and investigate these potentials.
1.2: Imitation-Nature

[Image 1] Isabel with Puppies, 2005

Following the discussion above the portrait titled Isabel with Puppies [image 1] demonstrates a correspondence between the definition of mimesis and its visual manifestation in art practice. Here is a mimetic painting process that resonates with the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle’s description of ‘a mimetic process of transformation of elements of a prior into a symbolically produced world’ (Gebauer & Wulf 1995, p.315). This transformation, as suggested in the stylistic devices used by French post-impressionist artist, Paul Gauguin in his painting, Still Life with Puppies (1888), has been translated into a backdrop for Isabel with Puppies [image1] and my own reproduction of Isabel’s visual form. This quotation from Gauguin into my work
is a deliberate incorporation of the puppies as a reference to childhood, innocence and the natural world. The question of appropriation is raised here as the figurative elements are explicitly derived from the Gauguin painting. The role of appropriation and its lineage in Western art will be further discussed with respect to my own work in section 1.5. Also my use of a limited colour palette and a linear drawing style will be discussed in section 1.3 and again in chapter 3, in relation to colour and form in Ancient Greek pottery painting style.

Mimesis is defined as a style of figurative depiction that is an imitation of the real world in art. It entails the depiction of an object/subject that exists in, and is accessed from, the physical world; it is essentially the stylistic depiction of an external model. The proposition that ‘mnemonic function’ of stylistic devices define an artist’s art practice is crucial here. However it should be noted that in the case of *Isabel with Puppies* [image 1] there is a further form of mediation to achieve the mimetic function – that of photography. Sontag states that ‘every style depends on, and can be analysed in terms of, some principle of repetition or redundancy’ (1966, p.24). For example, the portrait *Isabel with Puppies* [image 1] is derived from a photograph of my daughter that has been replicated and superimposed onto a painted copy of Gauguin’s *Still Life with Puppies* (1888) [image 2]. Thus superimposition acts as a methodological device to widen and deepen the visual references of repetition, redundancy and mimesis, suggesting an indeterminate world of existence inhabited by the child. The content of both the photograph and the painting [image 2] are stylistic visual representations of the real world, and each contributes to a mimetic construction that makes up the form of *Isabel with Puppies* [image 1]. The photograph and painting are models that I have copied using a grid system to transfer
the proportions accurately into my pictorial composition. The photographic image
allows me to use the grid as a technique to assist me in achieving a greater likeness of
the human form and enables me, as an artist, to engage more accurately with the
physical aspect of form derived from the natural world.4

The technique as described above is incorporating the mediated process of
photography, with its historical precedence in a history of photography of reproducing
images for wider consumption. As a painter my practice is drawing from photography
as a source for image construction, while also acknowledging that the mimetic
depiction of the human figure has a long and rich history of practice in western art.
Working from the human model was what the art theorist, Sir Ernest Gombrich saw
as the great revolution of Ancient Greek art: ‘the discovery of the natural forms’
(1972, p.52). The Ancient Greek artists’ ‘knowledge of the human form’ (1972, p.57)
provided an insight into how to ‘represent the human body in any position or
movement’ and this knowledge ‘could be used to reflect the inner life of the figures
represented’ (Gombrich 1972, p.61). This notion of reflecting inner life was
attributed to Socrates (470-399 BC) who was said to have implored artists to
‘represent the “working of the soul”’ by accurately observing the way ‘feelings affect
the body in action’ (Gombrich 1972, p.61). Accurate depiction of the body was
considered by Socrates, and discussed by Gombrich, to have the ‘capacity to make us
see the ‘workings of the soul’ in the poise of the body that turns a simple tombstone
like [Fig. 57] into a great work of art’ (1972, p.62). What Gombrich is implying is
that the process of using nature as a model for artistic representation first provides an
anatomically accurate image of the figurative form, and secondly that this process

4 The photographic image is a tool I use to produce more proportionally accurate image by the use of
grids to scale up the image then I am capable of by freehand and, or in front of the sitter/subject. Any
discourse regarding the photographic gaze is deferred in context of my art practice.
generates information about the inner workings of that figurative form. The ancient Greek artists’ ability to produce accurate proportions of the human body, its attitude and nuance was what Gombrich saw as a great achievement for ancient Greek art. My use of photographs and grids to achieve accurate proportions, attitudes and nuance of the figure acknowledges this rich tradition and works through the mediation of photography as a technological device to achieve mimesis in the visual field of a painting.

This process of imitating the natural world in the plastic arts was defined as mimesis by the Ancient Greek philosopher, Plato (428–347 BC). The two anthropologists, Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf explain that Plato’s concept of mimesis had ‘numerous heterogeneous meanings’ that include ‘imitation, representation, expression, emulation, transformation, and illusion’ (1995, p.25). This broad definition of mimesis was refined in terms of art practice by the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle who describes ‘a mimetic process of transformation of elements of a prior into a symbolically produced world’ (Gebauer & Wulf 1995, p.315) which:

[e]mbraces not solely the re-creation of existing objects, but also changes that were introduced in the process of re-creation – embellishment, improvement, and the generalization of individual qualities (Gebauer & Wulf 1995, p.26).

Aristotle’s description denotes a gathering and interpreting of information regarding the external world through mimesis, for the purposes of expression of knowledge of that world. My portrait demonstrates the transfer of understanding regarding the
physics and phenomena of human form into a symbolic representation of experience as human physiology and psychology.

By transferring, through imitating the representative image, in this instance mediated through photographic reproductions of Gauguin’s painting as well as photographs of the figure of the child, Isabel, the specific and detailed nuances of human form and action, certain physiological and psychological aspects of the human being are inferred. My portrait of Isabel [image 1] presents the expression of her body and its movement that displays action such as holding and looking. For example, the expression on Isabel’s face is serious; she is looking intently at the viewer contemplating the situation. Her eyes describe the act of looking and imply the concept of focus. Her hands are occupied with a box of pins, showing how the fingers
are in various positions when they are holding something, displaying the act of holding and illuminating the concept of holding. This conceptual information comes from the accurate understanding and depiction of the model; in this case veer the scaling up of a photographic image. Gauguin’s *Still Life with Puppies* (1888) [image 2] used as a ground for Isabel’s portrait, details a series of grouped objects: three puppies, three glasses, and three pieces of fruit that represent the concepts of multiplicity, repetition and patterning in the natural world. The reason for my inclusion of Gauguin’s use and depiction of repetition and alternation will be discussed later. For now, Aristotle’s notion of embellishment that emerges in Gauguin’s figurative painting style is elucidated.

My understanding of Gauguin’s painting [image 2] used in the portrait of Isabel was developed by copying a reproduction of this painting, initially to assist me to research painting in oils but later for the purposes of examining his compositional structure and technique, essentially his style. This process led to my quotation (or appropriation) of certain aspects of Gauguin’s painting methods and methodology such as mimesis (imitation), mnemonics (repetition), complimentary colour (red-green, violet-yellow and blue-orange) and a compositional S-shape produced by the placement of the object. The latter is a technique for leading the viewer’s eye through the picture and providing a visual sequential narrative.

Gauguin employed [image 2] the linear outline style of drawing, called Cloisonnism, derived from a mediaeval enamelling technique of contouring all colour surfaces with thick lines of colour (Ingo 1993, p.17). His use of complementary colours is arguably an influence from the French chemist, Michel E. Chevreul’s new scientific
discoveries of human colour perception, which led to the use of complementary colours by modernist artists in the second half of the 19th century. Chevreul’s research of colour harmonies ‘led the impressionists to juxtapose colours on the canvas, and encouraged them to use complementary colours in shadows and to use colours to intensify and neutralize one another’ (Bragg 1987, p.341). The decorative subject matter of Gauguin’s painting [image 2] is influenced by Japanese woodcuts, popular with the Paris artists particularly following the significant exhibition of Japanese woodcut prints in the *Paris Exposition Universelle* of 1878. Their bold colours and dynamic compositions demonstrate how ‘the visual motif becomes components in a decorative whole’ (Ingo 1993, p.19). Gauguin’s painting is located in the genre of a constructed still life with emphasis on repetitive patterning and complementary colours used to produce a decorative motif in the early post-impressionist style.

As complimentary colours and Cloisonnnism define Gauguin’s work with specific visual expression, my use of figurative superimposition assigns all my paintings with a recognisable technique that demonstrates the transformation of the perception and representation of figurative images. My style ‘insist[s] on’ the role of mimesis in art, which I have represented by ‘stylistic decisions’ (Sontag 1966, p.35) that focus the attention on my depiction of the natural world and its deconstruction by superimposition. My use of superimposed figurative images in my paintings investigates a chaos-and-order creative paradigm inherent in cosmic phenomena and informing my artistic intentions, and this is achieved by my style’s enacting of the forces of chance and design through figurative superimposition. This aspect of the philosophy behind my style will be discussed at length in chapter three.

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5 The understanding and acknowledgement of chaos and order or chance and design as perceived aspects of certain art methods and methodologies provides the development of contemporary painting practice.
In my painting *Isabel with Puppies* [image 1], exploration of Ancient Greek pottery paintings initiated the stylistic move from the use of complementary colours of post-impressionism to the introduction of a limited colour palette seen in certain Ancient Greek pottery. This initial transitional painting, *Isabel with Puppies* [image 1], shows that the methods and methodology of my art practice and its affiliation with the colour and style of post-impressionism was altered by my exploration of ways in which I could depict the characters from the Theban plays. The concept of using a family member (Isabel) to represent a character from the Theban plays (Antigone) is also introduced in this first portrait.

This painting begins my referencing of Ancient Greek pottery’s limited palette of black, white, brown and yellow colours\(^6\) and its linear drawing style. However, the level of transparency in this painting, the specific colours and the multitude of colour in the Gauguin still life [image 2] made the overall colour scheme ambiguous and less dominant than the flat opaque colours on Ancient Greek pottery. In addition, neither the content of Gauguin’s still life [image 2], nor my portrait of Isabel allude directly to the character of Antigone, tragic theatre or Ancient Greece. Consequently, the reduction in the number of colours used, the accentuation of form and the inclusion of images with a more direct graphic representation of the Theban plays were deemed necessary.

I have explained my use of mimesis as a process for transferring the human form into a symbolic world in order to provide an expression of human physics and psychology.

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\(^6\) This notion of a limited palette for ancient Greek pottery painting was an early aspect of my visual research from the viewing of pottery images; why these colours were deemed to be applicable was qualified at a latter stage due to the research of Attic vase painting and the brown and yellow colour combination was replaced by the Attic black-figure painting style in the conclusion suite of paintings. This process is referenced in chapter two and three.
I have set out the significance of style by exploring figurative painting in this project, and with reference to that of Gauguin as a post-impressionist artist. The steps taken to include Ancient Greek pottery painting style and colour have also been discussed. In conclusion, the research embedded in *Isabel with Puppies* (2005) using colour and line to achieve superimposition anticipated a possible direction for the project’s ongoing research. The unexpected appearance of a mask produced by the contour lines around Isabel’s eyes [image 1] pre-empts the exploration of how identity is interpreted. This will be examined in a following discussion.

1.3: Interpretation-Attic pottery

![Masked Oedipus, 2005](image3)

In this section I will explain how mimesis as a philosophy and a style is used to produce my portrait of Oedipus, the central character from the Ancient Greek Attic theatre trilogy – the Theban plays. I will relate the use of the mask in my portrait
[image 3] as an engagement with the specific narrative regarding identity in the myth of Oedipus and will conclude by defining the Attic black-figure painting style as a means of engaging with Ancient Greek mythology regarding the natural world.

The transfer of the external model (prior) into a symbolically produced world entails the act of interpretation. By reproducing the Oedipus portrait [image 4], depicted on the cover of the Penguin books *The Theban Plays* by Sophocles (Watling 1947), I reference and reinterpret this character and the style of depiction in my own work. The Penguin portrait’s [image 4] reference to Ancient Greek Attic black-figure pottery painting style provides an association to the symbolic mimetic representation, as prescribed by Aristotle, of the subject’s time, place and identity. Gebauer and Wulf detail Aristotle’s understanding of mimesis in this way:

> [I]n mimetic referencing, an interpretation is made from the perspective of a symbolically produced world of a prior (but not necessarily existing) world, which itself has already been subjected to interpretation. Mimesis construes anew already construed worlds (1995, p.317).

My replication of the Oedipus portrait [image 4] is not a copy. As Castoriadis states, ‘the ‘same’ thing is never exactly the same, even when it has suffered no ‘alternation’ [change], for the very reason that it is in another time’ (1987, p.191). The concepts of time and space are the subjects of Castoriadis’ discourse, my inclusion of this quote is to describe the specific action of moving the original portrait to a new time entails a re-interpretation of the portrait symbolic iconographic style. This direct quotation of an existing image is in order to introduce content and concepts that the original image contains and expresses through form and subject in order to provide a discourse regarding that form and subject.
David Blinder reiterates Aristotle’s understanding that mimesis is not about the imitation of the entity, when he states that ‘[t]he dependence of images on model (real or imagined) is missed entirely if we construe mimetic resemblance as a formal, symmetric relation’ (1986, p.20). In my use of an existing image I am incorporating the ability of that specific image to convey content and style to construct my paintings narrative. This form and style is in keeping with the philosopher Angus Armstrong explanation that Aristotle’s understanding is that poetry ‘aims at universality’ (1941, p.120) by depicting ‘the kind of thing a certain kind of man is likely or bound to do or say’ (1941, p.123). Tragic theatre is considered an ‘allegory where the dramatis personae are types’ (Armstrong 1941, p.123). Tragic theatre plays provide a style that portrays human existence on an individual and social level in terms of the Ancient Greek mythological and philosophical worldview as perceived by Sophocles.

Oedipus is the central character in the Greek tragic theatre trilogy written by Sophocles. In his introduction to the plays E. F. Watling describes Ancient Greek tragic theatre as a genre that provides ‘the ritualistic expression and interpretation of the power of natural forces, the cycle of life and death, and the nexus of past, present and future’ (Watling 1947, p.9). The exploration and interpretation of the human condition in the Theban plays, in the context of the social and natural worlds, is through the depiction of three generations of the Oedipus family. Attic black-figure pottery was also a genre that engaged with symbolic interpretations of life and death. By utilising the black-figure style for my portrait of Oedipus [image 3], I impart a direct association with the original black-figure iconography styles, birthplace, time,

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7 My appropriation of images from the canon of art is a research strategy that provides a process of direct visual quotation of existing images and styles that have a specific, discernable, reading I wish to discuss.
philosophy and the stylistic conventions of the Ancient Greek symbolic interpretation of the world.

In turn, I have interpreted the plays’ exploration of humanity by producing painted portraits that expressed aspects of the plays’ characters, narrative and concepts. As the characters are considered universal archetypes and the actual physical appearance of the individuals is not specified, I decided to use my family members to represent the characters, thereby providing me with readily available and contemporary models for my portraits and stating the notion that these themes are timeless and universal.

Through my use of the yellow mask, I have re-interpreted the image of Oedipus [image 3] thereby identifying and highlighting the significance of the subject’s identity in the play Oedipus Rex.

The myth of Oedipus describes an individual who, unknown to him, was raised by adoptive parents. As an adult he discovers his true identity and realises that he has previously unwittingly killed his father and married his mother. The play’s dramatic climax is hinged on the notion of identity and the seminal aspect of peripeteia, (‘peripety’ in English), which refers to a reversal of circumstances, or turning point – a device commonly used in tragic theatre. The uncertain nature of identity portrayed in the play’s narrative initiates a change of fortune for Oedipus, but it also touches upon the uncertainty of life in general. My reproduction of a portrait of Oedipus [image 4] provides the initial association with the character and the symbolic expression of uncertainty and control depicted in the tragic theatrical narrative. I take up this notion of uncertainty, in my painting, through the superimposition of a mask on the Penguin portrait, thereby putting the identity of Oedipus into question.
My painting of the mask on the portrait of Oedipus foregrounds the issue of identity and alludes that the uncertainty of identity that is the pivotal issue in Sophocles’ play. The sequence involved in producing this portrait [image 3] demonstrates the interpretation of identity being played out in my painting process. I began by painting a self-portrait [image 5] and adding a mask to engage with notions of concealed identity. However as the self-portrait appeared to lack any specific reference to Oedipus, I painted the portrait of Oedipus [image 4] on top. The mask was then re-introduced to the second image, highlighting the aspect of concealed or uncertain identity in relation to the Oedipus myth. In fact, the identity of the subject in the Penguin portrait [image 4] is not certain, as the only allusion to Oedipus is the referencing of Attic black-figure style. My own portrait has taken up this referencing of the Attic pottery style to depict Oedipus and I have added the mask to reiterate the notion of uncertain identity.
Masks in Ancient Greek theatre were used to designate the type of performance or character. According to the anthropologist Otto Bihajil-Meril, ‘form showed only the basic attitude, tragedy or comedy’ (1971, p.72). It is interesting to note that Bihajil-Meril reiterates Nietzsche’s statement that ‘all the celebrated characters of the Greek stage – Prometheus, Oedipus, and so on – are merely masks of that original hero, Dionysus’ (1971, p.51; Nietzsche 1993, p.51). In Greek mythology, Dionysus is the deity of tragic theatre and has links to chaos; this aspect of tragic theatre is of specific interest to this exegesis and will be explored later. For now however, my use of the mask in this portrait [image 3] does not reference the mask’s function in Ancient Greek theatre; rather it expresses the concept of uncertainty, concealment and change with respect to the identity of the person concealed.8

The portrait of Oedipus [image 4] is an interpretation of the Attic vase painting style described by the art historian Beth Cohen as having ‘two well-known standard techniques employed in their decoration [Attic vases], black-and red-figure’9 (2006, p.2).

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8 The Theban play Oedipus Rex is centered on the notion of Oedipus’ true identity. The uncertainty of what the true relationship of the character to each other is pivotal to the play. The mask represents that uncertainty of identity- what is the true identity of the person behind the mask.

9 Only the Black-figure vase painting stylistic expression of all form in black and all space in white will be pursued in regards to its representation and expression of a chaos and order duality.
This Attic pottery style developed in sixth-century BC Athens emphasised specific functions for colour and figuration: all figurative images were black or red, and all space in a second colour which provides an element of uniformity and universality in the expression of the figure.¹⁰ This uniformity however also becomes a space-and-form dichotomy as it depicts all forms in one colour and all space in another and this has a specific connection to Ancient Greek cosmic mythology.

The art historian John Gage states that the colour theory ‘in the poetry of Alcmaeon of Croton (early fifth century BC), dwell[s] on the antithesis between black and white, or darkness and light’ (1993, p.12). The Ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles describes a convergence of cosmology and colour in terms of ‘the analogy of the painter’s mixing color to illustrate the harmony of the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water’ created a direct association between ‘the solid and the void’ in Ancient Greek mythology in relation to the cosmos and space and form in the Attic pottery painting style. Laporte provide a well-developed hypothesis that links Ancient Greek creation myth, artistic expression (poetry) and pre- Socratic philosophy. ‘ In the early period, poetry had already separated from religion but it still held, implicitly, the thread of philosophy’ (1947, p.144). The religious aspect (creation myth) of the poetic

¹⁰ It is to be noted that the figurative painting style as artefact is of interest to my project. My interest is in the painting on the vases not form of the vase.
depiction of chaos-and-order in Attic vase painting is removed however the philosophical aspect still holds true.

According to Laporte (1947) Attic vase painting demonstrate a pre-Socratic philosophy regarding space and form, an ‘absolute opposition between the black figure and its background’ (1947, p.149). The cosmos and void creation myth of Ancient Greece states the cosmos, kosmos, (order or world) emerged from chaos, or khaos (vast chasm, void). Laporte states:

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\text{in the process of the birth of our world, corporeal things supersede the “void”, and every effort is made to prove that the “void” no longer “exists”. But when the figure is finally emancipated, it finds itself surrounded by a large “background” areas; by something, that is, whose very reality has been denied by the artist and philosopher alike, and which yet presents them with its demands for a compositional solution or a logical explanation’ (1947, p.146).}
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The hypothesis by Laporte stating that ‘The figure is now “separated out” from the “boundless” space of the vessel; there is no more filling ornament between the figures’ (1947, p.147). This method of isolating a human form in space, within the picture space of the vase states an oppositional dichotomy that correlates with the philosophy of Pythagoras and his ‘consistent concept of opposites’ (1947, p.148) detailed in the pairing of ‘the Limit and the Unlimited, and Light and Darkness’ (1947, p.148).

Laporte argues that this simple stylistic colour dichotomy is linked to the Ancient Greek mythology of creation and the philosophy of light and darkness, limit and unlimited describes a move from the creation myth that states the cosmos (form) is a part of the void (space). To give birth to the cosmos required the cosmos to be a part of
the void. In this same train of thought the void (space) is a residual aspect of the cosmos. Laporte’s thesis elucidates, not only a connection to chaos-and-order, the void and cosmos but also defines the issue of an oppositional dichotomy as the ‘logical explanation’ that represents a compositional solution in the form of dialectic. This colour dichotomy that describes a space-and-form, void-and-cosmos dichotomy and a philosophical dialectic will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.11

In this section I have described mimesis as the process used for my interpretation of the black figure portrait of Oedipus. The expression and re-interpreting of a time, a space, a person and a style was discussed, and an explanation of my painting’s links with Attic pottery painting style12 and that style’s representation of the philosophy and mythology of chaos-and-order were given. The concept of the mask used in my painting was shown to be a symbol of identity concealment that introduces the question of interpretation to the image. The inclusion of the mask to express ideas about the uncertainty of Oedipus’s identity was instigated by the accidental appearance of the mask in Isabel with Puppies and resulted in the evolution of a new inquiry for my project, as well as highlighting the intuitive creative process I adopted. How chance and intuition connect to a philosophy of chaos-and-order, and their expression in my art practice, will be discussed in the following section of this chapter

11 My project’s proposal stated an exploration of Ancient Greek tragic theatre’s depiction and expression of a chaos and order duality. I was unaware of the depiction of chaos and order in Attic vase painting. I deduced this hypothesis through the initial research engaged through the viewing and utilizing of black-figure images. The subsequent literature search of Gage’s discourse on colour in Ancient Greek pottery painting provided quotes by ancient Greek philosophers that gave emphasis to my hypothesis, and the discovery of the Laporte article, I believe, confirmed the hypothesis.
12 The stylized representation of the human figure, eg in profile and complete was not deemed to be a key aspect of my exploration and description of a chaos and order duality. However my painting styles non-utilization of these methods is a divergence from and a deconstruction of his aspect of the Attic painting style, which will be discussed later in the exegesis.
1.4: Expression-Attic theatre

The third aspect of mimesis to be discussed here is the utilisation of creative forces found in the natural world. I define the creative forces detailed in Attic tragic theatre and my art practice as the forces of chaos-and-order that form a creative paradigm. The chapter will conclude with an explanation of the physical and psychological epistemology of my painting process that draws upon the creative forces found in the evolution of living things.

In constructing my paintings through an epistemology that entails the assemblage and superimposition of disparate images, (two aspects of art practice that will be described in more detail later), I explore the forces of chance and control. Aristotle asserts that, ‘[p]oetry, painting, and music must create their works as nature creates’ (Gebauer &
Wulf 1995, p.55) thereby stipulating the use of the natural forces of creation in mimetic expression. He states:

[what is intended here is not an imitation of nature, such that a work should be fashioned as the equivalent of nature. The goal is rather to achieve similarity in the processes of creation. Painters, musicians, and poets should produce by the same forces of creation (1995, p.55).

Aristotle’s definition of mimesis as the transfer of, and the interpretation of, the prior to a symbolically produced world is expanded here to also include the creative forces that produced the prior as a requirement in the production of the artwork.

An example of a mimetic art practice that describes natural forces is the genre of Ancient Greek tragic theatre. Langer quotes Aristotle’s statement that “[t]ragedy is essentially an imitation not of persons but of action and life, of happiness and misery” (1976, p.352)’ the purpose of which is to elucidate the expression of human forces in tragic theatre. Langer goes on to explain that “[t]he protagonist and all characters that support him are introduced that we may see the fulfilment of his fate, which is simply the complete realization of his individual “human nature” (1976, p.353). The description of natural forces in ‘action and life’ demonstrates tragic theatre’s depiction of ‘human nature’ and the forces that impact upon that nature.

Nietzsche’s quote that ‘art is not an imitation of nature but its metaphysical supplement, raised up beside it in order to overcome it’ (Sontag 1966, p.30) places the philosophy of art practice espoused in *The Birth of Tragedy* in the same light as Aristotles notion of art as non imitation but rather a process of human expression of what nature does. Nietzsche’s thesis regarding the conception of Ancient Greek tragic
theatre detailed in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1993) places the chaos-and-order paradigm for creation at the centre of its hypothesis. Nietzsche states that ‘art derives its continuous development from the duality of the Appoline and Dionysiac’ (1993, p.16). In other words, the union of the two gods is the force behind artistic creation. Dionysus, the deity of tragic theatre, epitomises the forces of chaos and Apollo, the deity of plastic arts, epitomises the forces of order. When combined, the two gods constitute a chaos-and-order paradigm – which is intrinsic to the existence and evolution of most living things. In Attic black-figure pottery chaos (void) and order (cosmos) describe the Ancient Greek creation myth through colour. In Attic tragic theatre there exists a symbolic narrative regarding chance and design in human existence, which stipulates that the creative forces of chaos-and-order are a creative paradigm.

Phenomena in nature that can be considered to have derived from a chaos-and-order duality. Castoriadis describes this as the process of evolution:

> [t] he living thing possesses as an intrinsic property not simply its capacity for development but for evolving, for organizing itself in a different way; its organization is this very capacity for transforming an accident or a disturbance into a new organization (1987, p.217).

By branding the two derivatives of chaos, accident and disturbance, as intrinsic properties of the living thing, Castoriadis identifies chance and deformation, in particular, as aspects of the process of evolution. The living organism has a system of organisation that has a set order but it also has the ability to re-organise itself through the intervention of chance and deformation. The forces used in the evolution of the living thing provide the mimetic conceptual model for my art practice, which is an extension of the mimetic model I use to produce my figurative paintings.
My solution to how I could initiate a chaos-and-order duality in my art practice is in two parts. First, by employing a conceptual strategy of selecting and combining images that have some connection to the content and concepts in the plays’ narrative, but which have no conscious connection to each other. Secondly, by disturbing the form of the images through the layering process of superimposition, I am able to instil chaos as chance in the work. For example, the sequence of production for *The Riddle of the Sphinx* (2005) [image 8] began with my conscious choice of reproducing an existing self-portrait [image 9] to represent Oedipus. The second image [image 10] to be included was chosen as a general concept of order without any obvious referencing of the Oedipus myth. My intention was to depict two orderly images, one mimetic and the other geometric, that I could transform by superimposition, thereby disturbing
both images by the act of layering with the purpose of initiating uncertain (chaotic) change. Their association through addition and proximity stimulates a reaction between the two images, however what emerged from the two images was allowed to develop by chance.

This painting *The Riddle of the Sphinx* [image 8], which is a combination of portrait and geometric equation, is used to signify the intellectual aspect of Oedipus’s character by using the Ancient Greek pottery method of ‘strip-cartoon system of narrative [where] the Greek artist was obliged to encapsulate the narrative and message of a story in a single scene’ (Boardman, Griffin & Murrey 1986, p.275). My image utilizes superimposition to connect the figure and the geometric shapes to provide a narrative regarding Oedipus’ cognitive ability to achieve abstract thought.

The Ancient Greek potters depicted Oedipus in deep thought facing the Sphinx; I have depicted Oedipus and his thoughts, which infer both the cognition and abstraction of the human intellect.

My use of geometry to represent cognitive abstraction is in keeping with Boardman’s notion that ‘[e]ven when he worked in near-abstract, geometricized forms the [Ancient Greek] artists’ prime subjects were human’ (1986, p.175). The archaeologist Andre Leroi-Gourhan states ‘The most impressive manifestation on the intellectual level is the presence in the great majority of Palaeolithic art sites of painted or engraved geometric figures’ (2010, p.55). The visual iconography of mathematic/geometric equation is a depiction of human cognition used to express a link between the concept of abstract intellectual thought and Oedipus himself. My inclusion of the iconic image of the Sphinx provides a clue to the identity of the person portrayed. By depicting a
number of Sphinxes I am alluding to Oedipus’s defeat of the Sphinx, in the same way as images of enemy planes placed on the fuselage of fighter planes denote the number of kills achieved. My inclusion, and joining of, geometric shapes to the human figure outlines a physical and psychological bond between the two. Geometry, as abstract measurement of the physical and phenomenal world, is positioned to interact with the head and face of the figure, merging and incorporating the concept of geometry into the figure’s head as a depiction of human thought. This image was formed by a combination of intuitive and reasoned processes of image selection, of utilising and demonstrating both chance and design to stimulate a change in the image that arguably emulates the forces of creation in nature while providing the development of new organisations with which to define my interpretation of the Oedipus myth.

In Attic tragic theatre the expression of tragic occurrence, instigated by unforeseen, uncontrollable events, depicts the existence of chaos in the human and natural world. The genre’s conceptual framework has a tragic event as its action, thereby incorporating the forces of chaos in its conceptual process. My deformation of figurative images in my painting [image 8] is in the same mode, and so provides a visible depiction of the concept of chaos and demonstrates a painting method that enacts chaos by disturbing the original forms. The second aspect of the duality in tragic theatre is the god Apollo who epitomises order and is represented in my painting through the inclusion of the ordered measuring system of geometry. It is interesting to note that art historian Lester. D. Longman touches on this duality in his discussion: ‘Paintings – by Picasso, Braque, Leger, Kandinsky, Matisse – illustrate this delicate balance between dynamism and formal order and control, this fertile union of the Dionysiac and Apollonian’ (1944, p.12). In other words, there is a
recognisable expression of a chaos-and-order duality in the work of these artists. The
dynamism and control in my paintings is detailed in mimesis and the
superimposition’s connection to chaos-and-order produced by a duality of conscious
and unconscious action alludes to chance and design, accident and intent as well as
order and disorder in my painting.

1.5: Appropriation - Quotation

Appropriation in visual art is a complex and multilayered concept. Described as the
‘borrowing, adopting, recycling or sampling of aspects of man-made visual
culture’ (Oxford 2009). These elements are utilized in the creation of new works with
a concept of recontextualising that which is borrowed in the new work. There is also a
multitude of conceptual strategies such as: revision, re-evaluation, variation, version,
interpretation, imitation, approximation, supplement, increment, improvisation and
pastiche involved in the appropriation of images. In the 1980s and 1990s artists were
exploring their newfound visual freedom to appropriate from a diverse range of
sources, and to pastiche together different visual passages or quotations. Artist such as
Robert Rauschenberg, David Salle, Imants Tillers and John Young, among many
others, explored appropriation extensively. I acknowledge the complexity of this
visual strategy and that some aspects of this description are applicable to my
incorporation of existing images from other artists into my work; however, my project
is not a research of appropriation. The copying of existing images, within my arts
practice has been a research tool and in this project the incorporation of existing
images or styles constitutes a form of direct quotation of visual material.
The use of textual quotes to explain, explore and acknowledge the discourse, provided in a written form regarding any proposed theorem is obligatory in academia. My quotation through incorporation (appropriation) of existing images and or stylistic devices is a visual equivalent of this protocol. My art practice has three main conceptual points for the quoting of existing visual material. Firstly the utilization of the Attic vase painting style is a process of exploration through mimicry and interpretation, the philosophy related to the painting style and its time, place and society. As Burgard states, ‘Appropriation also provided Picasso with the means to express his thoughts and emotions as an ‘old master’ himself, through the selection of specific works and their association. Picasso, who according to Gilot “disliked references to feelings…” thus empowering great artists from the past to speak for him’ (Burgard 1991, p.490). In employing this strategy in my quotation of Attic black-figure vase painting style I endeavoured to make reference to and allow this Ancient Greek painting style and its artistic expression its specific time and place to speak for me through the direct visual quotation of its form, colour and content.

My second strategy of incorporating images by Gauguin [image 2] is the imitation and interpretation of his discourse through content and form regarding nature through the medium of still life. As Tanner states, ‘Classical “naturalism” is characterized as an artistic language with heightened capacity for the appropriation of natural bodily responses …’ (2001, p.257). The painting by Gauguin is also a quotation of form and content in order to engage the discourse this particular image is engaged in. I am quoting Gauguin’s understanding of the expression of nature through form, style and concepts regarding the natural world.
The third form of incorporation is the utilization of my own art works. The inclusions of existing paintings produced by me are utilized for their inherent content and concepts. My compilation of two existing paintings from my own oeuvre signal a composition that utilizes the conceptual expression of the two images, *Green Self-Portrait* 1999 (Image 9) and *Sixteen Squares* 2002 (Image 10), to produce a third metaphoric image, *The Riddle of the Sphinx* 2005 (Image 8). As such my own existing images are quoted to engage their conceptual content. Whether it is the incorporation of a specific social context in time and space as with the Attic pottery figurative painting style, or Gauguin’s expression of natural form through figuration, or my own expression of figurative content and concepts, ‘appropriation’ is a research tool in action here. It details a direct quotation of specific existing artwork through a process of inclusion and adaptation to make something new.

### 1.6 Summary

In this chapter I have marked out the significance of style in the project. I have explored the methods and methodology developed in conjunction with the mimetic process to express the forces of creation found in nature. The specific forces of chaos-and-order and their link to Nietzsche’s description of tragedy in Attic theatre and the arts in general have been explained. I have looked to explore the notion that tragic theatre is not about misery, loss and misfortune as aspects of life but rather that chaos-and-order in the guise of fate and design is the true gift of tragic theatre’s discourse. I have explained peripeteia as the chance turning point of fortunes. Chance and deformation have been described as the creative forces used in my painting process. My incorporation of painted images and their inherent style’s by other artists
describes a direct quotation of content and concepts rather than the appropriation of existing social context. In this first chapter I have explored my first series of paintings and the role of mimesis – the imitation, interpretation and emulation of the external model derived from the perceptual world. The role of appropriation as a strategy of direct quotation is flagged and the creative practice of Attic pottery and the narrative of Theban plays have been introduced and their links to a duality of chaos-and-order have been described. The utilisation of mimesis in the production of metaphors is described in the next series of paintings. Chapter two will explore this second series of paintings and their exploration of the metaphor in my art practice.
Chapter two: Metaphor

2: Introduction

The previous chapter described the role of mimesis in my paintings as the imitation, interpretation and expression of the external world. Through the exploration of content and subject in my paintings this chapter will define the role of metaphor in my paintings as the reflection, representation and construction of the cognitive world.

I will begin by examining metaphor from a psychological perspective, detailing the cognitive process used to conceive and render images as metaphoric. The second part of the chapter will set out my abstraction of concrete entities from the external world into signs and the assembling of these signs for the construction of conceptual metaphors to create a discourse regarding cognition. I will conclude by relating how the superimposition of pictorial images is a process that produces non-literal narrative thereby rendering my images metaphoric with the purposes of expressing human experience. The tone of the second suite of paintings is geared more towards the cognitive metaphoric use of subject matter to convey the narrative of the Theban plays.
2.1: Allegory-Reflection

[Image 11] *Brothers, 2006*

I will begin this chapter by defining metaphor in my artwork as a cognitive process used to analyse, interpret and depict my perception of how the Theban plays chronicle aspects of human experience. The compositional technique of pictorial assemblage will be discussed as the process used to construct metaphors in my paintings and to render the composite images as a metaphoric device to say something about the psychological and external world and their relationships.

Metaphor is ‘an analogy between two unrelated ideas or objects’ (Oxford University Press, 2000). The creation of metaphor entails a representation of the perceptual world in other than a literal sense. For example, to be able to imagine that the world is like a bowl of pasta requires a system of thought that can conceive the world in other
than the literal form perceived by our senses. An ability to see the same properties of a bowl of pasta in a completely different context involves a process of cognition and communication that converts literal experience into metaphoric interpretation.

My painting *Brothers* [image 9] is a representation of conflict and kinship as human experience described in the Theban play *Antigone*, and is encapsulated in a metaphor that utilises Gauguin’s literal depiction of the religious parable, itself an extended metaphor: Jacob wrestles with the angel in his painting *Vision after the Sermon* (1888) [image 10]. The religious parable is recounted as a conflict of conscience for Jacob regarding good and evil action. The conflict between Antigone’s brothers is both a physical and mental conflict over the right to rule the kingdom of Thebes that is seen as a conflict that has one brother deemed a hero and the other a villain by the king of Thebes. The inclusion of Gauguin’s depiction of Jacob and the angel in my composition titled *Brothers* [image 9] enables me to construct a metaphor regarding the physical and mental conflict between the two brothers, Polyneices and

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13 The conflict between Antigone’s two brothers Etiocles and Polynices, over the kingdom of Thebes, culminated in the battle that saw the two brothers die at each other’s hand is the starting point for the play *Antigone* by Sophocles. ‘Meanwhile the strife between his sons went on unabated fury. Seven champions, enlisted under the banner of Polynices, stormed with his Argive allies the seven gates of Thebes. But Thebes withstood them, and in the last encounter the two brothers took each other’s life. Creon, now once more undisputed master of the city, and resolved to make an example of the iniquity of the invaders, ordered that whilst the body of Etiocles, defender of the city, receive all honourable rites of burial, that of Polynices should be left in ignominy, unwept and unburied, upon the plain where it lay. Penalty of death was promulgated against any who should defy this order: and the voices of the city, whether in consent or in fearful submission, were silent.’ (Watling 1947, p.125)

14 The parable of Jacob describes a conflict of conscience, a wrestle between good and evil action by an individual. ‘So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” The man asked him, “What is your name?” Jacob,” he answered. Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, [e] because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.” Jacob said, “Please tell me your name.” But he replied, “Why do you ask my name?” Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.” (Chapter 32 Genesis) In *Antigone* the actions taken by the two brothers are seen to epitomize the individual as good and evil by the king of Thebes.
Eteocles. My juxtaposition of the parable with the portraits of the children in *Brothers* [image 9] provides a visual depiction of the psychological experience of kinship and conflict in an allegorical painting. I will elaborate on the parable and the story of Antigone later in this section, after an exploration of the visual connection to cognition and process involved in the production of metaphors.

An example of visual thinking that constructs metaphors is described by Rudolf Arnheim as follows, ‘The notion of the depth of thought is derived from physical depth; what is more, depth is not merely a convenient metaphor to describe the mental phenomenon but the only possible way of even conceiving of the notion’ (1997, p.232). Arnheim’s description of conceptual metaphors explains why contemporary neurologists such as George Lakoff and R. W. Gibbs Jr describe metaphor as ‘conceptual mapping; [they] that are part of the conceptual system and not mere linguistic expression’ (2008, p.24). Metaphor is ‘a fundamental scheme by which people conceptualize the world and their activities’ that illustrates ‘human abstract thought and people’s emotional and aesthetic experience’ (2008, p.3). The implication is that the interplay between the physical and psychological components of existence are conceived and expressed in metaphor. This notion will be explored in this chapter using a description of conceptual metaphors by Arnheim.

The significance of metaphor to the contextualization and expression of experience explains why the linguist, Eva Feder Kittay states that ‘a number of philosophers, linguists and psychologists have made the dual claim that metaphor is cognitively significant and that metaphorical utterances have a meaning not reducible to literal paraphrase’ (1984, p.153). Nietzsche activated metaphor through his writing
applauding its gift for human thought. For Aristotle (2008, p.39) metaphoric expression enacted a sign of genius (1985, p.27). In the sphere of artistic expression, Suzanne Langer, cited in Feinstein (1982), maintains that ‘metaphor is not only essential to thought, but also that art (visual, performing, literary), as a developed product of thought, is metaphor’ (1982, p.45).

Hermeine Feinstein, from the perspective of art as education, accepts Langer's notion that art is metaphor and goes on to suggest that what Kittay has already alluded to can be extended. She writes, ‘the power of the metaphor lies in its potential to further our understanding of the meaning of experience, which in turn defines reality’ (1982, p.45). This understanding lies beyond ‘literal’ depiction by ‘generat[ing]es new associations’ and ‘deeper levels of meaning’ (Feinstein 1982, p.45). My use of metaphor as a product of thought adds a second cognitive layer of interpretation to my mimetic expression of human experience.

[Image 12] After the Sermon
Gauguin, 1888 (Ingo 1993, p.21)

[Image 11] Brothers, 2006
My painting *Brothers* [image 9] is an allegorical painting that uses the analogous connection between the story of the two brothers in the play *Antigone* and the two figures wrestling in Gauguin’s painting [image 10] to produce a metaphor. Gauguin’s allegorical painting depicts a parable described by the art historian Wildenstein as a metaphor; it depicts ‘combat [which] is generally perceived as occurring within the conscience, and more particularly as the confrontation of the forces of Good and Evil within the soul’ (2002, p.470). The combination of the parable with the group of Brittany women in a field provides a composition that, according to the art historian Walther F. Ingo, ‘combines an everyday scene of women leaving church with a supernatural scene which exists only in the realm of faith’ (1993, p.21).

Gauguin’s use of two pictorial images to produce a composite scene renders the painting non-literal, thereby indicating to the viewer that the painting represents religious belief in nineteenth-century Brittany in metaphorical terms. This depiction of the ‘supernatural scene’ within the literal ‘everyday scene’ by Gauguin produces an image that constitutes metaphoric expression. According to the psychologist, John M. Kennedy:

> pictures are prototypical art objects, and pictures have to use perceptual tactics that are realistic, so violations of realism in art are readily taken to be metaphors. The general principle at work here is that metaphors violate standard representational practice (2008, p.447).

This is relevant for my project. Every time I superimpose two images I am violating realism thus producing metaphoric expression. Applying this to the image by Gauguin the non-reality of the angel and its introduction to a realistically rendered group portrait construes the image as metaphoric. This expression of a conflict
between good and evil is arbitrary and reliant on the cultural knowledge of the
parable to communicate its meaning, however the parable’s inclusion in the Brittany
landscape signals metaphoric expression, due to its violation of standard realistic
depictions.

The literal depiction of two figures wrestling in Gauguin’s painting is used in my
painting *Brothers* [image 9] to evoke the actual physical combat between the two
brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, over the kinghood of Thebes as well as to establish
the concept of conflict between good and evil. This notion of good and evil is
outlined in the decree from Crones the king of Thebes when he states, ‘the body of
Eteocles, defender of the city, received all honourable rites of burial, that of
Polynecis should be left in ignominy, unwept and unburied, upon the plain where it
lays’ (Watling 1947, p.125). The disparity in the king’s treatment of the two brothers
describes a social interpretation of their actions.

My visual representation of the parable and its expression of conflict between right
and wrong is transferred to the combat between the brothers and is also paralleled in
Antigone’s conflict between obeying the decree set by Creon or the kinship laws set
by the gods. Antigone’s anguish regarding her need to perform burial rites for both
brothers is put into context by my description of her experience as a sister when she
was a child. This is not dissimilar to that used by classical pottery artists, where they
‘sometimes dwell on proem or aftermath, which might be psychologically or
dramatically more telling’ (Boardman, Griffin & Murrey 1986, p.301). The actual
depiction of Antigone and her brothers in the Theban play portrays them as adults;
but my interpretation violates this standard. I have undertaken this strategy in order to
elicit the personal emotional expression of sibling bonds and conflict that I and, perhaps many people are privy to. This depiction taps into the psychology of emotional experience and adds pathos to the conflicting actions of the two brothers.

The depiction of the characters from the play as children and the inclusion of Gauguin's painting that renders the image metaphoric is evident in my production of the two images in different colours – dark brown for the image of the children and a pale blue for the Gauguin image. This strategy reinforces the notion of an assembling process in the construction of the painting. The replacement of the red ground in Gauguin’s painting [image 10] with the deep yellow found in classic Greek pottery ('buff in Corinth, orange in Attica' (Boardman, Griffin & Murrey 1986, p.283)) was a considered attempt to reference Ancient Greek pottery colours, however this colour inclusion provided only a partial expression of Attic Vase pottery painting style. It has been a deliberate decision to employ a differential shift in colour as an expression of difference of time and location.

I have discussed metaphor as a cognitive system of contextualising and expressing my reflection of human experience. The violation of standard representation is considered to be the defining process for rendering my painting [image 11] metaphoric. The use of signs and symbols to represent conceptual metaphors is the next form of expression I will ascribe to my paintings.

15 The use of yellow in the painting Brothers 2006 describes an experiment in the referencing of ancient Greek pottery painting colours, however Attic pottery painting utilizes a yellow and black duality. Thus through a process of analysis one can conclude that the use of yellow without the black is a ‘false’ representation of the Attic pottery style if truth or mimesis be the aim. The true depiction of Attic vase painting style has already been described in chapter one and my mode of representation in this image and others are revisited in the final series of paintings. This shows a necessary progression and alteration consistent with reflecting on, and engaging with, prior decisions, and being prepared to alter them to address the research problems as they arise. The rationale for the inclusion and deconstruction of the Attic Black-figure Vase painting style is detailed in chapter three.
2.2: Sign-Representation

Noble Child, 2007

This section examines the depiction of signs and symbols and their utilisation in the construction of metaphoric expression in my paintings. My analyses of Noble Child [image 13] will situate the human figure in my painting as a sign derived from a concrete entity (the child) and the geometric forms as symbols derived from the human psychology of Pythagoras, which together form a conceptual metaphor regarding human cognition.

My painting, Noble Child [image 13] is intended to express a metaphoric depiction of the type of intellectual ability evident in Oedipus, which enabled him to answer the riddle of the Sphinx.\textsuperscript{16} By using an image of a child [image 15] as a sign representing

\textsuperscript{16} The Sphinx is said to have guarded the entrance to the Greek city of Thebes, and to have asked a riddle of travellers to allow them passage. The exact riddle asked by the Sphinx was not specified by early tellers of the stories, and was not standardized as the one given below until late in Greek history. It was said in late lore that Hera or Ares sent the Sphinx from her Ethiopian homeland (the Greeks always remembered the foreign origin of the Sphinx) to Thebes in Greece where she asks all passersby
human psychology and experience alongside a series of geometric forms [image 14] as symbols of abstract measurement, I have created a metaphoric connection between the psychology of geometry and what I perceive as the child’s psychology.

Arnheim's statement that ‘The art of drawing essentials from a given kind of entity can apply only to organized wholes, in which some feature hold key positions while others are secondary or accidental’ (Arnheim 1997, p.173) can be seen in the depiction of essential aspects of a child’s form in the composition. Geometry details the second essential entity and it also holds a key position in the composition.

Geometric shapes [image13] represent an arbitrary system of measurement denoting the human ability for abstract cognition. The visual construction of a figurative image of the child reaching out to take the camera depicts the physical sensory experience of reaching and investigating the external world. This suggests the psychological cognition required to contextualise measurement and movement. The child’s actions indicate an ability to measure bodily movement within the environment and the geometric forms inscribe constructed abstract measurement. By combining these

the most famous riddle in history: "Which creature walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three legs in the evening?" She strangled and devoured anyone unable to answer. Oedipus solved the riddle by answering: Man—who crawls on all fours as a baby, then walks on two feet as an adult, and then walks with a cane in old age. By some accounts (but much more rarely), there was a second riddle: "There are two sisters: one gives birth to the other and she, in turn, gives birth to the first. Who are the two sisters?" The answer is "day and night" (both words are feminine in Greek).

Bested at last, the tale continues, the Sphinx then threw herself from her high rock and died. An alternative version tells that she devoured herself. Thus Oedipus can be recognized as a “liminal” or threshold figure, helping effect the transition between the old religious practices, represented by the death of the Sphinx, and the rise of the new, Olympian gods.

In Jean Cocteau's retelling of the Oedipus legend, The Infernal Machine, the Sphinx tells Oedipus the answer to the riddle, to kill herself so that she did not have to kill anymore, and also to make him love her. He leaves without ever thanking her for giving him the answer to the riddle. The scene ends when the Sphinx and Anubis who is there to kill the victims who cannot answer the riddle, ascend back to the heavens.

There are mythic, anthropological, psychoanalytic, and periodic interpretations of the Riddle of the Sphinx, and of Oedipus's answer to it. Numerous riddle books use the Sphinx in their title or illustrations. (Wikipedia)
through the painted image my intention is to offer a contextualising to the viewer of an individual’s cognitive strategies to construct his external and psychological world.

The two signs used in my painting Noble Child [image 13] convert subjects found in the external world into signs, which initiate a specific process as Arnheim explains:

[Human cognition as] a unitary process, which leads without break from the elementary acquisition of sensory information to the most genetic theoretical ideas. The essential trait of this unitary cognitive process is that at every level it involves abstraction (1997, p.153).

Following this thesis of abstraction and its relationship to human cognition, I abstracted the QV Building Site [image 14] (a high-rise building viewed in the process of construction is in a luminal position, being neither building nor assemblage of materials) such as the QV into geometric forms by ‘drawing essentials from a given kind of entity’ (Arnheim 1997, p.173). Geometric forms are symbolic representations used in the branch of mathematics concerned with the properties and relations of points, lines, surfaces, solids and higher dimentional analogs, a system of measurement. The geometric forms [image 14] derived from a building site have a paradigmatic relationship to abstract construction, as shown by the internal structure of the building being formed and which is still a visible process. In linguistics, the familiar concrete conceptual domain of “building” is used to describe the formation or foundation of ideas and words - such as framework, support and buttressing (examples of words used in other than their own context) - are elements of an actual building that can be used to express the building of ideas.
My painting Noble Child [image 13] depicts an abstract environment composed of geometric signs and symbols to illuminate the child’s propensity to see the world as a measured geometric form. Geometry and the grid in my art works represent control, order, and systems of subdivision and segmentation that demonstrate the human mind’s cognitive ability to control his/her environment by breaking down the whole into abstract segmented pieces.
By depicting the physical attributes of an object’s form, such as square, bent and straight, in conjunction with the image of the child, in this case a specific child, my son Kisha [image 15], I investigate what I perceive as the child’s character. My use of geometric form derived from a highrise building construction site [image 14] to denote an abstract environment as seen in Noble Child [image 13] elucidates the child’s ability to see the world as geometric abstraction. There is a relationship here with the thematic of the Theban plays in that by connecting geometric form to human characteristics the artifice in the artwork seeks to elude to Oedipus’s ability to abstract and construct the world through a particular intellectual ability. The Ancient Greek myth of Oedipus captures a person with an explicit abstract intellect; this is elucidated by the citizens of Thebes who conferred upon Oedipus the title ‘the first of men’ (1947, p.26). Peter J. Ahrensdorf also states, ‘What is distinctive about Oedipus’s victory over the Sphinx, however, is that it is a purely intellectual victory, one of brains and not brawn’ (2009, p.15). Oedipus’s ability for abstract intellect is also depicted in Attic pottery’s representation of Oedipus sitting or standing in deep thought facing the Sphinx.

Image [16] Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Oedipus and the Sphinx of Thebes, Red Figure Kylix, c. 470 BC, Inv. no. 16541, from the so-called Oedipus Painter

Image [17] Oedipus and the Sphinx, Red detail from a, Attic red-figure stamnos by the Menelaus Painter, ca. 440 BC.
By depicting Oedipus as a child [image 13], I am describing his abstract abilities as a genetic predisposition that makes him a savant or learned person in terms of his ability for abstract cognition. A “geometric” child depicts in a metaphorical visual form a person who sees systems within objects. Within my painting Noble Child [Image 13] the child psychology has a predisposition to see abstract geometric patterns within the concrete edifice of the building. The psychologist Sir Michael Rutter explains that ‘the underlying feature is that the savants use the strategy of taking a mental path from single units to a subsequent higher order extraction of overreaching patterns and structures’ (Fitzgerald 2005, p.22). This is expanded by Beate Hermelin when he notes the ‘savant’s superiority in block design (a method of measuring spatial skills) which suggests that they have a special ability to segment a holistic stimulus into its component parts’ (Fitzgerald 2005, p.22). My painting [image 13] depicts a child capable of answering the riddle\textsuperscript{17} of the Sphinx; essentially a person described by the psychiatrist, Hans Asperger as an ‘abstract thinker’\textsuperscript{18} (Fitzgerald 2005, p.21).

Arnheim’s premise that the human mind in an unconscious manner is able to extract conceptual meaning from abstract forms in art because one can see the same forms in the external world. He explains this process in his comparison of the figurative form in the French nineteenth century artist, Jean Baptiste Camille Corot’s painting Mother and Child on the Beach and the abstract forms in the British sculptor, Henry Moore’s

\textsuperscript{17} Riddle: a question of statement intentionally phrased so as to require ingenuity in ascertaining its answer.

\textsuperscript{18} I have been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. This neurological variant to the general population has particular traits such as the one detailed by Dr Asperger as ‘abstract thinker’. This underpins my interest in the forms of geometric abstraction coupled with psychological traits that I am examining here. There is an inherent desire for structural order in an Asperger mind, which is here demonstrated as geometric form. The ordered system that is geometric abstraction becomes a strategic use of form in my work to infuse an aspect of control to the overall composition. Through my research of chaos and order as a creative paradigm I have devised a hypothesis that the Asperger desire for order is arrived at due to the Asperger minds sensitivity to the chaotic aspect of daily life. An inability to cope with change and chance drives the Asperger mind to seek out order and structure. I return to this in the conclusion of the exegesis.
1934 sculpture *Two Forms*. According to Arnheim, Corot’s depiction of the mother leaning over the child is replicated in Moore’s abstract sculpture. They ‘[perform] similar actions-brooding over the smaller chunk, stretching out to reach it, hovering over it, protecting it’ (1997, p.164). The same conceptual notion is perceived by our minds ‘because we, too, have bodies-and mirror neurons,’ and ‘[t]hese neurons fire when we perform a coordinated action or see a corresponding action performed’ (Lakoff 2006, p.156). It is the human experience of such actions that provides the cognitive process leading to a concept, the depiction of which enabling us to recollect the action and engage with the concept derived from that action.  

Geometric patterns are a feature of the real world we view every day and my use of geometric patterns generated by human beings, metamorphosed from a building site, provides an explicit connection to the human’s cognitive ability for abstraction. Here Arnheim provides a connection between the visual world, human cognition and the construction of concepts.

In considering the content of my painting [image 13] a cognitive process is engaged that makes sense of and constructs geometric shapes and its conceptual paradigm of abstract measurement. The premise here is that when viewing abstract geometric shapes our minds perform the same psychological action – we construct geometric shapes and the concept of geometry. Also in the same way when viewing the visual depiction of a child the pattern recognition of the mind has the concept ‘child’

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19 Arnheim’s description of the similarity between Corot’s figurative painting and Moore’s abstract sculpture is describing, according to Arnheim and Lakoff the mind’s ability to perceive images through its cognitive process, not as conscious thought but rather unconscious cognitive process that constructs concepts from visual experience. This neurological tendency to construct concepts from abstract and figurative images is a feature of my art practice as research methodology, and it also stems from the functioning of the Asperger to perceive the external and psychological worlds via geometric abstractions and concrete patterns. This personalized comment is offered as a way of underpinning my interest in this way of perceiving and constructing, while it must be stated that an analysis of the functioning of an Asperger is not the primary focus of this research.
attached to it. The child in Noble Child [image 13] is depicted in the act of reaching and looking, thereby demonstrating that physical phenomena initiate a relationship between the external world and concepts of desire, seeing and action. The thought process seen in the figure reaches out for the camera, curious about its form and function and willing to investigate further, demonstrates the outward focus of his attention. The child’s stance and attitude express an active and willing mind, eager to engage with his surroundings. The child, himself is not engaging with the geometric forms in the image. Rather, I as the artist am constructing a metaphoric representation that alludes to a connection between the two, not by showing the child engaging with the geometric forms but rather by my superimposition of the two images (geometric shapes and child). This superimposition as a device is more than a mere compositional element. It is carrying the conceptual and thematic concerns that are underpinning the project.

The child’s willingness to engage with aspects of his environment through direct action combined with my replacement of the child’s original surrounding in the photo with an image of a building site [image 14], becomes a metaphor for abstract construction, thereby rendering the image metaphoric and highlighting the concept of the metaphor. I have discussed the construction of sign and symbols as a cognitive process, employed in this investigation to contextualise human experience with cognition demonstrated in my painting [image 13] by my abstraction of the figure and his environment. The violation of mimetic representation that is enacted by the layering process of superimposition is the next issue for discussion.
I will conclude this chapter with a discussion on the significance of metaphor in my work by defining the assemblage of pictorial images. My figurative superimposition paintings represent the construction of non-literal expression. The transformation of images, by the layering process of superimposition, will be pronounced as the evolution of images from mimetic to metaphoric images, both of which express a chance-and-design paradigm.

Superimposition is defined as a system of composition ‘where one image is placed or laid over another, with both still evident’ (Oxford 2009). Figurative superimposition in my painting [image 18] is arguably a process that activates the forces of chance and design to construct the composition. The layering of images is a designated
aspect of superimposition, as is the mimetic depiction of figurative images. However the resulting composite images highlight the element of chance and detail the artist’s inability to control the final image. The individual images used in my painting titled *Human Nature* [image 18] conform to standard mimetic representation, thereby providing literal expression of the space and form dichotomy. However, the addition of superimposition enacts a distortion of standard mimetic representation of space and form.

The metaphor is a non-literal expression that defines artistic expression according to Langer (1982, p.45). In the visual medium of painting, non-literal expression of figurative forms can be seen in the distortion of dimensions of height, width and depth and by the depiction of mimetic images with unrealistic scale, variety of scale and unrelated perspective. Saussure, (1974, p.70), Arnheim (1997, p.232) and Klee (1924, p.17) all state that ‘the sentence is linear and one directional’ (1974, p.70) whereas pictorial mediums ‘represent shapes in two-dimensional and three-dimensional space’ (Arnheim 1997, p.232). Arnheim also states that the figurative image ‘yields good thought models of physical objects or events, it also represents isomorphically the dimensions needed for theoretical reasoning’ (1997, p.232). Klee also believes that ‘this phenomena of many simultaneous dimensions… helps drama to its climax’ (1924, p.17). The depiction of the subject in visual, rather than verbal or literary form provides a language other than a linear, one-directional form that is grounded in human psychology.

My reason for utilizing superimposition in my paintings as a technique of pictorial assemblage, to produce non-literal composite images, is that as Kennedy states, in a
painting image ‘realistic features are what are violated in metaphors, pictures need to appear more or less realistic’ (2008, p.457). Mimesis provides the realistic features in my paintings that are then violated by superimposition, thereby rendering the paintings non-literal or metaphoric. By subjecting mimetic (realistic) images to superimposition I can alter their natural perspective and produce an assemblage of images that is unlikely to be literal even when the content of each image can form a literal association.

The assemblage and layering process entailed in superimposition impacts upon the narrative and meaning of the painted images. The archaeologist Leroi-Gourhan states that the layering of figurative images by pre-historic people of Europe ‘suggest that superimposition can be synchronically imposed, being perceived as a specific form of representation’ (2010, p.24). Leroi-Gourhan maintains that:

[t]he complexity of the links between the figures, the game with superimposition and oblique perspective have led us to assume the existence of an organisation for the assemblages of figures which makes of them ideologically pertinent entities (2010, p.43).

Leroi-Gourhan hypothesises that the superimposition of figurative images in European cave paintings was not the result of lack of space, or successive generations painting over previous images, rather that the paintings were consciously superimposed and that ‘the significance of the groups of figures would clearly emerge in response to the right question’ (2010, p.43).
The semantic meaning of “parietal20 assemblage” and what it represents is uncertain to contemporary minds, however if viewed from Arnheim’s perspective, we can perhaps gain a clearer idea. Arnheim states, ‘Visual thinking calls, more broadly, for the ability to see visual shapes as images of the patterns of forces that underlie our existence – the function of minds, of bodies or machines, the structure of societies or ideas’ (1974, p.315). The use of figurative superimposition in cave paintings demonstrates “patterns of forces” and describes “the function of minds” that arguably represent a mental understanding and experience of metaphorical thinking. A method of layering images that are disproportionate in size or disparate in subject renders them metaphoric, highlight the ways in which non-literal expression enacts mythological and, or philosophical methodology in a painted visual image.

My painting Human Nature [image 18] expresses concepts through figurative images and through the deviation of those images by the process of superimposition. Arnheim’s statement that ‘every pictorial analogue performs the task of reasoning by fusing sensory appearance and generic concepts into one unified cognitive statement’ (1997, p.148) describes the subject and object relationship of figurative images. By depicting a human figure as male, female, young or old, ancient or contemporary I provide a generic concept of humanity and a unified cognitive statement regarding human nature. However the use of superimposition distorts the sensory appearance of the figure and the generic concept depicted by the figure, and in doing so expresses a second metaphoric cognitive statement about transformation. The Attic vase painting style did not use superimposition to activate a chaos-and-order paradigm. Attic vase painting detailed the Ancient Greek creation myth by

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20 Parietal: Archaeology denoting prehistoric art found on rock walls.
producing all the figures fully, in one colour and surrounded by space in another colour (Laporte 1947) thus demonstrating a dichotomy of form and space. My use of superimposition is an innovation\textsuperscript{21} by me that activates and details aspects of control and chance thus transforming the image and demonstrating the technique’s expression of the concepts of chaos-and-order (chance and design).

\begin{center}
\textbf{[Image 18] Human Nature, 2006}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{[Image 19] Detail Attic red-figure, 500 BC, Kleophon Painter}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{21} This aspect of the project initiates a contextualization and deconstruction of the Attic vase painting style that will be pursued and elaborated upon in the third suite of paintings and in the third chapter of the exegesis.
My mixing of images with varying representations of the physical dimensions of depth, height, width and the psychological dimensions of time and semantic association in my painting *Human Nature* [image 18] enacts a move towards metaphoric expression. Pictorial images are vital to the rendering of the composition’s metaphoric dimension according to Kennedy and what is distorted is the spatial reality of the pictorial image. For example in *Human Nature* my superimposition of Klee’s figures [image 20] on my self-portrait [image 5] enacts the transformation of the physical appearance of both images and results in a movement of the content and concepts of each image into a metaphoric composite image, relating to the difference and similarity between the male (Oedipus) and female (Antigone) psyche. Superimposition enacts and demonstrates a visible progression from one image to multiple images and then to a composite image that provides a climax to the process in the form of an extended metaphor.

Blinder’s statement that ‘[s]igns are always related to an interpretive schema, and the informative content of the sign depends upon the subject’s familiarity with the schema’ (1986, p.22) is pertinent to the interpretation of my assemblage. The
identity of the characters from the Theban plays and a knowledge of the discourse regarding man’s mental and physical interaction with the world in Paul Klee painting *The Navigator* (1956) is required in order to read the painting’s conceptual narrative. In Klee’s painting I see a metaphoric expression of man’s ability to control the uncertainty of the world through abstract thought. Tools such as boats and spears, and concepts such as grids and navigation describe human intellect and a philosophical worldview. The depiction of a natural environment that has seals as monsters, the darkness surrounding the figure and the act of stabbing the seal are semantic expressions of uncertainty and chaos. Together the two oppositional elements detail a paradigm of control and uncertainty.

My second image is a self-portrait used here to represent Oedipus, the father of Antigone. My third image is a detail from *Isabel with Puppies* already defined as representing a young Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus. These two images are used to illustrate the genealogical and social connections between father and daughter in my painting. The fourth image is an Ancient Greek female figure included to represent the ideal, noble version of Ancient Greek women. In Antigone’s time women were bound by the social rules governing family, which were set by the state and the gods. When Antigone challenges the ruling by the state to fulfil the natural and social role set by the gods to honour family in life and death, her actions are in keeping with what the Ancient Greeks considered to come from a person who possesses natural instincts that are noble. The four images in *Human Nature* were assembled to produce a myth regarding Ancient Greek and contemporary human psyche. The Attic female is not used to represent a single Ancient Greek woman, or Ancient Greek women, but
rather the idea of noble action. Oedipus represents intellect and Antigone represents the notion of daughter.

That which is signified by the portraits is used to produce a signification of Antigone's noble nature and Oedipus’s ability to fathom nature – the two traits that define their characters. These two concepts are alluded to by the beasts superimposed over the head of Oedipus, metaphorically expressing his destruction of the Sphinx, and the image of Isabel [image 1] superimposed over the young woman [image 19], which suggests a similarity of traits between the two figures. The Greek figure sits above the other figures alluding to higher ideal and the central position of Klee’s figure states its role in the construction of the image. The similarity in Antigone and Oedipus’s facial expressions, the physical interconnection of the two figures and their proximity and the evenness in height, all allude to a genetic link between the two figures. The painting becomes an allegoric painting about human traits and characteristics that shape humanity’s engagement with the social and natural environments.

In my painting [image 18] the four images could have been placed side by side and would arguably still have provided a metaphoric narrative, however my premise of utilising, expressing, and especially activating, as well as depicting a chaos-and-order paradigm is made possible by my use of superimposition. Human Nature (2006) demonstrates the depiction and deformation of realistic images and states that the way the image was constructed introduces chance into the production process and this in turn impacts on the resulting image. By composing my painting [image 18] using superimposition, a technique that violates standard representation
I am testing the hypothesis that superimposition is a system that utilises and demonstrates the forces of chance and design. The Attic black-figure vase painting style used a colour duality to represent chaos (the void) and order (the Cosmos); I have used superimposition to express a change in the figurative images (cosmos) by chance (chaos).

2.4: Summary

This chapter has defined metaphor as a cognitive psychological process that contextualises human experience in signs and symbols and provides non-literal expression. My research of the Theban plays and the Attic vase painting style, through figurative superimposition, enters the third and final stage, which is demonstrated by the development and implementation of a new form of visual expression in my artwork. The superimposition of black-figure images will be designated as a system of making that combines superimposition, figuration, the Attic black-figure painting style, the narrative of the Theban plays and the concept of chaos-and-order that provides the conclusion to the project’s research.
Chapter three: Metamorphosis

3: Introduction

Chapter one defined mimesis as the imitation of the external world and chapter two defined metaphor as a cognitive expression of the world. The third chapter will detail the physical and psychological epistemology of my artwork that enacts metamorphosis and its engagement with and expression of creative forces. By exploring the form and style of my paintings and their activation of the creative paradigm of chaos-and-order, I am foregrounding the creative forces that manifest in metamorphosis. This is achieved through a process of installing multiplicity and difference, and employing chance and design as my project’s philosophical and artistic enquiry and expression.

I will firstly detail the metamorphosis of Attic black-figure painting styles’ depiction of a dialectic regarding the oppositional dichotomy of form and space achieved by my use of superimposition as a transformative paradigm of assemblage. Secondly, my use of figurative superimposition to enact multiplicity and to engage an artistic and philosophical enquiry of creative forces will be examined. I will conclude by defining the black-figure style as the subject matter (material) morphed by superimposition’s transformative system in order to engage with the creative forces of the cosmos (chaos theory (chaos) and the theory of general relativity (order)). My use of polycarbonate as a ground is espoused as a strategic material used to provide complexity and multiplicity within the exhibition space as well as a discourse regarding abstraction and figuration. The transparency of polycarbonate allows a
complex and multiple configuration of images. Its flexibility as a material allows me to test a range of possibilities of installation.\textsuperscript{22} The tone of the third suite of paintings emphasises the cognitive, psychological aspect of the image to engage certain neurological processes in the viewer’s mind. My use of colour is reduced to emphasize the philosophical enquiry of Attic black-figure pottery and my deconstruction of a dialectic form to rhizomatic form.

\textbf{3.1: Dialectic-Assemblage}


\textsuperscript{22} In previous tests in the studio the works were installed in space and eventually final decisions were made which are evident in the exhibition.
I begin chapter three by explaining that the metamorphosis of pictorial images by superimposition results in my activation and exploration of chaos-and-order as creative forces. Attic black-figure paintings’ depiction of the oppositional space and form dichotomy will be set out as a dialectic system of enquiry, and the assemblage system of superimposition will be illustrated as detailing multiplicity, difference and transformation.

A psychological metamorphosis is entailed in the mimetic transfer of the prior (entity) into a symbolic (internal) world; metaphor’s transfer of thought into the external (real) world and, in superimpositions transformation of figurative images. The metamorphosis of black-figure images veer superimposition makes explicit the role of metamorphosis in my paintings’ process and expression. The superimposition of black-figure images illustrates a physical and psychological change in the images and elucidates the modification of the Attic black-figure styles philosophical and artistic enquiry in my work.

Other then a small number of early paintings, I have used figurative superimposition in all my subsequent paintings as a method for installing multiplicity and difference, as well as enacting chance and transformation. In doing so, I have described a methodology that explores the forces of chaos-and-order employed by these aspects of my painting process, and have outlined the theoretical and practical aspect of the project’s research. Deleuze and Guattari explain that:

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of
deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow of these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and ruptures. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage* (2004, p.3-4).

In the segmentarity of my pictorial assemblage paintings, strata and territories are defined through mimesis and metaphor – with metaphor and superimposition used to enact lines of flight, movement and deterritorialization through transformation. My paintings demonstrate that the deliberation and consideration (*legein*) of my project’s research outlining a creative paradigm of chaos-and-order, with the assembling, adjusting and constructing (*teukhein*) of my paintings activating this paradigm through practice. My decision to re-paint the project’s paintings to date using only black paint is a direct engagement with, and a transformation of, the Attic black-figure pottery stylistic methods, methodology, content and concepts, and in turn their philosophical enquiry and expression. This is undertaken in order to make explicit the ‘metamorphosis: a change of the form or nature of a thing or person into a completely different one, by natural or supernatural means’ (Oxford 2009) of the black-figure style’s *legein* and *teukhein*.

As already stated in chapter one, in the process of separation of Attic vase painting from religion, it still ‘held, implicitly, the threads of philosophy’ (Laporte 1947, p.144). The chaos-and-order duality as creative process set out in the creation myth was replaced by ‘a compositional solution or a logical explanation’ (Laporte 1947, p.146) in the form of a negating dialectic system of philosophical enquiry. As much as the Cosmos came from, thereby existed within the Void (chaos), space exists within the Cosmos. The two are inseparable not as oppositional dichotomies, but rather as a creative paradigm. The creation myth states the birth of something from
nothing; the dialectic states an opposition between something and nothing. The ‘compositional solution’ (Laporte 1947, p.146) removed the creation aspect of the myth and separates the two aspects of chaos-and-order making them oppositional rather than a united paradigm.

Attic pottery’s utilisation of ‘the antithesis between black and white, or darkness and light’ (Gage 1993), by depicting and isolating full human figures in space, details a methodology that examines space and form in nature. The oppositional colour dichotomy of black-figure painting (black and white) is used to illustrate an oppositional dichotomy of matter (space and form) demonstrating the higher truth regarding the chaos (void) and order (cosmos) duality reported in the Ancient Greek creation myth. Both the method and methodology of the Attic black-figure Vase painting style arguably demonstrate a dialectic system of philosophical enquiry that, according to Aristotle, was invented by Zeno of Elea, and used extensively in Ancient Greece by Socrates (469 BC-399 BC) and Plato.

The German philosopher G.F.W. Hegel re-introduced the dialectic, defining its philosophical enquiry as a triadic progression, in which an idea is proposed, then negated, and finally transcended by a new idea that resolves the conflict between the first thesis and its negation or anti-thesis. The process results in a synthesis, or higher truth. I argue that this oppositional dialectic can be found visually in the Attic black-figure images proposition of form in black and space in white to result in a higher truth regarding the oppositional dichotomy of space and form (Chaos and Cosmos). This conclusion is reinforced by the writing of Laporte (1947).
My painting *Nature–Nurture* [image 21] utilises a figurative image of a man and a figurative image of a landscape in order to detail a discourse regarding their existence and interaction. Rather than depict a figure in the landscape, I have superimposed a figure into the landscape to transform and disrupt both the images with the aim of creating a metaphoric expression of how the figure and the landscape work together.
as forces that form and transform each other. My cropping of the portrait removes the aspect of form isolated in space that is a key feature of the oppositional dialectic of Attic black-figure paintings in their approach to space and form. My superimposition of the two images morphs the realistic (mimetic) expression of space and form, replacing the concept of an oppositional dichotomy of space and form, and installing the expression of transformative forces as the concept of the composite image.

Line, and to a lesser extent colour, has been used in my interpretation [image 23] of Albrecht Durer’s (1471-1528) painting *View of Argo*, [image 22] to highlight the way Durer depicts the space and form aspects of the landscape. My interpretation [image 23] deliberately accentuates the contour lines and extends others to run through the landscape and beyond the frame to make a grid over the landscape. By framing the image, I illustrate that it is an image of a landscape constructed by Durer. Whereas the original painting [image 22] details the alteration of the natural world by agriculture and the social in a ‘topographical watercolour’ (Bartrum 2007, p.6), my version is intended to show shows the artists process of construction of a painting where landscape is a motif’, with the main concern being the pictorial plain itself as a activating space. Through my deconstruction of the image I demonstrate that the landscape is not my prime concern. It is a starting point for the construction of the picture plain.

Durer’s depiction of the landscape is formed and informed by his knowledge of visual perspective and measurement, which he chronicles in his four-part treatise, titled *Four Books of Measurement* 1525, on architecture, engineering, perspective and geometric measurement. On display, in this painting [image 22], is Durer’s ‘application of rules
of perspective’ (Strauss 1972, p.9) which is described as a ‘rationalization of sight’ (Strauss 1972, p.9). However Durer’s comment on his work as ‘Vergleichlichkeit, or harmonies relationship, or perhaps more properly, “allegorical significance” (Strauss 1972, p.10) illustrates his understanding that his depiction of a landscape shows man’s impact on his environment and provides an allegorical painting about human existence. There is a ‘mixture of allegory and realism’ (Strauss 1972, p.11) mimesis and metaphor in Durer’s work that I have accentuated to illuminate the aspect of a constructed landscape by transforming the space-and-form dichotomy of the image.

My self-portrait titled *Death Shroud* [image 5] superimposed on the landscape is used here to represent Oedipus at the time of his death in the Theban play *Oedipus at Colonus*. The play’s narrative details the internment of Oedipus’s body in a craggy hillside near the city of Colonus. It is stated that Oedipus’s place of entombment ‘will insure your city’s safe defence’ (Watling 1947, p.118). The description by Sophocles creates a literal and metaphoric link between the landscape and Oedipus that has implications on the place and its people, now and into the future. This in turn illustrates the mythological understanding of man’s influence on nature. Sophocles’ notion that Oedipus is a force that lives on and bears influence on the surrounding land and its people into the future is reiterated by my interpretation of man as a force in nature.

Even though I have depicted man as a figurative entity, an individual and nature as a form and a place using a deconstructed Attic black-figure style, my expression of a transformative event, a process, a doing, humanity as a force, and nature as a force is the paramount discourse of my art work. In my painting [image 21] the Attic black-
By combining Oedipus and the landscape using superimposition, I am using a technique, which entails the addition of images, the orchestration of transformation, and provides the expression of new interpretive possibilities. The addition of components is a creative process because even when a component is ‘among the most highly determined, even mechanized, of components’, its entry into the assemblage ‘will still bring “play” to what it composes’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.336).

Assemblage is a process that:

- fosters the entry of new dimensions of the milieus by releasing processes of discernibility, specialization, contraction, and acceleration that open new
possibilities that open the territorial assemblage onto interassamblages (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.336).

The superimposition process using assemblage provides unknown outcomes in the sense that the deterministic action of assemblage and layering by superimposition affects indeterminable change in the images. When I superimpose images I cannot determine the exact form the merged image will take, in the same way that Oedipus could not determine the exact course of his life. Chance will always play a part.  

I have related my assemblage of images through superimposition as a means to demonstrate and activate the creative forces of chaos-and-order entailed in the concept of multiplicity. The assemblage and layering of images by superimposition is pronounced as a way of initiating a deconstruction and transformation of the space-and-form dichotomy. This is the dichotomy found in the Attic black-figure images’ oppositional form-and-space dialectic, with reference to the Ancient Greek creation myth.

The following discussion will explore and explain the philosophical enquiry initiated by my black-figure superimposition paintings. I will explain why superimposition enacts a process of metamorphosis. Through the concept and process of multiplicity there is a shift from the black-figure’s negating dialectic to an expression of affirmation and becoming.

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23 In his book *Greek Tragedy & Political Philosophy, Rationalism and religion in Sophocles’ Theban Plays*, Peter J. Ahrensdorf’s looks to contest the notion that Sophocles espoused chance as a governing factor in the ancient Greek world portrayed in The Theban Plays. He argues that reason in the form of philosophical cognition, rather then chance comprising religious/spiritual belief is the message Sophocles has constructed. However he acknowledges that chance is a matter of discourse within the plays, thereby giving credence to Nietzsche’s notion of a chance and design, chaos and order duality being a creative paradigm within the plays.
3.2: Transformation-Rhizomatic

I will explain firstly that the conclusion to my philosophical investigation into creative forces in Attic theatre, Attic pottery and my art practice is detailed in the metamorphosis of the Attic black-figure style by my use of superimposition. The physical and metaphysical transformation of black-figure images through assemblage and layering will be characterised as installing a rhizomatic system of philosophical enquiry with reference to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The rhizome as a way of thinking and being is a philosophical concept put forward by Deleuze and Guattari in *a thousand plateaus* (2004).

I have investigated how a chaos-and-order duality is depicted in Attic theatre and pottery as two forms of artistic expression. This exploration, through my art practice was not intended to be the depiction of narrative from the Theban plays, which deal with chaos-and-order, but rather it was to activate these forces as a duality of chaos-
and-order in my work. The examination of these forces by Nietzsche and Deleuze resulted in what Mohammad Zayani described as ‘a radical philosophy which is concerned with the invention of new modes of existence and the creation of new possibilities for life; i.e., a philosophy that can break away from the limits of representation’ (1999, p.331). My paintings parallel this approach of breaking away from representational modes, by moving from the figurative representation of the characters and events in the Theban plays to the activation of the forces of chaos-and-order that are engaged by the characters and events in the plays.

My paintings firstly remove what Castoriadis describes as ‘our phantasies’ when we are forced ‘to chose between geometry and chaos’ (1987, p.72). His postulation that ‘[t]otal order and total disorder’ are ‘not the components of the real’ (1987, p.72) means that philosophical or artistic enquiry regarding the Cosmos requires a process that activates and depicts both chaos-and-order. However the two forces should not be seen as oppositional, but rather in the same way ‘as the reproduction of species depends on the duality of the sexes’ (Nietzsche 1993, p.14). This is a creative duality in both the process-based and theoretical investigations of my art practice.

The solution for me was to engage with the Attic black-figure style in order to displace the negative aspects of its dialectic system of enquiry through the utilisation of assemblage as a form of multiplicity. There is a Nietzschean procedure here, in the acknowledgement and utilization of difference as a way of promoting affirmation.

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24 This last suite of painting is essentially the conclusion to the project. The images have an emphasis on the forces used to produce the work rather then the figurative aspect of my art practice. Tragic theatre uses figuration and phenomena of everyday relationships to represent forces of chaos-and-order I am using the distortion (chaos) of figuration/form (order) to activate and express the forces of chaos-and-order.
Nietzsche states that:

becoming multiplicity and chance do not contain any negation; difference is pure affirmation; return is the being of difference excluding the whole of the negative (Zayani 1999, p.328).

The method of superimposing images requires the assemblage of images in the pictorial space, thereby activating multiplicity and difference. As Zayani states, ‘Nietzsche celebrates difference; in lieu of a dialectical negation which thrives on opposition, he advocates an affirmation which thrives on difference’ (1999, p.328). Pictorial assemblage not only illuminates the use of multiple images it also celebrates multiplicity and difference. (Further discussed in chapter 4.) In this context my black-figure images that utilise superimposition are an engagement with, and a description of, an artistic philosophy that promotes creative affirmation in the form of multiplicity and difference. These are the ‘forces, densities, intensities’ utilised in my art practice (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.343).

The change from a system of enquiry that relies on negation to a system of enquiry that results in affirmation, results in dynamism and experimentation, similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s mode of philosophical enquiry:

from the pursuit of static principles and ordering realities to an interest in dynamic movements and immanent dynamics, from the configuration of resultants to the mapping of flows, from the representation of essence to an experimentation with events (Zayani 1999, p.333).

This change was made possible by the rhizomatic system that combines four principles: ‘connection and heterogeneity’, ‘multiplicity’ and ‘asignifying ruptures’ (2004, p7-8-9).
In this rhizomatic system there are no oppositional dichotomies or negating dialectics because the rhizome\textsuperscript{25} is a creative system that cannot be reduced to the one. The system works with the multiple, which cannot be reduced to the entities and pluralities that form oppositional dichotomies because the rhizome deals with the middle of things. The rhizome is:

made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, change in nature (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.21).

The rhizome has segmentation and stratification\textsuperscript{26} as its dimensions in the guise of space and form. It also has lines of flight or deterritorialization in the guise of action and forces of expression. In my black-figure paintings, the dialectic of Attic vase paintings maps the space and form aspect of the cosmos, and the assemblage system of superimposition outlines the action and forces of the cosmos. This in turn results in metamorphosis. My superimposition paintings bring the forces of order (stratification) and chaos (deterritorialization) together in the one picture space, emulating the rhizome while mapping the transformation, movement, dynamics, flows, events, ruptures, consolidations, deformations and organisations, and enacting a ‘change in nature’ through the painting process.

\textsuperscript{25} There is no rhizomatic process in Attic pottery painting; my inclusion of this form of philosophical enquiry is a key aspect of my deviation from, and deconstruction of, the painting style of Attic black-figure pottery with its dialectic philosophy. Thus my investigations are opening up new knowledge and expression for art practice.

\textsuperscript{26} Segmentation and stratification of content and concepts is the issue for both the rhizome and my paintings. Stratification is the layering of content and ideas not form; segmentation is the production of individual ideas and not the physical segmentation of the form.
[Image 24] *Attic Minstrel Song*, 2009


[Image 27] *Isabel*, 2006

[Image 26] *Lyre player, 500 BC*
*Attic Minstrel Song* [image 24] presents a pictorial assemblage comprising several aspects from the mediated and constructed worlds of painting, pottery, cartography, drawings, and tracings. They include: a large image of my daughter Isabel [image 27] on the right hand side of the painting (representing Antigone); an image from Ancient Greek Attic red-figure pottery, of a minstrel [image 26] representing artistic expression in Ancient Greece; a topographic map of the Greek landmass and islands outlining the place where the events took place; a schematic drawing of ancient burial mounds alluding to Antigone’s place of incarceration and death; an image of the city of Athens representing Attic theatre and pottery; and two tracings of hands: mine and Isabel’s representing the father-daughter, Oedipus-Antigone relationship. There is some geometric patterning appropriated from Greek pottery along the top and bottom of the painting’s picture plane, and a significant quantity of non-representational lines drawn throughout the picture space. The pictorial images were chosen to represent Antigone’s place of birth and death, her punishment by the state and her significance to the culture of Ancient Greece.

The layering of figurative images in *Attic Minstrel Song*, initiates a process of abstraction where the realistic content is altered. This process transforms the mimetic representation of essence as ‘forms and matter, or themes’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.343) and which moves towards the enactment of chaotic forces. Lines move across the figurative images, transforming the mimetic space-form dichotomy in order to enact a more lively form of deconstruction and reconstruction. Deleuze and Guattari explain that ‘[i]t is only after the matter has been sufficiently deterritorialized that it itself emerges as molecular and brings forth pure forces attributable only to the Cosmos’ (2004, p.347). Figurative portraits demonstrate set boundaries of
representation such as eyes, mouth and nose, whereas the layering of figurative portraits distorts those boundaries so they become an expression of creative forces unleashed by their reconstruction. This recreation of chaotic and orderly forces relates to the plays’ narratives regarding chaos-and-order. In the play Antigone's wish to comply with the performing burial rights (social order) results in a state of chaos as Creon condemns her to death by entombment in a cave for these same actions.

Attic pottery’s technique of producing a figurative image on the surface of the vessel by incising\textsuperscript{27} the lines of the image is replaced in my process of drawing\textsuperscript{28} with intersecting lines and by the device of superimposition that cuts up the mimetic images in \textit{Attic Minstrel Song} [image 24] and breaks down the literal depiction of the objects/subjects. The result is a non-literal depiction of figurative space and form. The lines and forms that describe densities and intensities now also express movements, flows and changes that mimic the forces of construction and deconstruction. The assemblage in \textit{Attic Minstrel Song} [image 24], through layering of the pictorial images enacts the move from realistic depiction of figurative entities to semi-abstract forms; in other words the work progressed from mimesis (imitation) to metaphor (interpretation) to metamorphosis (superimposition) in order to demonstrate change as a creative force.

As described in Chapter one, change in Attic tragic theatre is enacted by the technique of peripety: the enacting of chance (chaos) through the gaining of knowledge (order) that results in a reversal of fortune (change). In the same way that a change of fortune

\textsuperscript{27} Incise: mark or decorate (an object or surface) with a cut or a series of cuts.
\textsuperscript{28} I saw no benefit in replicating the incision process of the Attic pottery painting. The incision lines in Attic pottery are not a contributing factor to the concept of chaos-and-order. Both my images and that of Attic pottery painting depict the figure using lines and coloured segments.
(peripety) describes chaos-and-order in tragic theatre, my paintings use superimposition to bring about physical and conceptual change and evolution of the image by exploiting a chaos-and-order duality. The use of transformation in my paintings means that 'the essential thing is no longer forms and matter, or themes’ that represent entities, but rather ‘forces, densities, intensities’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.343) that express the forces of creation. Superimposed mimetic drawings result in a method of transformation that strips the figurative images of their specific meaning, thereby producing a work that is informed by disturbance as a creative force.

My activation of a chaos-and-order duality as a creative paradigm is achieved by my metamorphosis of the Attic Pottery black-figure, painting style, following Nietzsche’s dictum that, 'you will learn nothing through concepts unless you have first created them’ (Zayani 1999, p.331). This same sentiment is reiterated by Deleuze and Guattari:

The task of philosophy when it creates concepts, entities, is always to extract an event from things and being, to set up the new event: space, time, matter, thought, the possible as events (Zayani 1999, p.333).

My painting [image 24] demonstrates a conceptual change from a dialectic system to a rhizomatic system. This is evidenced through the depiction of entities and essences via a method of isolating figurative form within a picture space to the expression of forces and flows by a method of assembling and layering figurative forms, and extending those forms beyond the pictorial space. I have transformed both the entity and event that constitute Antigone in order to express the forces encapsulated in the person and the event. This is done by ‘bringing into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states’ (2004, p.21). Line and colour are used to form patterns (signs) as well
as disruptions (nonsigns) that are derived from, and express, the forces of chaos-and-order.

I have portrayed the transformation of the philosophical leaning of my art practice from the depiction of meaning to the expression of forces, from oppositions to multiplicity and difference, from being to becoming and, most importantly, from negation to affirmation. My use of the black-figure painting style to portray entities, which can be then transformed by superimposition, brings the project to the next aspect of exploration.

3.3: Superimposition-Material/Forces

The Theban Trilogy, 2010
I will conclude this chapter by designating the relationship between entities and forces in my rhizomatic black-figure superimposition paintings. This triptych [images 28-29-21] titled The Theban trilogy presents my interpretation of the discourses of the Theban plays regarding cognition, society and the complexities of the human condition.

The metamorphosis of a pictorial image by assemblage and layering via superimposition is the philosophical and artistic point of enquiry in my project. Within the techniques and processes of assembling, adjusting, fabricating and constructing, metamorphosis is enacted. A chaos-and-order duality that is capable of utilising and expressing a third force, the creative force of the cosmos (evolution) is enacted by disturbance (Castoriadis 1987), and by deterritorilization (Deleuze & Guattari 2004). Whereas the Attic black-figure styles’ depiction of entities and essence has a matter-form relationship. There paint is used to detail the form of an object. However with the assemblage and layering processes of superimposition ‘the essential thing is no longer forms and matters, or themes, but forces, densities, intensities’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.343). Superimposition activates ‘nonvisual forces that nevertheless have been rendered visible’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.343); forces that act upon the depiction of matter and the expression of form.

My use of black-figure images is an engagement with a matter–form paradigm, ‘a pre-existing paradigm’ (Castoriadis 1987) that is imitated, repeated and reproduced. The black-figure images imitate the pre-existing paradigm of human form or landscape providing what Deleuze and Guattari pronounce as a territorial image, which sets the parameters of the entity it depicts. In music and literature the refrain
uses this matters and form relationship to produces ‘a first type of refrain, a territorial
or assemblage refrain’ (2004, p.349). This first refrain is in turn manipulated ‘in order
to transform it from within, deterritorialise it, producing a refrain of the second type
as the final end of music: the cosmic refrain of a sound machine’ (2004, p.349)
through a transformation process that activates a cosmic form of expression.

The Attic black-figure, painting style provides the first type of image, a territorial
image that sets out in matter the parameters of a black-white colour dichotomy, and
describes a physical space-object dichotomy in form. By superimposing black-figure
images, their matters-forms relationship is transformed by the layering process that
deterritorialises the object/subject depicted, and produces a second type of image
which activates a metamorphosis and details the ‘[o]pening [of my] assemblage onto
a cosmic force’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.350).

When I superimpose a second black-figure image onto the first I am initiating the
construction of ‘the abstract machine that connects a language to the semantic and
pragmatic contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a
whole micropolitics of social field’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.7). The abstraction
component labelled as “[t]he art of drawing essentials from a given kind of entity”
(Arnheim 1997, p.173) entailed in figurative representation connects my images to
the semantic, pragmatic and collective aspects of the abstract machine. However my
superimposition of images also ‘unites disparate elements in the material, and

29 As already described by Laporte, Attic black-figure pottery painting has an oppositional dichotomy
as its foundation. The dichotomy is also a philosophical enquiry that uses a dialectic process for its
exploration and expression of a synthesis notion. This dichotomy is engaged by my use of black and
white, however my use of superimposition deconstructs and converts the dialectic to a rhizomatic
philosophical enquiry that explores forces and becoming rather than being that is predicated on an
oppositional dialectic.
transposes the parameters from one formula to another’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.343). The parameter of semantic expression is transposed to the expression of forces by my uniting of all the elements through superimposition. Mimetic forces of organisation outline an order that is transposed by superimpositions that change the formula and produce an image that adopts and activates the creative forces of chaos-and-order.

In other words, my painting employs a creative practice that utilises ‘[f]orces of chaos, territorial forces and cosmic forces’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.312) as ‘forces of creation’ (2004, p.342). Deleuze and Guattari characterised the engagement with these forces of creation through artistic expression in the following way:

[s]ometimes chaos is an immense black hole in which one endeavours to fix a fragile point as a centre. Sometimes one organizes around that point a calm and stable “pace” (rather than a form): the black hole becomes a home. Sometimes one grafts onto that pace a breakaway from the black hole (2004, p312).

In my black-figure triptych [images 28-29-21] the forces of chaos are harnessed by my depiction of a human figure (mimesis) to set the point; terrestrial forces are represented by the black-figure painting style/system that describes a form and space dichotomy (signs and symbols). Cosmic forces are activated when superimposition grafts on a second image, thereby enacting a breakaway and moving the figure and the black-figure system from the depiction of a space/form dichotomy, to the expression of chaos-and-order as transformative forces of creation.
My aim was always to activate the forces of chaos-and-order detailed in the *Theban plays*, particularly in relation to fate and design in human existence. The three paintings that form my triptych [images 28-29-21] have already been individually analysed in the exegesis; together they detail my interpretation of the abstract concepts I see as fundamental to each play, while simultaneously highlighting the creative paradigm of chaos-and-order that gave birth to Attic theatre and the *Theban plays*.

In the first painting of my triptych [image 28] geometry represents man’s cognitive abstraction of the physical world that in turn reshapes man and his urban world. The play *Oedipus Rex* deals with humanity’s cognitive perception and abstraction of the natural world by relating how psychological forces construct meaning and therefore reason. In the second painting [image 29], the four figures re-shape each other’s
image, perspective and content. Antigone, the play, has an emphasis on the social constructs of kinship and burial rites; it also portrays the anthropomorphization of the natural world. In the play, social forces (burial rites) shape the human world, but they also shape the way we describe the cosmos. The final painting [image 21] pronounces man (i.e. human being) and nature as the paradigm of human existence. Oedipus at Colonus explores the essence of the human and the natural (Nature), providing a conceptual notion that both are forces premised on, and which exist in, a chaos-and-order creative paradigm.

I have not produced a triptych that depicts the peripetic moment when the messenger tells Oedipus that he was adopted as a child, or when the body of Oedipus is entombed on the craggy hill, or when Antigone performs burial rites for her brother – these are deemed to be the three pivotal moments in the Theban plays. Artists have depicted these scenes since the plays were first performed. What I have done is to define in plastic terms cognition, society and evolution, or change, as the concepts that express the interrelationship between man and nature, the individual and society, life and death, chance and design, and chaos-and-order in the Theban plays. I have demonstrated Attic theatre’s expression of these concepts through my use of multiplicity, difference, forces and flows rather than oppositional dichotomies. As a triptych the three images display the forces of repetition in matter and form using line and colour, and the forces of transformation (alteration) in material and events through layering and assemblage.

The ‘mnemonic function’ of figurative superimposition in my paintings is outlined in Sontag’s statement that ‘every style depends on, and can be analysed in terms of,
some principle of repetition or redundancy’ (1966, p.24). My use of figurative superimposition assigns all my paintings with a recognisable technique that demonstrates the transformation of the perception and representation of figurative images.\textsuperscript{30} My style ‘insist[s] on’ (Sontag 1966, p.35) the role of metamorphosis in art, which I have represented by what Sontag terms as ‘stylistic decisions’ (1966, p.35) that focus the attention on transformation.

Superimposed black-figure paintings demand the activation of a chaos-and-order paradigm inherent in cosmic and artistic phenomena, and this is achieved by my style’s enactment of the forces of chance and design through figurative superimposition. Nietzsche defined the duality of Apollo (order) and Dionysus (chaos) as the creative paradigm that gave birth to, and is the underlying expression of, Attic tragic theatre. It is important to reiterate here that, in Arnheim’s words, ‘[i]n the arts the image is the statement. It contains and displays the forces about which it reports’ (1997, p.301). My methodology of bringing together formal and philosophical concerns is crucial in my approach to superimposition.

I have detailed Laporte's hypothesis that Attic black-figure vase painting describes the chaos-and-order paradigm of the Ancient Greek creation myth as a dialectic philosophy. My paintings’ use and adoption of Attic theatre’s chance and design duality, and the space and form dichotomy of Attic black-figure pottery paintings, provides a visual language that itself morphs into the manifestation of a chaos-and-order creative paradigm. I am, as Klee famously states, ‘rendering visible’ (1924) the metamorphosis of ‘many simultaneous [conceptual and cognitive] dimensions which

\textsuperscript{30} The understanding and acknowledgement of chaos-and-order or chance and design as perceived aspects of certain art methods and methodologies influences the development of Western contemporary painting practice.
helps drama to its climax’ (Klee 1924, p.17) and in so doing I am mimicking the process of Cosmic creation. The disruptive forces activated by the intersecting lines are chaotic forces of transformation and evolution demonstrating chance as well as moving the overall expression of the composite image from mimetic representation to the expression of creative evolution of form, content and concept.

3.4: Layered multiplicity

Superimposition is my strategic key to the evolution of the form, content and concepts expressed in my paintings that activates an artistic philosophical and material enquiry regarding multiplicity. My disruption of the figurative form by compressing the two images into one changes the form, content and concepts of the finished image into semi-abstraction. In essence a form of geometric abstraction is accomplished not as the twentieth century, Cubist art movement and their construction of the human form
through geometric shapes and passage across the pictorial planes, but rather as the exploration and illustration of a physical system of construction that activates an abstraction of figurative form. Thus in this suite of paintings I am composing chaos-and-order through the combining of layered figurative images to produce abstraction through multiplicity and disruption. As Arnheim states:

> The thought element in perception and the perception element in thought are complementary. They make human cognition a unitary process, which leads without break from the elementary acquisition of sensory information to the most generic theoretical ideas. The essential trait of this unitary cognitive process is that at every level it involves abstraction (1997, p.153).

In my last series of paintings it is abstraction as a cognitive aspect of human neurology and its role in my art practice’s chaos-and-order paradigm that I look to elucidate. I bring historical notions of abstraction such as geometric cubism and combine them with the contemporary sphere of abstraction in order to activate a chaos-and-order paradigm. However with my reproduction of all earlier paintings in black the multiplicity of images was retained, the layering aspect was diminished as the images are now residing on the one picture plane.

The last series of images in the exhibition, for this project features paintings on clear plastic that are layered one upon another. By doing this I have re-emphasized superimposition as a system of activating multiplicity within a creative paradigm of chaos-and-order. The material now becomes a signifier of content, transparency, elasticity, plasticity and layering. Here is a discourse regarding painting as a material itself that is engaged in a new way by my use of plastic. The layering of images painted on plastic becomes an effective contemporary way of exploring mimesis and
metaphor in my project. Mimesis is deconstructed and metaphor is engaged by the material’s ability to allow an effective process of superimposition of one image field over another. The elements of figuration and abstraction start to speak to one another. These images themselves then engage in a discourse that speaks back to both the artist and viewer. The practical application of this plastic material is enabling a discourse that extends the painting technique of figurative superimposition as a chaos-and-order paradigm. These are formalist concerns that can be explored through paint, and the paint and ground relationship of material are engaged through this use of plastic.

My re-engagement of superimposition through the use of a transparent ground (polycarbonate) brings contemporary materials into the discourse regarding abstraction and figuration. This layering of paintings pronounces a complexity by activating multiplicity of conceptual notions, in both historical and contemporary space, with the fragmentation of tragic theatre narrative and the construction and deconstruction of figurative form. The material (polycarbonate 31) now ties into this notion of layering by allowing the overlapping of paintings to create composite images. Materiality enables the conglomeration of paintings to provide a composite image that can be read through each layer. This promotes another strategic process for the abstraction of figurative forms via superimposition. Interplay between the historical ideas and philosophical ideas of abstraction are activated providing a divergence from my referencing of geometric abstraction to open up a discourse

31 The use of the polycarbonate began in my master’s project titled ‘Created in your image’ with its discourse regarding light through the use of light boxes. My use of polycarbonate as a ground material in the Doctoral project was initially pragmatic as it allows me to copy existing images with ease. In the final suite of paintings the material as represented in the Doctoral exhibition should be viewed as another strategic layering device to reinforce the notion of complexity through multiplicity as well as a discourse regarding abstraction and figuration.
regarding abstraction as a physical, material and psychological process and product of an artist.

3.5: Material surface

The physical appearance of paint sitting on the surface of the polycarbonate is distinct from the way paint sinks into a canvas. The material (polycarbonate) provides another discourse regarding the formalist aspects of a painting art practice. There is a more plastic look to the painted figures that lends itself to comparison with the figurative images on an Attic pottery vessel. Attic pottery figurative images are produced using a glaze that sits on the surface of the clay pots. My black-figure portraits sit on the surface of the polycarbonate and the transparent quality of the plastic allows the gallery wall to become the ground for these images. This aspect of my art practice opens a discourse regarding the materiality of the paint and ground relationship. This investigation is not intended to be a definitive statement regarding image /ground relationships, however it furthers the formalist discourse of materiality in a painting art practice.

3.6: Geometric order

The grid is an abstract trope that represents an order system included within my paintings. As with geometric abstraction there is an implied mathematic aspect to the grid that can lend the concept of ordered structure to the composition. It can provide stabilization and a contrast to any chaos aspect within the composition. Through this research it has become apparent to me as the artist that my inclusion of the grid is related to my own desire for control. By this I mean a controlling aspect of emotional
or psychological conditions as well as a way of ordering the external environment. Thus it is an internal mechanism allowing a semblance of stabilizing an external world. It is a manifestation of an artistic and personal process of recognizing a chaos-and-order paradigm. This way of being is a trait of my Asperger neurological variation. The grid is for me an ordering device, a strategic trope that can work the philosophical, psychological and material threads into a structure.

As much as the grid in itself can be a demonstration of order, when I construct grid patterns across my figurative images the grid becomes an instrument of deconstruction. Now the grid sets up a discourse within the picture space regarding the chaotic forces of superimposition at work on the content of the composition. The depiction of a system of order (grid) is utilized to represent order and to simultaneously initiate change. With the inclusion of the grid and geometric forms in my paintings there is always an illustration, demonstration and activation of conceptual and material forces that are either orderly, chaotic, or both.

### 3.7: Picture space

The variety of compositional devices used is an extension of my research regarding space and form. The discourse of a space/form dichotomy in the black-figure painting style hypothesized by Laporte is an expression of the chaos and cosmos creation myth that is played out as form and space within the picture space. The illustration and accentuation of empty space within some of my paintings’ picture space is in part premised on the variation of compositional devices. At other time the picture space was limited to illustrate the extension of the figurative image beyond the picture.
space. These compositional formats that engage with the space/form within the picture space, simultaneously expend my art practice research to space and form within a gallery/viewing space. A discourse regarding the size and shape of the picture space and what it can convey is a part of any painting.

I have explored a variety of compositional formats, the frieze being the most direct link to the frieze used in Ancient Greek civic building: a format used at the time to display a societies’ cultural discourse through a figurative narrative. The elevated level of frieze sculpture alludes to the elevated concepts of the artwork, which was dominated by the mythological subject matter. Ancient Greek mythology comprised the majority of the artwork displayed in this compositional format. The culminating images within my exhibition will feature the large frieze format in order to capture that aspect of kudos and pathos encapsulated by this compositional device.32

3.8: Summary

In this chapter I have set out how figurative superimposition, as a process of assemblage, results in a cosmic, creative force. My activation of a rhizomatic process of enquiry through figurative superimposition has been explained. I have used the philosophy of Nietzsche, Castoriadis and Deleuze and Guattari as the framework for my system of making that activates, emulates and illustrates the creative forces in the cosmos. Black-figure superimposition is the conclusion of the research, which has

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32 The issues discussed in Layered multiplicity, Material surface, Geometric order and Picture space are confined within, and contribute to, the parameters of my art practice research set for this doctoral project. I acknowledge their role in bringing the project to fruition and the future possibilities they have elucidated.
resulted in a style and methodology of painting that taps into the representation of creative forces in Attic tragic theatre and Attic black-figure pottery. It achieves this while simultaneously deviating from the notion of representation to the activation of creative forces through my art practice. The chapter has addressed the materiality of the work, my use of specific materials and compositional devices, and their implementation in the exhibition. It has also addressed the trope of the grid and geometric abstraction as an ordered system and why the structure is a necessary device to balance the propensity for chaos in the internal and external worlds. The final chapter will contextualise my project’s investigations through art practice in the wider context of figurative superimposition in the painting styles of three artists who are relevant to this research.
Chapter Four: Style

4: Introduction

This chapter will discuss pictorial assemblage, the expression of multiplicity and engagement with the construction of meaning in a painted image through figurative superimposition. The three artists I have selected as case studies all employ assemblage and superimposition to represent the relationship between figure and content. I have chosen these artists because they explore the politics of multiple images that are physically or contextually disconnected images within a picture space, and the knowledge transfer expressed by this process. I will examine the formalist expression of figurative superimposition within their work and the philosophical and psychological rationale for this expression, and the artists’ explorations of art practice as a creative process that correlate to my project’s research. My examination of the figurative superimposition paintings of the Spanish Dada artist, Francis Picabia (1879-1953), the Asian Australian post modernist painter, John Young (1956-) and the American figurative painter, David Salle (1952-) assists in setting out the context of my project. The formalist trope of figurative painting coupled with superimposition used by these three artists, which corresponds to my own use of figurative superimposition, provides a contextual frame for my project in the sphere of art practice.

I will trace Picabia’s use of figurative superimposition in his *Transparency series* (1928-1931) as a derivative of Cubism’s deconstruction of the figurative form and Dada’s utilisation of chance. Next I will examine Young’s use of superimposition and juxtaposition to explore the politics of the picture space in order to express cultural
difference in his *Double Ground series* (1996-2006). The chapter will conclude by defining Salle’s painting oeuvre (1970- ) as an exploration of social ambiguity in figurative representation. The common thread in the work of these artists and their bearing on my work is the use of figurative superimposition as a trope that opens up possibilities for the examination of forces, picture space, meaning, cognition, culture, language, and technique in art practice. The artists and their art practice as discussed in this chapter are relevant primarily to the first two suites of paintings in my research project. The third suite moves from these points of inference towards a more original contribution in conception, process and production. The final suite demonstrates an original style and conception that constitutes new knowledge in art practice.
Francis Picabia’s (1879-1953) superimposition of figurative images in his suite of paintings titled the *Transparency Series* is derivative of Cubism’s deformation of the figure and Dada’s utilisation of chance (Baker 2007; Richter 1964; Watts 1980).

Picabia’s transparency paintings were made up of figurative portraits sourced from historical and contemporary images that demonstrated a complex interplay between what the art theorist, George Baker describes as ‘a chain of signifiers, linkages, and transfers’ (Baker 2007, p.209). In Picabia’s process of figurative superimposition, chance is given a part in the construction and reading of the work in order to
demonstrate what ‘[w]e so rarely, in life, experience in an intelligible way one thing becoming something else’ (Baker 2007, p.232). Picabia’s concern in his work was to utilise the forces of change through chance.

Figurative superimposition was the process Picabia chose for his expression of chance. There is arguably a link to Nietzsche’s philosophy regarding art practice at play in Picabia’s utilization of chance. As already described in chapter one Nietzsche attributed chaos in the form of chance, as the founding component of Attic theatre construction and narrative. Picabia is known to have read Nietzsche and even wrote a book of poetry utilizing Nietzsche’s work (Picabia 2007). Picabia also appropriated images form Ancient Greece and Rome for his paintings. This figurative superimposition can be considered as a response to the reading of, and engaging with, Nietzsche’s philosophy regarding art and human existence, coupled with the exploration in figurative representation by the Cubist art movement.

The influence of Cubism’s deconstruction of the figurative form on the Dada art movement provides a starting point for exploring the compositional process and theory of Picabia’s Transparency Series. The art theorist George Baker describes Dada’s use of collage as a derivative of Cubism:

> At precisely the moment when the Cubists began to retreat from their greatest invention, the Dadaists embraced the cut as a central procedure of their work…Picabia was not the only artist to recode the cut of collage as a procedure of destruction and negation (Baker 2007, p.82).

In Picabia’s Transparency paintings his use of assemblage and layering of images by superimposition, demonstrates a process that literally dissects the images and metaphorically destroys and negates the original figurative expression of the images.
Such a process of destruction engages with cubism’s utilization of the cut that becomes an expression of Dada’s creed of anti-art sentiment and enacts Dada’s seminal catch cry of chance.

Picabia’s engagement with chance and the unconscious was borne out of the Dada movement’s philosophical premise: ‘Chance is everywhere, it overrides all laws. The realization that anti-reason, nonsense, chance, and unconsciousness, belong and are a necessary parts of art as expression –this was the central message of Dada’ (Richter 1964). The Dada artist’s incorporation of chance as a force in their art process came through engagement with the unconscious mind, which is considered to be the repository of human imagination. Dada artists incorporated the unconscious, in keeping with the theories of psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud ‘who unveils the unconscious, affirms its mode of being to be incompatible with diurnal logic and ontology’ (Castoriadis 1987, p.175). Even though Freud concealed the ‘indetermination as radical imagination’ (Castoriadis 1987, p.175) the Dada artists used various systems to enact indeterministic art processes. In much the same way, Picabia’s process of assemblage and layering disparate figurative images seeks to engage and express the imagination of the unconscious mind.

Chance is an aspect of Picabia’s engagement with automatism, a technique that entails the performing of an action without conscious thought or intention. As stated by the art historian Harriett Watts, ‘The Dada artist freed himself from the rule of reason and causality by welcoming chance into the creative act itself’ (1980, p.1). Picabia used automatism in his paintings and, according to the art historian, Maria Borres, they are ‘purely automatic works’ where ‘[t]he schematic face, for example, superimposed on
a kneeling body’ (1985, p.335) provides no discernible connecting narrative. Baker also saw in Picabia’s paintings a process where ‘pitted against each other the transparency of line-as-trace and the opacity of line-as-deposit, roping together the incompatible Dada gambits of the copy and that of chance, the image conceived of as a token of as excremental’ (2007, p.208). The Transparency Series is, according to Baker, a by-product of Picabia’s combining of mimetic and random processes, which is considered to engage and express the conscious and unconscious functions of the mind.

Picabia’s Transparency Series paintings are a reflection on, and a manipulation of, mimetic representation as a cognitive system. Baker states that:

Picabia’s copies surely were not tied to the real world, to a fronto-parallel view, to the vertical field of nature and the traditional mimetic copy; they were not anchored in the upright coordinates of human perception (2007, p.238).

Baker’s description of neurological and psychological function elucidates the interplay between the conscious and unconscious aspects of Picabia’s art practice. There is an exploration of literal and non-literal representation in Picabia’s paintings that examines the exchange between psychological and sensory perception. Assemblage in Picabia’s paintings contains a discourse regarding relativity and ambiguity whereby the role of imagination is examined in relation to notions of reasoned or unreasoned choices of image.

I have recounted Picabia’s use of figurative superimposition as the expression of chance that is derived from the deformation enacted by the cut described by Baker
(2007) and the significance of Picabia in relation to my use of superimposition as a means of deforming or deconstructing the totality of form and image.

The work of the Asian-Australian artist, John Young, in the mid-1990s, at the height of postmodernism, when appropriation, pastiche, collage, bricolage and discontinuity were engaged by artists as stylistic concerns, gives a varying context to my own utilization of a cultural style. Young’s use of figurative superimposition to examine the politics of the picture plane and to disrupt the grand narratives of modernist formalism, and his compilation of multiple and culturally diverse pictorial images in order to express cultural difference as explored in his paintings is my next focus of attention in the following section.
4.2: John Young - *Double Ground Series* - Differences

[Image 33] Young, *A.D. 706, 2007*

John Young’s *Double Ground* series will be related as the exploration of a deconstruction of the formalist use of images within a picture space to provide an expression of cultural difference and exchange through the superimposition of pictorial images from two distinct cultures.

Young’s *Double Ground* series explores cultural diversity by utilising the tropes of juxtaposition and superimposition to create and investigate the concept of difference. By painting multiple, culturally diverse, pictorial images within the one picture space Young has produced, according to Lindsey, a:
‘transcultural’ project [that] involves a series of paintings under the generic title Double Ground, which refers to his compositional schema, while also being a metaphor for his concern with the interrelationship of different cultural spheres (1995, p. 5).

Young utilises the compositional schema of pictorial superimposition to suggest a metaphorical superimposition and juxtaposition of one culture on another, while simultaneously illustrating the difference and diversity of cultural expression in figurative painting.

The assemblage and multiplicity aspects of superimposition and juxtaposition open a discourse regarding cultural difference in Young’s work. By taking up the figurative imagery and style of Chinese and European painting, at the time of China’s colonisation by the Portuguese, Young highlights the similarities and differences in style and content of the two cultural groups. While my art project is not concerned primarily with cultural difference I have engaged with the Ancient Greek culture through my use of its Attic vase painting style, coupled with the philosophical and mythical constructs for this style, thus opening up a transcultural possibility for one set of ideas to inform another across time and space. In Young’s paintings the ‘complex constellations of cultural materials’ is used to ‘challenge the viewer to recognise different narratives of culture’ (Barnes, Wright & Braye 2005, p.43).

The Double Ground paintings outline ‘the alternation between figure and field’ and in doing so the ‘conceptual structure of the works’ (Barnes, Wright & Braye 2005, p.43) describes a method of expressing the representation of a constructed composition. Barnes states that ‘for Young, cultural orientation is not achieved through concord or synthesis, but by unsettling established meaning and allowing the heterogeneous to
exist’ (Barnes, Wright & Braye 2005, p.47). The paintings use the ‘conventions of the pictorial against themselves in order to foreground the complexity of representation and its implied politics’ (Barnes, Wright & Braye 2005, p.47). Young demonstrates the multiplicity of artistic representation used to describe the repetition and instigation of signs and symbols that relate to cultural difference.

A similar quest for the heterogeneous to exist informs my work. I have incorporated a form of visual style (Attic black-figure) to provide a symbolic expression regarding Ancient Greek culture that brings with it the philosophy and psychology of its method and methodology. As already detailed in chapter three the Attic pottery painters engaged in a discourse regarding entities by their use of a colour duality. My embedded engagement with Ancient Greek art practice is expressed in my appropriation of this colour duality in my final suite of paintings. In turn my use of superimposition deconstructs the black-figure discourse regarding entities. Young’s devices of juxtaposition and superimposition of images and styles from different cultures begins a dialogue regarding the relationships of cultures and content through stylistic concerns and subject matter.

Because Young depicts multiple independent images on the one ground they are interpreted as individual unrelated images, thereby bringing into question the formal relationship between the figure and the ground. This use of the ‘recognizable planes on which images operate and the mediation of differing genres of representation causes a tension between the two to create a field that implies space’ (Chiu 1995, p. 8). Young’s use of figurative superimposition provides an explicit questioning of the affects that compositional process has on the perception of the picture plane. By
disrupting the mimetic laws of perspective, through his compilation of several images that are disparate in size and content, he distorts realistic form, space and representation and enacts a metaphoric expression of cultural exchange.

Young’s experience of an Australian and Chinese culture duality is expressed through the technique of superimposition, as much as through the compilation of cultural imagery. His appropriation of cultural imagery already in existence speaks about culture and the way he has combined the images details a visual method of describing difference. There is in Young’s work a dialogue about appropriation of culture at the very time in art history that appropriation is at its formalist height in western painting. His work highlights postmodernist concerns with appropriation of historical and cultural imagery as a source of material for contemporary expression about social and cultural difference. Simultaneously he acknowledges and explores these devices as a method of representation, by displacing modernist forms of representation to detail his ‘acknowledgement of the influence and co-existence of both cultures’ in his paintings.

[Image 34] Young, The Bridge, 1994-95 (Chiu 1995, p. 43)

In The Bridge (1994-5) Young’s replication of Giuseppe Castiglione One Hundred Horses (1728) – a painting described as ‘an image which itself bridges the fabled
east-west divide’ (Hutchings 1995, p. 15) – initiates a discourse regarding the perception of a Western and Chinese painting divide. Both Castiglione and Young have produced figurative, mimetic images with metaphoric elements, with no difference in technique and expression, other than at the semantic level where the cultural meaning of the objects and subjects as entities are formed. Hutchings’s comment with respect to ‘Henri Bergson’s concept of the “Whole-as-the-open” is pertinent here: there is ‘a kinetic exchange of meanings, values and effects’ (Hutchings 1995, p. 20). The assembled ‘whole’ of the Young compilation of pictorial images from two distinct cultures suggests there is a movement of meaning, values and effects from one culture to the other and this is inevitable due to the inherent similarities in human psychology and expression.

I have discussed Young’s use of superimposition and juxtaposition to construct a discourse regarding cultural difference and cultural exchange. Young’s use of figurative superimposition to interrupt the formalist classical construct of images within a picture space in conjunction with specific cultural painting styles and subject matter correlates to my deconstruction of pictorial images within a picture space and my use of Ancient Greek style and subject. The superimposition of disparate figurative images to produce paintings that are visually ambiguous is my final case study.
4.3: David Salle-Ambiguity

The American postmodernist artist, David Salle (1952-) has an oeuvre that demonstrates the use of pictorial assemblage in the form of juxtaposition and superimposition of multiple disparate images with the purposes of expressing ambiguity in pictorial representation. Salle constructs multiple images within the one picture space that hold no discernable pictorial narrative, thereby providing a conceptual narrative of social ambiguity.

Collectively, Salle’s compilation of pictorial images does not point towards a specific or self-contained meaning. His paintings are comprised of disparate pictorial assemblages that produce no cohesive relationships or associations between the objects/subjects depicted. Rather, according to Wilfried Dickhoff, ‘Salle puts on a show of pictorial ambivalence which he neither negates nor confirms’ (2000, p.153).
In Salle’s paintings ‘the opposites are not resolved’ and ‘[t]he whole of the painting is a nonsynthesis’ as ultimately his work ‘set[s] up referential chaos’ (2000, p.153). According to Dickoff the figurative superimposition in Salle’s paintings foregrounds the relationship between ambiguity and ‘referential chaos’ in the pictorial images.

By using superimposition to negate any visual narrative in his painting, Salle creates a sense of ambiguity as to the conceptual meaning of the image. A compositional feature of Salle’s paintings is that ‘they could be read in innumerable ways’ due to ‘[t]he absence of a clear narrative or hierarchical arrangement’ (Phillips 1987, p.22). In his paintings contextually connected images are ‘replaced by indeterminate, duplicitous ones that require the viewer to assign a meaning’ (Phillips 1987, p.22). The various images placed together produce no synthetic relationship; they create ambiguity, which is related to the composition rather than to any defined meaning of the content.

With no actual or implied connection between the pictorial images, the connection between the method of superimposing disparate images and its accent on ambiguity becomes the focus of the work. Salle not only subscribes to the notion that ‘[m]odern painting asserted its autonomy, it’s “objectless”, by stressing the process of picture – making itself…its own internal language of colour, line, shape, surface’ but he also ‘takes this modernist self-reflexivity a step further’ (Phillips 1987, p.25) by elucidating the process he uses to construct the painting and its meaning. His paintings create a more direct discourse regarding the semantic aspect of figurative representation: how meaning is constructed through figuration and how meaning is disrupted through the superimposition of disparate images.
Salle provides an ambiguous image by his compilation of disparate images, thereby producing a disruption of content and narrative through subject to achieve ambiguity.

Salle’s creative process is described by Phillips:

His deliberate break up and isolation of forms focus our attention on what an image is, how it is made, and how it gets used – on the process of representation itself. There is no fixed centre of meaning, only the discursive action of the painting (1987, p.23).

What is evident in his painting is the use of multiple images on the one ground, which initiates cognitive analyses of the relationships between subjects, forms and contents. This analyses is enacted in Salle’s paintings firstly by the ‘separation’ of the pictorial image ‘from its natural habitat…an image is reissued in a context that preserves some aspect of its content’ (Kardon 1986, p.12) in order to highlight the ambiguity inherent in all that one perceives. Secondly by ‘[o]ne of Salle’s main conventions – the diptych format – [he] opens the possibility for maximum ambiguity (Kardon 1986, p.14).

Salle does not transform the meaning of a pictorial image from one to another; he transforms his composite images to create pictorial and spatial ambiguity.

The construction of pictorial ambiguity through pictorial superimposition by Salle can be considered the primary goal of his artwork. He is deliberately juxtaposing unrelated sequences to create visual ambiguity in the artwork and in the viewer’s mind. Salle offers a discourse regarding the contemporary world’s abundance of visual sensation. The reading of our world puts us into continuous ambiguity as a state of being where nothing can be certain. His approach to art practice is affirming of the social condition in which we live.
The references to my own work lie in the deconstruction of the figurative image in my paintings through the deployment of superimposition, which serves to produce a pictorial ambiguity as a formalist process. Through this device I disrupt the expression of figurative form and thereby it’s content to achieve a displacement of modernist representational practice. Salle provides ambiguous narrative; I provide ambiguous representation. By using a formalist figurative deconstruction my primary goal is to elucidate the forces utilized by the process of superimposition of figurative images. Salle sets up a dialogue regarding the construction of social ambiguity through figurative superimposition; I provide a discourse regarding superimposition as a process that realises ambiguity as a force (chaos) of representative deconstruction.

Arguably Salle’s paintings engage with figurative representation to explore the construction of meaning by making explicit the role of ambiguity in artistic expression. As Kordon states, ‘[w]hen something has no set meaning, it can be used more freely to reach the unconscious. The restructuring and unnaming that underlines Salle’s art allows for the restitution of meaning’ (Kordon 1986, p.31). His method of ‘isolating signifiers through semantic disjunction’ (Kordon 1986, p.31) demonstrates that for the viewer ‘to promote any component to a key effect position is to make a false move. The image exists there, full of temporal and spatial slippage’ (Phillips 1987, p.20). The viewer is made aware of the relationship between that which is depicted and its meaning in a painted image.
4.4: Summary

Salle’s social ambiguity through figurative superimposition, Picabia’s superimposition of figurative images through cut and chance, and Young’s exploration of the politics of the picture space and cultural difference, all hold some relevance to my project. My paintings’ replication of Attic black-figures’ style that allude to a incision technique and the deconstruction of the figure by the linear cuts introduce an aspect of chance; my superimposition of contemporary, historical figures from multiple cultures highlights difference, and my production of semi-abstract images through the superimposition of black-figure images details a move towards non-representational constructions. Essentially, my artistic enquiry regarding the creative forces entailed in superimposition’s assemblage and layering paradigm is in many ways paralleled in the art practice of these three artists. The artists offer a number of reference points, as discussed above, to enable a clearer elucidation of my project.

‘Superimposition is synchronically imposed’ and is ‘a specific form of representation’ (Leroi-Gourhan 2010, p.24). Figurative superimposition is a visual language that invokes our psychological ability to comprehend the process that renders mimetic images metaphoric. In addition, the technique also points towards the human experience of the chaos-and-order duality in a world of chance, cultural difference and social ambiguity. Assemblage and the layering of pictorial images is critical to my project as the forces of chaos-and-order are both used and expressed thereby providing my art work with a creative duality that gives rise to a third force, a cosmic force of creation.
Conclusion

My practice based research comprising three suites of paintings and an exegesis examines the relevant aspects of form, content and style that demonstrate methods and methodology used to activate a chaos-and-order creative paradigm. Such a paradigm is locatable specifically in my art practice, which is informed by chaos-and-order references from: Attic tragic theatre trilogy: the Theban plays by Sophocles; and the seventh century B.C black-figure vase painting of Ancient Greece. The research draws together the links between these fields as a way of furthering this knowledge through art practice. In addressing my first research question, methodologically I have constructed a process that can manifest a chaos-and-order paradigm in and through my art practice. By my production of figurative images and their deconstruction via utilization of superimposition, I manifest the forces of chaos-and-order. With figuration I provide an imitation of some aspect of order in the natural world; with the deconstruction of figuration there is a disturbance of its ordered content that initiates uncertainty.
Each artwork in this project explores or investigates the potential of composite aspects of style and content in conjunction with the philosophy considered through the production process. The goal is to open a discourse that can elucidate how chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm can be manifest through figurative painting that alludes to aesthetic, philosophic, human, creative expression. Two narratives are identifiable within my art practice to further this discourse by engaging construction and deconstruction of figurative images. Materials (paint and ground), compositional formats and geometric abstraction as formalist aspects of my art practice facilitate the exploration of content and concepts in both narratives.

The first narrative is engaged by referencing the Theban plays through figurative content as mimesis and metaphor. In addressing my second research question this narrative details a discourse regarding the psychology and philosophy of human interaction with the social and natural worlds premised on chance and design. I began the project by opening a dialogue regarding the depiction and utilization of chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm in my art practice with reference to Attic Tragic Theatre. My research engaged with Nietzsche’s premise of the Apollo (order) and Dionysus (chaos) duality as the creative paradigm that gave birth to, and is the underlying expression of Attic tragic theatre. A seminal aspect of tragic theatres is its expression of peripeteia, (‘peripety’ in English), which refers to a reversal of circumstances, or turning point in the play’s dramatic climax: this being the point of coming together of a chaos-and-order duality. Running parallel to the investigation of the tragic theatre through an exploration of the Theban plays there is also the formulation of a discourse regarding chaos-and-order espoused by Attic black-figure pottery painting style. In the process I have reintroduced the understanding that Attic
black-figure pottery painting style is a philosophical enquiry and depiction of the Ancient Greek creation myth regarding chaos-and-order as forces of creation.

A second narrative regarding chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm is engaged through form explored by my combination of superimposition and figuration. In this process, the research seeks to reveal philosophical, psychological and formal aspects of these practices. It is important to reiterate here that, in Arnheim’s words, ‘[i]n the arts the image is the statement. It contains and displays the forces about which it reports’ (1997, p.301). Drawing on my research through Nietzsche and Laporte what can be gauged from the ‘statement’ espoused by Attic theatre and Attic pottery is a method and methodology that incorporates and expresses a chaos-and-order creative paradigm.

My third research question addressed related to superimposition as a technical and philosophical enquiry. The philosophical enquiry of Attic black-figure pottery painting as described by Laporte has an oppositional dichotomy at its foundation. The dichotomy is also a philosophical enquiry that uses a dialectic process for its exploration and expression of a synthesis notion. This dichotomy is engaged by my use of black and white, however my use of superimposition deconstructs and converts the dialectic to a rhizomatic philosophical enquiry that explores forces and ‘becoming’ rather than the notion of ‘being’ predicated on an oppositional dialectic. My methodology of bringing together formal and philosophical concerns is crucial in my approach to superimposition. The assemblage through layering of the pictorial images enacts the move from realistic depiction of figurative entities to semi-abstract forms; in other words the work progressed from mimesis (imitation) to metaphor
(interpretation) to metamorphosis (superimposition) in order to demonstrate change as a creative force.

My figurative and non-figurative forms activate chance and design through the lines which construct and deconstruct form as well as subject and object, resulting in a representation or activation of forces and flows. This project focuses specifically on the creative aspect of transformation enacted by the assembling and layering of pictorial images by figurative superimposition. The reason being that within that transformative process, the forces of chaos-and-order are both drawn upon, activated and represented, thereby providing my art work with a creative paradigm that gives rise to forces of change – the cosmic force of creation.

As such the three chapters, mimesis, metaphor, and metamorphosis expand on my research of figurative superimposition as a stylistic device for the expression of a creative paradigm of chaos-and-order. While acknowledging that superimposition, as a formalist stylistic device is not used in Attic vase painting or Attic tragic theatre, it is crucial in my art practice to suggest the changes or reversal of circumstance, and to carry a condition of indeterminacy. It is the chaos-and-order aspects of my practice that resonate with certain chaos-and-order aspects of Attic vase painting as well as certain stylistic devices of chaos-and-order used in Attic tragic theatre.

My Doctoral project through art practice puts forward a thesis stating two distinct forms of philosophical enquiry, one occurring through figurative superimposition and the other through Ancient Greek Attic pottery painting and Attic tragic theatre: espoused as dialectic and rhizomatic forms of enquiry with connection to the
philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari. My art practice explored the use of mimetic, metaphoric and metamorphic expression as found in both dialectic and rhizomatic modes of enquiry. There has been an investigation of the philosophy and psychology of art practice through this project, as a product of my artistic endeavours.

By transforming mimetic images and their representation of the Cosmos and humanity I deconstruct and demonstrate my project’s philosophical and artistic enquiry into the chaos-and-order paradigm of tragic theatre as referenced in, and investigated through my art practice. Thus my art practice researches and encapsulates the forces of chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm. The practice resonates strongly with the Ancient Greek philosophy of art as well as contemporary cognitive science regarding art, and it introduces ‘a philosophical change that constitutes a rebirth of pre-historic artistic enquiry’ (David 2012, p.29).

The final suite of paintings represent the conclusion to my project ‘Apollo come dance with me’. They are a reconsideration of the project’s earlier paintings finding a resolve as a conclusion that demonstrates the deconstruction and transformation of the black-figure painting style from didactic oppositional duality to rhizomatic multiplicity. Figurative superimposition is used to activate a layered multiplicity in my artworks by engaging with a material consideration of plasticity, surface and ground. This process encompasses a discourse regarding art practice that draws on the psychology, history, philosophy, neurology and archaeology of art as a creative and material process.
However my project and art practice ‘has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.21). This ‘middle’ is where the assemblage ‘changes dimensions’ and ‘undergoes a metamorphosis’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.21). Mira [image 32] demonstrates this “middle-ground” where creation is in action. Figurative superimposition makes explicit the use of mimesis, metaphor and metamorphosis in combination with the assemblage, multiplicity, and rhizomatic aspects of superimposition. These are crucial concepts I have engaged and researched through my art practice.

In terms of content and subject matter, I draw on the Ancient Greek myths for their understanding and expression of the chaos-and-order aspects of being human in the world. My research locates the Oedipus myth in relation to the Cosmos by describing the metamorphosis of Oedipus from a noble figure, ‘the first of men’ (Watling 1947, p.26), to a figure who is made an outcast due to his unwitting transgression of the fundamental laws of society and nature. Sophocles defined the concept of knowledge as that which resulted both in the rise and fall of Oedipus’s fortune. When answering the riddle of the Sphinx, Oedipus shows his ability to fathom the laws of nature and is rewarded; however, when the true nature of his relationship with his mother is revealed he is punished.
I have defined knowledge as the main theme in the play *Oedipus Rex*. By interpreting knowledge as a golden light and describing nature as living forms in *Mira* [image 36], I have alluded to the significance of both to the myth of Oedipus. My depiction of Oedipus as a child (lower right) and as a man (far left) refers to his journey that will traverse both knowledge and nature. This is my figurative interpretation of the narrative of the play *Oedipus Rex*, and its exploration of the forces of chaos-and-order as chance and design.

The research into Bildwissenschft (theory of images) over the last twenty years by German and Austrian academics has looked to include all human image making to be examined by disciplines as diverse as anthropology, computer science, philosophy, archaeology, neurology, psychology, sociology, linguistics and biology. My contribution (David 2012) to the discourses of image making, as an artist, is to engage with philosophy and psychology of creative practice. This is being achieved through both philosophical enquiry and application of material practice of painting as a creative research process through this doctoral project, and beyond.

A further direction of research in the future has been revealed by my research in this project. I have been diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome. This neurological variant to the general population has particular traits such as the one detailed by
Dr Asperger as 'abstract thinker'. This underpins my interest in the forms of geometric abstraction coupled with psychological traits that my project has been demonstrating. The grid sets up a discourse within the picture space regarding the chaotic forces of superimposition at work on the content of the composition. The depiction of a system of order (grid) is utilized to bring order to the composition and to simultaneously initiate change. With the inclusion of the grid and geometric forms in my paintings there is always an illustration, demonstration and activation of conceptual and material forces that are either orderly, chaotic, or both. The grid is for me an ordering device, a strategic trope that can work the philosophical, psychological and material threads into a structure.

There is an inherent desire for structural order in an Asperger mind, which is here demonstrated as geometric form. The ordered system that is geometric abstraction becomes a strategic device in my work used to infuse an aspect of control to the overall composition. Through my research of chaos-and-order as a creative paradigm I have devised a hypothesis that the Asperger desire for order is arrived at due to the Asperger mind’s sensitivity to the chaotic aspect of daily life. An inability to cope with change and chance drives the Asperger mind to seek out order and structure. This newfound knowledge achieved through the research is an aspect that will build on my doctoral project to form my future research through art practice. In this sense the research has been for me a peripeteia, turning point, as chaos-and-order come together as was discussed in relation to Sophocles’ play, Oedipus Rex (section 1.3).

In conclusion, the artist within me has endeavoured to test the affirmative aspects of figurative superimposition as a trope that can ‘open a cosmos’ (Deleuze & Guattari 2004, p.345). In utilizing a chaos-and-order, conscious and unconscious, chance and
design paradigm for my art practice, I have activated the cosmic creative practice of chaos-and-order, Cosmos and Void. The affirming creative paradigm of a chaos-and-order combination constitutes the new knowledge my project makes in terms of the links between human psychology, cosmic phenomena and creative art practice. The paintings produced for this project, their ‘statement’ and ‘the forces’ they ‘display’ and ‘report’ on (Arnheim 1997, p.301) provide a perspective that elucidates creative forces.
Appendix

Artists, philosophers, psychologists, anthropologist and sociologists have explored the content and concepts of the Theban plays by Sophocles since their conception. As such the plays are considered to hold a significant place in the western cultural psyche with the general consensus being that the Theban plays are an exploration of human existence comprising a discourse regarding the uncertainty aspect of life (Ahrensdorf 2009; Armstrong 1941; Castoriadis 1987; David 2012; Deleuze & Guattari 2004; Nietzsche 1993; Watling 1947; Vellacott 1961).

Sophocles

Sophocles, an Athenian playwright born in 496 B.C., produced over one hundred plays, of which only seven have survived. Of these The Theban trilogy and in particular Oedipus the King is considered by Aristotle and others to be a masterpiece of tragic theatre.

Theban plays

The Theban Plays, or the Oedipus cycle tell the story of the mythical king, Oedipus of Thebes and his descendants. What befalls Oedipus and his children is a reversal of fortune due to the uncertainty of existence. That is why, ‘Nietzsche praises tragedy above all for its courage in the face of the truth’ (Ahrensdorf 2009, p.153) a view that is disputed; ‘Philosophers since Socrates believe...that the world is a cosmos rather than a chaos…’ (Ahrensdorf 2009, p.153). The cosmos (ordered whole) or the world
we live in being dominated by order is challenged by tragic theatre’s expression of a chaos (chance) and order paradigm for human existence and the universe.

I have used the translation of the Theban plays produced by E.F. Watling as the main guide to the plays. Here I have included abstracts from the introductions (with emphasis on the original) that accompany the individual plays in order to provide background to the consecutive drama that unfolds.

**Oedipus Rex**

The story of Oedipus the man begins with his birth: ‘...; and to Laius and his wife Jocasta a son was born... he was destined one day to kill his father, and to become his own mother’s husband’ (Watling 1947, p.23). This fate begins its move to fruition when Laius and Jocaster ‘take upon themselves the guilt of infanticide,’ (Watling 1947, p.23). However the child Oedipus finds his way to;

‘Polybus, King of Corinth,... who, being childless, gladly welcomed the infant and adopted it as his own,...’. Oedipus grew to manhood. ... But by chance he came to hear, again from the mouth of Apollo’s ministers, the terrible prediction concerning him33.... He fled from Corinth, resolved never again to set eyes on his supposed father and mother as long as he live’ (Watling 1947, p.24).

From here the fate of Oedipus becomes reality:

‘His wondering brought him to Thebes, where now all was calamity and confusion. King Laius had been killed by an unknown traveller on a lonely road; the city was in the grip of a deadly monster, the Sphinx, who pitted her ferocity against the wits of man, destroying all who failed to answer her cunning riddle: and none could answer it. But in Oedipus the creature met her match. He answered the riddle34 and destroyed her power, and so was received joyfully into Thebes as her king and heir to the house and fortune; a happy man, a wise man and resourceful man,

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33 The notion of identity is explored in my painting *Masked Oedipus* [image 3] (p.23).
34 My painting *the riddle of the sphinx* [image 8](p.32) engages with this concept of intellect (abstract cognition) in the play.
and (save for one sharp encounter on his journey from Corinth to Thebes) a man of peace. He married Jocaster; and sons and daughters were born to them’ (Watling 1947, p.24).

The ‘sharp encounter’ fulfils the first part of the prophesy (the killing of his father) and brought the second prophesy (marriage to his mother) into possibility. The play itself begins with Oedipus the king of Thebes, husband to Jocaster and father to Antigone, Ismene, Polynices and Etiocles. Oedipus is asked to find and punish the person who killed King Laius (his father). Through a process of exploration and chance occurrence the truth regarding Oedipus’ unwitting part in the death of his father, King Laius, and his marriage to his mother Jocaster is revealed.

‘The principle example Nietzsche gives of a human being who exemplifies the tragic world view is Sophocles’ ‘Oedipus…the unfortunate Oedipus, as the noble human being who, in spite of his wisdom, is destined to error and misery but who eventually, through his tremendous suffering, spreads a magical blessing that remains effective even beyond his decease’ (Ahrensdorf 2009, p.3).

Oedipus the King is generally considered Sophocles’ most representative work. Aristotle considered it a perfect tragedy. As well as all his works, this tragedy talks about fatalism, a traditional theme for Greek literature. My interest conveyed in my paintings is concentrated on the psychological aspect of the riddle and the role of identity in the play.

‘In the first painting of my triptych [image 28] geometry represents man’s cognitive abstraction of the physical world that in turn reshapes man and his urban world. The

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35 In Noble child [image 13](p. 50) the concept of intellect is pursued as a psychological trait possessed by Oedipus.
play *Oedipus Rex* deals with humanity’s cognitive perception and abstraction of the natural world by relating how psychological forces construct meaning and therefore reason’ (p.89).

**Oedipus at Colonus**

Oedipus at Colonus is one of the three Theban plays and was written shortly before Sophocles’ death, in 406 BC. The blinded Oedipus arrives at Colonus with his daughter Antigone. Oedipus enters the village, led by Antigone and sits down, to rest, on a stone. Afterwards he asks to see their king, Theseus, explaining his believes, that he is a gift for the people in Colonus. The play begins some time after Oedipus is banished from Thebes. His wondering finally leads him to Colonus.

‘the order for his banishment was at last pronounced, and Oedipus, now growing old, went forth into perpetual exile. Hereupon discord again rent his family; for while his daughters remained faithful to their father – Antigone, the younger, accompanying him in his wandering, and Ismene remaining at home to watch for any happier turn of events – his two sons, Etiocles and Polynicies, lifted no finger to lighten his burden or stay the execution of his doom. Worse, they rebelled against the regent, Creon; not in alliance together, but in ambitious rivalry for power’ (Watling 1947, p.69).

Meanwhile the blind wanderer and his faithful daughter came in their journeying to the hamlet of Colonus, within a mile of the city of Athens, over which King Theseus ruled. But even here his peace was yet to be troubled by the scheming devices of his city and family. For, having banished him, they now found, through the agency of the oracle, that his patronage while alive, and after his death the custody of his remains, were necessary to the accomplishment of their selfish purpose. So the tormented sufferer was not to find rest before he had denounced the feigned repentance of these deceivers and silenced their specious overtures with his last curses’ (Watling 1947, p.69).

*Oedipus at Colonus* looks to provide a philosophical discussion regarding the fate and circumstance components played out in *Oedipus Rex*. The subject is human fate and
the intricate way of destiny. The past is dealt with by Zeus absolving Oedipus, despite his actions and the tragedy of his last years. The present is brought into view by Ismene, the other daughter of Oedipus, who brings news about Thebes, where Eteocles and Polynices, their brothers, were fighting for the throne. The future is engaged when it is revealed that an oracle is telling both sons, that the outcome of the conflict depends on where their father is buried. Creon's plan was to bury Oedipus at the border of Thebes, without respecting the proper ritual. This way the power that the oracle said, the grave will have, would remain for Thebes.

The play *Oedipus at Colonus* provides an overview of the life of Oedipus, summed up by Ahrensdorf as such:

‘The story moves us to pity, since Oedipus falls so suddenly from the greatest prosperity to the greatest misery and shame, and since he ultimately commits the very patricide and incest he has striven so mightily to avoid. But, more importantly, the story also inspires fear for our terrifying precarious condition as human beings’ (2009, p.48).

My point of engagement with the play is in regards to the canonization of Oedipus by Zeus. The body of Oedipus is connected to the land that he is interned in and gives protection to the people that inhabit that land. The influence of man on nature and nature on man is the concept I have explored in my painting regarding Oedipus at Colonus.

‘The final painting [image 21] pronounces man (i.e. human being) and nature as the paradigm of human existence. *Oedipus at Colonus* explores the essence of the human

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36 The link between man and nature is played out through the process of burial, the reconnection of Oedipus with the land that is viewed as having impact on future occurrence. In *Nature-Nurture* [image 21] (p.68) there is a discourse regarding the push and pull of nature and nurture in human existence.

37 In *Human Nature* [image18] (p. 58) the discussion is regarding the male and female psyche and nature as seen by the Ancient Greeks.
and the natural (Nature), providing a conceptual notion that both are forces premised on, and which exist in, a chaos-and-order creative paradigm' (p.90).

**Antigone**

The first play to be written and performed, and the last in the time sequence is *Antigone*. Sophocles is not the only writer interested in the Antigone legend. The dramatist Euripides also wrote a play called Antigone, but the play is lost. The story also inspired a painting by Philostratus showing Antigone placing the body of Polynices on the funeral pyre. Again the story of Antigone is set in motion before the play begins.

> 'Meanwhile the strife between his sons went on unabated fury. Seven champions, enlisted under the banner of Polynices[^38], stormed with his Argive allies the seven gates of Thebes. But Thebes withstood them, and in the last encounter the two brothers took each other’s life. Creon, now once more undisputed master of the city, and resolved to make an example of the iniquity of the invader, ordered that whilst the body of Etiocles, defender of the city, receive all honourable rites of burial, that of Polynices should be left in ignominy, unwept and unburied, upon the plain where it lay. Penalty of death was promulgated against any who should defy this order; and the voices of the city, whether in consent or in fearful submission, were silent' (Watling 1947, p.125).

In the play *Antigone* the theoretical essence is the conflict between individual conscience and the power of the state. The individuals place within and as part of a social whole is the major discourse of *Antigone*. This discussion is played out through an exploration of the role and obligation of the individual and society to each other. The individual is Antigone, sister of Ismene, Polynices and Etiocles. All four children

[^38]: The individual’s impact on society and societies impact on the individual is explored in *Brothers* [image 11](p.43) through the aspect of family.
being the result of the accidentally incestuous marriage between King Oedipus of Thebes and his mother Jocasta. The obligations of the individual to family and to the state, both social constructs are tested:

‘A solitary girl defies the edicts of a cruel, tyrannical king in order to bury the corpse of her brother. When arrested, she bravely denounces the king to his face for his injustice and impunity. This denunciation proves to be so powerful that, in time, it is repeated by the king’s own son, by a soothsayer, by the king’s wife, by the elders of his realm, and eventually by the king himself’ (Ahrensdorf 2009, p.85).

The concept of interest for me in Antigone is the social aspect of human existence.

‘In the second painting [image 29], the four figures re-shape each other’s image, perspective and content. Antigone, the play, has an emphasis on the social constructs of kinship and burial rites; it also portrays the anthropomorphosis of the natural world. In the play, social forces (burial rites) shape the human world, but they also shape the way we describe the cosmos’ (p. 89).

39 In Minstrel song [image25] (p.82) I have compiled a series of images that allude to aspects of Antigones life and death within the broader sphere of her time and place within a culture.


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