

**COMPARING *THE WASTE LAND* AND
SURREALIST PAINTING:**

A METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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COMPARING *THE WASTE LAND* AND SURREALIST
PAINTING:
A METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Magister Artium
in English at the Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys

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POTCHEFSTROOM

1998

VOLUME I

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Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to

1. My supervisor, Prof. A.M. de Lange for his patience, professionalism, invaluable creative suggestions and consistent inputs.
2. The friendly and helpful staff of the Ferdinand Postma Library.
3. My mother, who was also my assistant supervisor, for unfailing encouragement, precious time and support and for believing in me.
4. Friends and family who professed an interest in my studies and who supported me throughout, notably Willie; and also my grandparents, whose financial and emotional support meant a great deal to me.
5. Jan-Louis, whose understanding, assistance, encouragement and interest made all the difference to my work.

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions reached in this dissertation are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

ABSTRACT

The basic concern of this dissertation has been to establish a methodological approach that could accommodate analogous readings of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. The aim was therefore to transform intuitively apprehended similarities between these texts into more sustained and scholarly arguments. In order to do so, a number of critical texts dealing with analogous readings of *The Waste Land* and Modern art movements were investigated with a view to extracting and evaluating the issues emerging from such an endeavour. It was found that Surrealism and Cubism were often used for purposes of being read analogously with the poem, but the dissertation argues that the thematic complexity and concern for content which are salient to Surrealist painting render this particular movement in visual art more suitable for analogy with *The Waste Land* than Cubism.

The concurrent reading of the poem and a painterly movement further necessitated an investigation into the probability of pursuing an interdisciplinary study of this nature, and a critical perspective of a number of existing views in this regard was undertaken. It was found that although the analogous reading of poetry and art is a contentious issue, it would be possible to compare two generically different kind of texts. Also, the texts under discussion - *The Waste Land* and Surrealist paintings - were framed within the Modernist movement and particularly the branch of Modernism that questioned the optimistic and technological worldview so often associated with the Modernist project. Hence it was found that both *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting undermine questions of certainty, clarity and objectivity by surrendering formal logic and embracing the darker, more ambivalent and doubtful branch of Modernism.

In order to establish a workable methodological approach, semiotics emerged as being an eminently suitable tool for this purpose. Although semiotics has for a fairly long time been incorporated into literary studies, it has not yet been firmly established as an art-historical approach and therefore a number of critical perspectives on semiotics and the discipline of art history had to be investigated and assessed. Having established that the very interdisciplinary and also transdisciplinary nature of semiotics rendered this approach suitable for cross-disciplinary investigation, the dissertation set out to establish a methodological approach based on semiotics and modified to suit the current purposes. The semiotic model of

Riffaterre in *Semiotics of poetry* (1983) as supplemented by the conceptual framework of Johnson (1985) in an article entitled "*Broken images* - Discursive fragmentation and paradigmatic integrity in the poetry of T.S. Eliot" was proposed as an approach that would give the reader and viewer of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting access to a number of decoding possibilities and interpretative avenues. This model was supplemented by incorporating salient aspects such as fragmentation, allusion and intertextuality as well as collage as part of the methodological approach.

The final section of the dissertation set out to illustrate possible applications of the proposed methodological approach and here the notions of unfixed and indeterminate identity as well as the theme of sexual decay were addressed in exemplary analyses. It was established that the method can facilitate analogous interpretations of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting in a more structured and informed manner than the merely intuitive.

OPSOMMING

Onderliggend aan hierdie verhandeling was die poging om 'n metodologiese raamwerk daar te stel vir die analoë lees van T.S. Eliot se *The Waste Land* en Surrealistiese skilderkuns. Die doel was dus om intuïtief-waargenome ooreenkomste tussen hierdie tekste te formaliseer en tot meer volgehoue en wetenskaplike argumente te kom. Om dit te kon doen is 'n aantal kritiese tekste wat sulke lesings van *The Waste Land* en Moderne kunsbewegings bevat ondersoek om my in staat te stel om dié sake wat hiermee saamhang uit te lig en te evalueer. Daar is gevind dat Surrealisme en Kubisme dikwels gebruik is vir analoë lesings met hierdie gedig, maar dit is 'n sentrale argument in hierdie verhandeling dat tematiese kompleksiteit en die belang van die inhoud wat 'n inherente deel van Surrealistiese skilderwerk is hierdie beweging meer geskik maak vir 'n analoë lees met *The Waste Land* as wat die geval is met Kubisme.

Die samehangende lees van die gedig en 'n beweging in die skilderkuns het die ondersoek na die moontlikheid van 'n interdisiplinêre studie van hierdie aard genoodsaak, en 'n kritiese studie van 'n aantal insigte in hierdie veld is dus onderneem, waartydens gevind is dat hoewel die analoë lees van poësie en kuns nie sonder probleme is nie, dit tog moontlik sou wees om twee generies-verskillende soorte tekste te vergelyk. Die tekste wat hier tersake is - *The Waste Land* en Surrealistiese skilderkuns - is binne die Modernistiese beweging ingebed, en dan meer spesifiek daardie vertakking van Modernisme wat die optimisme en tegnologiese behepthed wat dikwels met Modernisme geassosieer het bevraagteken. Wat uitgekóm het is dat beide *The Waste Land* en Surrealistiese skilderwerk die sake van duidelikheid, sekerheid en objektiwiteit ondermyn deur formele logika te laat gip en die donkerder, meer ambivalente en vertwyfelde vertakking van Modernisme te omarm.

In die poging om tot 'n werkbare metodologiese benadering te kom, het die semiotiek hom voorgedoen as baie geskik vir hierdie projek. Hoewel die semiotiek al lank in literêre studies tuisgekóm het, is dit nog lank nie goed gevestig as 'n kunshistoriese benadering nie, en 'n aantal kritiese perspektiewe op die semiotiek en kunsgeskiedenis

moes dus nagespeur word. Nadat vasgestel is dat die interdisiplinêre en transdisiplinêre aard van die semiotiek hierdie benadering besonder toepaslik maak vir kruisdisiplinêre ondersoeke, is daar begin met die ontwikkeling van 'n metodologiese benadering gebaseer op die semiotiek wat aangepas is vir die huidige doeleindes. Riffaterre se semiotiese model, soos uiteengesit in *Semiotics of poetry* (1983) en soos aangevul deur die konseptuele raamwerk van Johnson (1985) in sy artikel "*Broken images* - Discursive fragmentation and paradigmatic integrity in the poetry of T.S. Eliot" word as 'n benadering voorgedou wat vir die leser van en kyker na *The Waste Land* en Surrealistiese skilderye toegang bied tot 'n aantal moontlikhede vir die dekodeering van hierdie tekste. Die model is aangevul deur die inkorporering van sulke toepaslike aanvullende aspekte as fragmentasie, allusie en intertekstualiteit, sowel as collage.

Die laaste deel van die verhandeling bevat moontlike toepassings van die voorgestelde metodologiese benadering en hier word die idees van onvaste en onbepaalde identiteit sowel as die tema van seksuele verval ondersoek by wyse van eksemplariese ontledings. Daar word vasgestel dat hierdie metode analoë lesings van *The Waste Land* en Surrealistiese skilderwerk kan fasiliteer op 'n meer gestruktureerde en ingeligte wyse as wat die intuitiewe lees dit kon doen.

A note to the text

This dissertation consists of two volumes, namely Volume I which comprises the written text, and Volume II, in which the visual illustrations are placed. These two have been bound together, and it is essential that they are read concurrently, as Volume II is intended to illustrate Volume I and to facilitate the reading of the text.

Mottoes at the beginnings of chapters only feature the quotation and the name of its author, for example *Appreciation comes before understanding* - T.S. Eliot.

Although I am aware of the fact that the first person singular could be problematic in academic writing, it was felt that the subjective nature of the opinions and suggestions that prompted this investigation allowed for the use of "I" - this pronoun is not meant to suggest informality and does not intend a lessening of proper academic modesty, but seemed more suitable than the royal plural. However, in some instances the pronoun "one" is also used; this can be read as referring to the general reader as well as to the author.

The reader and viewer are referred to as masculine throughout the dissertation. This is done purely for purposes of consistency, but the reader of the dissertation should read "he" as "he/she" and "him" as "him/her".

The first time an artist is mentioned, his dates of birth and death are provided, for example René Magritte (1898-1967).

With regard to the visual references, the following method has been devised: the artworks that are reproduced in Volume II of this dissertation are referred to as "figures" in the text. Beneath the figure, the surname (in upper case) and name of the artist (lower case) appears, in that sequence, followed by the date of the artwork and the name of the painting:

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MAGRITTE, René. 1934. *Collective invention*.

English titles of artworks have been used throughout. When quoting an author who refers to the French, the English translation of the title is given, for example *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, also known as *The musings of a solitary walker* (figure 19).

In the list of figures that accompanies Volumes I and II, other relevant information is provided, namely the medium, dimensions, where the painting is currently located as well as the source used for the current study. These details have been omitted from the inscriptions beneath the figures themselves to avoid tedious repetition.

Names of books, articles, poems and paintings: names of books are printed in italics in the text, and articles are placed in inverted commas to distinguish them from books. *The Waste Land*, by virtue of its length, is printed in italics, while shorter poems like "Gerontion" are printed in inverted commas. All titles of artworks are printed in italics.

The Harvard stylesheet as adopted in *Handleiding vir nagraadse studie* (PU for CHE. 1997. Potchefstroom) and *Handleiding vir bibliografiese styl* (PU for CHE. 1997. Potchefstroom) has been used throughout for references to texts. In the Bibliography, capital letters have been omitted from titles of publications, except for words after full stops or names, for example

GREEN KAISER, J.E. 1998. Disciplining *The Waste Land*, or how to lead critics into temptation. *Twentieth Century Literature*, 44(1):82-99.

References to C.B. Cox and A.P. Hinchliffe's book *T.S. Eliot. The Waste Land. A casebook* (1968) are as follows: the name of the original author, text and the original date will appear, followed by: in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968 and the page number in their book -

Cecil Day Lewis, *A hope for poetry*, 1934 in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:59.

Regarding footnotes, these are chronological to each chapter, so that the first footnote to every chapter will be footnote 1. End-notes have not been used.

The term "text" is used to refer both to written and painterly texts, since the assumption is that one can "read" both a poem and a painting.

Furthermore, this dissertation addresses only issues pertaining to *The Waste Land* in its published form, in other words, the 1922 version is used throughout, and not the manuscript as recovered in 1968. The published version is attached to Volume I as Appendix A.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Appreciation comes before understanding - T.S. Eliot

Reading *The Waste Land* is a highly charged, complex intellectual and emotional experience. Those who fall under the poem's formidable spell and wish to engage with it on an academic level encounter a proliferation of critical writings exploring, it seems, an inexhaustible number of interpretative angles. Therefore, I want to propound - with apologies to Jane Austen - that it is a truth universally acknowledged that a student in possession of a good appreciation of *The Waste Land* must be in want of some understanding. In looking for this understanding, working through seemingly endless critical texts, the student invariably stumbles upon T.S. Eliot's (1888-1965) oft-quoted description of this poem - and his dismissal of some honest critical attempts to make sense of it:

Various critics have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of the contemporary world, have considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling (quoted here in Ward, 1973:68).

I am not assuming that poets - or any artist, for that matter - necessarily make the best judges of their own work; one is reminded of Picasso's famous account of how the overwhelming experience of *green* in the woods of Fontainebleau compels the artist to fill his canvases with more green (almost like taking acid for a stomach ulcer). Nonetheless, Eliot's words - *a piece of rhythmical grumbling* - with their implications of the illogical, the subjective, contingent and spontaneous creative processes - triggered a connection in my mind with well-nigh epiphanous clarity: it reminded me intuitively of Surrealist painting¹. On the strength of this highly subjective association

¹ Surrealism is an extremely complex and wide-ranging movement in both art and literature that originated in France in the 1920s and subsequently significantly influenced Western culture and art. In view of the fact that this movement will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3, this definition is brief. One can assert that the following are characteristics of Surrealist art: a fascination with the bizarre, the incongruous and the irrational. The aim of Surrealism was to liberate the powers of the unconscious mind by overcoming the hegemony of reason. In this

which presented itself to me, I felt urged to explore this possibility further. What follows in the next few passages, therefore, is a brief account of some “pre-scientific” pockets of awareness, pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, in which I will indicate some of my initial haunting, fragmented and yet strangely coherent experiences in this pursuit.

Consider, for example, the first impression one gathers from the poem: an awareness of an overwhelming confusion generated by the weird jarring and jumbling together of unexpected bits and pieces. Follow, for example, the plaintive, haunting presentation of the coming of Spring in the first lines of the poem, and its lack of relationship with the chunks of thought that are placed thereafter:

- Line 1 April is the cruellest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.
- Line 8 Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
 With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
 And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
 And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
 Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch
 And when we were children, staying at the arch-dukes,
 My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
 And I was frightened. He said Marie,
 Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.

Shortly afterwards, even more dislocatingly disconcerting, there is the following section indicated by a typographical break:

- Line 19 What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish?

pursuit, dream and hallucination played important roles. “With its stress on the marvellous and the poetic, it offered an alternative approach to Cubism and various types of abstract art” (Norwich, 1990:440-441).

These passages stir the same awareness of lost connections that one finds in René Magritte's (1898-1967) *On the threshold of liberty* (figure 1). In this painting the different splinters of imagery - a fragment of a Titianesque female torso; wooden surface panelling; metal spheres suspended on a shiny metallic wave; grass or fire; geometrically patterned wallpaper; the facade of a building; clouds and a bit of forest, are all placed like sections of an interior in which a cannon stands, pointing phallus-like towards the female torso. As in the poem, one feels at a loss as to how to bring the bits together to arrive at the "unitary experience" so often sought in artworks.

Now, consider the use of setting in the poem:

Line 19 What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water.

Here a desert presence asserts itself, and is echoed in other accounts such as the nightingale filling "all the desert with inviolable voice" (line 101). This reminds me irresistibly of, for example, Yves Tanguy's (1900-1955) *Mama, Papa is wounded!* (figure 2) in which the empty desert wasteland in the painting seems to reverberate with a single voice echoing from fragmented images. In *The Waste Land*, the desert backdrop becomes an antagonistic presence. Note, for example:

Line 331 Here is no water but only rock
 Rock and no water and the sandy road

One thinks of a similar evocation found in *The persistence of memory* (figure 3) by Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), where the threat of the sandy setting looms over a fictional humanoid figure, and the presence of water seems to be nothing but a mirage. The transfixed yet "liquid" nature of time embodied in Dalí's painting by the melting

Compare, for example, these words with the horror expressed in *Two children are threatened by a nightingale* (figure 5) by the German Dadaist/Surrealist Max Ernst (1891-1976), in which the figures of the children try to escape the menace presented - inexplicably - by the bird, but also by their scary surroundings. The architectural imagery under a threatening sky in Ernst's work could further lead one to consider this passage from *The Waste Land*:

Line 385 In this decayed hole among the mountains
 In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
 Over tumbled graves, about the chapel
 There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
 It has no windows, and the door swings,
 Dry bones can harm no one.
 Only a cock stood on the roof tree
 Co co rico co co rico
 In a flash of lightning.

Furthermore, what strikes the viewer of Ernst's work is the introduction of foreign matter - bits of wood, a wooden gate - into the painting. Equally dislocating are the chunks of foreign matter inserted into the poem, such as

Line 12 Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.

277 Weialala leia
 Wallala leialala

and 427 *Poi s'aspose nel foco che gli affina*

Sometimes the foreign matter is derived from earlier texts, such as the above (line 427 is taken from the *Purgatorio*³) and lines 31-34, from *Tristan und Isolde*⁴:

Line 31 *Frisch weht der Wind*

³ Eliot's note to line 427 indicates that these lines were taken from the *Purgatorio*.

⁴ The note to line 31 guides the reader to *Tristan und Isolde*.

*Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind
Wo weilest du?*

The poem displays a number of similar instances where reference is made to existing, often much older texts. Similarly, *Venus asleep* (figure 6) by Paul Delvaux (1897-1994) jars the senses; the figure of Venus, far removed from the typical lush Renaissance surroundings a viewer might expect, is inserted into a Neo-classical cityscape. Her space is shared by a skeleton, a woman dressed in what looks like Victorian attire, a number of female nudes seemingly performing a ritual. In the background volcanic mountains and a dark sky punctuated with more nude figures loom ominously. One is bound to wonder about the lost connections - how has the figure of Venus come to find herself in this foreign context? Venus is jarred out of her familiar context and positioned in a new narrative. This is not unlike the situation regarding the figure of Tiresias in *The Waste Land*, who finds himself in a sordid contemporary situation, far removed from the "high drama" in Oedipus Rex:

Line 218 I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.

Furthermore, the reader and the viewer of Tiresias and Venus have to make some temporal adjustments; the personae of Tiresias and Venus have been jarred out of their original contexts and yoked together with a new and foreign situation in the present. Centuries stand between these personas and their contemporary situations - the past and the present seem to become one, and are apprehended simultaneously. The rules of conventional logic seem to evaporate in the face of such temporal dislocation.

In *The Waste Land* there is a sense of free association or subjective and rather arbitrary links that suggest an avoidance of fixtue, especially with regard to identity. Not only is it impossible, for example, to pinpoint Tiresias' identity in the passage

mentioned above, but Eliot's note to line 218 suggests a more severe rupture of the motif of identity:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a "character", is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias.

Whether or not one accepts Eliot's explanation of especially the central position of Tiresias, the note quoted above simply confirms the loss of fixed identity - one fragment of a persona blends into the other, in a constant state of becoming. It is this fluid nature of identity that recalls, for example, Dalí's *Soft construction with boiled beans: Premonition of civil war* (figure 7). In this painting, limbs and fragments of the human body are arbitrarily connected, melting and fusing, allowing for no particular identity to be fixed. Male and female, living and decaying - the human limbs blend spontaneously into each other to suggest a constant and prolonged metamorphosis. The one limb cannot exist without the other; like Tiresias in the poem consists of various aspects, Dalí's apparition is constituted of multiple human aspects.

This notion of melting and fusing is found in more instances in *The Waste Land*; consider, for example,

Line 182 By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
 Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song
 Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long[.]

The waters of Lake Geneva (Leman) blend into the almost unbearably melancholic references to the Thames in an effortless fusion; bound by the inherent sadness in these lines. Consider, analogously, Magritte's *The red model*: feet and shoes blend into each other; although associated, the images are startling and in a real sense dislocating in their fusion.⁵ This kind of fluidity of association transcends the

⁵ One is irresistibly reminded of Johnson's disparaging dictum about the Metaphysicals, and their poetic practice of "violently yoking together heterogenous ideas", and Eliot's more

boundaries of conventional logic and rather points towards freely associative processes in which anything and everything is possible.

Because, then, of the loss of fixture and the processes of association found in *The Waste Land*, the reader would tend to regard images, narratives and references with a certain suspicion: everything seems to suggest something else than its ostensible referent. As in Magritte's *Interpretation of dreams* (figure 9), the poem says one thing but one suspects that a different meaning lies hidden beyond the surface. If a horse can be a door, a clock a wind and a jug can become a bird, then the viewer is compelled to surrender normal cause-and-effect logic and embrace the logic of dreams, in which anything can signify anything, and where the most mundane image can assume eminent significance. Therefore the real and the unreal or imagined exist side by side. Compare, for example, an instance in Part II of the poem - "A Game of Chess" - a splendid interior (seemingly "real") is described, but flows into, and is tainted by, a *mythical* reference which represents the "unreal" -

Line 97 Above the antique mantel was displayed
 As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king[.]

What seems to be "real" merges into a construction, the myth of Philomela, without clearly delineated borders between the real and the fictional. Compare this with Magritte's *The human condition* (figure 10) and Chirico's *Great metaphysical interior* (figure 11), where a painting - a construction - merges into its surroundings (which still constitute a painting). Boundaries between the real and the imagined fade - interrogating, inevitably, one's perception of what is real and what is not.

constructive rejoinder about amalgamating disparate experience. This echoes, intriguingly, the painterly practice of Chirico, the central member of the *Scuola Metafisica*, who achieves the visual equivalent of this "yoking together" in his early paintings.

In this first tentative, and rather sprawling discussion I have attempted to share some of the intuitive apprehensions I experienced with regard to similarities found in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. One does not need to look far, it seems, to find analogous techniques and concomitant interpretative possibilities in these texts; they seem to suggest themselves at numerous levels. Things experienced intuitively - notably similar effects of the incongruous, the inexplicable - suggest the need to investigate these analogies further.

The relevance of such an investigation would be lodged in the current concern for interdisciplinary studies articulated by, for instance, Daniel R. Schwarz in his book *Reconfiguring Modernism - explorations in the relationship between Modern art and Modern literature* (1997). Schwarz feels that this kind of study is not only geared towards the broader debate on how we define cultural studies, but also emphasises the fact that interdisciplinary investigation presents strategies for seeing relationships between the art and literature of a period and in so doing, locating possible cultural patterns (1997:iv). This dissertation therefore wants to position itself within the field of interdisciplinary studies and wishes to participate in the contemporary project of seeking tangential points and, indeed, overlapping areas, between the literary and the visual arts, using *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting as exemplars.

However, in order to do so, a number of issues need to be clarified with a view to establishing a fruitful methodological approach for engaging with *The Waste Land* and visual art, and more particularly, Surrealist painting. To bring these into sharper focus, the following questions will therefore be addressed in this dissertation:

- Broadly speaking, is it possible to compare poetry and art, and if so, what are the possibilities and problems inherent to this kind of interdisciplinary inquiry?
- What is the most appropriate contextual frame within which *The Waste Land* and its proposed counterpart in the visual arts - Surrealism - should be situated in such an interdisciplinary inquiry, and how does one's knowledge of this context affect the reading of these texts?

- What does the body of critical texts that engage with *The Waste Land* and possible analogies in Modern⁶ visual arts comprise, and what conclusions with regard to such an interdisciplinary methodology can be reached from investigating the current literature on the poem and visual counterparts?
- Methodologically speaking, which approach seems to suit the requirements of an analogous investigation of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting best? And how can concepts salient to the exploration of analogies between these texts be made pertinent to this methodological approach?

Given these central questions, I will argue that:

- the analogous study of poetry and art is not only possible, but fruitful;
- it is necessary to locate the objects of study within a contextual framework (in this instance the Modern period);

⁶ The terms "Modern", "Modern" and "Modernism" are loaded ones - ambiguous and highly charged, "[t]o define them in full would constitute a valuable chapter in the lexicon of contemporary discourse" (Tuttleton, 1987:275). Although a critical discussion of aspects of Modernism and the Modern movement appears in Chapter 2, it is necessary to clarify the use of these terms. Jesse Airaudi asserts that the term Modernism (he uses the lower case) "has been a puzzle" (1988:453), while Robert Atkins (1991:102) seeks to clarify his position by stating that *Modern* refers to the contemporaneous; that all art is Modern to those who make it. Modernism, according to Atkins, refers to the philosophy of Modern art (again the lower case is used). Frederick R. Karl (1985:3) distinguishes between Modern and Modernism by referring to Modern as the movement that assimilates the *avant-garde*, and Modernism is an umbrella term that signifies the more familiar landscape of the Modern. In this dissertation the use of *Modern* will refer to literary and artistic expressions produced during the Modern period which culminated during the first three decades of the twentieth century, although it is acknowledged that the use of the word "Modern" can be traced back to the Middle Ages and that the term is sometimes used to describe movements in philosophy and the arts from as early as the seventeenth century. *Modernism* in this dissertation would refer to the broad movement in philosophy, arts, science and so forth, characterised by a certain epistemological crisis brought about by a culmination of Enlightenment values, the industrial revolution, sociological changes and ultimately a radical questioning of all modes of enquiry that preceded this movement.

- it is imperative to unpack critical texts dealing with the same concern with a view to locating both useful notions and possible shortcomings as a basis for developing an interdisciplinary methodology; and
- a methodological approach informed by semiotics presents one with a workable approach for analogising the texts chosen for investigation, namely *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting.

The method to be followed in the rest of the dissertation is as follows: in the first instance, it will be necessary to investigate the possibility of comparing poetry and art by engaging with critical opinions regarding this issue. This will comprise the first section of Chapter 2. Following this, and in view of the fact that both *The Waste Land* and Surrealism emerged from the Modernist movement, some tenets of the Modernist context will have to be brought into the discussion in order to frame the relevant texts. Once contextualised, some background information regarding *The Waste Land* will then be discussed.

A second step would then be to investigate similar studies concerning the poem and possible visual counterparts, specifically with a view to investigating methodological aspects or approaches to such an endeavour. A thorough literature search revealed that critical texts dealing with comparisons between *The Waste Land* and Modern visual art are limited in number⁷.

⁷ Apart from the texts mentioned in this discussion, two more critical texts dealing with *The Waste Land* and Modern art appeared. They are: Vinni Marie D'Ambrosio's "Tzara in *The Waste Land*" which appeared in 1990 in the *T.S. Eliot Annual* edited by Shyamal Bagchee, and Jacob Korg's 1988 contribution "*The Waste Land* and contemporary art" which appeared in Jewel Spears Brooker's compilation entitled "Approaches to teaching T.S. Eliot's poetry and plays". The D'Ambrosio article could not be found in a South African catalogue and the Korg contribution was reported missing from Natal University in Durban, which held the only copy available in the country. Furthermore, it should be noted that Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley's book "*Reading The Waste Land: Modernism and the limits of interpretation*" (1990) refers briefly to possible cubist analogies to the poem, but they deal more extensively with the idea of comparing Modern poetry with Modern art, and therefore their contribution will be scrutinised and acknowledged in the later section of this dissertation dealing with this notion of poetry and art as possible analogies for each other.

Having then explored existing texts that seek to analogue *The Waste Land* with Modern visual arts, the next step would be to propose a methodological approach that can account for the analogies I seek to emphasise. An exposition of this approach follows in Chapter 3. The proposed method is based on a number of semiotic principles; an approach, I will argue, which is fruitful because of its emphasis on the interpretative process and its allowance for interdisciplinary research, in this case literary studies and art history. Since semiotics is, surprisingly, relatively new to art-historical inquiry (unlike literary studies, where it has been thoroughly established as a valid method), it will be necessary to investigate salient issues in this regard with reference to a number of critical texts, in order to establish the relevance of semiotics to the discipline of art history. For the construction of a semiotic approach that would suit the current purposes, the model proposed by Michael Riffaterre in *Semiotics of poetry* (1978) supplemented by Anthony L. Johnson's proposed model in the article "Broken images: Discursive fragmentation and paradigmatic integrity in the poetry of T.S. Eliot" will be used as a basis, modified to also suit the requirements of an investigation of the visual arts. Some salient concepts that presented themselves as pertinent to *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting, notably fragmentation, allusion, intertextuality and collage, will be viewed from a semiotic perspective. The method will therefore be framed using some of Riffaterre's and Johnson's semiotic principles and the concepts mentioned above, and will be made relevant to both the poem and the paintings under discussion. Pertinent also to this section which aims to present a methodological approach will be to explore Surrealism briefly from a semiotic perspective.

The last chapter will then comprise an application of the proposed method, and exemplary passages and themes from the poem will be analysed analogously with Surrealist paintings with a view to testing the validity of the method. The study will conclude with a number of proposals for further investigation.

CHAPTER 2: THE BROADER PICTURE

It would be possible to study poetry by studying art - Wallace Stevens.

2.1 Introductory remarks: the debate surrounding comparative studies of poetry and art

When considering a comparison between poetry and visual art one is confronted with the question of probability - in other words, is it possible to compare these art forms, and if so, under what conditions? In order to answer this question, one needs to consider the parallels and differences between these types of texts to establish some kind of working formula or basis of comparison; an imaginative yet carefully grounded *modus operandi*.

Uta Janssens-Knorsch in "Poets on the couch - and in the library", published in *English Studies* (1984), asserts that "so-called fashionable" current interdisciplinary studies focus mainly on the study of the relationships between literature and the visual arts. She finds the beginnings of this kind of endeavour in Horace's famous dictum *ut pictura poesis*, and states that there is a history of a comparative study between literature and the visual arts, but that this field has only recently been elevated to that of a science (1984:327). The language of poetry and the language of the visual arts correspond in the sense that both are presented as selections from the *given*, that is, poetry selects from a particular language system or systems and presents this selection in a new formation. The visual arts, in a similar fashion, select elements from the visual given and from systems of visual organisation in order to compose a new formation. This chapter wishes to explore both intuitive and "scientific" explorations of the idea of interdisciplinary studies between the visual arts and literature, especially poetry, as part of the development of a coherent set of critical tools to be used in the application that constitutes the final section of the dissertation.

Since Horace's statement is referred to above, it seems useful to look briefly at antiquity and the notions regarding the relationship between poetry and art. Plato's insistence on the mimetic element seems to dominate the discourse in this regard, and

to summarise what Christopher Janaway suggests in "Plato's analogy between painter and poet" (1991), one could suggest that poetry seems to occupy a special position in this equation. While a painter may deceive people by painting a picture of, for instance, a carpenter - even though the painter needs not have any knowledge of carpentry - the poet is expected to know more about his raw material. However, this distinction is not unproblematic, because essentially the poet and painter should both strive for *mimeisthai* - "making oneself like another either in voice or form" (*Republic*, book 3, quoted in Janaway, 1991:2). However, it is interesting that Plato uses the mimetic aspect of painting in order to scrutinise a similar notion in poetry (Janaway, 1991:1).

During the Middle Ages the primary function of painting and other two-dimensional forms of art was to illustrate Biblical events, or narratives concerned with the lives of saints. Cynthia Hahn (1990:9) indicates that, although the illustrative - and hence reductive - nature of two-dimensional art took precedence during the Middle Ages, a reverse process often occurred whereby the illustrative image was read as an expansion upon the literary work. As such, "a strongly forged link between text and image as equal variants of a story" could come into being (Hahn, 1990:9). Therefore, although the production of paintings took their cue from the literary work, they always revised, retold and expanded upon the literary work and as such became artworks in their own right. The medieval viewer was encouraged to let images come alive in his imagination.

During the Renaissance, the poetry/painting issue took its cue once again from Horace's doctrine - *ut pictura poesis* - which seems to have allowed for painting and poetry to exist in a mutually supportive manner (Alderson, 1995:256). Similarity, rather than difference, was at the heart of comparisons of the arts, and this similarity operated on three levels: poetry and art both aimed to imitate and improve upon nature; they shared a common mode of perception (in the sense that both created "images" to be impressed upon the mind of the reader or viewer); and they shared a common body of subject-matter (Alderson, 1995:256). However, since the subject matter often derived from literary sources, there was a feeling that a certain hierarchy existed which subjugated painting since poetry provided the structural model for

composition across the arts. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century there was, among art scholars, an increasing desire to liberate painting from this hierarchy and as such the endeavour became one of investigating those parts which are proper to painting only, in order to provide painting with a sense of autonomy. In fact, it was asserted that painting approximated God's creative act more closely than poetry, since painting created, as it were, "out of nothing".

Having established that there is a very old tradition which investigates analogies between poetry and art, one could now turn to more contemporary perspectives in this regard. These perspectives either postulate that all the arts of a period have much in common and should be treated as equals, or that there seems to be a hegemonic position occupied by literary texts and that especially the visual arts seem to be denigrated to a secondary position.

The approach used by William Fleming is typical of the view that the arts - visual, written, musical - of a period share some inherently common ground. In his influential book *Arts and ideas* (1991) the visual arts, music and literature of an age are discussed along with concomitant trends in philosophy to create a "whole" picture. For example, when talking about the Romantic Style there are passages dealing with Delacroix and Géricault alongside discussions of Victor Hugo, Berlioz and Wagner. In the section on Modern styles he effortlessly makes the connection between Surrealism and, for example, James Joyce and Gertrude Stein's methods for "automatic writing as a way to tap the reservoir of the subconscious mind" which resulted in the stream-of-consciousness technique (1991:543). Statements such as "Paul Klee's world of childhood fantasy finds a charming lyrical *counterpart* (my italics) in Maurice Ravel's opera, *The child and the Sorceries* of 1925" (1991:544) reveal a fundamental conviction that the various arts of an era correspond sufficiently to talk about parallels or counterparts between them.

The same is true of Suzanne Ferguson's (1988) viewpoint, although she stresses the particular relationship between poetry and art in her article "'Spots of time': representation of narrative in Modern poems and paintings", published in *Word and Image*:

Despite occasional attempts to fence off the territory between poetry...and painting,...the history of 'the Sister Arts' delineates a continuous overlapping of pictorial poetry and narrative painting, apparent efforts to overcome what would seem to be the generic limitations posed by the very media of the two forms (Ferguson, 1988:186).

Her view is that humans rely on one art form to respond to and interpret another. One therefore uses the "static" art of painting to represent narratives and the "temporal" art of poetry to represent a "pictorial" scene. In both poetry and painting one tends to hypothesise about the "story" behind the text in order to make sense out of it. Furthermore, both paintings and poetry present one with spatial and "processual" signs which one interprets as thematised setting and action. Ferguson (1988:187) also asserts that one thinks both in words and in images, and therefore one's critical vocabulary and the possible processes of interpretation overlap.

Edmund Burke Feldman in his book *Varieties of visual experience* (1987) uses the critical vocabulary of the one art form to complement the analysis of the other: by calling the visual elements such as line, shape, colour and texture the *grammar* of art, he makes the connection effortlessly: "[a]nd just as words can be broken down into letters, images can be broken down into their visual elements" (Feldman, 1987:207). The logical consequence of this statement would be that as poems are made up of words and sentences, visual artworks are made up of images and structures.

However, not all authors seem to share the same conviction. A.L. Sötemann in "Four traditions in Modernist poetry and art" (1988) published in *Word and Image*, states that one of the differences between written art forms and the plastic arts is the fact that a writer's raw material contains an intellectual element absent from paint - the fact that a writer works with language. Consequently, he feels that it would not be possible to derive "poetic" or philosophic statements from paintings themselves as one would in the case of novels or poems. Although this is a highly contestable statement, the basic problem that is addressed here is the problem of two different systems: the written and the pictorial, and that "poetic" or philosophic information is decoded differently for each type of text, be it written or pictorial. However, in his discussion

of possible similarities between literature and pictorial art, he hypothetically states that there is perhaps a closer relationship "between poetry and painting than between painting and prose" (Sötemann, 1988:299).

A notable difference between pictorial or visual arts and written art forms is that of temporality. Whereas one apprehends the basic structure of a picture more or less at once, a written art form unfolds over time. In this regard, Charles Bernstein in his article "Words and pictures" published in *Sagetrieb* in 1983, feels that of all the visual arts, film bears the closest resemblance to the written art form because of the shared dependence on duration, and particularly silent film, by virtue specifically of its silence. In the early silent films language as pure gesture is presented within a duration of time, comparable to the use of language over time in a written art form (Bernstein, 1983:10).

Arie Kuijers (1986:47) presents a rather similar classification with a slightly different slant in his book *Kunswerke in die kunsgeschiedenis - 'n benadering*. He places all the fine arts, design and architecture under the heading of "spatial arts" ("ruimtekunste"), while film, theatre, dance and opera are classified as "temporal-spatial arts" and music and literary arts are placed under the heading of "temporal arts". All of these share art practice, philosophy of art, art theory, art history, art criticism and methodology made particular to each discipline. In this dissertation I am therefore dealing with a spatial art form (Surrealist art) and a temporal art form (*The Waste Land*) in Kuijers's terms.

However, the problem of written text versus pictorial imagery has not yet been cleared up. There seems to be disagreement among critics as to which one of the two will be the most salient, thus guiding one's understanding of the other. Oskar Bätschmann in "Text and image - some general problems" (1988:11) argues that art history seems to be dependent on language since it needs language as a descriptive medium, but language is not the object of the discipline. However, in the contemporary situation art history is concerning itself not only with the image, but with the larger field of visual culture. This, according to Bätschmann, causes the connections between word and image to become more important, especially regarding the production and

reproduction of composite pictorial-verbal forms such as film, television, poster, comics, the illustrated book, and journal and painting.

Even the most eminent of art historians of the earlier part of this century, Erwin Panofsky, produced a model for analysing and interpreting artworks which is largely reliant on the use of language. The model of *Iconology* (as set out in Panofsky's *Meaning in the visual arts*, 1970) proposes that there are three phases of investigation, each with specific activities, subjective presuppositions and corrective principles. The first phase is concerned with the identification of forms such as human beings, animals, plants and so forth. In this stage, called "pre-iconographical description", one makes statements about objects, actions and expressive qualities. This is called the primary subject matter. The second phase, called "iconographical analysis" demands that one identifies a story, concept or theme from the primary subject matter, to arrive at the secondary subject matter. In other words, if one realised in the first step that one is seeing a painting portraying thirteen people seated around a table, one can state, in the second step, that this is probably a portrayal of the Biblical event of the Last Supper. These first two acts, therefore, are acts of understanding with the aim being to derive signification from the structural duality of signs (what the lines, surfaces and colours designate in terms of objects and expression) in terms of text or concept. The third and final phase is the one that seems to be the most problematic. While the first two acts provide the basis of analysis the third step needs to provide an interpretation of the artwork, aiming to discover the "underlying principles" which are also called "symptoms" of an age, a place, a culture, a *Weltanschauung*, and a personal philosophy. One therefore looks for the intrinsic or hidden meaning in the artwork.

This model was criticised for its dependence on "logos" (Bätschmann, 1988:12) as it seemed to confirm the supremacy of language over the image. However, Panofsky himself warned that "[l]iterary critics see art historians as slaves to the tyranny of the eye who fuss over brushstrokes and colour fusion while ignoring the really important question of what a painting really means" (1970:23-50). Bätschmann (1988) feels, however, that in spite of comments such as these, the image still runs the danger of being subordinated to the written text. When one speaks of "reading paintings" or

"the languages of art" or one thinks of the problem of "how to read a picture" metaphors of language are still employed, suggesting that language is the primary tool for understanding pictures. One does not say that one has related the image to a preceding text, but instead it is said that the picture has changed itself into language - into a text - and that the meaning has been opened up because of its close proximity to the word.

Bernstein (1983:14) seems to confirm this view in his argument relating to the visual image. The Bible tells that the first act of creation was light - even before the eyes that had to see it, were created. In Western culture eyesight seems to be valued more than the other senses as most people would, according to Bernstein, rather give up smell, hearing, and so forth. However, the problem that arises from this preciousness is that eyesight seems to be "split off from the other senses and from language" (Bernstein, 1983:14), as if it assumed an autonomous realm of truth. Commonly used metaphors seem to underline the incorrigibility of eyesight: "I've seen the light", "It's plain to see", "Use your eyes", "Seeing is believing". However, Bernstein feels that this masks a twisted value, since, "when push comes to shove, visual experience is only validated when accompanied by a logico-verbal explanation" (1983:15). Furthermore, in Western society a well-educated person is expected to be well versed (note the expression) in the use of language, rather than to have a proper understanding of colour and an ability to render, and other skills associated with the world of visual imagery. Verbal syntax, according to Bernstein, is basic knowledge, while visual syntax is esoteric.

Bernstein's argument goes further to suggest that in spite of the apparent hegemonic position of language, there are nonetheless correspondences between these seemingly irreconcilable systems. The fact that no visual image exists as primary any more than any isolated word exists as primary is emphasised - any picture, even if isolated and framed, presupposes an entire visual language, and any world exists only in the context of a complete verbal language. The eye is not simply a passive mechanism used for intercepting the images of objects. One has to look, to discern, in order to visualise. "Seeing is more involved with differentiation than reception; as with all

language, its primary means of constitution is by establishing differences" (Bernstein, 1983:18-19).

This cursory overview of some critical positions in the debate surrounding the comparison of poetry and art does not pretend to be a comprehensive discussion of all the important debates concerning this issue. I have, however, attempted to establish that there are different viewpoints in this debate, and that these can be categorised into those critics who ascribe a superior position to the written word, and on the other hand, the position that the arts of a period can be awarded equal status in a comparative and analogous study.

Modern theories of art can add further dimensions to this debate, as is the case with Janssens-Knorsch's (1984) thinking. It seems as if language occupies a special place in her argument, since she asserts that one "reads" and "decodes" poems and pictures. Concurrently, she argues that "Russian formalism, French structuralism and semiotics have taught us that all arts exhibit behaviour common to language, i.e. comprised of a system of signs, and that *meaning* arises from the *interplay* of signs" [italics by Janssens-Knorsch, 1984:327]. With this statement she acknowledges the semiotic principle of *systems* within which signs function, and asserts that new vistas are being opened for a semiology of the visual arts. If one explores this statement further, it means that the process of decoding has become the primary interest, as opposed to arriving at conclusive interpretations. And if this process is governed by an abstract system of cultural conventions, it makes possible "the fact that each of the individual arts is necessarily related to the others, but also makes it possible for the work of art to be perceived as such in the first place by the member of the culture involved" (Janssens-Knorsch, 1984:327). Therefore the Modern critic might be less interested in the work of art itself than in *how* to "read" it.

Without oversimplifying the issue at hand, one might safely assert then that the terminology of language can be utilised very effectively when speaking about paintings. One cannot ignore the importance of just this - verbalising about the painted image. This need not imply that one diminishes the inherent qualities present in visual art, but that at present there seem to be few other options. The question as to

whether the fact that one visualises a text is more important than to verbalise about a painting will not be answered here. What is important is that one can do both, and for the purposes of this study these possibilities will be heavily depended upon.

2.2 Comparing Modern art and Modern poetry

*I have been struck about how little the relationship
between Modern art - painting and sculpture
- and Modern literature have been studied
- Daniel R. Schwarz.*

Christopher Butler in his book entitled *Early Modernism - literature, music and painting in Europe 1900-1916* (1991) emphasises that the literary bias of many accounts of Modernism fail to acknowledge, and take into account the "exceptional interaction between the arts in this period" (1991:xv). The acceptance therefore of the premise that there are significant correspondences in the work of literary and artistic Modernists, informed by a similar *Zeitgeist*, is crucial for the current study. The discussion that follows will trace a number of similarities between Modern poetry and Modern painting to elaborate on this viewpoint.

Modern poetry is characterised by "free verse", a vague term that A.C. Partridge in his rather dated (albeit informative) book *The Language of Modern poetry* (1976) feels is as useful as it is unsatisfactory in pinpointing the quality of language found in the poetry of, among others, Eliot, Yeats and Auden. However, Modern poetic verse is "free" only in its "eclectic use of established techniques" (Partridge, 1976:13); sporadic occurrences of the devices of metrical poetry like assonance and alliteration and spells of regular metre. This brings Modern poetry closer to the "living utterance" (Partridge, 1976:14). Sometimes, this would imply a more fragmented use of language often achieved by the use of phrases rather than complete sentences, which results in a feeling of dislocation. In so doing the boundaries of what is known to be "poetic" are challenged.

Modern visual arts characteristically challenge the boundaries of art in an attempt to be "free", and often, as is the case with Surrealism in particular, this freedom

manifests in the eclectic use of established techniques. This is especially true of the brand of Surrealism more concerned with a kind of "magic realism"¹ (such as Dalí, Magritte and Chirico). Dislocation is therefore accomplished by combining established techniques in a bewildering and unexpected way. The visual elements of Surrealism not only correspond to the language in Modern verse (and, as will be indicated, particularly with *The Waste Land*) in its eclectic use of established techniques, but also in the fragmentary nature of the visual elements which often creates the feeling of "unfinished" images. In the light of these correspondences between Modern poetry and Modern art Schwarz suggests that the experiments regarding theme and technique found in the work of Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, Eliot and Stevens *parallel* the challenges to mimesis presented in works by Matisse, Picasso and Klee (1997:iv).

In spite of possible parallels between visual art and literature (particularly poetry), then, it seems as if the basic difference between the visual arts and poetry in general is that the visual arts are spatial in nature; they use forms and colours that are organised in space. On the other hand, poetry is temporal in nature: it employs language consisting of words following each other in time. This implies also that the visual arts are by nature static while poetry is dynamic. A visual artist, even if he or she suggests movement in an artwork, essentially selects a single moment in time to depict. Poetry, on the contrary, is characterised by the arrangement of words that are being read one after another in time (Brooker & Bentley, 1990:22-23).

While visual artists sought to blur the boundaries of the arts by incorporating real movement in visual artworks such as Alexander Calder's (1898-1976) so-called

¹ Arnason states that the branch of Surrealism concerned with magic realism, precise realism or sharp-focus realism is generally inspired by Chirico, and created "mystery and the marvellous through juxtapositions that are disturbing even when it is difficult to see exactly why" (1977:298). This was done by translating everyday experiences into strangeness, and the resultant magic emerged from the fantastic juxtapositions of elements that do not usually belong together (Arnason, 1977:294).

mobile sculptures² and other manifestations, one can assume that painting, which is what this dissertation is concerned with, retains an element of spatiality peculiar to the discipline.

However, by the beginning of the twentieth century these fixed assumptions regarding spatiality and temporality were being challenged by artists and many artists consciously reversed them. Instead of trying to depict three-dimensional space, an artist such as Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) in *Nude descending a staircase* (figure 12) attempts to suggest a movement that takes place in time; and as such shunning the presentation of space by suggesting a temporal aspect.

Brooker and Bentley (1990:23) assert that Duchamp and many other Modern artists were redefining the limitations of their medium by challenging the principle of visual art as being static that has been dominant for centuries in Western culture. The parallel that Brooker and Bentley (1990:24) suggest for poetry is found in the evasion of time and the abandoning of point of view and narrative. They look to Joseph Frank who, as early as 1945, wrote in *Spatial forms in Modern literature*, to reinforce this idea: "[j]ust as Modern painters had shunned space and tried to achieve a temporal dimension, so Modern writers hand undercut narrative and tried to achieve a spatial dimension" (Brooker & Bentley, 1990:24). The poem subverts the temporal notion of a beginning, middle and end, pointing towards the fact that it cannot be read, it can *only be reread*. Therefore the entire poem, including the last lines, must be present in the mind of the reader before the first lines can be understood. Hence the entire work should be perceived at once, within a mental space created in the mind of the reader. In the visual arts, the same happens: the entire work is perceived at a glance, and although it compels more than a glance, one comprehends the work as not having a beginning, middle and end, requiring from the viewer to comprehend the entire structure at once.

² Calder was famous for pioneering the "mobile", which is a kind of kinetic art. Challenging the notion that the visual arts are static, Calder's mobiles physically moved - either by means of a motor or as a response to air currents. These mobiles consisted typically of flat metal parts suspended on wires.

Brooker and Bentley (1990) therefore argue for the abandoning of conventional temporality in Modern poetry. Similarly, they argue for a rejection of simple spatiality in Modern art. Using Cubism as an exemplary movement, they suggest that the Cubists sought to incorporate time in their paintings. While time is generally held to be a literary preoccupation, the Cubists therefore extended the boundaries of their medium to claim a quality alien to the painterly medium for themselves. Evading pure spatiality in their paintings, the Cubists suggest temporality by showing an object as viewed from different angles, representing movement in time - see figure 13 for an example of a Cubist painting. In this painting the sitter - Ambroise Vollard - is viewed from a number of angles; each view is fragmented and superimposed upon the whole to form the portrait. This creates the effect that one is circling the model, a process that extends over time but condensed in the painting.

It can be argued that the element of temporality in the visual arts can be extended to encompass Surrealist art, too. Dalí's use of the visual pun is an example: in *Mae West* (figure 14) he suggests both a room and the face of a woman; the same images representing dual realities at once. The comprehension of these two realities takes place in time, and in this way Dalí also adds a temporal aspect to his work.

2.3 The context: Modernism

Il faut être Moderne - Arthur Rimbaud

Make it new! - Ezra Pound

Poets in our civilisation, as it exists at present, must be difficult
- T.S. Eliot

While the term Modernism is widely used and has been investigated from seemingly all possible perspectives, it remains vague, dynamic and indefinable - but, as M.H. Levenson states in his book *A genealogy of Modernism*: "vague terms still signify" (1984:vii). Furthermore, although definitions of the Modernist project are based on human selection and groupings of facts (Lodge, 1986:74) it is still necessary to contextualise the present discussion surrounding *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting in more particular terms. It is acknowledged that Modernism dates back to an

episteme shaped in the seventeenth century by, among others, Cartesian and Kantian philosophical investigations, and that the epistemological search gained impetus towards the end of the nineteenth century, resulting in an explosion of scientific, technological, philosophical, artistic and other activities with a broad critical frame called Modernism.

What is acknowledged to be Modernism culminated, from the beginning of the century, in the inter-War era although its influence has been formative in shaping the Postmodern condition, and "Modernist" artistic works were still produced as late as the seventies and, arguably, even later (Atkins, 1991:102, 104).

Pertinent to the development of the Modernist world-view would be the tremendous advancements made in the fields of scientific enquiry and empirical modes of research, as well as technological breakthroughs resulting, by the end of the previous century, in a utopian vision based on progress, order, rationality and control. However, within this framework, it is inevitable that strong counter-currents of doubt and scepticism - as found, for example, in the voices of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard - would emerge as by-products of the envisioned technological utopia. This discussion of the Modernist period is therefore based on the assumption that within the general fabric of Modernist optimism, various expressions of doubt and scepticism emerged that questioned the success of the age of technology, avant-garde optimism and progress. Consider, for example, the view expressed by Frederick Karl in his book *Modern and Modernism - the sovereignty of the artist 1885-1925*:

Not unexpectedly, Modernism expresses both hope and threat to the same people: it its technological phases spreading cheer, but in its political and social consequences - not to speak of its artistic potentialities - creating anxiety (1985:5).

Similarly, Daniel R. Schwarz, in *Reconfiguring Modernism* asserts that

Modernism is paradoxically both an ideology of *possibility* and *hope* - a positive response to difficult circumstances - and an ideology of *despair* - a response to excessive faith in industrialism, urbanisation, so-called technological progress, and the Great War of 1914 to 1918 as the War to End All Wars (1997:3 - Schwarz's italics).

Hence, alongside technological advancement and scientific enquiry anxiety and despair existed: the very foundations of Modernist optimism seem to have shattered even as they were constructed. Reacting, then, against this optimism, the doubtful voices of relativism and existentialism cast a shadow of disillusionment over the sheer belief in control, order and rationality. These reactions, although not completely uniform, have in common a tendency toward the absurd, the subversion of conventional logic and a search for psychological depth. A complicating factor is that the two trends - the optimistic and the doubtful - were not necessarily mutually exclusive, so that the Modernism perceived today is punctuated by ambivalence and contradiction. James McFarlane states as much in *The mind of Modernism*:

What is distinctive - and difficult - about the Modernist mode is that it seems to demand the reconciliation of two distinct ways of reconciling contradictions, ways which in themselves are also contradictory ... it recognises the validity of largely rational, mechanic Hegelian synthesis ... but at the same time, the Modernist mind also seems to want to acknowledge Kierkegaard's "intuitive" repudiation of this as merely shrouding everything in a great fog ... (1991:87).

Acknowledging McFarlane's idea of the simultaneous presence of distinctly different approaches, it can be postulated that certain styles, movements and individuals placed greater emphasis on the rational and the mechanistic, while others celebrated the intuitive side of things - the "great fog".

For example, Fleming (1991:525) in *Arts and Ideas* proposes that one finds two distinct but not mutually exclusive trends during the Modernist period: the tendency towards abstraction on the one hand, and on the other hand, the expressionist approach. Expressionism, according to Fleming, is an introspective tendency, concerned with emotional and psychological states, and turns away from naturalism. "[T]hey close their eyes and explore the mind, spirit and imagination" (Fleming, 1991:525). Abstraction, although sharing with Expressionism its rejection of

naturalism, goes about this differently - towards analysis, simplification, geometricality and a concern with the intellect.

H.W. Janson, in *History of Art* (1986) also speaks of the trends toward expressionism and abstractionism, but distinguishes a third current, namely fantasy. He propounds that the expressionist tendency places emphasis on the artist's emotional attitude towards himself and the world, while abstractionism stresses the formal structure of the artwork, and the fantastical explores the realm of the imagination, emphasising the spontaneous and the irrational.

However, in view particularly of the statements by Karl (1985), Schwarz (1997) and McFarlane (1991) quoted above, I want to propose that one could look specifically at poetic and visual artistic expression during the Modern period in terms of two coexisting but contradictory currents: in the *first* instance, the logical, the "stripped", the technological (with concurrent emphasis on formal elements) and the optimistic; and in the *second*, the anxious, the disillusioned, doubtful and introspective current.

I would suggest that these currents or "sets" of characteristics could be useful in the process of structuring one's investigation of Modernism, because they seem to represent some of the tensions and contradictions characteristic of the Modernist period. And yet, although this is once again a strategy that aims at "classification" of trends (Schwarz, 1997:2 warns that: "... any ... 'classification' should be undertaken with caution"), this classification provides a useful framework for interpretation. Obviously, this argument for two distinctive but not necessarily mutually exclusive currents needs further elaboration in the current discussion.

If one accepts these two "sets" of characteristics as such, one can distinguish, in the first current, a line that runs from Cézanne through Cubism - and to an extent through Futurism - towards Constructivism in the visual arts. These individuals and movements present a desire for scientific awareness, an aesthetic based on logic and optimism and informed by a certain order. Furthermore, these present what the critic Clement Greenberg called purity of medium - free of allusion, theatricality or narrative content; emphasis on the literal qualities of the medium and, by and large,

non-referentiality (1982b:5-6). In poetry, the Imagists, for example, could represent some of these characteristics. Rather than employing allusion, theatricality or overt referentiality, the Imagists aspired towards qualities of hardness, clarity and economy, and as such this tendency could be regarded as slanting towards the formalist concept of "making the stone stony" (one thinks of Viktor Skhlofsky's *Art as Technique*, in which the formalist awareness of the methods and techniques enjoy prominence over issues of "content"). The Imagist endeavour was to separate words by science, to treat them with acid to remove the smudges (Bradbury & McFarlane, 1991:158). This kind of work could be presented as the one side of the scale - the scientific, wrought art-making process informed by logic, clarity and optimism.

On the other hand, the second current presents one with styles, movements and individuals whose artistic expression grew from doubt and disillusionment; informed not by the clear-cut truth of science but by the darker, uncertain realms of the psyche. I want to argue also that the second current suggested in this discussion featured more strongly in artistic expression after 1914. The watershed movement in this regard is Dada³, which proclaimed its scepticism in progress, science and technology, logic and truth. The *raison d'être* for Dada was the First World War - artists flocking to neutral Switzerland created a breeding ground for disgust and horror for the War. Their disillusionment gave rise to expressions of absurdity, and exaggerated emphasis on the importance of chance in artistic creation. In opposition to current avant-garde movements, Dadaists recognised no theory, stating that "we have enough cubist and futurist academies: laboratories for formal ideas" (Butler, 1994:268). Hugo Ball, one of the founders of the Dada movement, proclaimed that "... the world of systems was disintegrated" and the alternatives were that "instincts and hereditary backgrounds are

³ Dada - which will also be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 - emerged during the First World War (Zurich, 1915) as an expression of disillusionment with the destruction of the War. The movement was characterised by a violent revolt against traditional values and the bourgeoisie. Proclaiming the anti-rational and anti-artistic, Dada emphasised the illogical and the absurd, and the importance of chance in art. Dada artists used buffoonery and provocative behaviour to shock and disrupt public complacency. The movement was relatively short-lived, but its influence was profound in Surrealism which is often called "the Dada of the successful" (Norwich, 1990:121).

now emerging pathologically" (quoted in Karl, 1985:359). Randomness and chance encounters were their staple, an ostensible way of rejecting truth based on formal logic. From Dada, Surrealism emerged as a more sustainable and tremendously influential movement. Retaining some of the principles of Dada, notably the rejection of conventional logic, Surrealism succeeded particularly at countering the dominance of Cubism as central to Modernist aesthetics. The Surrealists rejected logic based on reason, and immersed themselves rather in scepticism, speculation and anxiety. Their work is expressive of alienation and sought to explore the depths of the unconscious in order to access the world of the beyond - dreams, hallucinations and invisible narratives.

In much the same way, Eliot's post-war *The Waste Land* presents one with poetry that ruthlessly abolishes causal relationships between elements, expressing the uncertainty and scepticism of his age (Butler, 1994:105). The poem is fraught with allusive references, disillusionment, psychological depths and suggestive of invisible realities beyond the surface. These artistic expressions characteristic of the second current or set of characteristics - scepticism, disillusionment and alienation, among others - share also the common ground of looking for new "beyonds" under the surface of reality. In a Derridaean sense, these "beyonds" are worlds without centres, hallucinatory arenas where no ultimate fixture occurs. Indeterminate, unknowable, and ultimately anxious - these are terms associated with the disillusioned current of Modernism.

One can therefore argue that *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting share a number of traits: both are slippery in terms of "content", both present one with narratives that are ultimately unknowable, both are indeterminate and function in terms of signifier chains suggestive of openness, which suggest anxiety produced by the lack of fixity (Karl, 1985:402). Furthermore, both the poem and the paintings abound with allusive and intertextual referentiality, and both are constituted by fragments or images from the real interspersed with the hallucinatory or the phantasmagoric. They present the reader and viewer with juxtapositions of the sordidly realistic and the fluidity of memory, using the devices of chaos and the incomprehensible to present their unconventional narratives.

2.4 *The Waste Land*

*It has always been foolish to quarrel
over The Waste Land, and it is
self-defeating to quarrel with it*
(Grover Smith)

The Waste Land created an almost overnight stir after its first publication in 1922 in *Dial*; and since then it has been the subject of countless critical investigations. Brooker and Bentley (1990) divide *Waste Land* criticism into three dispensations, the first being from the thirties to the fifties, then the sixties to the eighties, and the third starting with the eighties. The first period is constituted mainly by scholars of New Criticism, many of whom knew Eliot personally and admired him. The second period was largely a reaction against the first, consisting to an extent of younger scholars interested in literary theory. Often rejecting Eliot, as well as the methods and canon of their predecessors, these critics were more orientated towards metacritical discourse. Critics of the last phase, beginning in the eighties, show renewed interest in Eliot, enriched by an awareness of the primary material as well as an increased appreciation of theoretical concerns with language (Brooker & Bentley, 1990:3).

By the end of 1921 Eliot had completed the original draft of *The Waste Land* and sent it to Ezra Pound for his criticism, upon which Pound suggested improvements and considerably reduced the length of the poem. One of the greatest bones of contention about Pound's involvement was this significant reduction of the length of the poem. Eliot regarded Pound's "Caesarean section" as fruitful enough, responding to a question in an interview with the *Paris Review* dated 1959 as to whether Pound's excisions challenged the intellectual structure of the poem: "No, I think it was just as structureless, only in a more futile way, in the longer version" (quoted in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:26).

The original draft of the poem was missing until, in 1968, *The Times Literary Supplement* published the news that typed and handwritten papers of the original draft of *The Waste Land* still existed. These were published in 1971 and caused an immense critical stir, often resulting in critics mentally adding deleted lines in their

interpretations of the poem. The current study, however, agrees with the standpoint of Thormählen (1978:9) in her very significant book entitled *The Waste Land - a fragmentary wholeness* that

While deleted passages must and should arouse speculation on interpretational matters, *The Waste Land* is a poem first published in 1922, not a MS collection which appeared in 1971, and disregarding that all-important fact is an abuse of the fresh material.

Therefore, matters concerning the poem as it stands in its "first published" form will be considered in this dissertation.

Reviews of *The Waste Land* have not always been favourable; it has even on occasion been described as "a piece of tripe" (E.K. Brown, *Mr Eliot and some enemies* referring to Amy Lowell's statement, quoted in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:11). This seems to summarise the feeling of a number of readers when the poem first appeared in 1922. F.L. Lucas in 1923 sarcastically stated that "a poem that has to be explained in notes is not unlike a picture with 'This is a dog' inscribed beneath"⁴ and even the influential Clive Bell criticised it for a lack of imagination (*Nation and Athenaeum*, 1923 in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:11). Other early reviews, such as Charles Powell's October 1923 review in the *Manchester Guardian*, criticised the poem for its lack of clarity: "... meaning, plan, and intention alike are massed behind a smoke-screen of anthropological and literary erudition, and only the pundit, the pedant, or the clairvoyant will be in the least aware of them" (quoted in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:30).

It would seem that Eliot's views themselves do little to refute these accusations, as if he felt that the wrong kind of respect had been accorded to *The Waste Land*, and I quote again:

Various critics have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of the contemporary world, have considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant

⁴

Could one possibly resist a reference to René Magritte's (in)famous picture - (see figure 25) of a pipe with the inscription underneath - "This is not a pipe"?

grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling (quoted in Ward, 1973:68).

Critics such as Edmund Wilson and Conrad Aiken praised the poem for its apt reflection of post-war society and for suggesting the intellectual's feeling that he was part of a broken, decaying civilisation. Aiken especially mentions that *The Waste Land* is a "brilliant and kaleidoscopic vision", and this "heap of broken images" is justified as "a series of brilliant, brief, unrelated or dimly related pictures by which consciousness empties itself of its characteristic contents" (this statement reminds one of the idea of the "hidden beyond" propounded by the Surrealists). Aiken concludes that the incoherence of the poem is a virtue "because its *donnée* is incoherence" (*New Republic*, undated review quoted in Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:12). Cecil Day Lewis (1968:58-9) also mentions that the poem is important as a "social document" in which Eliot addresses not only the beautiful, but also the ugliness; not only the horror, but also the glory.

It seems as if the poem created such a stir that the widespread reaction to it, whether positive or negative, caused it to be well-established as a formidable literary force by 1930 (Cox & Hinchliffe, 1968:13). Brooker and Bentley assert that at this early stage it was being treated by many as "the poem of the century" (1990:3).

Thormählen (1978:7) affirms that no twentieth-century poem in English has received such extensive treatment as *The Waste Land*. This assertion is supported by the immense body of critical writing devoted to a multitude of aspects pertaining to the poem. However, there remain a vast number of unresolved issues surrounding the poem (the necessity of tracing sources, the exact source alluded to, the readability of a fragmentary text, the possibility or desirability of arriving at conclusive interpretations, and so forth). The present study acknowledges these critical problems, but wants to suggest that a fresh look at some of the aspects of the poem sparked off by a comparison of aspects of the poem to the visual arts and more particularly Surrealism could facilitate a new kind of understanding and appreciation.

In so doing, the question of interpretation remains a difficult one, but Thormählen's (1978:17) sentiments provide a crucial perspective:

No *Waste Land* reader, whatever his capacity, can hope to be able to foist his own view of the poem on anybody else and present irrevocable proof of his interpretation...All the critic can offer is suggestions; the reading stays with the reader.

It remains elusive why critics praise what they do not understand, for, from any perspective, while *The Waste Land* is a highly acclaimed (and enjoyed) text, no reader can possibly claim to "have understood" the poem in all its complexity. One explanation, perhaps the most suitable one at this stage, is Eliot's own claim that appreciation comes before understanding, and that a *better* understanding, in my view, contributes to a deeper appreciation of the poem.

2.5 Literature overview: four critical texts

The discussion that follows will engage with four critical texts⁵ exploring analogies between *The Waste Land* and Modern painting in order to investigate the nature and range of critical thinking in this regard, but also to position the views presented in this dissertation. This discussion also aims to access methods in which comparative studies have been conducted, as well as to establish possible shortcomings in the approaches of other authors.

The first attempt to analogise some aspects of the poem with Modern art is found in Jacob Korg's 1960 article "Modern art techniques in *The Waste Land*", which was published in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. The next contribution to the body of comparative studies in this regard was by John Dixon Hunt, called "'Broken images': T.S. Eliot and Modern Painting". This is a revised version of a lecture presented at the University of York in the fiftieth year of *The Waste Land* and which appeared in a collection of essays entitled *The Waste Land in Different Voices*, edited by A.D. Moody and published in 1974. Both Korg and Hunt attempted to illuminate analogies with the poem and Modern visual art by referring to numerous art

movements from the Modern period, such as Cubism, Surrealism and Futurism, and as such drawing on a very wide spectrum of visual manifestations. Curiously enough, later publications on *The Waste Land* and Modern art have tended to focus on one analogous visual art movement, such as in the case of David Tomlinson, who published his article "T.S. Eliot and the Cubists" in 1980 in the journal *Twentieth Century Literature*. This author only looked at the poem in the light of Cubism, and the 1995 article by Nancy Hargrove and Paul Grootkerk entitled "*The Waste Land* as a Surrealist poem" that appeared in the journal *The Comparatist* focuses on Surrealism, and also briefly touches on Dadaism. There is an obvious departure from the more general approach towards a more specific one in the two later publications, which may signal that critics felt the necessity of stating a position as regards the poem and visual counterparts or analogies. It is also notable that all of the above publications typically address parallels between *The Waste Land* in terms of Modern painting rather than, for example, sculpture or prints. This suggests perhaps that painting provides a more accessible route for comparison than the other art forms, or merely that the authors overlooked possible counterparts in the other visual arts disciplines. However, since this dissertation is intended both as a continuation and critique of studies regarding the poem and Modern visual counterparts, the current study will also limit its comparative study to *The Waste Land* and painting, and Surrealist painting in particular. This is also done because I believe that Surrealism is a more relevant movement for analogous discussion with *The Waste Land*, and I will argue for this during the course of the discussion of existing texts in this regard

A number of questions will be foregrounded in this discussion. They are:

- 1 What are the art movements authors use as analogous to *The Waste Land*?
- 2 What are the salient features of these movements rendering an analogous study with the poem viable?
- 3 Which methods are used for comparison?
- 4 How effective or convincing are the arguments for analogy with particular movements?

⁵ Refer to footnote 7, chapter 1.

- 5 What is the nature of the conclusions these authors reach?, and
 6 Do the authors move beyond analysis towards *interpretation*, and if so, how satisfactory are these interpretative avenues?

The first critical text that this discussion will deal with was written by **Jacob Korg** in 1960, called "Modern art techniques in *The Waste Land*".

Korg feels that, although the poem often invited comparison with music (such as a Beethoven symphony), the parallel with the visual arts *suggests itself*, and refers to the technical experiments of the Cubists, Futurists, Dadaists and Surrealists - all Eliot's contemporaries - exhibiting close affinities with technical innovations in the poem. Of significance is Korg's statement that, although these movements had literary aspects, "it is, curiously enough, in the paintings [produced by these movements] ... that the closest analogies to the methods of *The Waste Land* can be found" (1960:456).

Korg's article can be divided into two large sections: the first dealing with parallels between the poem and Cubism, Futurism and collage, and the second engaging with possible Surrealist analogies. The section dealing with Cubism and related movements is the most extensive and can be subdivided into a number of separate, but related arguments.

Analogies with Cubism and Futurism

Korg suggests that the fragmentary nature of Analytical Cubism⁶ (and Futurism⁷) in the visual arts corresponds to the fragmentation of subject matter in *The Waste Land*.

⁶ The first stage of Cubism is called the Analytical phase. Pioneered by Georges Braque (1882-1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) around 1909, this movement sought to break with the realistic depiction of nature and spatiality predominant in European art from the Renaissance. In Analytical Cubism, objects were represented from a multiplicity of angles so that various different aspects of the object could be viewed simultaneously. Forms are typically analysed into predominantly geometrical shapes and colour was subdued to become almost

In the paintings, the central motif is fragmented but distinguishable, as is the case with the poem, where the central theme is communicated via echoes and fragments. The second and related argument for Cubist analogy to the poem, Korg asserts, is found in the way that a new unity is brought about in the fragments of a painting, a unity that corresponds to the way in which the fragments in the poem suggest a larger unified structure. The third argument Korg propounds pertains to the use of collage in Synthetic Cubism, and the author likens the use of collage elements in paintings to the use of quotations and references to other sources in the poem.

The first, and perhaps most obvious analogy between Cubism and *The Waste Land* is found in the fragmentary nature of both: the poem is often described as a collection of fragments, and the five sections it comprises seem "incomplete" and without transitions, and even the smaller units within these sections such as words or phrases appear "incomplete in form and apparently unrelated to their contexts" (1960:456). However, these incomplete smaller units work together to form a whole larger than themselves within the context of the poem. Korg compares this shattering of subject matter to the Cubists' preoccupation with cutting up objects and the subsequent rearrangement of these fragments into a new whole. The governing principle behind this technique of fragmenting images is to show an object as viewed simultaneously from different angles, while the repetition of angles and design elements within the

monochromatic. The Analytical phase of Cubism can be said to have lasted up to 1912, after which the Synthetic phase of Cubism became dominant. This second phase of Cubism is characterised by the use of stronger colour, almost decorative, and elements such as lettering and bits of newspaper are introduced in many of the collage works of Synthetic Cubism. The First World War brought an end to the collaboration of Picasso and Braque, but their influence, especially as regards Cubism, on later movements was significant (Norwich, 1990:119).

⁷ Futurism was an Italian movement, founded by the poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909. Originally a literary movement, the painters and sculptors of the movement soon established for themselves a dominant position within the larger Modern arts arena. Futurism was propagated by numerous manifestos, which proclaimed a radical break with the past, and a celebration of Modern technology, power and dynamism (Norwich, 1990:166). Technically many Futurist painters were influenced by Cubist principles of fragmentation of subject-matter, but the Futurists added a dimension of emotion and movement to their canvases.

configuration accentuate the simultaneity. While this technique was also adapted by many Futurist painters, these artists often added a dimension of powerful emotion, usually tension and anguish. Korg likens this device - as well as the addition of emotion - to the fragmentary scenes, figures and allusions in *The Waste Land*: fragmented bits that send echoes reverberating among themselves to create a design, and echo the central meaning of the poem. Therefore, like the Cubists and the Futurists use fragmentation and re-integration of subject-matter with the effect of dislocating the viewer's perceptions, *The Waste Land* exhibits the same device, with a comparable effect on the reader. Using the theme of decline and renewal as the central theme, fragments from the Tiresias myth, the Grail legend, Frazer and Weston's theories, the Upanishads and various other sources in a single poem, Eliot brings together disparate fragments within a unified theme. This device, according to Korg (1960:457), creates the effect of circling the model and depicting it from many angles, in the same way that Cubist analysis of subject matter functions. In this regard, Korg (1960:458) draws attention to Eliot's referring to the poet's mind being

... a receptive for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases and images, which remain there until all parties which can unite to form a new compound are presented together⁸.

Once again, Korg suggests likenesses to Analytical Cubist modes of artistic production: like the laws of space are suppressed in a Cubist fragmentation, the laws of time are suppressed in *The Waste Land* "so that all of history and literature can be made available to the poem" (Korg, 1960:458).

In the second argument for a Cubism/*Waste Land* analogy Korg suggests a resemblance in the way that both Cubist painting and the poem bring together fragments of reality into a new unity. While the first argument emphasised repetition and reintegration of fragments to attain a sense of structure, the second goes further to suggest more powerful integrating forces at work. Korg explains that a Cubist work shows a jungle of lines and shapes while the actual model is nearly invisible,

discernible only as a "mutilated, shadowy shape partly occluded by and partly made up of those fragments of itself" (1960:458-9), and argues further that the same situation occurs in *The Waste Land* where the "model is the fable of loss of faith in the recent history of mankind" (1960:458), and this "model" appears as if in the background of the poem, obscured by parallels, echoes, allusions and so forth. Consequently, the "model" seems to be smothered by these aspects in the same way that the multifaceted lines and planes obscure the model in a Cubist painting.

Korg's third argument for a Cubist/*Waste Land* analogy focuses on technique once again, but this time the focus is shifted from Analytical to Synthetic Cubism, a later phase of the Cubist movement (specifically Picasso and Braque). The argument pertains in particular to the technique of *collage*, a device where the artist attaches actual objects or bits of paper, wallpaper, musical scores, and so forth, onto the canvas (see figure 15). Korg compares this device to the poem's innovative use of quotations from other poems, songs, devotional books and so forth into the texture of the poem. Many of the quotations appearing in *The Waste Land* have no syntactical function, and seem utterly removed from their context, for example the lines from Verlaine's *Parsifal* which are inserted into the Mrs Porter ballad:

line 199 O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter
 And on her daughter
 They wash their feet in soda water
 Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

The significance of this technique in the poem is that the quotations communicate, "not by carefully controlled meaning, as the other words in the poem do, but by their associations, which are at once more immediate and less exact than the meaning of words" (Korg, 1960:459). The same function is ascribed to the bits of realistic conversation inserted into the poem, such as those in *The Burial of the Dead* (section I - Madame Sosostris' advice) and *A Game of Chess* (section II - the pub scene relating the Albert and Lil story). These quotations and bits of conversation are significant

⁸ From T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the individual talent", which first appeared in 1932 in *Selected Essays*. Current source: Davis, R.C. and Schleifer, R. 1989. Contemporary literary criticism. New York : Longman, p. 26-31.

Analogies with Surrealism

The second section of Korg's article deals with *Waste Land* analogies with Surrealism, and briefly refers to possible Dada counterparts. Although he points out that the principles and values of Surrealism differ markedly from Eliot's, Korg insists that "*The Waste Land* is in some ways an unmistakably Surrealist poem" (1960:461). In the first instance, he argues that the quest for reality beyond appearances characterises both the poem and Surrealist painting, and expounds this argument into the realms of the unconscious and a certain multiplicity of awareness produced by the poem and Surrealist paintings. In the second argument, Korg focuses on juxtaposition used analogously in the poem and the paintings, with comparable effects on the reader and viewer. He also briefly refers to the dream-like atmosphere of unreality found in both the poem and the paintings, and cites the use of the visual pun as his final argument.

Korg's first argument focuses on the quest for reality beyond appearances, a concern for Dada but even more so for Surrealism. Reality beyond appearances was accessed by means of automatic writing, which was initially a Dadaist preoccupation and later became one of the basic principles of Surrealist conception. Automatic writing warranted a new way of accessing the image-forming and organising power of the unconscious and opened vistas for exploring the supremacy of the imagination in art (Korg, 1960:460). In the visual arts the first Surrealist manifestations were in the form of automatic painting, and later the illustration of dreams, trances and hallucinatory psychic states was also pursued. The Surrealists' notion of "Surrealité" was a reality superior to mere appearance, a reality in which material reality and dream material, fantasies and attitudes resulting from mental disorders would coexist, and hence the "weird quality" (1960:461) of Surrealist painting: this strange mingling of the commonplace with the fantastic. This technique of mingling opposites aimed at overcoming the ordinary limitations of perception by accessing the powers of the unconscious, in order to arrive at a more profound reality. Thus, "Surrealité" walks on the two legs of ordinary perception and intuitive awareness (Korg, 1960:461).

Korg asserts that *The Waste Land* achieves the same multiplicity of awareness, in much the same way as Surrealism. As a whole, the poem presents two layers of levels: the banalities of Modern life, adjacent to a dark and suggestive mythical structure. On the one hand there is the hidden memory of a race, and on the other, the here and now. This "grotesque mingling of contradictory elements" (Korg, 1960:461) results in a typical Surrealist irony.

Korg then develops his second argument pertaining to Surrealism and *The Waste Land* when he compares the use of juxtaposition found in these texts. This is motivated by taking into account the widest definition of Surrealism, which would be an image that is at once dreamlike and sharply realistic, eerie, funny and unaccountable, yet significant (Korg, 1960:461). The Surrealist dream quality embodies a profound emotional expression, but its meaning remains elusive. This is typically attained by joining incongruous elements so that they produce an indefinable but perceptible sense of relationship. As an illustration, Korg refers to the work *The Child's Brain* (figure 16) by Giorgio de Chirico⁹ (1888-1978). In this painting a man, naked to the waist, stares pensively at a book before him. No obvious clues are provided regarding how one should interpret the relationship between these two images, nonetheless, there seems to be an indefinable connection.

Korg likens this effect to sections in *The Waste Land* where, for example, Stetson is asked

line 71 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

Regarding these lines, Korg (1960:461) asserts that "the Surrealist quality speaks for itself". Obviously, this statement requires some critical evaluation, which will be pursued at the end of the section dealing with Korg's article.

⁹ The fact that Korg uses this artist as an example of a Surrealist illustrates that Korg applies Surrealism in its wider definition to encapsulate artists such as Chirico, who was actually a predecessor of Surrealism.

A further argument pertaining to Surrealist analogies to the poem involves atmosphere, and Korg refers to the passage in *What the Thunder Said*:

line 377 A woman drew her long black hair out tight
 And fiddled whisper music on those strings
 And bats with baby faces in the violet light
 Whistled, and beat their wings

The atmosphere created is portentous yet dream-like, elusive and inexplicable - qualities typical of Surrealist painting. For Korg, the above passages exemplify the formula of Surrealism: yoking together unrelated elements into a grotesque unity. Especially the passage dealing with the woman with long black hair, adjacent to the images of baby bats, inverted towers and voices singing from empty wells, seems terrifyingly meaningful, yet eludes final interpretation, and as such achieves the true, disquieting Surrealist quality (1960:462).

Related to the arguments for Surrealist analogy is the idea of ambiguity and how the Surrealists' use of the visual pun¹⁰ can be compared to devices used by Eliot. According to Korg (1960:462) the visual pun enables a single form to assume two or more identities. Salvador Dalí's work presents one with such a case. In *Paranoiac face* (figure 17) figures are shown seated on the sand in front of a dome-shaped dwelling with trees behind it. If the painting is turned on its side, one sees half of a terrified female face emerging from the configuration of these images. Everyday objects assume a strange and secret value, displaying the potential of being something other than anticipated. This device is compared to *The Waste Land's* insistence on the presence of ambiguity: treating the subject by looking before and after rather than lingering precisely on the event or character. Every allusion, character, episode and symbol in the poem transforms into something else under the pressure of its context,

¹⁰ The visual pun typifies Salvador Dalí's work. Susan Alexandrian (1970:100) relates this to Dalí's ability to act as if under the influence of a psychic disorder, while being fully aware of what is going on. Dalí called this kind of organised delirium the "paranoiac-critical method" and when in these states he produced paintings such as *Mae West*, in which the room and the face simultaneously appear as elements of each other, drawing attention to the double significance of things (Alexandrian, 1970:101).

thus exhibiting two or more identities simultaneously. An example of this fluid state of identity is found in the character of Mr Eugenedes, who is one-eyed, and therefore also the merchant in the Tarot pack of Madame Sosostris, and being half-blind, he also has some relationship with Tiresias. According to Korg (1960:462), this presents one with an evocative counterpart of the device of the visual pun or double image.

Korg's arguments: An assessment and perspective

The above publication deals relatively comprehensively with *Waste Land* analogies with Cubism and Surrealism, and presents an attempt to establish counterparts while not claiming the poem as belonging to any one movement alone. It is significant that the author naturally accepts that one can (or should) look for analogies between the visual arts and the poem; in other words, that it is natural to view the art of painting and the art of poetry with the same ideas in mind.

Korg's discussion of Cubism - and Futurism - as counterparts for *The Waste Land* focuses on technique (shattering and re-assembling of subject matter) and then deepens to a more profound level regarding fragments of reality and the model or central theme being obfuscated by rhythms, repetitions and planes. The discussion is extended to include collage elements in paintings and their effect, paralleled with the effect of quotations and realistic conversations inserted into the poem. These arguments are well-substantiated using specific examples from the visual arts and the poem, imbuing his work with a sense of validity.

Despite it being a groundbreaking essay, it has serious shortcomings, one of which is the fact that Korg's arguments for Cubist analogies remain within the realm of formal qualities and technical innovations, and very little reference is made to the more profound possibilities of content/meaning or interpretation beyond analysis. It is true that *The Waste Land* presents a clear concern for technical innovations and departures from existing norms in poetry (a typical avant-garde concern especially eminent in more formalist movements such as Cubism), but these technical innovations do not account for content generated in the poem by means of certain technical innovations. This can to an extent be ascribed to the movements used for analogy: one can assert

that Cubism and to some extent Futurism are more concerned with form while less emphasis is placed on matters regarding content. In this regard Cubism constitutes a significant embodiment of the formalist Modern theories of art (such as those of Greenberg and Fry) and the notions of high art, emphasis on the purity of the material and non-referentiality were hailed as the landmarks of the new art (Hertz, 1985:v)¹¹.

Although few would probably fail to call *The Waste Land* "high art", there are marked differences in how the poem and Cubist paintings function within this domain. Imagery, for example, is a case in point: in both the poem and Cubist paintings one often encounters a regular reference to commonplace objects or images (in the poem, these are often extended to the vulgar and banal). However, the difference lies in the way these objects or images are appropriated in the poem and paintings. While the Cubists used commonplace objects, it seems as if the staple Cubist imagery (portraits, musical instruments and conventional still-life objects such as glasses and jugs) is limited in scope. This suggests that the artists sought to remain in the domain of high art and exclusivity by elevating a restricted number of objects to icons suitable for their art. Even when collage elements are introduced, the Cubists confined themselves to staple trivia such as wallpaper, newspaper clippings and the occasional chair caning. Again, these were canonised as suitable elements for high art production.

It seems as if the poem, on the other hand, advances far beyond these restrictions, drawing on such disparate sources that one cannot assume that a limited number of commonplace items were elevated to suitable icons. For example, an unknown person says in line 12:

¹¹ "These characteristics of Modernism - opposition to popular culture, the emphasis on high art and self-sufficiency, the preoccupation with medium and purity, the desire to maintain a rigid distinction between art and popular culture" (Hertz, 1985:v) are among the most salient elements of Greenberg and Fry's critical theories emphasised by Hertz. See also Greenberg, C. 1982b. Modernist painting. (In Frascina, F. & Harrison, C. 1982. Modern art and Modernism: A critical anthology. New York: Harper & Row. p. 5-10.)

Bin gar keine Russian, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch

followed by an unintroduced protagonist called Marie

line 13 And then, when we were children, staying at the arch-dukes,
 My cousin's he took me out on a sled,
 And I was frightened. He said, Marie
 Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.
 In the mountains, there you feel free.
 I read, most of the night, and go south in the winter.

This is closely followed by a reference to Ezekiel II:

line 20 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,

A few lines further, Donne is implied in

line 30 I will show you fear in a handful of dust

followed by a quotation from *Tristan und Isolde*

line 31 *Frisch weht der Wind*
 Der Heimant zu
 Mein Irisch Kind
 Wo weilest du?

Then, a young man's failed love is implied in the direct address

line 37 - Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
 Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
 Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
 Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
 Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

Soon afterwards the soothsayer, Madame Sososttris, is introduced, and she speaks:

line 46 Here, said she,
 Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,

(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)

This last line of her speech also refers to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and recalls Ariel's song to Ferdinand promising his father's sea-change:

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange
(*The Tempest*, Act I Scene II line 396-401).

These sources and references, like the numerous others in the poem, penetrate into the texture of the poem without becoming "canonised" as staple references. Rather, there is a constant quality of surprise and inexplicability about the nature of the references.

As such, then, *Waste Land* references, and therefore also its imagery, seem relatively unlimited in scope, and far removed from the formulaic appearance of Cubist imagery.

In terms of the technique of fragmentation and reintegration of subject matter, Cubism seems to present a satisfying analogy to the poem. However, once one proceeds beyond the effect of this device towards interpretation of fragmentation in Cubism and *The Waste Land*, Cubist analogy falls short. This is true especially with regard to the notion of synchronic versus diachronic awareness. The fragmentation of the subject matter in Cubism takes place on a relatively synchronic level, that is, although the dimension of time is suggested by fragments presented as if one is circling the subject matter (suggesting a time-span of a few seconds or minutes), the experience of fragmentation remains limited in terms of temporality. On the other hand, the poem's shattering of subject matter presented as allusions, chronological jumps and unrelated events suggests fragmentation on a diachronic level. In other words, in a passage such as

line 199 O the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter
 And on her daughter
 They wash their feet in soda water
 Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

 Twit twit twit
 Jug jug jug jug jug jug
 So rudely forc'd
 Tereu

 Unreal City
 Under the brown fog of a winter noon

the shattering of subject matter is not only fragmented in the sense that there are no logical connections, but a vast temporal frame encompassing the contemporary situation and the eras alluded to is established in the diachronic manipulation of fragmentation. The Mrs Porter ballad is of an unknown date¹², while the quotation from Verlaine's *Parsifal* dates from the nineteenth century. The "twit" and "jug" utterings refer back to the earlier allusion to the ancient Philomela myth

line 99 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
 Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
 And stille she cried, and still the world pursues,
 'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.

and "Unreal City" is linked to Dante's *Inferno*, while "Under the brown fog" describes a situation in contemporary London. This example distinguishes between Cubism's relatively more synchronic and the poem's diachronic fragmentation of subject matter to illustrate that the poem functions on a more complex temporal level.

Should one engage with the effect of these fragments in the poem and the demands made on the reader, one cannot escape the compelling need for interpretation and "meaning" beyond the fragments. For example, the fact that Mrs Porter is mentioned in the same breath as Philomela underscores the theme of sexual decay. Mrs Porter was a prostitute, and Philomela was raped by the king, who was also her sister's

¹² Eliot's note to line 199: "I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia".

husband¹³. Therefore, although the subject matter in the poem is fragmented, one cannot disregard the underlying potential for meaningful suggestion: fragmentation is a technique with particularised aims in the poem.

The above example deals with a specific *passage* composed of fragmented images and references to events. When the same logic is applied to the fragmentation of a *persona* in the poem, the differences between the use of fragmentation in *The Waste Land* and Cubist painting can be highlighted even further. Philomela is an obvious example to illuminate this statement. In Cubist terms, the model is fragmented and the fragments reintegrated while the "outlines" of the model is obscured by repetition and unrelated detail (Korg, 1960:458-9), so that the viewer sees, but does not really make out, the model. A pure analogy of this device to the techniques used in *The Waste Land* for the fragmentation of a persona is not satisfying, however, because this analogy fails to take into account the meaning of links between different instances where reference is made to the persona. This can be explained by the persona of Philomela and her textual and emblematic significance.

The first reference to the Philomela myth occurs in lines 99-104, just after a section reminiscent of *Antony and Cleopatra* (see the quotation above). Then follows an unexplained jump, where someone muses:

line 104 And other withered stumps of time
 Were told upon the walls, staring forms
 Leaned out, hushing the room enclosed.
 Footsteps shuffled on the stair.
 Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
 Spread out in fiery points.

¹³ After being raped, Philomela's tongue was cut out by her assailant - the king and her sister's husband. She and her sister avenged the husband's act by serving him his own son for dinner, and the gods punished all three by turning them into birds. Eliot's version of the myth suggests that Philomela was turned into a nightingale, an ironic twist since the nightingale, supposed to have the most beautiful song, was muted by her assailant.

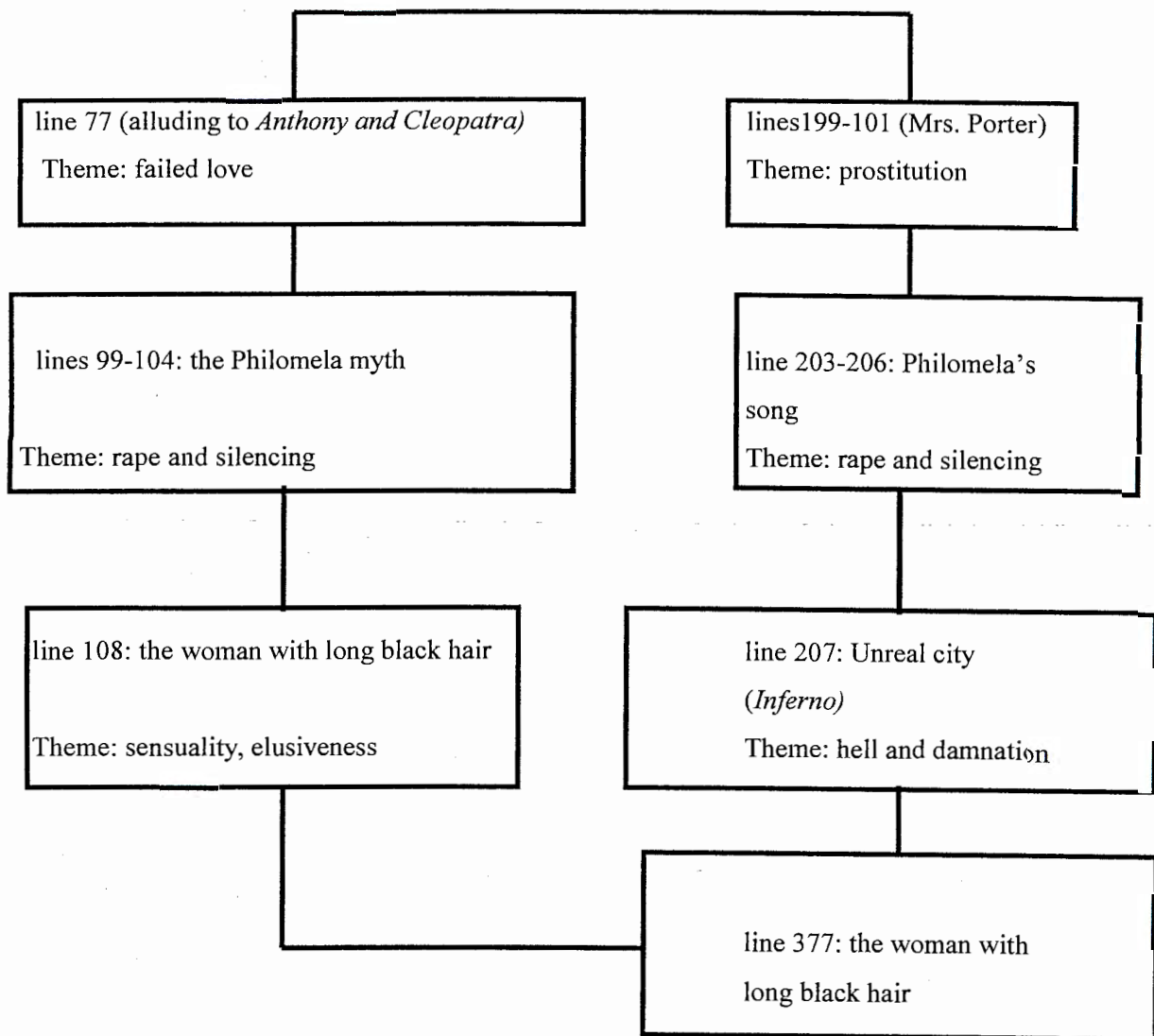
One can assume that these lines rather refer to the woman drawing her long black hair tight, in line 377, than to Philomela. Yet, the very placement of this last passage between the first reference to Philomela and the very next line

line 110 Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

which once again suggests Philomela's muteness, transforms Philomela into the hauntingly evasive woman with long black hair. Therefore, the link between these two characters is established also because of the adjacency of the images on the page. The next suggestion of Philomela¹⁴, in lines 99-104 ("The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king" up to "'Jug Jug' to dirty ears") also occurs sandwiched between Mrs Porter and the allusion to the *Inferno* ("Unreal City"), so that the interpretation of the character of Philomela is informed by adjacent passages: the prostitute, and Hell. These interwoven links create a web of signification and content, different from the way that a Cubist portrait operates. The portrayal of Philomela's character via fragments of the ancient myth and fragments from other sources can be presented schematically as follows:

¹⁴ The fact that the reference to Philomela reappears can be analogous to the repetitive planes in a Cubist portrait. However, the interpretation of the effect of repetition is different in the poem, and the reference is thematically underscored by adjacent passages. In this regard, Cubist analogies remain limited to similarities in technique, but cannot account for the referential and thematic aspects occurring in the Philomela reference.

Connecting theme: failure and decay of love and sexuality



Cubist analogies with *The Waste Land* therefore reveal shortcomings with regard to the referentiality of intertextual references and their intertextual, semiotic character. Typical of the formalist branch of Modernism¹⁵, Cubist paintings abstain from referring to anything but the model or object, and the meaning of the model is seldom explored, as this is not a formalist preoccupation. Most Cubist paintings have a

¹⁵ The formalist Modern theories propounded a preoccupation with medium and purity as well as self-sufficiency, and rejected any influence from other artworks and art forms, seeking the essence of painting by avoiding narrative content or referentiality (Hertz, 1985:v-vi and Levin, 1985). These characteristics would illustrate the first trend or set of characteristics argued for in the discussion of Modernism.

mechanical, almost formulaic appearance, with little or no information signifying "beyonds" in a referential sense. Intertextual references rarely, if ever, appear in Cubist paintings; the "purity" of the painterly art is maintained¹⁶. In contrast, *The Waste Land* abounds with intertextuality and allusion; these constitute one of the most salient characteristics of the poem.

On these grounds one can assert that comparison with Cubism alone can be impoverishing, and furthermore, that Cubism does not present possibilities for analogy with *The Waste Land* beyond those of technique. The poem suggests, albeit elusively, vast possibilities in terms of meaning and content (in themselves loaded terms, supported by but more profound than form). In this respect Cubism does not seem to satisfy the potential depths of analogous reading with *The Waste Land*.

Korg's suggestion of analogies between the poem and Cubist collage also compels further debate. He asserts that "nonsymbolic" elements (e.g. quotations and bits of conversation) inserted into the poem present a counterpart of the Cubist device of pasting bits of real-life material onto the canvas. On one level, Korg's analogy is very successful: the dislocation of *objet trouvé*-like material from their context and into the new context of the poem or painting presents an intriguing dialectic between the real and the imaginary. However, if a finer distinction is made between the use of quotations and bits of conversation in the poem, Korg's analogy may be too simplistic. In other words, when these devices are used by Eliot they each have their own very particular nature. A piece of conversation is taken from real life, and, even if quoted unchanged, has little of the associative imperative found in a quotation from a classic literary work, which evokes the entire text and the whole of its context.

To illustrate the above argument one may look at the Albert and Lil scene (lines 139-171) and the section where a woman identified as Marie speaks (lines 13-18). These bits of conversation typically take place in the present. Like collage elements, one can speak of real-life material incorporated into the poem - on the present temporal scale.

¹⁶

It seems as if Surrealism, and to a lesser extent Dada, are among the few Modern art movements to draw openly on references to other paintings and references to narrative texts.

There are numerous similar instances in the poem, most sharing the temporal distance from the contemporary. Therefore, it seems improbable that an analogy with Cubist collage can fully account for the temporal shifts resulting in a diachronic level of awareness, as well as the thematic underscoring presented by the quotations.

The second part of Korg's article deals with possible analogies between Surrealist paintings and *The Waste Land*.

His first argument, pertaining to the multiplicity of awareness (the material world together with the illusory and elusive dream-world) typical of Surrealism seems valid especially since the reader/viewer draws on intuitive responses to juxtaposed elements. Korg mentions the beginning of *The Fire Sermon* (section III) in this regard:

Line 174

The nymphs are departed
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors,
Departed, left no addresses.

The pairing of seemingly disparate elements produces a dislocating effect within the reader, in the same way one may feel when confronted with, for example, Magritte's *Familiar Objects* (figure 18), where incongruous images are yoked together without overt connection, so that a final interpretation eludes the viewer. This device is so recurrent in *The Waste Land* that one can barely read a few lines without feeling that the text eludes one, as if it withholds answers to questions that cannot be understood. Therefore Korg's reference to intuition is indispensable when engaging with the poem or with Surrealist paintings, as seemingly unrelated imagery that baffles the reader/viewer seems to be the staple of both, and requires "intuitive logic" in order to be grasped.

However, while dealing with elusiveness, Korg himself is elusive at times; asserting that "the Surrealist quality speaks for itself" (1960:461) when referring to the person calling to Stetson:

Line 71 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

While few can disregard the supernatural suggestions in these lines, it would have been profitable to explore the nature of the Surrealist quality evoked by the image of the corpse and its potential sprouting. The present statement by Korg, that the Surrealist quality "speaks for itself", seems like a cop-out.

Korg makes a fruitful comparison between the atmosphere evoked in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting: haunting, dream-like, hallucinatory - all of these are characteristic of both the poem and most Surrealist paintings. Objects and events seem to be imbued with eminent significance, yet interpretation eludes the viewer and reader.

Related to the above is the idea of the double-image where images in paintings become different things when viewed differently. Analogous with this, Korg suggests, is the way that characters in *The Waste Land* seem to merge into one another (Eugenedes, the Hanged Man, Tiresias, and so forth). The most interesting of all these instances where identity is fluid and merges continually into something else is curiously enough found in Eliot's notes (note to line 46):

I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the 'crowds of people' and Death by Water is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

A few important notions arise from this note. For example, it would seem that the idea of transformation or metamorphosis of identity validates closer scrutiny. If the characters in the poem are in a constant state of becoming and merging, a case can be made for analogy with Surrealist metamorphosis which would rely more on images such as Dalí's *Soft construction in boiled beans: premonition of civil war* (figure 7) than only on the rare double image. In images such as Dalí's one is eminently aware of the changing nature of the identity of limbs constituting a figure, in the same way that *The Waste Land* calls for an awareness of the fluidity of identity. Furthermore, Eliot's note emphasises the arbitrariness of subjective association, for example "[t]he man with Three Staves ... I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself" (note to line 46).

Korg's discussion regarding Surrealist analogy with *The Waste Land* is far less comprehensive than his arguments for Cubist analogies and also seems more tentative and vague. Although he touched upon some aspects with regard to Surrealist counterparts for the poem, many possibilities are left unexplored or unsaid. Korg does not address possible Surrealist analogies with the poem relating to, for example, automatism, free association, allusion and intertextuality, themes and setting - and these aspects certainly invite comparison.

In the end, it needs to be stated that Korg dared to explore new boundaries in his article with regard to interdisciplinary approaches to *The Waste Land*, opening up various possibilities for new research and renewed attempts to engage with the poem on different levels.

II

This interdisciplinary approach is echoed to an extent in the text by John Dixon Hunt called "'Broken images": T.S. Eliot and Modern Painting" (1974), a contribution to the book *"The Waste Land" in different voices* edited by A.D. Moody.

Hunt presents one with an attempt to embrace Eliot's poetry from *Sweeney Agonistes*, *Rhapsody on a Winter Night* through *The Waste Land* and "Four Quartets". These he

endeavours to analogise with Modern painting, referring to numerous artists and movements: Paul Klee (1879-1940), Duchamp, Magritte, Chirico and the Cubists, although the focus is on the latter three. He does not claim influences on Eliot's poetry by Modern painting or vice versa, but uses Wallace Stevens' claim that "it would be possible to study poetry by studying painting" as point of departure (Hunt, 1974:166).

Before embarking on a structured analysis, a few remarks establish the engagement with the poem, it seems, via painting. Note, for instance "there is equally a sensation of Dalí when the woman" -

line 377 ... drew her long black hair out tight
 And fiddled whisper music on those strings
 And bats with baby faces in the violet light
 Whistled, and beat their wings[.]

(Although no indication is given as to what a "sensation of Dalí" would be.) Hunt also draws attention to Eliot's *probable* knowledge of Modern art, referring particularly to the Armory Show, an exhibition travelling from Europe to Boston and characterised as an "intelligent refusal to work in outmoded forms" (Hunt, 1974:165), a quality which Hunt feels coincided with Eliot's ideas regarding poetry. The Armory Show was also hailed by critics as representative of an art "recapturing its own madness" and "the expression of subjective experience" (Hunt, 1974:165). Further background includes Eliot's seminar delivered during a seminar series entitled "A comparative study of various types of method" in which he argued that each new interpretation adds to the facts by introducing a new point of view. Hunt likens this to the Cubists' endeavour to reveal the process by which objects are fundamentally altered by the various opinions and views one has of them (1974:167). Connected to this statement is the reference to Duchamp's *Nude descending a staircase* (figure 12) which represents movements and memories of movements, and in so doing, draws one to the limits of painterly coherence while *The Waste Land* "brings us to the limits of verbal coherence" (1974:167).

Hunt seems to suggest in this regard that painting can be used as a decoding device when approaching the poem. The uncertainties one finds when confronted with Modern painting can help one to *recover* some of the unnerving "manoeuvres of Eliot's verse" (Hunt, 1974:167). Hunt furthermore boldly asserts that while engagement with Modern art will probably discourage efforts to pinpoint meaning, many Eliot critics do the opposite when they confidently metamorphose their experience of insecurities in his poetry into their own lucid prose; "explaining" the poem to the reader. Obviously, Hunt has little patience with the "suave lucidity of much Eliot criticism" (1974:168).

Hunt's main concern is the way in which the inexplicable is arrogantly paraphrased by critics of Eliot, but not those of the visual arts. In the same way that Cubism presents an uneasy "interaction of many unknowns and variables" *The Waste Land* constitutes a similar structure of such interactions (Hunt, 1974:167), and should, Hunt suggests, be treated in the same way. Hunt finds it ironic that Eliot himself provided apparently lucid "explanations" in the note to line 46: "[t]he Hanged Man, a member of the traditional Tarot pack, ... is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and ... with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus ... Such "calm deliberation" by Eliot in the midst of poetic ambiguities is "alarming", according to Hunt (1974:167). This statement may be problematic, since one can barely describe the arbitrary process of association presented in the note to line 46 as *deliberated*, rather one may think of adjectives such as erratic, "weird", inexplicable, even mad, to describe the logic of Eliot's note. If the note seems to reflect calm, it is only on the surface, because the pandemonium created with regard to identity can be all but calm. Rather than being an explanation, this note seems to want to tease the reader and push him further towards acknowledging the complexity of the poem emphasised by the merging of apparently unconnected personae.

With regard to the relationship between Eliot's poetry and Modern painting, Hunt argues that while Modern painting depends on the mind of the viewer to determine the organisation of the artwork (a characteristic that Hunt associates typically with poetry), Eliot's early poems exhibit a strong presence of visual elements. This would,

according to Hunt (1974:168) endorse an approach which tries to read Eliot in the light of Modern painting as the one may supplement the reading/viewing of the other.

Hunt's arguments for Modern art analogies with Eliot comprise three sections: in the first place, reference is made to Magritte, then Chirico, and finally Cubism.

Most of the analogies with Magritte are made with regard to *Gerontion* and *Prufrock*, although many of these are also applicable to *The Waste Land*. In the first place, Hunt identifies Magritte's rejection of pedantic illusionistic space characteristic of Renaissance painting, similar to Eliot's avoidance of "temporal exigencies of words in sequence" (1974:169). Instead, Eliot's images and worlds have a feeling of simultaneity which, like Magritte's paintings, "disorientate our accustomed perspectives" (1974:169). While the idea of comparing the suppression of space in painting with the suppression of time in poetry is enticing, being one of the pursuits also of Brooker and Bentley (1990), the use of Magritte as exemplary artist in this instance is contentious. Stating that Magritte does not employ illusionist space is not convincing - on a technical level, his Surrealist paintings do not exhibit any distinct departure from the depiction of illusionist space. Rather, he employs the technique of illusionist space as a vehicle for his riddle-laden expressions. By using convincing depth and space concomitantly with strange juxtapositions, he imbues his works with a first-level sense of credibility, only to startle the viewer on a second level when he (the viewer) realises the strangeness of the unconnected images in the painting.

Hunt's next argument for analogies between Eliot and Magritte centres around one of the most characteristic qualities of both of these artists' work: that images and settings seem to have no logical connection. The following passage, discussion and analogy from *Prufrock* are useful insofar as they also illustrate Hunt's argument that painting can help explain poetry, and will therefore be dealt with here, although the main concern is with *The Waste Land* and not with *Prufrock*. However, the same idea of unconnected images and setting can be applied to *The Waste Land*. The opening lines of *Prufrock*

Let us go then, you and I
 When the evening is spread out against the sky
 Like a patient etherised upon a table

suggest an analogy with Magritte's *Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (Hunt uses the French title - in English it reads *The musings of a solitary walker* -see figure 19). In the picture, one cannot reconcile the images of walker and patient, as in the poem, where a false logic or facile reconciliation of images would be unsatisfactory. As a case in point, Hunt (1974:171) cites Grover Smith's "easy explanation" to substantiate his assertion that Eliot's imagery cannot be interpreted in a logical way:

The opening image symbolises through bathos the helpless Prufrock's subjective impression of the evening, which is like an anaesthetised patient because he himself is one.

After having looked at Magritte's painting, one can hardly imagine that this kind of paraphrasing of *Prufrock's* opening lines does justice to the passage at hand. The symbolism that Smith speaks about cannot account for what Hunt calls the "ready-made" realities that Eliot invokes. Furthermore, Smith's "explanation" does not acknowledge the irreconcilable image-setting relationship as effectively as Magritte's painting does. At this stage, it should be pointed out that Hunt also abstains from verbalising about how the *Prufrock*-Magritte connection can be elucidated further. However, what Hunt calls "the panic of lost connections" (1974:172) is evident in both Eliot's poetry and Magritte's paintings, and the dislocating effects these lost connections produce are similar: panic, dread and fear.

Waste Land analogies with Magritte are also explored, and particularly with regard to what Hunt (1974:174) calls Eliot's "continued and deliberate disruptions of our planned adjudications of reality". For example, the placement of the lines

line 19 What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images

directly after the reference to Marie and the events at the archduke's is compared to Magritte's *Le fils d'Homme* (in English, *The son of man*; see figure 20) where the apple, pregnant with *felix culpa* baffles its clerk (Hunt, 1974:174). Similarly, the conflation of Dante's *Inferno* with the contemporary metropolis in *The Waste Land* in the following passage

line 62 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
 I had not thought death had undone so many.

presents a simultaneous invocation of dream and fact, internal and external, unconscious and conscious, similar to the effect produced by many of Magritte's works. Hunt (1974:174) in this way reaffirms his statement that these examples illustrate how Magritte's simultaneity of images more closely approximates the experience of Eliot's verse than much critical explanation and paraphrasing. This statement presents a daring position within the critical discussion of Eliot's verse, because the visual arts and artists like Magritte in particular seem to have an edge over much critical explanation, capturing the infinitude of suggestion most Eliot readers find intriguing. However, on a more cautious note, even though "explanation" in the pedantic sense as well as paraphrasing clearly proved inadequate, Eliot criticism is not confined to these endeavours. Many critics engage fruitfully with the poem without taking it upon themselves to "explain" the poem for the reader.

With regard to Eliot's use of "past artefact", Hunt compares the Marvellian "at my back I always hear" that meets the present scepticism of "from time to time" (line 196) with Magritte's *Le bouquet tout fait* (*The ready-made posy* in English - see figure 21) where the image from Botticelli's *Primavera* appears on the back of a bowler-hatted man. Hunt asserts, but does not elucidate, that the uneasy juxtaposition presented in Eliot's verse finds a counterpart with the same effects as those achieved in Magritte's painting (1974:174).

However, in the second section of Hunt's contribution he argues that Giorgio de Chirico presents one with a "richer visual poetry" that more closely resembles Eliot's verse than that of Magritte. In this regard, Hunt (1974:175) connects Eliot's technique

With regard to this argument, Hunt indicates that Cubist portraits present the viewer with a multiplicity of viewpoints, controlled by the ordering of shape and colour in the superimposed and juxtaposed geometrical shapes (see figure 13). These work towards suggesting the *idea* of such a subject while avoiding conventional illusionism. Similarly, in *The Waste Land* a rich variety of viewpoints are suggested, controlled by rhythm that functions like the recurring geometry of Cubist painting:

line 185 But at my back in a cold blast I hear
 The rattle of bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
 Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
 While I was fishing in the dull canal
 On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
 Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
 And on the king my father's death before him.
 White bodies naked on the low damp ground
 And bones cast I a little low dry garret,
 Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.

In this passage, Hunt suggests, organisation is controlled by puns, rhymes and rhythms, like geometrical rhythms control Cubist paintings. In both Cubism and the poem, these elements form patterns and assume significance in one's mind.

Hunt's next analogy pertains to the use of subject matter in Cubism and *The Waste Land*. He suggests that Cubism's use of ordinary subject-matter leads towards a feeling that one is not looking at, for example, a *specific* violin, palette, and so forth: one is only catching glimpses of what seems to be a mental image of a violin, palette, and so forth, and these objects are painted in monochromatic tones so as not to distract from the mental images in one's mind (Hunt, 1974:178). He compares this process to the way the rat in *The Waste Land* emerges from the sound of "rattle", and hence the rhythms, like the colours in a Cubist painting, limit and control. This argument, being quite abstract, demands a significant amount of compliance from the reader. Also, the vagueness of the comparison is unsatisfactory - there are, as Korg (1960) already indicated, more obvious analogies between Cubism and the poem. Furthermore, the argument may not hold water when one compares the nature of Cubist ordinary subject matter with Eliot's. Whereas Cubist subject matter is somewhat generic

(nonspecific violins/palettes/still-life elements) Eliot uses very *specific* ordinary subject matter (such as the Albert and Lil passage, the mention of Marie, and so forth).

The following argument for Cubist analogy with *The Waste Land* is presented with regard to the rejection of both the photographic and the narrative in both Cubist paintings and in *The Waste Land*. Hunt (1974:178) cites as an example the opening lines of the poem, which are characterised by "ellipses and narrative uncertainties". This effect of a "hallucinatory whirlpool" (1974:178) is likened to the Cubists' rejection of photographic realism (that is, mere visual context that "explains") which compels the reader to rather take cognisance of the mental notion of the motif. However, the mention of the word "hallucinatory" is sufficient to alert the reader also towards Surrealism, as hallucinatory effects constitute the staple Surrealist imagery. Most critics would agree that hallucinations and the irrational are more typical of Surrealism than of Cubism, while a certain kind of logic or rationality governs the latter - and is usually absent in Surrealist painting. Certainly, Surrealists such as Dalí often use photographic realism, but not towards explanation: rather, to undermine the usual notions of reality on a detour towards the reality of dream or the unconscious. The argument for Cubist analogy in this case may therefore be limited.

Hunt (1974:180) also attempts an argument for analogy between *The Waste Land* and Cubist collage (see figure 15). He feels that the use of elements from "ready-made reality" in Cubist collages contribute towards "the emancipation of Cubism from any comfortable illusion that what we face on the canvas is like what we see". Hunt then, like Korg (1960), compares this device to Eliot's use of, for example, the Albert and Lil conversation, the song of Mrs Porter, and "C.i.f. London" (line 211). Furthermore, like Korg, he asserts that there is a collage-like quality about the use of literary allusions in *The Waste Land*, "although at their best they are revised in a fresh context".

However, Hunt (1974:182) makes the contentious assumption that the quotations in the poem do not always have any relation to their new context in the poem, much like, he feels, is the case with Cubist collage. In a Cubist collage little consideration is

necessary as to why, for example, wallpaper was used instead of newspaper because the most important is the effect of the real merging with the artistic. Hunt argues that a similar notion arises in the poem - "the language of *The Waste Land* fails to find these compounds (that is, relationships between quotations and contexts) and then the collage elements from earlier literatures are not mediated by their new context" (1974:182). While one may agree to an extent that the quotations in the poem *seem* unconnected to their new contexts, it seems preposterous to suggest that there are not *substantial* relationships between quotations and their contexts. The intricate webs of signification between quotations and contexts may not seem obvious at first glance, but at second-level decoding it would constitute thematic unawareness not to recognise significant connections between the quotations and the larger structures in the poem. Hence, when Eliot states "I can connect/nothing with nothing" (lines 301-302) this seems true only with regard to first-level decoding and as reference to the general state of mind presented in the poem. But, connections between quotations and the themes they suggest and reinforce constitute one of the most pertinent aspects of the poem.

While Hunt's (1974) contribution presents the reader with some useful analogies, one can argue that most of these similarities either remain relatively superficial or are very abstract in nature. Furthermore, he speaks broadly of Eliot's poetry (not focusing on one poem only) and Modern painting in general. This lack of demarcation presents problems with regard to the scope of his discussion, impacting on the persuasiveness of the analogies suggested. On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the inclusion of visual material in his publication greatly enhances readability and access to references.

III

David Tomlinson's article "T.S. Eliot and the Cubists" (1980) presents a different approach from either Korg (1960) or Hunt (1974), in that the basic thrust of his arguments is based on an attempt to prove that Cubism physically influenced the making of *The Waste Land*.

He refutes Korg's (1960) arguments for *Waste Land* analogies with Surrealism, stating that "Korg's parallel with Dalí is needlessly anachronistic" (Tomlinson, 1980:65). For example, Tomlinson cites Korg's reference to images of contemporary London merging into the lost souls Dante sees inside the gate of the Inferno:

line 61 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
 A crowd flowed over London bridge, so many,
 I had not thought death had undone so many.

Tomlinson propounds that Picasso's *papiers collés* can better account for this effect of one thing (London's crowds) merging into another (Dante's lost souls) since "the cut-out of a bottle can turn out to be a piece of grained paper, and the cut-out of a violin, a piece of newspaper" (1980:65).

This assertion is contentious because the argument fails to move beyond the formal level of technique. The fact that one perceives one thing (contemporary Londoners or a bottle) that turns out to be another thing (Dante's lost souls or a piece of grained paper) is valid but limited, not acknowledging the depths of meaning or possible interpretation invited by the very nature of the subject matter in the poem. Therefore, formal comparison only on the grounds that one thing can be another remains a relatively limited issue and does not account for the effects of metamorphosis, the unconscious and free association on a more profound level. In this regard the Cubist collage analogy can be a starting point for comparison with similar techniques in *The Waste Land*, but remains unsatisfactory when one engages with the effects of dream-like merging of one image into another, or into another context, and the disturbing psychological result of this metamorphosis.

A further argument for analogy brought forward by Tomlinson is the "appearance in Eliot's poetry of the characteristic motifs of analytical and synthetic Cubism" - these motifs are objects such as violins and mandolins, men with pipes, glasses of beer and so forth; objects and images found in bars and sidewalk cafés (1980:65-66). This seems obvious at first glance, but then almost all of Modern art (except perhaps for purely abstract works by artists such as Piet Mondrian [1872-1944] or Vasily Kandinsky [1866-1944]) deals with everyday motifs. These motifs certainly are not Cubist property only. For example, Futurism (Giacomo Balla's [1871-1958] *Dynamics of a dog on a leash*, Gino Severini's [1883-1966] *Dynamic Hieroglyphic at the Bal Tabarin*), Dadaism (Duchamp's ready-mades), Surrealism (Magritte), German Expressionism (Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's [1880-1938] *Street*), even the Post-Impressionist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) (*At the Moulin Rouge*) all use this kind of imagery, and one may well find similar examples in Pieter Bruegel's (c. 1525-69) festive scenes and Frans Hals's (c.1581-1666) images of drinkers. Tomlinson's argument thus debunks itself by being too general to support Cubist analogy to *The Waste Land* in terms of motifs used.

In a further extension of the argument, Tomlinson (1980:66) refutes Korg's (1960) assertion that parallels between *The Waste Land* and Modern visual arts were coincidental, spurred by a generally shared *Zeitgeist*. Tomlinson argues at length that Eliot was very specifically influenced by Cubism during the process of composing the poem. He points out all the instances where Eliot *might have* encountered the visual arts, particularly Cubism, and how his friends were often either interested in or involved in making Modern art. This would, according to Tomlinson, validate his assertion that Eliot looked to Cubism as presenting technical solutions to *The Waste Land*. In so doing, Tomlinson retorts to tentative phrases such as "let us assume" (1980:71), "most likely" (1980:71), "could hardly avoid" (1980:70), "but he might well have heard" (1980:72), "probably" (1980:72), "we do not know if Eliot had then seen any cubist work" (1980:72), "again, it would be rash to build anything on this" (1980:73), and so forth. All of these instances pertain to *vaguely possible* encounters with Modern art in general or Cubism in particular, or to people with whom Eliot might have discussed Modern art. However, during the years more closely approximating the conception of *The Waste Land* there seems to be more proof that

Eliot was well aware of Cubism (1980:77), and this is taken to suggest that Cubism did in fact *influence Eliot to produce the poem in the way that he did*. While certainly an interesting notion, this last argument is speculative and cannot be proved. While biographical details validate investigation, and while one should not discount possible influences on Eliot, Tomlinson's arguments are too vague and demand that the reader plays along with his hypothetical suggestions to a large degree.

Furthermore, one may well ask whether possible encounters with Cubism *influenced* the making of the poem, and even so, whether Cubist influences necessarily deems *The Waste Land* Cubist in nature. It is common knowledge that Eliot engaged with a vast number of different sources and also acknowledged influences, and none of these can claim to have had the definitive influence on the poem.

The most disconcerting aspect of Tomlinson's article is the lack of examples to motivate his arguments. Nowhere in the entire article is there a physical quotation from the poem, and he refers to scenes from the poem in two instances only (Dante's lost souls and London Bridge, and the opening scene of "A Game of Chess" - Part II). This suggests a lack of hands-on engagement with the poem and particular artworks that could illustrate analogies, and leads the reader to question the validity of arguments.

Tomlinson's basic contention is that "it is unlikely, then, that all the parallels Korg perceptively noted between the stylistic innovations of *The Waste Land* and Cubist techniques were incidental" (1980:73), intimating that Cubism had a very direct influence on the poem. This remains an argument based on speculation, as one may especially argue that the techniques found in the poem could just as well be a further exploration of similar techniques already manifest in earlier poems such as "Gerontion" and "Prufrock". And, finally, the view presented in this dissertation is that, in the first place, readings looking for "intentions" in any poem should be approached with caution: we, in the 1990s, cannot possibly pretend to know what Eliot "intended" in 1922 and before, so that a comparative reading or interpretation of *The Waste Land* and Modern art movements takes place from the position of a reader in a contemporary situation. Furthermore, it has been suggested in the discussion of

Korg's article above, that Cubist analogies with the poem, although valid up to a point, prove less fruitful than analogies with Surrealism.

IV

The final critical text under discussion is entitled "*The Waste Land* as a Surrealist poem" (1995) by Nancy Hargrove and Paul Grootkerk.

This concise, informative article takes as point of departure Korg's (1960:461) statement that "*The Waste Land* is in some ways an unmistakable Surrealist poem". Hargrove and Grootkerk take cognisance of the most eminent attempts to establish analogies between the poem and visual counterparts, notably Korg (1960), Hunt (1974) and Tomlinson (1980) and also refer to the contributions of Brooker and Bentley (1990). In this article the authors assert that most critics have explored various avenues regarding *Waste Land* analogies with Modern art, but few have really attempted to investigate the particular Surrealist qualities of the poem they find most important. They cautiously demarcate their position by

suggesting not that Eliot was influenced by specific Surrealist paintings...but, even more exciting and indicative of his genius, that he was producing in England a Surrealist poem at the same time that painters and writers in France were creating similar works, that he was at the very forefront...of a major movement in European art and literature (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:4).

This approach therefore differs markedly from Tomlinson's (1980) who argued for Cubist influence on the making of *The Waste Land*. Rather, Hargrove and Grootkerk present a case for a general *Zeitgeist* that permeated Western Europe and the British Isles during the Modernist period, and that this can account for similarities in these texts without claiming that any particular movement almost exclusively influenced the making of the poem.

Like Tomlinson, Hargrove and Grootkerk refer to Eliot's knowledge of contemporary European art, the exhibitions he probably attended, and his awareness of French cultural production (in view of the fact that Surrealism was essentially a French

movement). It is also pointed out that Eliot took an undergraduate course in art history, a fact that would indicate his interest in the discipline. These aspects would, according to the authors, have fostered an awareness of, and sensitivity towards the emerging new ideas and techniques culminating in the Surrealist movement, "indeed, the conception and creation of *The Waste Land* coincided precisely with the first stirrings of Surrealism" (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:5).

Hargrove and Grootkerk's definition of Surrealism, albeit brief, seems to be flexible and encompassing (for example, they refer to artists as disparate as Max Ernst, George Grosz and the filmmaker Luis Buñuel [1900-]), and acknowledge the variety of creative processes and concomitant variety of definitions of the term. It is within this awareness of Surrealism's far-ranging creative possibilities that the authors set out to prove a similar philosophy and set of technical innovations emerging in *The Waste Land*. In this regard it is worth referring to Harding's (1974:15) statement that *The Waste Land* was "a formidable piece of anti-establishment writing" in its time.

It is a generally accepted view that most Modernist movements sought to break with tradition, with regard especially to technique, and also content, often in order to challenge conventional notions of art and poetry. Hargrove and Grootkerk set out to prove that a concern not only with technique, but also with content would be indispensable when engaging with the poem and possible visual counterparts. Hence, the first analogy to be addressed is with regard to content. This is undertaken with due cognisance of the Surrealists' reaction against the Cubists' emphasis on form, thus aiming to restore the emphasis on content. The concern for content in *The Waste Land* and Surrealism is partly ascribed to a feeling of disillusionment following the First World War, manifesting in themes of sterility of the Modern world and humanity, and the concomitant sterility of Modern spaces, either experienced as physically barren desert settings or the sterility portrayed in Modern urban settings as blighted areas devoid of humanity. References are made to Yves Tanguy's wasteland settings lacking human presence and the empty sterility in many of Dalí's landscape scenes (see figures 2 and 3 respectively). Similarly, the desert theme is pointed out in *The Waste Land*, Section I:

line 19 What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
 Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, and the cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water.

Within this drab, barren setting, human life is presented as absurd, chaotic and painful, or monotonous, both in the poem and in Surrealist painting. Ernst's *Two children are threatened by a nightingale* (figure 5) shows a girl in a bleak, empty landscape haunted by a black sky, running away in terror, arms outstretched. The pain of existence also emanates from Ernst's *Oedipus Rex* (figure 22) where nails pierce fingers and the imagery shocks with its absurdity and bizarre ambiguity. Both these paintings suggest the "panic of lost connections, especially the connections of logic and sequential explanation" (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995 referring to the article by Hunt, 1974 discussed earlier). Another example of unexplained infliction of pain and terror can be found in Bunuel's film *Un chien Andalou* where a razor cuts through what seems to be a human eyeball. Similar portrayals of emptiness, lost connections, futility and terror appear abundantly in *The Waste Land*, for example the woman crying out in near hysteria

line 131 What shall I do now? What shall I do?
 and line 133 What shall I ever do?

Similarly, the outcry in lines 301-303 is indicative of the inability to make sense out of a futile, hopeless situation:

I can connect
 Nothing with nothing
 The broken fingernails of dirty hands.

The second major theme found concurrently in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting indicated by Hargrove and Grootkerk is that of the absence of love; the lack of meaningful human relationships (a theme supplementing the prior one of sterility and barrenness). In Surrealist painting the loss of meaningful human interaction is sometimes manifested in the portrayal of humans as machines (for example, Ernst's *Elephant Celebes* - see figure 23) or human beings isolated from one another.

In the poem this theme finds expression in the various futile relationships, such as the inability of the man confronted with the Hyacinth girl to accept her offering of love:

line 37 Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,
 Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
 Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
 Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
 Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

Further examples of unfulfilled relationships are found in the rocky marriage of Albert and Lil, wracked by intimations of abortion and infidelity; the vulgar Sweeney and the prostitute Mrs Porter, and the meaningless seduction of the three Thames daughters (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:10). One of the most striking instances, however, dealing with the human-as-machine and futility of attempting to establish a fulfilling relationship is found in the episode between the typist and the young man carbuncular, in *The Fire Sermon*.

Line 215 At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
 Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
 Like a taxi throbbing waiting

Having established the mechanical, sterile nature of humankind, the pair's copulation is recounted by Tiresias in a Shakespearian sonnet format, ironically commenting on the absence of passion. Again, by the end of the scene, one finds the final blow struck against meaningful human intercourse:

line 255 She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
 And puts a record on the gramophone.

With regard to content, a further similarity is pointed out by Hargrove and Grootkerk (1995:13): that of the omnipresence of the irrational and the unconscious. Surrealist aesthetics responded to a large degree to sources of dreams, fantasy and nightmare - in the words of Bunuel: "I treasure that access to the depths of the self which I so yearned for, that call to the irrational, to the impulses that spring from the dark side of the soul" (quoted in Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:13). Yves Tanguy's *The Storm*

(figure 24) fits this description: a nightmarish barren desert filled with fragments, an ominous black background and unfamiliar shapes suggestive of irrational horror and incomprehensible darkness.

This austere, nightmarish world is echoed in *The Waste Land* in the passage where the protagonist approaches the Chapel Perilous:

line 368 Who are the hooded hordes swarming
 Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
 Ringed by the flat horizon only
 What is the city over mountains
 Cracks and reforms and bursts the violet air

followed by the nightmare world evoked in a following passage:

line 382 And upside down in air were towers
 Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
 And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

The next section of Hargrove and Grootkerk's article deals with the analogous techniques encountered in Surrealism and *The Waste Land*. In the first instance, they refer to collage¹⁹, a technique the Surrealists borrowed from Cubism but adapted to their own ends: to convey the qualities of spontaneity, the absence of logical thought patterns, the shock effect sustained when things are presented out of their ordinary contexts, and the interpenetration of the real with the fantastic or irrational (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:15). The authors connect the Surrealists' use of collage to the exploration of the unconscious in art - hence the name super-reality resulting from

¹⁹ It is interesting that Hargrove and Grootkerk depart from analogy with Cubist collage and rather use Surrealist collage as analogy. They seem to be the only authors to do so, presenting an analogy, to my mind, more fruitful than the argument for Cubist collage. Surrealist collage is concerned not only with the startling effects presented by bits of real-life paraphernalia on a formal level, but employs this technique as a means of arriving at "a realisation of personal, imagined pictorial conceptions" in order to arrive at "a fusion of immutable imagery ... the collages, aside from combining disparate content, are rife with formal, graphic tension" (Spies, 1991:106). There is clearly a concern for the content of the collage imagery: it acknowledges formal concerns, but also goes beyond these to generate meaning in their juxtaposition.

combining material reality with the reality of the unconscious. Examples of Surrealist collage are found in the work of Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948) and Max Ernst (for example, *Two children are threatened by a nightingale* [figure 5], where an actual doorbell and little wooden gate form part of the painting) and Hans Arp's (1887-1966) technique of cutting up bits of paper resulting in a purely arbitrary configuration (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:16).

Counterparts for this technique in *The Waste Land* emerge on two levels: structurally, and in the shape of allusive strategies. In terms of structure, the poem "is a literary collage of various urban and desert scenes which seem disconnected and without order" (Hargrove & Grootkerk, 1995:16) suggestive of cinema's fade in, fade out technique. With regard to allusion, "collage" is understood metaphorically when an image of London is suggested in the merging of real landmarks of the contemporary city with the eerie landscape of Dante's *Inferno* (lines 62-66). The effect of this device in *The Waste Land* is similar to that of a Surrealist artwork: by yoking together unrelated images a super reality comes into being, causing the perceiver to question conventional views of reality. Coupled with this effect is the atmosphere of ambiguity based on the elusiveness of the meanings of images, calling upon the reader/viewer to discard purely rational methods of interpretation. This seems to suggest reliance on the reader/viewer's intuition for interpretation (see also Korg, 1960).

It seems as if the wealth of implications of collage and especially allusion are not acknowledged by Hargrove and Grootkerk, although they have connected Eliot's use of the collage technique with Surrealism rather than Cubism. It will be pointed out in a later chapter that more fruitful comparisons can be made, semiotically speaking, if the various signifiers at work in collage are more clearly differentiated, and if one distinguishes more precisely between (1) certain phrases and extracts from songs (and their artistic counterpart, bits of paper/everyday material), (2) literary quotations (and, analogously, images taken over directly from other paintings) and (3) allusions, where the referred text is not quoted exactly, but evoked via different means (counterparted by less explicit appropriation from older paintings). It is also imperative not only to identify the technique and the effect on the first level of decoding, but to unravel

semiotically the deeper levels of signification emerging from the use of these strategies.

However, it is their closing remarks that compel more thorough scrutiny. Hargrove and Grootkerk claim that, "rather than being influenced by Surrealism, Eliot was actually an isolated co-creator of the movement" (1995:17). This is a daring assertion, especially in view of the fact that the French Surrealists were a relatively cohesive group gathered around André Breton (albeit with a range of artistic expressions) with manifestos, principles and philosophies of their own. However, if one were to take Surrealism in its wider definition, including artists such as George Grosz - as these authors do - one might well accept that Eliot made a "Surrealist" contribution within the wider aims and concerns of the movement.

In conclusion, Hargrove and Grootkerk (1995:17) claim that

Exploring this work [*The Waste Land*] in relation to Surrealist painting allows readers literally to "see" the poem in a different light and perhaps provocative context, thus providing a valid and meaningful way of experiencing the poem in addition to the more traditional avenues of literary criticism.

This suggestion concurs with Hunt's (1974) reference to Wallace Stevens' "it would be possible to study poetry by studying painting" and Hunt's own reference in this regard that "Magritte's simultaneity of images comes closer to our experience of Eliot than much critical explanation" (1974:174).

While daring, these statements are bold in their faith that traditional criticism of *The Waste Land* fails to make sense of certain aspects of the poem. More significantly, the statements suggest that the reading and interpretation of poetry can not only be enhanced, but supplemented and validated by a simultaneous apprehension of visual arts corresponding in certain very pertinent and illuminating ways with a poem.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate some of the most crucial aspects that emerged from the overview and discussion of these four critical texts.

As noted before, there seems to be an increasing trend towards narrowing the focus of studying *The Waste Land* concurrently with Modern art. From Korg's groundbreaking work in 1960 which investigated parallels between the poem and numerous art movements, among which Cubism and Surrealism featured the strongest, while Dada and Futurism received some mention, through Hunt's rather sweeping approach which looked at a number of Eliot's poems including *The Waste Land* in the light of a whole number of artists, notably Magritte, Chirico and the Cubists in 1974; and then the focus narrows in Tomlinson's text which concentrated on Cubism (1980) and Hargrove and Grootkerk's 1995 analogous study of the poem and Surrealist painting. It will appear that the more recent critical studies - Tomlinson and Hargrove and Grootkerk - present one with more focused and less ambitious investigations, which could be because they were aware of the work of Hunt and Korg; the broad foundations of these two earlier critics paved the way for later research to address particular aspects and to articulate personal positions.

Furthermore, it seems as if all the critics - intentionally or not - have gone along with Korg's statement that "it is, curiously enough, in the paintings [of these movements] that the closest analogies to the methods of *The Waste Land* can be found" (1960:456). The above critical texts deal only with painting - and collage as an extension of the domain of painting - and this dissertation was also sparked off by an intuitive link made between Surrealist *painting* and *The Waste Land*. Of course this leaves the question open as to what the possibilities are with regard to analogous study of the poem with the other visual arts such as sculpture and photography.

Generally speaking, these critics seem to pursue two different avenues in establishing the reasons for their investigations: in the first instance, bringing together the poem and the paintings because they emerged from a similar *Zeitgeist* and because the comparisons sparked new possibilities for interpretation (Korg, Hunt and Hargrove and Grootkerk); and in the second, linking the poem to an artistic movement because

it is postulated that Eliot's knowledge of art movements had some impact on the poem. The latter avenue is acknowledged by Hunt and Hargrove and Grootkerk; they point out instances where Eliot would have encountered contemporary artistic expressions, but Hargrove and Grootkerk qualify their position by

suggesting not that Eliot was influenced by specific Surrealist paintings...but...that he was producing in England a Surrealist poem at the same time that painters and writers in France were creating similar works (1995:4).

Tomlinson's (1980) more radical stance is that the similarities he found between the poem and Cubist painting (and these are, as have been pointed out, not always based on sustainable arguments) are not coincidental, but spurred by Eliot's probable encounters with Cubist art, to the extent that he was influenced by these paintings when composing the poem. The current study would support the more cautious avenue: although Eliot was most certainly aware of contemporary artistic activities, it would seem like an intentional fallacy to ascribe his methods to any particular art movement - in any event, many of the techniques used in *The Waste Land* are anticipated in poems such as "Prufrock" and "Gerontion". Rather, I would suggest, the general sense of post-war despair and the prevailing *Zeitgeist* present one with a probable contextual link between the poem and the art movements of the time, notably Surrealism.

The critics who look to Cubism (notably Analytic Cubism) to find analogies with *The Waste Land* focus on the device of fragmentation and the effects this has on the viewer - to obscure the central motif, to set up a new unity between the fragmented bits (Korg); looking at the multiple viewpoints found in Cubism analogous with *The Waste Land*, and a rejection of the photographic and the narrative (Hunt) and the use of certain motifs or objects such as mandolins and men with pipes (Tomlinson).

Arguments for Cubist collage (in the Synthetic phase of Cubism) can be résumé as follows: Korg (1960) compares Eliot's use of quotations and bits of conversation with the Cubists' use of everyday matter foreign to the painting canvas, such as newspaper bits, wallpaper, and so forth. In both instances this device undermines the mimetic

assumptions one may have about art, and it questions the boundaries between the imagined and the real. Hunt (1974) asserts that Eliot's use of real-life bits such as "C.i.f. London" corresponds with the bits from real life inserted in Cubist collages, and asserts - albeit contentiously - that in both instances the real-life matter bears little relation to its new context (as indicated, this may be true in the poem, but only on the first level of decoding). Tomlinson (1980) likens Cubist collage - with its effect of presenting a cut-out shape of, for instance, a bottle constituted of a piece of newspaper - to Eliot's personas whose identities are not fixed (again, Tomlinson remains focused only on the level of formal technique). I did discuss these in some detail in the overview of the texts, and therefore it will suffice to say at this point that many of the arguments put forward for Cubist analogy with *The Waste Land* are useful but limited because they often fail to move beyond technique into the interpretative process, and that this might be because Cubist art was less occupied with issues of content than with technique.

Analogies presented with Surrealist art - and here the term is used in its wider sense to include the Surrealist predecessor Giorgio de Chirico - are found in three of the texts. Korg (1960) singles out the search for a reality beyond the world of appearances in the poem and Surrealist art, where the use of the fantastic or imaginary adjacent to the commonplace and banal achieve a sense of the unreal; juxtaposition of incongruous elements that suggest dream-like connections between them; the use of atmosphere in Surrealist art and in *The Waste Land* and the presence of the visual pun in Surrealist painting that echoes the ambiguities found in the poem. Hunt's (1974) central arguments in this regard focus on the conflation of dream and fact found in Magritte's work and in *The Waste Land* and how this device presents a simultaneity of awareness in the reader and viewer. He further asserts that both Eliot and Chirico depart from the existing norm regarding illusionist traditions and narrative connections - a valid analogy, but all of Modern art arguably departed in some way or another from existing norms.

Hargrove and Grootkerk (1995) focus on the Surrealist endeavour to reinstate the importance of content, a challenge to the hegemony of form found in Cubist aesthetics. They refer particularly to similar settings - notably urban or desert - and

themes found in Surrealist art and *The Waste Land*, such as the absence of love. Further links are made between the poem and the paintings in terms of the seeming prevalence of the irrational and the unconscious, and mention - unlike any of the other critics - that analogies between the poem and *Surrealist* collage can account for certain worthwhile comparisons. In the last instance, the authors refer briefly to the mixture of cultures and the concomitant lack of fixed identities found in the poem and the paintings. The arguments for Surrealist analogies with *The Waste Land* sometimes use technique as a starting point but departs from this emphasis towards an exploration of more interpretative depth. This, I want to argue, is because Surrealism as a movement was concerned with issues of the "beyond" in the same way that Eliot's poem is; therefore, a Surrealist analogy with *The Waste Land* seems to hold the promise of a more in-depth interpretation than would other Modern art movements.

The methods used by these critics vary - from working from the outside in (such as Tomlinson, who looks to "possible" Cubist influences), to Korg, Hunt and Hargrove and Grootkerk, who, after acknowledging that Eliot was probably aware of his contemporaries in the visual art world, would seem to work from the inside out, looking at the poem and the paintings themselves. Some of the thematic parallels suggested by Hargrove and Grootkerk imply a strong presence of the prevailing *Zeitgeist*, but these arguments are sustained by references to particular passages and paintings.

And while Korg feels that analogies with the poem and visual art *suggested* themselves, most of the critics employ a fair amount of intuition in their search for correspondences, which they pursue in more sustained arguments. It therefore seems crucial to acknowledge the intuitive when looking for analogies between *The Waste Land* and possible visual counterparts; the challenge lies in the elaboration of these intuitive apprehensions into sustainable scholarly arguments.

CHAPTER 3: THE METHODOLOGICAL SOLUTION: SEMIOTICS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the semiotic approach to poetry, and to art, will be explored with a view to establishing the validity of the semiotic method for purposes of analysing *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting. After having engaged with other critics' approaches towards comparisons of the poem and numerous visual arts movements including Surrealism, this section therefore sets out to establish a method for analysis that, it is postulated, will open up a significant number of avenues for the comparison of the poem with Surrealism in particular and ultimately to be used for purposes of extrapolating to other poetic works and works of visual arts. It will be argued that using semiotics as a strategy for analysis and interpretative avenues is a valid and workable method of generating more responsible and in-depth analogies between the poem and the paintings of the Surrealist movement.

Semiotics developed from the theories of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, as well as through the writings of Charles Sanders Peirce into a highly prominent model for engaging with literary texts. The work of, among others, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and Jonathan Culler¹ has contributed towards the study of semiotics and Derrida's contributions are also largely based on expanding, undermining (but still informed by) the principles of semiotics. Developing, therefore, from a highly structuralist basis towards the more contemporary, post-structuralist notion of "free play" (Derrida, 1988:150) semiotics persists in being a useful strategy for literary analysis.

The concern for this study, then, is to argue for a semiotic approach when comparing *The Waste Land* with Surrealist painting, and for the latter, one ventures into the field

¹ See Kristeva's "The system and the speaking subject", Culler's "Semiotics as a theory of reading" and Barthes' "Science versus literature" and "The death of the author" in Newton, K.M. (ed.). 1988. Twentieth century literary theory. Houndmills : MacMillan; also Kristeva's exploration of semiotics and visual arts in her *Desire in language - a semiotic approach to literature and art*. New York: Columbia University Press, published in 1980.

of art history. However, the discipline of art history seems to have been reluctant to accept the semiotic point of view as a model for investigation (Bal, 1996a). According to Norman Bryson in *Vision and painting. The logic of the gaze* "[it] is a sad fact [that] art history lags behind the study of the other arts" and he attributes this backlog to institutional reasons as well as the tendency of art historians to "isolate that study from the other humanities" (1983:xi). He argues that art history needs a radical re-examination of its methods, particularly with regard to conventionally held notions that painting is an act of perception - and should be studied as such - a view initiated by Plato and reinforced by Gombrich's phenomenally influential *Art and illusion*. Bryson asserts that this notion is "*fundamentally wrong*" (1983:xii - Bryson's italics), and postulates that seeing painting as the record of perception suppresses the social character of the image as well as its reality as *sign*. He cautions that a semiology of painting should avoid formalist trappings by reinforcing the notion that signifying forces outside of a painting need to be taken into account if one wants to engage responsibly with painting (1983:xiii). Although Bryson's book was published in 1983, the fact that Mieke Bal (1996a) expresses concern for the state of art historical enquiry and institutional and theoretical level is an indication that the discipline has perhaps not taken sufficient cognisance of newer approaches, such as semiotics.

Pleas for the introduction of a semiotic approach to art history can be traced back to structuralist theorists such as Jan Mukarovsky, whose "Art as a semiotic fact" (first delivered in 1934) is discussed below. More recently, the so-called "New Art History" embraced semiotics as one of the "new" methods to be incorporated into art historical enquiry, concurrently with feminism, Marxism, psychoanalytic criticism and so forth, in an attempt to liberate art history from its rather suffocating insistence on the *catalogue raisonné*, formalism, connoisseurship and the biographical approach, among others. Paul Duro and Michael Greenalgh in *Essential art history* state that "the practitioners of semiotics [in art history] have borrowed both their approach and their terminology from literary criticism, conscious perhaps, that art history was lagging behind in methodologies appropriate to the expanding interests of the discipline" (1992:10). These authors insist that semiotics should not be confused with formalism, but could rather be informed by more recent developments in post-structuralism and deconstruction.

This discussion, therefore, will focus in the first instance on the relationship between art history and semiotics. Texts which ostensibly articulate a concern with semiotics and the study of the visual arts have been included in this section. In the next section of this discussion, a model for the analysis of poetry - one that, it will be argued, can be modified to suit the concerns of the visual arts as well - will be discussed. Further concepts that will aid the analytic model will also be explored, notably fragmentation, which, in this study, will be a portmanteau concept for the exploration of allusion, intertextuality and collage.

3.2 Art history and semiotics

3.2.1 *Jan Mukarovsky*

In his essay "Art as a semiotic fact" (first delivered as a lecture in 1934), Mukarovsky - a Prague structuralist - argues for the application of linguistic concepts to "other domains of sign usage". He proposes that the systemic approach of structuralist semiotics can be extended to these other domains provided that it is differentiated according to their special characteristics (1976:3). His work centres on the notion that the work of art cannot be perceived as merely an "artifact"² - according to Mukarovsky, the "artifact" is merely an external signifier, in Saussurian terminology, and needs to be received by a collective consciousness in order to arouse signification, corresponding with the signifier, in order to become an "aesthetic object" (1976:4). Mukarovsky does not dismiss the importance of subjectivity in this process, stressing the associative factor of aesthetic perception. Referring particularly to the possibility of subjective feelings aroused by Surrealist works, he stresses the role of the receiver's imagination in the semiotic process.

Mukarovsky distinguishes between the two semiotic functions of an artwork: the autonomous and the informational. The autonomous function is present in all artworks, and represents another reality evoked by the artwork, an indistinct reality

² This is the spelling used by Mukarovsky.

that "may be called *social*, for example, philosophy, politics, religion, economics, and so on" (1976:5), and in this sense the artwork can represent an "age". Mukarovsky's description of this function seems vague, but he admits that the "something" for which the autonomous function stands, cannot be determined distinctly. However, his discussion of the informational function provides some useful notions. He talks of the distinction between artworks with a "subject" or "theme" (those with a "communicative function") as opposed to those in which one cannot distinguish clearly the communicative or thematic aspect (1976:6) - here he seems to make the distinction between figurative and non-figurative or wholly abstract works. Even in the latter group, Mukarovsky contends, one can find a "virtual semiotic character" in the formal constituents of the artwork, such as line and colour in, for example, the "absolute" paintings of Kandinsky. Hence these formal constituents possess the ability to have a measure of informational power. However, some artworks - those with a theme or subject - refer more distinctly to the informational function. But, he cautions, "[i]f we were to be precise, we would have to say that it is once again the entire structure (of the artwork) which functions as the signification of a work of art, the informational signification included. The subject of the work simply plays the role of an axis of crystallisation with respect to that signification which, otherwise, would remain vague" (1976:6-7).

Mukarovsky's main contribution here could be the introduction of semiotic concepts into the study of the visual arts. However, his structuralist insistence on the fact that the subject matter is "merely an axis of crystallisation" could be problematic; it seems as if his focus remains a formalist one, in line with formalist and structuralist poetics and also paralleling the formalist art historical approach as found in the work of Heinrich Wölfflin. What is interesting about his approach, nonetheless, is the fact that he takes the *reception* of the artwork into account by implying that the artwork proper only comes into being once it has been perceived.

In terms of Mukarovsky's contribution to the study of art history as such, one could agree that this early essay highlights possible semiotic implications for the study of the visual arts, but it would be decades before the semiotic approach would be regarded more seriously within the field of art history. By the 1970s the emergence of the so-

called *New Art History* called for the incorporation of more critical theory into the discipline to counter the prominence of orthodox studies such as auteur theory, connoisseurship and purely formalist enquiries (cf. Duro & Greenalgh, 1992:2-11 & 206). Semiotics, being one of the "new" approaches to art history, could be one of the modes of enquiry that could be used to bridge the gap between the orthodox and the more contemporary concern for post-structuralist theoretical enquiry in the field of art history. A systematic overview of the contributions of some proponents of this approach would be illuminating at this stage.

3.2.2 *Margaret Iversen*

The contribution by Iversen entitled "Saussure versus Peirce: models for a semiotics of visual art" is contained as a chapter in *The New Art History* (1988) edited by A.L. Rees and F. Borzello. She argues for the need of establishing a theory that would provide an understanding of the nature of visual signification. Drawing heavily on the work of Meyer Schapiro, she dismisses the contributions by Panofsky and Gombrich as being limited in their usefulness when it comes to producing meaningful ensembles of visual imagery. Art is conceived of differently by the new approaches to art history, and therefore requires new modes of enquiry.

Iversen suggests that the Saussurian perspective would be less useful than the Peircean, since, in her view, the arbitrary and fixed nature of signification in Saussure's theory would run the danger of deteriorating into an imposed frame of limitations (1988:87). Peirce, on the other hand, seems to allow for more flexibility since his distinction between the icon, index and symbol allows for different relations towards the interpretant as well as to the object. Particularly the indexical sign could emerge as useful when looking at Modern art. Iversen feels that the case of Abstract Expressionism presents one with "the apotheosis of the indexical sign or all-over signature" such as in the work of Jackson Pollock (1912-56) (1988:90). Jasper Johns (1930-), similarly evasive of the image (the "flight from the...image", according to Iversen, presents a liberation from the sign-vehicle construct), produced works which critique the possibilities of representation by their mass-produced quality, challenging

conventional notions of the iconographical. Iversen (1988:91) connects this to Peirce's statement that:

You can write down the word 'star', but that does not make you the creator of the word, nor if you erase it have you destroyed the word. The word lives in the mind of those who use it.

Ultimately, Iversen is showing how the Modern avoidance of images (in movements such as Abstract Expressionism, certain proponents of Pop Art and Minimal Art) constitutes the necessity of focusing on the Peircean index, as opposed to the iconic or symbolic. However, her contribution does not provide a model for analysing the complexities of images from a semiotic perspective, and therefore remains useful only for certain inquiries into artworks that relegate the image to the domain of the less pertinent.

3.2.3 *Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson*

Published in 1991, Bal and Bryson's article "Semiotics and art history", published in the journal *Art Bulletin*, provides an overview of some of the concerns that become apparent when semiotics is applied to art-historical investigation. They motivate this investigation by asserting that "it seems obvious that semiotics has something to contribute to the study of art" (1991:174).

As a starting point, the authors assert that semiotics is eminently antirealist; meaning that it is concerned with showing how one sign stands for another and how people inhabiting a particular culture endeavour to make sense of these signs. Bal and Bryson contend that semiotics threatens traditional art-historical practices by undermining claims of truth of interpretation as well as - among others - debates surrounding authorship, context and reception. Therefore - although it can be proved that semiotic principles are implicitly present to an extent even in, for example, Panofsky's iconological approach - the challenges posed by semiotics to the established discipline of art history have met with resistance. Especially art history's positivist premises - based on, for example, narrative in the study of images and emphasis on certain unambiguous "facts" have come under scrutiny. Bal and Bryson

(1991:175) express the view that a semiotic perspective would cast doubt on such facts, drawing on Jonathan Culler's assertion that all contextual "evidence" is also determined by interpretative strategies and that, therefore, "context" as such is also subject to the scepticism characteristic of contemporary semiotics.

The article by Bal and Bryson therefore aims at both examining how semiotics challenges a number of fundamental tenets and practices of art history, and at demonstrating how semiotics can further the analyses pursued by art historians. Of primary importance in this pursuit is the acknowledgement that semiotics is a transdisciplinary theory that furthermore "helps to avoid the bias of privileging language" (1991:175). Bal and Bryson refer to the methodological problems often occurring when concepts from one discipline are transferred to another (such as the use of the term "metaphor" when analysing paintings) and state that "semiotics, by virtue of its supradisciplinary status, can be brought to bear on objects pertaining to any sign-system" (1991:175). Therefore, semiotics seems eminently suitable for "interdisciplinary analysis, for example, of word and image relations, which seek to avoid both the erection of hierarchies and the eclectic transferring of concepts" (1991:175).

3.2.3.1 Context

Supporting Culler's suggestion that the term "framing" would do justice to the reading of signs more pertinently than "context", the authors propound that any contextual reading implies a selection and arrangement of circumstances. This casts doubt on the use of the term "context" such as "art in context" which often occupies an important position in many branches of art historical enquiry, where the hope is that a body of material assembled and juxtaposed with the artwork will reveal the determinants that "make the artwork what it is" (Bal & Bryson, 1991:177). Semiotics challenges this notion by undermining the assumption that "context" could be a fixed entity, as the "structuralist" era operated on the premise that signs are mapped within art in a static system. Bal and Bryson assert that structuralist semiotics gave way to post-structuralism when it acknowledged that semiosis, far from being static, unfolds in time. They refer to Derrida's insistence on the notion that the "meaning of any

particular sign could not be located in a signified fixed by the internal operations in a synchronic system; rather, meaning arose exactly from the movement of one sign or signifier to the next", so that the meanings of signs can never be said to have fully "arrived" (Bal & Bryson, 1991:177). Therefore, the very idea of "context" harbours the notion of indeterminability.

Furthermore, Bal and Bryson indicate that studies of context often emerge from the study of the text itself, meaning that a study of context does not necessarily precede the study of the text. Rather, the text indicates certain contextual elements which then give rise to an investigation pertinent to the "context" of the text. The same metalepsis or "chronological reversal" in the relationship between text and context is found in art historical analysis, so that "it would not be thought unusual for the art historian to work from the paintings out toward the history of these sites and milieux" (1991:178).

Of course, the assertion that "context" is unfixed challenges the notion held by conventional art history that a "meaning" or "correct interpretation" can exist for any artwork. The canonical interpretation therefore is undermined by Bal and Bryson's assertion that artworks "are constituted by different viewers in different times and places" (1991:179), an approach which allows for semiotic play to take its course.

3.2.3.2 *Senders*

From a semiotic point of view the concern with the artist (or author, the term Bal and Bryson prefer) is also problematic, for "authorship", like "context", is an elaborate work of framing, "something we elaborately produce rather than something we simply find" (1991:180). In art history the genre of attribution comes under scrutiny, because inherent in the processes of attribution are value-judgements concerned with, for example, issues of standard and quality. Problems with the notion of authorship do not emerge because of the naming of the artist, but because this process usually also assumes explanatory dimensions. Bal and Bryson voice their support for Culler when they caution that authorship is "not given but produced" and "what counts as authorship is determined by interpretative strategies" (1991:181). One of the

problems with the orthodox art-historical insistence on authorship is that the monograph with its hegemonic hold on the study of art tends to naturalise a number of questionable ideological constructs (such as the genius [as masculine]) and the romantic notion of artistic creativity. Although the "death of the author" thesis may shock conventional art-historical approaches, Bal and Bryson note that "many Modernist discourses in art history have defined themselves exactly by shedding this message of mythified authorship" (1991:182).³ This does not mean that the "humanist" approach that favours authorial investigation is entirely obsolete, but that it stands to lose its place as an overriding concern for many branches of art history. Connecting problems related to author to those encountered with regard to "context", Bal and Bryson state that "[t]he problem of the 'author' is not, then, so different from the problem with 'context'. Semiotics assumes that not only artworks but the accounts we fashion for them are works of the sign ..." (1991:184).

3.2.3.3 Receivers

Because semiotics is essentially concerned with reception (Bal & Bryson, 1991:184), it follows that the semiotics of visual arts is not primarily aimed at producing interpretations of artworks, but rather sets out to investigate the processes by which viewers make sense of what they see. In terms of the role of the "beholder", which has received increasingly more attention over recent years, semiotic analysis emphasises the plurality and unpredictability of reception rather than aiming at explaining what the "ideal" viewer might receive (Bal & Bryson, 1991:185-6).

Semiotics is critical of the official records of reception, also because the "official" reception is often synonymous with canonical claims which are inherently exclusive.

³ The insistence of many Modern artists on "originality" seems to perpetuate, paradoxically, the centrality of authorial self-origination - see, for example, Karl's book *Modern and Modernism. The sovereignty of the artist 1885-1925*. New York : Atheneum, published in 1985.

Allowing for semiotic play in the interpretative process would, according to the authors, confront the dangers of official reception (such as being primarily repressive and legislative) (1991:187). Therefore, while the conventional art historical route may be to retrace and reconstruct the history of recorded reception, semiotics would investigate the position from which such receptive claims have been made, in order to lay bare the ideological biases inherent in these receptions. Adding to this investigation, semiotics would also allow for the views of different "empirical" viewers (real people) - "[n]othing can stop the movement of signifier to signifier in a visual text as it is actually being viewed by empirical spectators" (Bal & Bryson, 1991:187).

3.2.3.4 Peirce and Saussure

Bal and Bryson (1991:189-90) also propound a number of suggestions and problems with regard to the use of Peircean and Saussurian concepts for the study of visual arts. For example, Peirce's terms icon, index and symbol can create problems.

The use of *icon* could be misunderstood to imply either the entire visual domain, or to mean realism, which need not always be the case. Rather, Bal and Bryson feel that:

Instead of visibility in general, or realism for that matter, the decision to suppose that the image refers to something on the basis of likeness is the iconic act, and a sense of specularity is the result. A romantic sound of violins accompanying a romantic love scene in a film is as iconic as the graphic representation of Apollinaire's poem about rain in the shape of rain (1991:91).

With regard to Peirce's notion of *index*, Bal and Bryson mention that this concept, unlike the icon, needs the object in order to exist. Examples of the use of the index can be found in studies of the gaze - there is an indexical relationship between the look and what is looked at. Similarly, the iconicity of the open mouths in Francis Bacon's portraits after Vélasquez is complemented by the indexical. The screaming mouths are indexical of the pain felt by these figures.

With regard to the symbolic, Bal and Bryson point to Peirce's insistence that this class of signs is more dependent than the other two on "the act of interpretation that brings it to life, because without that interpretation it simply does not exist - as a sign, that is" (1991:191). Furthermore, symbolic interpretation is informed by culture and convention, and underlies other kinds of interpretation. Hence Bal and Bryson find the relevance of Peirce's theory in the emphasis on art in society and the fact that this theory allows for "a view of image-seeking that is dynamic and positioned in time" (1991:191).

On the other hand, Saussure's views put much more emphasis on stasis, as well as the search for the global set of rules that would govern a system in a "frozen moment". Bal and Bryson refer to the Derridaen challenge to the fixedness of the Saussurian view. Rather than insisting, like Saussure, on the connection between a signifier and its single, univocal signified, the authors point to the post-structural arguments for dynamism: a sign is constituted by the movement of one signifier to another; in other words, the sign is the motion between signifiers (1991:191). Although, then, thinkers such as Derrida have addressed some of the problems of Saussurian principles of structuralist methodology, Bal and Bryson ultimately question the appropriateness of the Saussurian legacy in advancing one's understanding of the visual arts, especially since all of Saussure's models are *verbal* ones (1991:193). The notions of the "significant unit" and the arbitrariness of the sign are examples of how Saussurian terminology would be less than adequate for the development of a visual semiotics (1991:194).

This article in many ways provides ground-breaking critical insights into the problematic, albeit significant position semiotics occupies, or needs to occupy, in contemporary art historical practice. Post-structuralist conceptions of semiotics are especially pertinent to art-historical practice because they undermine the fixedness and truthful claims often encountered in orthodox methodologies of the visual arts. Furthermore, as Bal (1996b:586) points out, the name of the discipline art history determines to a degree the methodology of the discipline - the academic study of art is called "art history", not "art studies", like literature studies or musicology's equivalent study. Consequently, the perception exists that the historical approach to the study of

art is the only legitimate one. Referring to the article by herself and Bryson (1991), Bal (1996b:586) acknowledges that semiotics would not be conducive to certain branches of art-historical enquiry, such as attribution, patronage, connoisseurship and the processes of determining the age of wood panels; but asserts that there are certain dogmas within the discipline of art history that could be challenged by the semiotic method. The liberating aspects of using semiotics as a model of art historical investigation are that the visual nature of the artwork enjoys prominence over the historical; that claims to correct interpretations can be critiqued and evaluated, and that the process of interpretation can be stressed over final interpretative conclusions.

Having thus established that semiotics can be a valid method not only for analysis of poetry, but also for the visual arts, a practical approach for the application of semiotics to the texts at hand needs to be extracted and formulated before being applied by way of an exemplar of an approach to be used for the works under scrutiny in this study, but also capable of being extrapolatable for wider application in this field.

3.3 A model for analysis

Following my exploration of the work of semioticians, the model of Michael Riffaterre (*Semiotics of poetry*, 1978) emerged, to my mind and in view of the concerns of this particular study, as being particularly useful. In this section, therefore, the Riffatterrian approach to semiotic investigation will be explored, with a view to establishing a practical method of applying semiotics to art and poetry. The discussion will be linked to subsequent sections in which pertinent concepts - fragmentation, allusion, intertextuality and collage - will be introduced as useful aspects for analysing *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting from a semiotic point of view.

Riffaterre (1978) produced a semiotic model for the analysis of poetry based on the difference between mimetic reading and semiotic reading which, he feels, presents the reader with a more valid interpretation than the mimetic reading. This model is based on the idea of a written language, but if one accepts that a system of communication such as it is found in the visual arts can constitute a "language" (this does not mean

privileging the written word over other systems of communication), then Riffaterre's ideas present one with many workable concepts in the sphere of the visual arts.

Raman Selden (1985) regards Riffaterre's theory as having affinities with the broad spectrum of reader-oriented theories. The basic tenet of this branch of literary studies, according to Selden, is the doubt its exponents express with regard to the "objective" scientific enquiry of the nineteenth century (1985:106). In the light of Thomas Kuhn's assertion that "facts" are determined by the scientific frame of reference, as well as Einsteinian relativism and Gestalt psychology's belief that the human mind is an active perceiver of configurations, reader-oriented theories grant the addressee of the text particular status.

Some of the pertinent aspects propounded by Riffaterre invite brief consideration. His main concern in *Semiotics of poetry* is to indicate the difference between mimetic presentation and semiotic organisation. Only if one acknowledges that poetry (and, by extension, the visual arts) does not function according to the rules of mimesis can one begin to see the semiotic significance emerging from the text. Poetic language differs from common linguistic usage - this is true also in poetry where the language of everyday usage occurs (in this sense Riffaterre shares a certain kinship with the Russian formalists). Riffaterre (1978:1) justifies this statement by arguing that poetry states by indirection; it says one thing, but means another. This is therefore a semantic indirection. The same can be said of the visual arts. If one accepts that the visual arts function as a "language" then art differs from everyday, non-artistic visual inputs in that it states by indirection, saying one thing and meaning another. Semiotically speaking, the signifier (what is stated) and the signified (what is *really* stated) show the same function in poetry and in art.

The difference, then, between poetry and non-poetry and art and non-art is the *way* in which the poetic text or the artwork carries meaning. The comprehension of this difference is based on a dialectic between the text and the reader/viewer. Riffaterre (1978:2) limits this dialectic: one must regard the poem - and, by extension, the artwork - as a discrete entity or a special finite text. This will render intratextual and intertextual semiotic analysis possible.

Semiotic indirection occurs in three ways, namely by displacing, distorting or creating meaning. Displacing occurs when the sign shifts from one meaning to another, where one word or image "stands" for another, as is the case with metaphor or metonymy. Distorting refers to instances where there are ambiguities, contradiction, or nonsense (including humour) and creating occurs where the textual space serves as a principle for organisation to make signs out of elements that might not be meaningful otherwise (Riffaterre, 1978:2). These instances include symmetry, rhyme (which can be paralleled with certain instances of structural repetition in the visual artwork) and semantic equivalences between positional homologues in a stanza (which correlate with structural repetition or deviances from repetition which may indicate semantic implications in the visual artwork). The main thrust of Riffaterre's argument is that all of the above methods threaten mimesis. This is because mimetic presentation is founded on the direct referentiality of language, i.e. a direct relationship of words (or, in visual artworks, images) to things.

The question is, then, how does one establish a way to pass beyond the mimetic and into the semiotic level of analysis and interpretation? Riffaterre (1978) proposes that one looks for deviations in the normal grammatical structure in the poem. These "ungrammaticalities" are spotted at the mimetic level, and are perceived to be ungrammatical because the normal usage in the language system is violated. Within the poem as a closed entity, these ungrammaticalities are integrated into another system and shaped into a paradigm peculiar to the poem. This paradigm has the effect of altering the meaning of the poem, and now the ungrammaticalities begin to signify as components of a different network of relationships within the unity of the poem. Riffaterre feels that this transfer from one level of discourse to another, more developed system at a higher level of the text constitutes the proper domain of semiotics.

In the visual arts the same transfer occurs when the viewer spots certain deviations from the usual visual environment, comparable to observing "ungrammaticalities" in the poem. At this stage the viewer acknowledges that the artwork constitutes another system which is formed into a paradigm that has the effect of altering the meaning of the artwork. Now the deviations begin to signify, as in a poem, as components of a

different network of relationships within the artwork's unity. Hence the same kind of transfer as Riffaterre proposes for poetry happens with the "reading" of a visual artwork, and this enables the viewer to enter into the domain of semiotic analysis..

It should be stressed that the semiotic process occurs in the mind of the reader or viewer, and active engagement with the given text is therefore crucial for semiotic analysis and interpretation. This semiotic process demands a second reading (reading in the wider sense of the word to include "reading" a visual artwork). Riffaterre (1978:5) then proposes two distinct stages of reading: with the first reading, the decoding process is set into motion, but one reads the text from beginning to end, from the top to the bottom of the page. In the visual arts, this first reading is comparable to the first stages of observation. This first stage, both in poetry and in art, is characterised by a syntagmatic unfolding of the text. It is during this first heuristic (Riffaterre's term) reading that the first interpretation occurs in the mind of the reader or viewer. During this first stage the reader/viewer assumes that language (or the system of communication) is directly referential or mimetic. However, already during this stage he is able to perceive incompatibilities between words - or visual images - and he can identify tropes and figures, as well as their visual counterparts. Typically, these "incompatibilities" do not make sense unless the reader/viewer performs a semantic transfer to approximate the understanding of metaphor and metonymy. The reader/viewer is therefore engaged in a double/bilinear deciphering of a single, more linear text. Furthermore, this reader/viewer input only occurs because the text is ungrammatical or, in the case of the visual arts, because the artwork presents deviations from the visual system of mimesis. It is clear that the reader's linguistic competence enables him to identify ungrammaticalities, in the same fashion that the viewer's visual "literacy" allows him to perceive deviations from mimesis.

Riffaterre (1978:5) also mentions the reader's literary competence, that is, his familiarity with descriptive systems, themes, society's mythologies, quotations, and above all, with other texts. In the visual arts this would find its corollary in the viewer's familiarity with styles, themes, myths, imagery and other artworks - coincidentally, many of the aspects mentioned in Panofsky's iconological model where he demarcates the "equipment for interpretation" (Panofsky, 1970).

After having completed the first stage of reading, a second retro-active reading should occur. This second, hermeneutic reading is characterised by the fact that, with the hindsight of the first reading, the reader/viewer constantly modifies his interpretation, remembering what the first reading entailed. Now the reader/viewer proceeds towards a fuller understanding, in the light of what is being decoded during the second reading. As the reader/viewer works through the text for the second time, he is reviewing, revising, and comparing: now a structural decoding is performed, within the confines of the text as a closed unit. Riffaterre (1978:6) states that "the text is in effect a variation or modulation of one structure - thematic, symbolic or whatever - and this sustained relation to one structure constitutes the significance". Very significant is Riffaterre's suggestion that this second reading aims at viewing the entire poem at once - because one knows the end of the poem by this second reading, the way in which the beginning is read will also change. This brings the reading of poems closer to the reading of paintings, where perception takes place more or less by taking in the entire painting at a glance. When smaller sections of a poem are viewed, this happens with the whole of the painting in mind, so that the reading of smaller sections is coloured by one's perception of the painting as a whole.

A number of general principles for analysis emerge from the above discussion of Riffaterre's approach, and these will be implicit in the comparative analysis that will follow in the next chapter:

- If one accepts that a "language" can be regarded as any system of communication, one can draw a parallel between the way poetry and art function within this system. Poetry works within the system of language as well as the more focused system of poetic conventions, while the visual arts function within the domain of the visual and also within certain artistic conventions.
- Poetry and art manipulate this system - not for the purposes of mimetic referentiality, but to state by indirection. The poem or artwork as a closed unity creates its own structural paradigm and the reader/viewer has the task of decoding this paradigm.

- Within the closed system, the reader/viewer can identify semantic indirection when displacing, distorting or creating occurs. All three of these methods of indirection threaten mimesis and compel a semiotic approach.
- We arrive at this semiotic level of analysis by looking for “ungrammaticalities” in poetry and visual deviations from mimesis in artworks. These ungrammaticalities and deviations function within the paradigm of the poem or artwork, and signify as components of a united network of relationships. This is the proper domain of semiotics: when this transfer to the higher level of the text occurs.

A few aspects of this model need to be qualified at this stage. Riffaterre's insistence that poetic language necessarily differs from common linguistic usage is one that, by all accounts, should be approached with caution. Selden (1985:120) also points out that Riffaterre's model does not allow for perfectly straightforward readings such as looking for a political message in a poem. Nevertheless, Selden admits that his approach seems appropriate as “a way of reading difficult poetry that goes against the grain of ‘normal’ grammar or semantics” (1985:120). Because this dissertation deals with *The Waste Land*, a poem that is hardly “intelligible at first reading” (Kaiser, 1998:82) as well as Surrealism - presenting the viewer with similar “difficulties”, Riffaterre's model would seem to serve the current purposes for setting the interpretative process into motion.

Regarding the poem - as Riffaterre proposes - as a *unity* seems acceptable, although Jo Ellen Green Kaiser (in an article called “Disciplining *The Waste Land*, or how to lead critics into temptation”, published in 1998 in *Twentieth Century Literature*) cautions that, in the case of this particular poem, critics have looked for unity based on the *notes* to the poem and that this may be a less than fruitful endeavour⁴. It can be argued that the poem is lacking in the ostensible unity critics seek when analysing it,

⁴ Green Kaiser (1998) finds the reason for the critical insistence on the unified structure of *The Waste Land* in the belief held by critics that Modernist literature had an order, and highlights Eliot's notes as the source of many critics' belief that unity can be found. Particularly notes such as the comment on line 218: “Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character’, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest ...” have created the expectation that the poem is a unified structure.

but it can further be postulated that the very fragmentary nature of the poem - and Surrealist painting - might be studied in terms of certain paradigmatic fusions that create a sense of underlying structure under the chaotic surface structures with which the reader/viewer are confronted. This necessitates a further investigation into the role of fragmentation from a semiotic point of view.

3.4 Salient concepts

At this stage it will be necessary to provide brief working definitions and justification of points of departure from a semiotic point of view on issues such as fragmentation, allusion, intertextuality and collage (as modes of employing fragmentation) before these principles can be applied to *The Waste Land* and Surrealist art in an attempt to uncover, demonstrate and collate the correspondences intuitively apprehended before.

3.4.1 Semiotics and fragmentation

*Now I see the white and black on this Paper, I hear one singing in the next
Room, I feel the Warmth of the Fire I sit by, and I taste an Apple I am eating,
and all this at the same time
- John Locke*

This section deals with the concept of fragmentation as principle both in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist art, with a view to finding semiotic avenues for making sense out of fragmentation in these texts.

It has been suggested by Ackroyd (1984:160) that Eliot perceived life during the Modern period as fragmentary and lacking in unifying principles. However, it is suggested that Eliot's philosophical quest was directed towards seeking possible unifying elements underlying the chaotic surface of Modern experience (Freeman, 1989:41). Eliot seems to accept fragmentation, and its corollary, the forming of creative new wholes, as an essential part of consciousness:

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; *in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes* (my italics) (T.S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*: 287).

Experiences are seemingly piled upon each other in *The Waste Land*, and I am going to attempt to seek the "new wholes" that emerge within the context of the poem. However, these "wholes"⁵ are by no means obvious and need to be traced by means of a process of analysis and reflection.

Fragmentation, then, is one of the most salient features of *The Waste Land* (and also of Surrealism) in the sense that experience is apprehended as a simultaneous layering of psychic events, and this is conveyed by a montage structure. Charles Sanders (1981:384) asserts that *The Waste Land* seems to be viewed almost cinematically through a rapid series of interchanging frames which create a sense of inarticulateness. A.P. Hinchliffe (1987:71) described the method as follows: "he [Eliot] glued together bits of poetry and pretended he was only a camera". This statement is very significant for the probability of playing with a collage structure which is also typical of Surrealist art, as well as for the Surrealist technique of rendering bits and pieces of human elements in strange new juxtapositions.

It seems utterly impossible to approach either of the texts at hand without paying special attention to the bewildering but also, as will be indicated, structuring effect of fragmentation that the reader of the texts under discussion has to deal with. It can be argued that fragmentation can be regarded as a thread running through whatever interpretational avenues one takes with both *The Waste Land* and Surrealist art. Furthermore, fragmentation in these texts are characterised by *juxtaposition* of incongruous elements and one's *simultaneous* apprehension of these disparities.

⁵ These wholes are also not necessarily coherent and "logical" in the ordinary sense, but make possible ongoing new fusions in what Johnson (1985) calls paradigms set up by signifier signposts, and from these one can uncover clusters of signification that guides one's interpretation of the poem.

Anthony L. Johnson (1985) offers a very valid theory of fragmentation in his article "Broken images": Discursive fragmentation and paradigmatic integrity in the poetry of T.S. Eliot'. In the first instance fragmentation can be regarded from outside the text, in which case it is interpreted as the recognition of "gaps" or portions missing from the *Gestalt*. Fragmentation in this sense may be the result of part of a text not being written, or because it was censored, or because it is part of an authorial strategy (such as one may also find in authors withholding the end of a novel). Alternatively, fragmentariness can be regarded as a textual strategy interpreted from the inside, as discourse. This implies that the reader becomes aware of *cracks* that appear where one would expect textual continuity and unimpeded first-level decoding. In terms of Riffaterre's suggestion that the first reading of the poem makes the reader aware of ungrammaticalities - *cracks* in Johnson's terminology, first-level decoding sensitises the reader to the semantic transfers necessary to make sense of these cracks.

Johnson's (1985) argument centres on the idea that the reader needs to construct a vertical plane of coherence and cohesion, and also of paradigmatic unity, from all the signs and "signifier signposts" offered by the text in order to sense the "paradigmatic integrity" of the poem. Thus signifiers appearing in certain parts of the poem are echoed elsewhere (intratextually), and allusions support these because the intertextual nature of allusion supports the basic paradigms set up by certain clusters of signification. Fragmentation then prevents unimpeded first-level decoding but draws attention to a richness of paradigmatic webs and as such heightens awareness of the paradigm⁶. In this way fragmentation also heightens awareness of *simultaneity* -

⁶ An example cited by Johnson (1985:400-01) might elucidate this. If one regards the figure of the rat as emblematising carnality and female sensuality and if one further takes the reason for the rat's appearance "*Dragging its slimy belly on the bank*" (line 188 - Johnson's italics) that it is heavy with young, a poetic logic emerges from the line "*And bats with baby faces in the violet light*" (line 379). This happens if one regards the bats as airborne equivalents of the rat, which would imply a development from the disguised pregnancy of the rat to the baby (reproduction accomplished) faces of the bats. Thus, if we read a paradigmatic linkage between the two passages we are allowed to detect a dynamic reworking of the female fertility-paradigm. The first is a threat of reproduction while the second represents a "nightmare visual inscription" (Johnson, 1985:401) in the bats' "baby faces". The choice of the word "baby" is a

different fragments in the poem are perceived at the same time, as one perceives fragments in a painting.

Thus, if one accepts Johnson's basic premise of paradigmatic integrity, a number of principles work together in the construction of "new wholes". These include morpho-syntactic fragmentation (and cohesion) - register, phanopoeic moments, position of parts of discourse within the poem, grammatical schisms and so forth, semantic fragmentation (and coherence) and paradigmatic fragmentation which ultimately can be read as paradigmatic integrity.

The counterparts of the above for the visual arts can be proposed as follows: the language of poetry is made up of linguistic elements where the language of a visual artwork is constituted by visual elements such as colour, line, structure, shape and texture. Hence disrupted grammar or unconventional lexical choices in a poem are counterpointed in the visual arts by disrupted formal elements and the use of elements such as colour and visual images that may challenge mimetic conventions. The style and register of a poem can be equated to the style of a painting, and therefore one can distinguish, for example, between a Quattrocentian Florentine style and a Cubist style. If, therefore, an artist uses two seemingly disparate styles in one painting it can be equated to Eliot's use of Drydenesque stylistic elements directly next to the style of, for example, everyday conversational speech.

The typical register associated with a style in visual arts or poetry will play a role in the reader's determination of context. Semantic elements of language and visual arts are traceable in terms of coherence and fragmentation, and the paradigmatic wholes are established by means of analysis in both poetry and the visual arts.

If one explores this avenue further, one can assert that while thematic dislocation constitutes a first instance of fragmentation, pure stylistic fragmentation can constitute another. The use of various styles in painting (techniques associated with different

further reminder that, as is the case in most of the poem, the (negative) paradigm of fertility as presented in *The Waste Land* does not draw barriers between animal and human domains.

movements in art) or the use of various stylistic qualities juxtaposed in the poem are examples of these.

The web of fragmentation becomes more complex when one considers that stylistic variations or juxtapositions can be allusive instances where not only the style but also the content echo another context associated with another artwork, text, event in history, and so forth.

Fragmentation is therefore expressed in the use of different allusions or intertextual instances seemingly piled upon another with the effect of dislocating the reader or viewer. One way of engaging with this phenomenon is to attempt to discover possible linking devices that would lead one to consider the possibility of unity within fragmentation.

3.4.2 *Intertextuality and allusion: a semiotic perspective*

The term *intertextuality* was popularised by Julia Kristeva and is used to signify the various ways in which any literary text echoes or is linked to other texts, whether by overt or covert citations or allusions, or by assimilating the formal and substantive features of another earlier text, or simply by participating in "a common stock of literary and linguistic procedures and conventions". Kristeva emphasised three dynamic elements, apart from the text under discussion, namely the author, reader and the multiple other texts (Pedoto, 1989:31). This implies that the reading process is constituted of two axes: the horizontal one constitutes the relationship between reader and author, and the vertical one the relationship between the text under discussion and other pieces (Abrams, 1988:247). Allusion and intertextuality therefore function to activate two or more texts simultaneously in the mind of the reader (Ben-Porat, 1976:127). From a semiotic point of view, allusive or intertextual instances function as signifiers pointing towards the signified referent, whether this be another text (intertextuality) or the Bible, myths, historical events, and so forth (allusion in general).

Catherine Belsey (1980:21) defines intertextuality as "the recognition of similarities and differences between a text and all the other texts we have read, a growing 'knowledge' which enables us to identify a story as this *story*, and indeed to know it to be a story at all, or which makes it possible to understand one poem as a lyric, another as an epic, with all the expectations and assumptions that that understanding entails". An intertextual work recalls, in one or various ways, other writings. This process necessitates an active reader with some background who perceives the textual relationships (Pedoto, 1989:31). This idea can be viewed in the light of Riffaterre's statement that a reader needs not only linguistic competence (to spot "ungrammaticalities") but also literary competence, "the reader's familiarity with the descriptive systems, with themes, with his society's mythologies, and above all with other texts" (1978:5). It is the reader's familiarity with these literary aspects that will enable him to "fill in" the signifying process by decoding allusive instances. Similarly, the viewer's knowledge of other artworks and also literary texts, myths and so forth enables him to find allusive instances in a visual artwork.

Marthinus Beukes (1992:31) states that a poem is a corpus of intratextual tracks because the form of the word and the word as such have implications of meaning. The composition of the text (the poem) is a whole of cohesive elements that guides the reader towards a coherent interpretation. Cohesion in this sense means the link between two or more textual elements that have a bearing on each other with regard to meaning (Beukes, 1992:31). Thus words in a poem cannot be read in isolation from each other, but the same holds true of the poem as such; it cannot be read in isolation. According to Jacques Derrida (1979:83) "A text is no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces". Interpretation, or meaning, if one uses this term, therefore rests upon the very fact that there is a broader network of possible interpretations. Roland Barthes (1981:39) can also be mentioned in this regard - he insists that "[a]ny text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognisable forms". The more radical stance of Barthes implies that literary texts can only cross-refer to each other (Jefferson, 1986:109).

Linda Hutcheon (1985:2) relates intertextuality to parody (textual imitation with a critical distance) and states that it functions as an active, dynamic force aiding the poet as a means of "formal and thematic construction of texts" (1985:98-99).

An important feature of intertextuality in *The Waste Land* is that it allows for multiple signification and the possibility of various interpretative angles provides a playground for the generation of signifying processes, so that a multi-layered text comes into being that demands active reader participation. The same can be said of Surrealist painting, where multiple layers of signification function to light up different parts of the painting, continuously modifying meaning. The words or images that "echo" in the mind of the reader or viewer are not only the words or images presently read in the poem or painting, but a vast panorama of history, literature, philosophy, and contemporary experience. Each phrase or image evokes an entire context, and the poem and Surrealist paintings are constituted of these clashes and parallels in their juxtaposition. Hillis Miller (1966:176) feels that this technique should not be confused with a Cubist fragmentation, but rather "all the images, experiences, and feelings hover side by side in a '*simultaneous order*'" (my italics). The simultaneity of perception thus proposed demands that the reader of the poem is a frequent reader, and familiar with the poem to an extent. It is my contention that it is precisely this simultaneity that invites comparison with the visual arts, because one can "take in" an artwork at one glance, even though it will take some time to properly investigate the elements at work in the artwork.

In the case of Eliot much discussion has been devoted to the validity of his intertextual method. Brooker and Bentley (1990:4) state that Grover Smith's contributions in the 1950s to Eliot criticism contributed to the poem's allusions and sources moving to the foreground of concern. On the one hand there is the perception that intertextuality might encourage active reader involvement and also a greater comprehension of the text, while these sentiments are opposed by those who feel that the wide range of intertextual references leaves the reader frustrated by the weight of the intellectual backgrounds, and that it has the unfortunate effect of rendering the text closed. The other perception is that the reader can only benefit by looking at the allusive and intertextual sources. I.A. Richards (1968:52) concluded that "[a]llusion in Mr Eliot's

hands is a technical device for compression" and compares *The Waste Land* as equivalent in content to an epic. Without the rich allusive structure, Richards feels, one would need twelve books to accomplish the poem. This leads him to question whether the poem is worth the considerable trouble reading it entails. Even after the material necessary to uncover the allusions has been collected, the poem itself still has to be read, and one may fail in this undertaking (Richards, 1968:53). However, he feels that one should allow oneself to experience the "music of ideas" that the poem presents in terms of feelings as well as thoughts, allowing these ideas to combine into "a coherent whole of feeling and attitude and produce a peculiar liberation of the will" (Richards, 1968:53).

One technique that exemplifies both the use of fragmentation and the intertextual play in the texts under discussion is collage, where fragments of different parts of texts or bits of material are inserted into the texture of the poetic as well as the visual text.

3.4.3 Collage

Collage is not a mode of production that is encountered as frequently as pure painting within the most prominent body of Surrealist art, but it is often used together with painterly techniques and as such opens interesting avenues for interpretation for this dissertation. Collage as it is known is peculiar to Modern (and of course post-Modern) art. Stephen Bann (1988:353) asserts that the emergence of the collage is one of the clearest symptoms of the Modernist "rupture in the plastic arts".

As did many of the Modern theorists, Clement Greenberg (1982a:105-8) connected collage specifically with Cubism. Braque and Picasso were the major exponents of this influential Modernist movement, and it was Braque who, in 1912, glued a piece of imitation wood-grain paper to a drawing (Greenberg, 1982a:105). Picasso, it seems, followed Braque in this practice and collage became a major technique of Synthetic Cubism, which followed the stage of Analytical Cubism.

The distinction between collage and *papier collé* is that "*papier collé* indicates a specific kind of pasted image whose elements are consistent, governed by the classical

principle of design that insists on unity of material, in this case all paper. Collage, on the other hand, "mixes different materials, modes of presentation, and styles; it welcomes the clash of the alien and unexpected" (Schwarz, 1992:69). The two Cubists mentioned above experimented with this technique in order to further the play of shallow space common to Cubist painting. Collage elements, by their abrupt flatness, drew attention to the literal, physical flat surface of the canvas, so that all the painted elements were pushed into illusioned space by the force of the contrast (Greenberg, 1982a:105).

For Cubism, which was concerned with the shuffling of picture planes in an already shallow space, collage provided another dimension of surface-awareness and the possibility of experimenting with the possibilities this created. However, Picasso seems to have been aware of the wider epistemological implications of the technique, illustrated by this remark of his: "We sought to express reality with materials we did not know how to handle, and which we prized because we knew their help was not indispensable to us, that they were neither the best nor the most adequate" (Bann, 1988:353). This seems to be reminiscent of the philosophy of the ready-made, a device typical of Dada and discussed elsewhere.

Greenberg (1982a:107) asserts that collage works were mainly aimed at shock value after Cubism. He feels that this often meant deterioration of the integrity of the technique, but excludes the artists Arp, Schwitters and Miró who, he felt, "grasped its [collage] meaning enough to make collages whose value transcends the piquant" (1982:107). Bann (1988:354) also praises Schwitters's use of collage, but for different reasons. Whereas Greenberg (1982a:107) feels that Dada artists too easily employ collage as "stunts of illustration, or ... decoration pure and simple", Bann (1988:353) asserts that artists of the Dada and Surrealist artists who used collage created a dialectical interaction with the work and the world, because of the otherness introduced by the elements of the collage. Collage fragments present an essentially discontinuous picture, untouched by the technical skills of the artist, and therefore they retained the quality of being independent witnesses to the everyday world from which they had been snipped or torn.

Another quality of collage is the concern of what lies beyond the bits stuck onto the picture plane. The collage emphasises both the physical presence of things and the more ambiguous presentational status of every element in the collage as an "episode" (Bann, 1988:354).

Collage also voluntarily discards the traditional mastery of materials. The artist does not need to exhibit his virtuosity in the handling of oil paint or drawing, but has to face a different challenge in bringing together seemingly unrelated elements into a new whole. J. Elderfield (1985:90) says of the work of Kurt Schwitters that "the effect of each of Schwitters' mature collages is not of a (stylistically predetermined) whole made up of pieces, but of pieces making a whole. This holds true for most of the collages made by Dada and Surrealist artists". Therefore, collage is clearly important in a consideration of Surrealist art. This is equally true of *The Waste Land*, especially in the light of Korg's (1960) argument that the poem's innovative use of quotations from songs, devotional books, Shakespeare and other literary figures, as well as everyday conversation, creates the impression of a poetic collage with similar effects to collage found in the visual arts. Furthermore, Hargrove and Grootkerk (1995:16) feel that the poem is "a literary collage of various urban and desert scenes which seem disconnected and without order". Hence when poetic and non-poetic elements coexist in the poem, these create the fragmentary quality of collage where layers of signification create a playground for a multiplicity of interpretative possibilities.

The term collage will be employed in this dissertation to signal those instances where "ready-made" bits of reality (such as conversations) are inserted into the texture of *The Waste Land*, analogously with the use of real-life bits and pieces found in Surrealist collages. Therefore, it follows that the "compilation" of elements found in the poem - quotations, allusions and so forth - will not be regarded strictly as collage. The term will be reserved to signify snippets from the everyday, such as the song of Mrs Porter, the Albert and Lil conversation and the reference to Marie inserted into the texture of the poem.

3.5 Surrealism

... there are enormously varied definitions of Surrealism
- Hargrove & Grootkerk

*I believe in the future resolution of these two states - outwardly so contradictory -
which are dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, a **surreality**
- Surrealist Manifesto*

Surrealism is considered to be first and foremost a state of mind and a spiritual orientation. In the words of the leader of the Surrealist group, André Breton, Surrealism is defined in the *Manifeste du Surrealisme* (1924) as:

SURREALISM, noun, masc., pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, either verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.

ENCYCL. *Philos.* Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association hitherto neglected, in the omnipotence of the dream, and in the disinterested play of thought. It leads to permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to its substitution for them in the solution of the principle problems of life (Bigsby, 1972:37).

Surrealism, in its inception, was supposed to be a way of thinking, feeling and living. It began as a literary movement in Paris claiming to have been influenced by Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870) and Mallarmé (1842-1898). The central figures were André Breton (1896-1966), Louis Aragon (1897-1982) and Philippe Soupault (1897-?)⁷ - all three were at the time between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-five.

Surrealism grew from the ashes of Dada, an anti-bourgeois, iconoclastic and anarchistic movement begun in Zurich in 1915 by Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), Hugo Ball (1886-1927) and others in an attempt to undermine the bourgeois attitudes that made a world war possible: "We agreed that the war had been contrived by the various governments for the most autocratic, sordid and materialist reasons"

Huelsenbeck said in 1920 (quoted in Ades, 1994:111). By implication, both reason and logic also came into disrepute, as these were seen to have governed the materialist philosophy of the day, as illustrated by the words of the Dada artist Hans Arp (1887-1966): "Dada is the disgust with the foolish rational explanation of the world" (Oesterreicher-Mollwo, 1979:8). Dada set out to ridicule conventional taste and to dismantle the arts, the point at which culture had become infected with a tainted morality (Bigsby, 1972:9). Because many of the principles of Dada are so pertinent to the emergence of Surrealism, it will be necessary to provide a brief overview of some aspects of Dada.

The word "Dada" means "hobbyhorse" in French and the word was found, according to legend, by inserting a knife into a dictionary and settling for the first word that appeared. This method of name-giving serves as an apt example of the emphasis on pure chance and absence of rationality characteristic of Dada. Dada professed to be anti-art, anti-bourgeois and anti-style, which explains why one cannot talk of a typical Dada style. Dada artists and poets were united in their negative, often destructive activities aiming at provocation and often deliberately nonsensical art.

Dada in the arts expressed a radical discarding of traditional modes, for example a music concert would consist of beating keys and drums on stage, while a poetry reading would be an absurd conglomeration of poetry being shouted by different voices at different speeds, accompanied by rhythmical drum-beating and people jumping up and down making the noises of young bears. In literature Dada manifested itself in the shape of chance-poetry which depended on the removal of sense-connections due to random shuffling of words. Illogical language fragments could produce different emotional associations and as such make evident the "confusion of everything in the consciousness" (Oesterreicher-Mollwo, 1979:10). One of Arp's poems read (translated into English): "World wonder sends cards immediately here is a part of a pig all 12 parts put together stuck on flat will give the

⁷ The date of Scupault's death could not be established, even via Internet searches. However, in view of the fact that most of the Surrealists became very old, it is possible that he may still be alive.

clear side view of a stencil amazingly cheap all buy" (these are fragments of sentences randomly picked from a newspaper) (Ades, 1994:115).

One of the hallmarks of Dada in the visual arts is the so-called ready-mades championed by Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), a French-American exponent of Dada. His ready-mades were, among others, a urinal, a bicycle wheel, a bottle rack and a shovel (the latter named *In advance of a broken arm*) which were all presented at different exhibitions. The significance of the ready-made is in the first instance its powers of subversion - presenting something as art which is not compliant with the traditional definition of art. Of these Duchamp said that "A point I very much want to establish is, that the choice of these ready-mades was never dictated by an aesthetic delectation. The choice was based on a reaction of *visual indifference*, with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste, in fact a complete anaesthesia" (Ades, 1994:119).

One of Duchamp's most notorious works consists of a *ready-made*, in this case a print of the Mona Lisa by Da Vinci, with a Daliesque moustache and beard, and the letters L.H.O.O.Q. written under the print⁸. For the purposes of this study this is one of the significant instances of a ready-made as allusion "palimpsested", as it were, with common and vulgar material from contemporary life - at once a subversion and enrichment of the images under discussion.

In the visual arts Hans Arp is famous for his collages made by tearing up a drawing and letting the pieces fall to make a new pattern, thus allowing the laws of chance to govern the compositions. Collage provides a playful and spontaneous way of creating in the hands of the Dadaists (it should be noted that the concept of collage was probably first used by the Cubists Picasso and Braque during the phase of analytical cubism, but for quite different purposes). In any event, collage opens the possibility of fragmentation and bits of "ready-mades" - for example, Kurt Schwitters, who also

⁸ These letters, when pronounced in French, produce the sounds corresponding to "elle a chaud au cul" - *she's got a hot ass*.

had affinities with Dada, often used train tickets and other paraphernalia in his collages to suggest an effect of immediacy and confusion of meaning.

The transformation from Dada to Surrealism occurred during the three years preceding the first published Surrealist manifesto in 1924 (Rubin, 1969:115). During this period Breton sought to take the Dadaist ideals further, to make sense out of the confused ideals presented by the earlier movement. In a declaration issued on 27 January 1925 the following was proclaimed:

- 1 We have nothing to do with literature. But we are quite capable, if need be, of making use of it like everyone else.
- 2 Surrealism is not a new means of expression, nor a simple one, nor even a metaphysic of poetry. It is a means of total liberation of the mind and everything resembling it.
- 3 We are determined to create a Revolution.
- 4 We have bracketed the word Surrealism with the word Revolution solely to show the disinterested, detached and even quite desperate character of the Revolution.
- 5 We lay no claim to changing anything in men's errors but we intend to show them the fragility of their thoughts, and on what shaky foundations, what hollow ground they have built their shaky houses.
- 6 We hurl this formal warning into the face of society; whatever protection it affords its disparities, each of the false moves of its spirit, we shall never miss our aim.
- 7 We are specialists in Revolt. There is no means of action we are not capable of using if the need arises (Bigsby, 1972:37).

The statements outlined above present one with some of the most significant notions within the movement.

A crucial guiding concept within both Dada and Surrealism is *automatism*, the "dictation of thought without control of the mind" - a notion that implies the intervention of chance. This technique was hailed by the Dadaists as one of the prime means of expression and Surrealism also placed the greatest hopes on automatic techniques of expression. Various types of processes are typical, one of which is rapid drawing that expresses the personality of the artist directly from the subconscious. This is a method that demanded an unusual degree of tension (such as found in the work of André Masson (1896-1987)). There are also processes of a

mechanical nature, such as the collages of Max Ernst. Chance poems and other variations of this technique also featured prominently.

Rubin (1969:116) states that although the free flow of associations typical of automatism was typical of Dada, Surrealism sought a means of stretching this boundary into a new ordering of the creative process. The feeling expressed by Breton was: if they resorted systematically to the dictates of the unconscious, and thus to the products of chance, these measures were essential but not sufficient. The unconscious with the possibility of chance it provided served as a springboard furnishing the initial impulse and the direction of the work. But, very often the artists used those as raw materials in the task of interpretation and ordering which would give the finished work its profound meaning. Breton stressed ordering and systematisation of automatic thought, and as such bringing more order to the chaotic inventions of Dada, and also more recognisable elements.

Order would for the most part imply a more conscious systematisation of the unconscious - this contradiction might be elucidated somewhat by Breton's words in 1922:

Up to a certain point one knows what my friends and I mean by Surrealism. This word, which is not our invention and which we could have abandoned to the most vague critical vocabulary, is used by us in a precise sense. By it, we mean to designate a certain psychic automatism that *corresponds rather closely to the state of dreaming*, a state that is today extremely difficult to delimit (Rubin, 1969:121 - my italics).

Two main trends are distinguished within the larger Surrealist movement: on the one hand, those for whom calligraphy, animation and movement are essential (Juan Miró [1893-1983], André Masson, Roberto Sebastian Matta [1911-] and Max Ernst) - here an idea is suggested without concern for exact representation. This branch of Surrealism is based on pure automatism, the dictation of thought without control of the mind, and the results are often close to pure abstraction, although a measure of recognisable imagery may be retained. Often called organic or even absolute Surrealism, this trend is perhaps closer to Dada (Arnason, 1988:280). On the other hand there are the "descriptives" who have an affinity with magic realism and were

inspired by Chirico. Among them are René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, Paul Delvaux, and Yves Tanguy. Their works are characterised by an unreal scene, but the setting, the objects and human figures are painted with fidelity to the principles of conventional realism. Jean (1960:177) refers to this branch of Surrealism as "pictorial Surrealism", meaning those painters who achieve Surrealist disorientation by means of "derangement" caused by modifying usual pictorial traditions in order to provoke, and then transcribe the appearance of hallucinatory scenes (Jean, 1960:178). However, to all artists of the Surrealist movement the subconscious and the significance of dreams were fundamental to their art-making (Arnason, 1988:289). For the purposes of this study this branch of Surrealism answers best to the endeavour of analogous reading, by virtue of its subversion of one's expectations regarding conventional realism. Therefore, although one could make a case for using artists such as Masson and Miró for analogous reading, it would seem that the magical realist branch of Surrealism is more suitable for the current purposes.

This branch of Surrealism is characterised by the creation of new worlds and new beings in an unknown atmosphere. The universe being represented cannot be explained by reason or science, but because the objects and spaces are rendered according to the conventions of realism, one tends to believe them, only to realise soon afterwards that they portray the impossible. Therein lies the power of this branch of Surrealism: fooling the viewer with the first impression, making him believe in the possibility of the scene, and then confronting him with the unreality and impossibility of the representation. This tension generates the quality of a riddle that the viewer wants to solve, but cannot. Bigsby (1972:66) links this impulse to the Surrealists' challenge of Aristotelian and Cartesian assumptions regarding the nature of art and reality, and the desire of the Surrealists to restore vitality to a language that had been drained of it by the utilitarian demands of daily usage.

With regard to the semiotic organisation of Surrealist painting, Jennifer Mundy (1987:492) draws attention to the typical notion in Western art which perceives a painting as a window on reality. This means that art simply copies an aspect of reality; thus an iconic sign-system comes into being; a tree in a painting, for example, has inherent similarities and shared features of what it stands for - a real tree. Traditional realism in Western art can often be described in this way. No new sign-system comes into being and the painting is made up of various iconic signs. Of course, most paintings evoke certain associations that are certainly more significant than merely echoing nature, for example, but these type of associations are relatively few and limited in mimetic art.

Breton rejects the notion of art as a window and points out that art is more than a *vista*. However, he also has problems with the conception of art as *surface* - one of the major premises of critics of Modern art, who would emphasise techniques in painting - the surface - an idea expounded also by Maurice Denis: a painting is a surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order. In addition to this, the Modern formalist approach to painting was one of great attention to style and other empirical aspects. Art historians and critics were reluctant to agree with Breton on the notion of art being a window on the illusory world of the marvellous and the unreal (Mundy, 1987:492).

Breton therefore stresses the transparency of art and art criticism in order to arrive at a proper understanding of the surrealist project and rejects the opaque language of Modern formalist criticism, because he feels that only transparency allows for the viewer to accept the mimetic *enchantment* (more than mimesis).

In an effort to arrive at an answer to the question: "What is surrealist about surrealist paintings?" Mundy (1987:494) asserts that not even the surrealists themselves ever arrived at a satisfactory explanation, but suggests various possibilities with emphasis on the vagueness, juxtaposition and the *beyond* claimed by the surrealists.

The *beyond* is concerned with the "depths of the mind" explored enthusiastically by the Surrealist project. Beneath the rational, articulate layers of the mind there is a substratum of semi-realised, fluid emotions and impulses. In terms of semiotics, the sign-system of the rational and the material is seen as opposed to the system of the beyond. The beyond is for the purposes of the Surrealists, also concerned with dreams, hypnosis, madness and hallucinations, as well as the unconscious mind (Bigsby, 1972:59). This also illustrates the Surrealists' interest in Freud's theories of the unconscious and the world of dreams (Duro & Greenalgh, 1992:281).

For Surrealism, then, the question was how to represent the flow of thought (sign-system of the beyond), in other words, how to translate a mental image into paint. This is a question addressed by making use of the idea of a metalanguage: one sign-system denoting another sign-system. The answer was not to be found in technique - Breton repeatedly expressed contempt for those who would take technique as a definition of Surrealism. Rather, the images found in Chirico's metaphysical paintings and Ernst's collages would be an approximation to the unexpected and disturbing nature of thought at the lower levels of the mind (Mundy, 1987:495). Other methods used to rediscover the significance of the non-material world included the ascription of uncommon properties to common objects, or the confrontation of seemingly unrelated objects, or the wilful dislocation of object and context (Bigsby, 1972:60).

It is therefore clear that a vision of art concentrating on the surface of the artwork (a sign-system) at the level of easy identification is not satisfactory for the Surrealist vision. What is at issue in art is its challenge to the appearances of this world and its indication of another (another sign-system denoted by another world). For Surrealism the artwork is a window only insofar as it leads to the beyond, and the world of dreams, for example, is a convenient metaphor leading to life beyond (Mundy, 1987:496). This would also facilitate the rejection of the intellect as governing principle (Fleming, 1991:541).

The sign-system of the beyond is constituted by potentially unlimited and more or less interchangeable metaphors (signs) relating to the "putatively real space of the image, dressed in the guise of poetic 'beyonds'" (Mundy, 1987:496).

An important notion that arises now is the role of the imagination of the creator and perceiver. This is an imperative for interpretation of surrealist works and can be illustrated by the surrealist tendency to present seemingly incoherent signs within a realistic context such as a landscape. Recognisable contexts, portraying realistic signs and in so doing, referring to the tradition of mimesis are often found to be vehicles for allusions to the poetic beyond. The point is that the mimetic window becomes an art-window opening a sign-system of the mind - and this system may be constituted by hallucinations, dreams, memories, and so forth, projected amidst the seeming reality of the exterior world. One therefore appreciates the dependency of the Surreal upon the conventions (sign-system) of realism, which provide a mask of easy legibility. Mundy (1987:499) states in this regard that "the mind might later question the evidence of the eyes, but the challenge of the intellect, so the rationale of such works runs, would be too late to qualify the initial response of 'acceptance'" (this idea relates to the difference between the first and second levels of decoding - by using a technique that would seem accessible on the first level, the second level subtly asserts itself via this route). Surrealism therefore aims at inducing acceptance of the "never seen" by means of conventional sign-systems on the surface of the artwork. The interior model or sign-system is therefore essentially a modified model of the Western tradition of mimesis. Bigsby (1972:66) asserts in this regard that "the true purpose of art and indeed of life itself was to expand our definition of reality until it included the marvellous".

The aim of the Surrealists is to elaborate the complex associations, significations and secret links found in an image, while at the same time highlighting the appearance of randomly selected detail and the logical impossibility of these images or signs. By attempting to echo the apparent confusion and associative richness of thought at the lower recesses of the mind, this manner of production (both surrealist writing and painting) hinges on the juxtaposition of highly worked, static arrangements of images (Mundy, 1987:505). It is important to note that a literal reading of a Surrealist work

misses the fact that each image is essentially a sign or metaphor for the hidden beyond and the springs of associations and interpretation in the minds of both the artist and the viewer.

3.6 Framing the method

It has been suggested in the overview of critical texts that deal with the poem and Modern painting that arguments for analogy in these texts proceed by nuance, suggestion and intuitive responses. Working from the inside out, from the texts themselves as suggested by Schwarz (1997:1) is an approach that will be sustained throughout. However, the present endeavour is to find a methodological approach that can allow for the intuitively apprehended analogies to be structured more meaningfully.

The following *résumé* and consolidation of critical aspects discussed in sections 3.1 to 3.5 above will crystallise the basic tenets of the methodological approach proposed. This approach is suggested because it allows the reader/viewer to access analogous interpretations of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting in a more thorough manner.

The semiotic approach, as argued, is a valid albeit relatively new way of engaging with painting - while it has been incorporated into literary studies for a long time, the relationship between semiotics and the discipline of art history is not yet as firmly established. Nonetheless, the fact that semiotics challenges mimetic presentation (acknowledged by Bal and Bryson's art-historical arguments [1991] and Riffaterre's arguments for a semiotics of poetry) makes this a very useful approach for engaging with the interface between texts such as *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting.

Riffaterre's (1978) approach as supplemented particularly by Johnson's (1985) conceptual framework could answer to the current need; these authors emphasise the active role of the receiver (something also stressed by Bal and Bryson) and allow for a *process of investigation* rather than looking for finite conclusions. Furthermore, the plurality and unpredictability of texts are provided for in both Riffaterre's model and Johnson's approach. Within the entity of the text, the reader can find semiotic

indirection occurring in the form of distorting, displacing and creating - where the text says one thing but means another. The reader will also look at deviations from the usual grammatical structure spotted at the mimetic or first level of decoding. These ungrammaticalities begin to signify as components of a different network of relationships in the poem, and there the transfer to the second level of decoding occurs. In the visual arts violations of mimetic conventions could signify as components of networks of relationships in the artwork with similar implications for first and second level decoding.

Active reader and viewer involvement is stressed; the first syntagmatic unfolding of the text during the first reading of the poem - from beginning to end - allows for the reader to identify ungrammaticalities. The reader's linguistic competence enables him to do so, while his literary competence allows him to pick up echoes of other texts presented as allusions (similarly, the viewer of a painting will spot deviations from mimetic conventions and pick up allusions to other works, references, myths and so forth based on "visual literacy"). This makes Riffaterre's model eminently suitable for an analogous reading of *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting, since both present deviations from mimetic conventions, and both abound with allusive instances. The affinities of Riffaterre's model with Johnson's (1985) theory of fragmentation are obvious: what Riffaterre calls ungrammaticalities are referred to as cracks in the text; both hinder first level decoding and sensitise the reader (or viewer) to the necessity of a semiotic transfer to the second level of decoding. Also, Johnson refers to allusive instances in the text that set up a vertical plane of cohesion and coherence; the allusive instances function as signifier signposts to suggest a paradigm, or paradigmatic integrity (a term that seems to be more satisfactory than Riffaterre's use of "fixed entity" to describe the poem).

The second retro-active reading of the text, according to Riffaterre, modifies the first interpretation and a more profound decoding is made possible at this second level of decoding. This second reading requires that one views the entire poem at once, knowing the end as one reads the beginning. Again, this model suits the current purposes extremely well - to view the poem at once is to view the poem like a multi-layered painting, like a Surrealist painting. Of importance, furthermore, is the

semiotic principle entrenched in this method - that the poem and the paintings state by indirection, and require the semiotic process in order to unravel the different layers of signification. Johnson's argument for clusters of signification that emerge at the second level of decoding seems to correspond to Riffaterre's description of the second reading and the concurrent semiotic transfers that make the process of semiosis possible. Johnson's suggestion that new wholes are formed by these clusters of signification in a paradigmatic web also echoes the simultaneity that Riffaterre's second reading requires: *that one views the poem like a painting: reading the parts but informed by the entire structure of the texts, as if apprehended in a glance.*

The emphasis that Riffaterre and Johnson place on the function of allusive signifiers necessitated a closer look at the function of allusion and intertextuality, in this instance also collage, because these devices serve the purpose of thematic dislocation and stylistic fragmentation while allowing for "links" to be established on a second level of decoding. *The Waste Land* and Surrealist painting involve dealing with multi-layered texts that invite multiple signification and a simultaneous apprehension of the allusive fragments in these texts. Therefore it has to be stressed that the allusive instances will not be regarded as having fixed referents; the Derridean notion of the unfinished text will therefore be sustained.

Regarding the use of the terms allusion, intertextuality and collage in the discussion that will follow, I suggest the following:

- *intertextuality* will refer to direct quotations or unchanged references from other texts or paintings;
- *allusion* will be used to denote more general or oblique references to texts, stylistic conventions and so forth, and
- *collage* will describe the use of real-life elements in *The Waste Land* and Surrealist collages.

While all three of these are, in Kerg's (1960) words, more immediate and less exact than the meaning of words, an attempt will be made to verbalise - but not to paraphrase - interpretations of some instances of intertextuality, allusion and collage.

Fragmentation, intertextuality and allusion in *The Waste Land* are issues that affect the interpretation of *The Waste Land*; and invariably arguments centring on the "correctness" of interpretation may arise. In this regard, Brooker and Bentley (1990:6) remind one that Eliot saw the interpretative activity as a never-ending process, "yet a process that must be subjected to the limitations imposed by knowledge of the text's origins and intertextual relations" (1990:7). Therefore interpretation is perhaps preceded by what the text "wants" one to know.

The position propounded in this dissertation with regard to allusive sources (and also intertextual sources) in Eliot's poem (as well as Surrealist art) needs to be clarified. This study does not subscribe to the school of thought that can be coined the "magpie approach"; the almost frenetic search for as many possible sources for an allusion, arguing at length which source would indeed be the "correct" one. This kind of valiant endeavour runs the risk of becoming a wild goose chase, when critics look, for example, at what Eliot most likely *intended* (a fallacious pursuit, at best) based on for instance a list of the contents of his personal library (see, for example, Michael Whitworth's 1998 study of the phrase "Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song"). All we really have as readers in the 1990s is the poem and Eliot's notes - and further attempts to locate sources are based on speculative measures of probability. Every new interpretation of allusive strategies in *The Waste Land* could open new avenues for engaging with the poem, and while one may acknowledge certain sources investigated by critics, the current dissertation holds that one could not locate only one "correct" source. Rather, if an allusion sparks associations with numerous sources, it would be interesting to note the dialogue created between such sources or to propose that a certain source answers to a particular reading in a more or less satisfactory way. The same holds true, I would suggest, for tracing sources of allusive instances in Surrealist painting. Furthermore, the more poststructuralist notion of semiotics is suspicious of fixed interpretations and would rather allow for the process of semiosis to regard the allusive signifier as a referent with the inherent possibility of free play.

The proposed analyses will not, of necessity, make claims to completeness or comprehensiveness, but are done by way of being exemplary of the method developed and expounded in this chapter.