



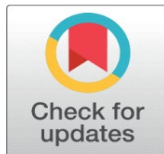
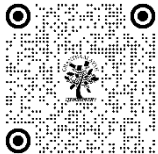


SELF- PORTRAITS REGARDED AS THE VERY MANIFESTATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

The artists who are both consciously and unconsciously involved embody their very own existence with impressions from their internal life. Out of many theories psychoanalysis can be used subjectively, for the existence of an individual in the process of becoming 'I'. This theory of unconscious could be very personal. Using the impressions from the very theories of Freud is what I would like to write about in this research paper. His theory about psychoanalysis very particularly to study oneself or someone else would be like to ask for: What to see? What to Hear or Speak about? Express or repress? Depending upon a close observation alongside awareness on the life of many artists. Which has revealed from the past as they have been instinctive believers, of some other world. Making an apt sense of this is how any repressed emotions arises when explored to a deeper level of unconscious. As 'I' becomes the foundation to the core body the mind actively takes the possession to take actions for that very individual with holding a command on the body. The very idea of the Identity of the artist as an individual is related deeply to what the artist's trying to express himself/ herself as one individual. And painting is the freedom of a platform using medium to paint without any restrictions. This paper tends to study the very idea of psychological journey of the artist. With the self-portraits inducing the very Identity of the artist through a critical evaluation on the artist.

Keywords: Consciously, Unconsciously, Psychoanalysis

1. INTRODUCTION

As all of us are social beings, we survive in groups with our own private and separate existence, too. We feel our thoughts in the most unique manner. Almost all artworks function to express an individual expression of the artist himself. The visual images carry a visual language that acts as a means of communication. However, beyond the whole idea of artist trying to communicate through visual language, it does express the identity or the personality of him as a human – his psychological, or inner state of being. An artist who creates art for the reason to

express themselves, their feelings and ideas are the people often seen to be self-motivated. They would rarely depend upon other artificial things for any new innovative ideas. There could be times when the extreme creative artists are barely understood by the number of activities they do. Intuitive guidance works through the artist's subconscious, as he experiments with the materials, which the work requires. An exertion on the power of our brain to review some of the artworks based on literary sources or on the artworks alone explains as to why psychoanalysis of an artwork is possible. In this materialistic world they force the artist to do what the society wants to see. Unable to achieve the exact value of the artwork. The art is truly a human activity merging two worlds and the artist acts as a mediator.

2. OBSERVATIONS

Any psychological approach to the artwork would be solely dependent on the artist and the creative process in which he/ she is involved. Here the concept of 'I' is somehow closely related to the idea of that particular artist as an individual. Expressing the identity, arising from different time periods. The artist then becomes a paradigmatic figure of the self, which is always predicted differently, positioned with others. Because the self- becomes the unique. Individual as it makes sense to oneself is technically different from collective or religious ideologies. As Erik Erikson perspective about identity says that the development of identity is a throughout process with the different stages of life. While we talk about self, there is autobiography in Literature and self-portraiture in Visual art. Self-expression towards an individual as self emerges with self-portraiture. Expressing 'I' as an individual was a form of self-conscious being. With the emergence of the artist to portray himself with the ability to express in a two-dimensional surface. And because art as a visual language is more than that of standard symbols or signs, it will never communicate like that in newspaper or a headline. A song or a poem would not mean the same as does a sculpture or a painting about that very same object. It is the artist who creates different meanings to an artwork by different techniques or materials. Art involves forming colors, lines, shapes to personify the experiences. Meanwhile in this process the materials or the techniques which the artist uses for expression embody their individual intention behind their very expression. [Funch \(1997\)](#)

It was **Sigmund Freud** who developed psychoanalysis about 100 years ago, with the effect of psychology on the western culture. This was the first time when psychology was merged with art somewhere around late nineteenth century. It was also before Freud in nineteenth century that some artist's did fuse these two formulations- Goya, and the other symbolists- who did depict dreams and mind as something very internal rather than external. 'Walter Pater's descriptions of Renaissance art reflects a new awareness of psychology of the artist and the personal link between the artists and their works' [Adams \(1993\), p.1.](#)

Figure 1

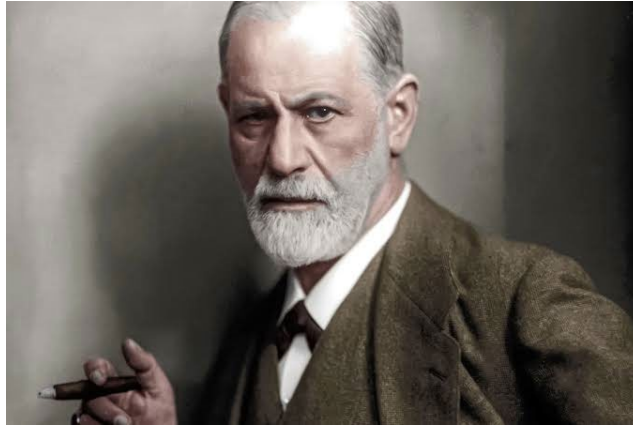


Figure 1 A Portrait Photograph of Sigmund Freud

The philosophy of Freud might vary with time as few believe that his philosophy was right, and few disapprove. But with the evolving time psychoanalysis has been an act of great influence for the modern psychologists who have been reading about both mind and behavior. Few based psychoanalytic theories state that human behavior is motivated with that his motivations are hidden from the individual himself, they are said to be lying down in the unconscious of the being. Freud searched for his own beginnings and their significance. He derived the same excitement from exploration his childhood as Keats had his first experience on first reading Chapman's Homer. Freud's "archaeological" self-analysis laid foundations from his sub-sequent work, and his knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology enlightened him. Freud followed his thoughts back in time to his childhood. There he located three cornerstones of psychoanalysis: infantile sexuality, the power of the unconscious, and the Oedipus complex. [Adams \(1993\), p. 2.](#)

Others state that psychoanalysis could be an act of therapy for those in distress or trouble. All in all, this theory seeks to counsel as to what kind of unconscious forces act in the development of human behaviour. Sigmund Freud stands out to be one amongst the major figures. As he would often treat his patients with strange and unexpected disorders whose cause of illness could not be determined by the doctors, as it lied beneath somewhere in the unconscious. Such conditions were called hysteria. Freud was fully convinced that when nothing was wrong physically with the patient, they had some real sufferings that were those hidden psychological problems causing their sufferings. This exercise would involve a series of questions to be discussed with the patients about their emotional or any personal experiences. With this approach Freud developed this practice of psychoanalysis and with time he formulated it with different studies and experiences in human behavior. The key principle could be that the past experiences of a person were important to shape the way in which particularly the individual behaves at present. It is through this therapy that the person can cope up to his distress and trouble. Freud categorized the personality or psyche into three different levels of consciousness. The part of the personality which was conscious was concerned with the feelings and thought, the effects which an individual experiences in general when he/she is awake. The second was preconscious or subconscious which constrained memories and thoughts when not awake at the moment or conscious at the moment. But can be recalled when asked. The third could be the unconscious, the deep place where lies

the motivations, desires, and wishes about which an individual may not even be aware. Freud also put in his belief into different structures that managed the motivational force behind an action. Then named them as id, ego, and the superego. Freud placed the location of unconscious in id, that were the impulses, motivations, or desires for that matter. Then was the conscious one trying to plan as to which energy to release. It is then the superego operating between the ego and id to satisfy the impulses. Freud used this superego as to a condition known as repression. [Freud \(1949\)](#)

A subconsciously inspired art has in fact a quite opposite spectrum of appeal; it is exciting, sublime, agitated rather than vital. Ideas or the imagery influenced by subconsciously influenced images has symbols. The nature of subconscious and unconscious encompasses many repressed memories, images, desires, and wishes. Applied by the art critic, art viewer, researcher, and the artist himself forming a fundamental source of knowledge for a psychoanalytical study on the work of art. The act of presenting emotions in self-portraits is inclined deeply to the artists life. Whether or not it has direct or indirect contact with the conscious, subconscious or even at unconscious levels. The artist is greatly courageous as he up-frontally presents a great amount of emotions in his work. Involving his personal psyche to have more conscious perceptions about the situation. The psychologists and the psychiatrists have suggested in their studies about the levels of consciousness in a human being combining to form their identity. The artist in the creation of his self-portraits goes several steps back and further to deal with his subconscious and unconscious. That is how an artist might achieve a sense to express emotions in a work of art. There would be times when the artist would induce a quality of detachment in them. A detachment from the distractions against his work. Meanwhile continue to be attached with the subject matter which interests them.

Figure 2



Figure 2 Dr. Yashodhar Mathpal with his Self-Portrait in an Online Symposium.

Categorizing Mathpal sir's portraiture it divides itself majorly into two parts: **Single Portraits** (which he painted on a commission basis for others and his family) and his **Self-Portraits**. From those amongst the group of single portraits boldly reflect the artists specialty in a particular medium and his understanding of a personality of human. The self- portraits specifically reveal of how the artist blended

both his psychological and the social side reflecting his genius side. The artist clearly says that he is truly inspired by Rembrandt and consider him as an idol in the field of art and self-portrait in particular. When asked about this question in the interview he **compares himself with few aspects of Rembrandt's life. He connects to Rembrandt's psychology, through character, on the basis of social aspects, emotional and few other aspects.**

When asked to the artists about his psychoanalytic journey with self-portraits in different periods of his life. He says **“that just by looking at the glimpse of a particular self-portrait, he gets lost in that time period and that particular age of his life in which the portrait was sketched. All the memories related to that time period gets refreshed.”** And just like the theory of unconscious mind by Freud. The repressed desires, images, memories, and wishes which is embraced by the unconscious mind as one dynamic entity. However, which becomes an important factor in psychoanalytic understanding. It is the body gestures and facial expressions that are a living language for the spectator. The artist is striving his best to translate everything into a visual language with self-sufficient terms. In a conversation with the artist is an interview he narrated as he himself sometimes looks back into his self-portraits to understand the language of the situation which he experienced himself. It is always the subject selection, that is important for the visual communication to be at its best. As once when his sister-in-law expired, he had to shave his head, the first thing he did after coming back was to paint his self-portrait. That event was recorded in his memory through his self-portrait. That self-portraits which speak a wordless language. **It is Only the face that talks about the hidden psychological capacity. This is where a genuine artist would perceive his individual self.** Adding biographical significance would add another primary significance to the iconography of the self-portrait. Both the imagery and the documentation are proofs for the psychoanalytic critic in his/her way to write in account the psychobiography of the artist. One has to see through those layers of consciousness of the artist in order to get through the real psychological insight of the artist.

Figure 3



Figure 3 Self- Portrait of Dr. Yashodhar Mathpal Soon After He Came from the Funeral of His Sister-In-Law.

There are artworks suitable for a particular type of expression. These imagery and emotions of the subconscious refers to a period in evolution before the humanizing sensitivities had come into being. They could be ugly, awkward, or anti-aesthetic. The experiences occur since the very childhood days but in a simpler form, could be either vivid or a detailed visualization. As seen in the drawings of children they often reveal an intense visual symbolism which is very rarely seen in an adult art. The magnetic power of a visual work of art is widely applicable. For expression is not a continuous process, there can be periods of creativity that state unpredictability with long periods when unexpected changes occur. The very existence of a human being itself is an oscillation between the world of splendor, dreams, and any inspiration for an artwork in the case of artists.

3. DISCUSSION BASED OF ARTWORK

This kind of experience is particularly well known to writers. Sometimes the influences are so strong that they are very well aware of temporary possessions. The very medium- rendering ideas into concrete form through words and phrases- seems to make them vulnerable to this kind of psychic parasitism. By the personality of the artist, they might not be analyst but a believer in instinct. A close familiarity with the artist, his lifestyle reveals about how they did believe in a another world. It is truly said that the creative people are capable of creating anything of importance from this another world or a deeper world within themselves. It is and has always been an artist's individual observation about a particular scenario, object, or himself for that matter. As an individual the artist's were entitled to express themselves through paintings about his/ her view about the world. And once the artist finds himself involved in himself as a subject in a very deeper level for his very painting the results are unpredictable. In psychoanalysis the self-portraits are raced from their very roots. In which the expression of the artist himself plays a very important role. The colors that he/she uses.

Figure 4

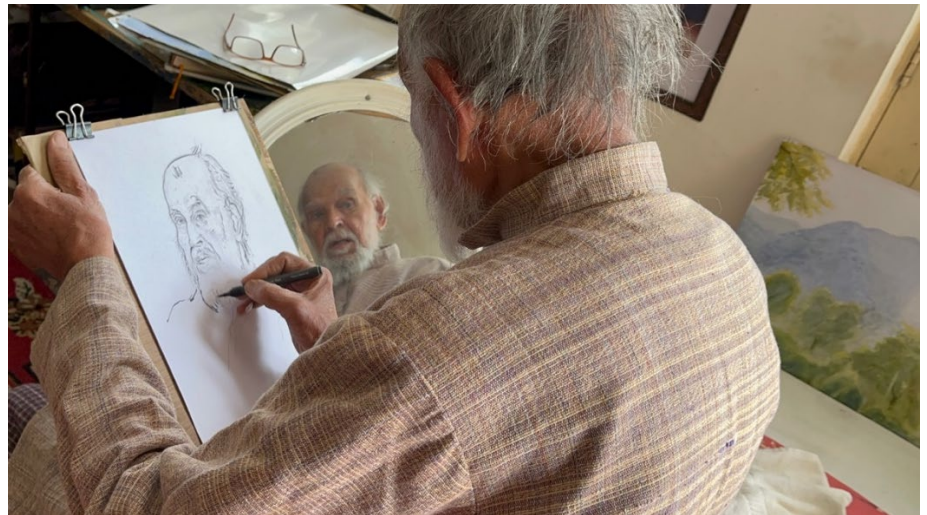


Figure 4 Dr. Yashodhar Mathpal Sketching His Self-Portrait.

It is this time when the subconscious mind touched by any form of distress or disturbance. The magical mind takes the charge of creative expression using the abstract unconscious self quite artistically. They trace the hidden symbolic images into a physical form in a painting for the world. For both the viewer and the artist it

is important to feel the impact that has been made by a particular artist with his unique experience. It is the work of art which creates an opportunity different with the individualism that is reflected in the work of the artist. As artist he/ she tries to communicate his emotional expression to the viewer without any limitations. The only changes that are between the viewer or the artist is that the artist expresses his total involvement in the creative journey of his artwork. The viewer however experiences a sort of similar involvement with the aesthetic or emotional pleasure from the painting, he/she has no driving forces to wishing towards expressing it externally. It is this energy of the artist which is then transferred to the viewer. But with this for both the artist and the art viewer the artwork creates an opportunity to a unique experience, varying at different individual exposures.

Figure 5



Figure 5 Self-Portrait of the Artist Rembrandt Harmenszoon Van Rijn

Turning the middle period we encounter in self-portrait of 1640's. The artist attire is no less elegant or fanciful than before. This is the phase of Rembrandt's life in which the first symptoms of inner crises appear. We detect that his misanthropic expression seemed to contradict the emphasis upon his rich attire. In general, the light is softer than in the earlier period, and has lost its spotlight character. The roundness of form is increased through the more subtly graded modelling. [Rosenberg \(1948\), p.40](#)

4. CONCLUSION

For a portrait the source of inspiration is the intuitive seeing and observing the details of a particular person in the sense of surreality. William Blake called it "sensing of the angelic form". [Wilson \(1981\), p.120](#). A good portraiture is almost like a good landscape genuinely revealing the reality of expressions. The face map is what the artist is trying to make with face as the main subject. The drawing has that subtle humanity to communicate the psychological insight of the artist.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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