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### **Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society**

#### **Title**

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#### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4547w5kd>

#### **Journal**

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 25(25)

#### **ISSN**

1069-7977

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#### **Publication Date**

2003

Peer reviewed

# The “Autonoetic Hypothesis” on Creativity: Memory and Cognition in Picasso’s *Guernica*.

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## Purpose.

To study Picasso’s memories in relation to the creation of his masterpiece, *Guernica*.

## The Hypothesis.

In a previous study, I presented **The “Autonoetic Hypothesis” on Creativity** showing that long-term memories, recognizable, conscious images, are critical to the genesis of abstract art, like in Pollock’s abstract paintings. (Espinel, 2002) *Guernica* (1937, Madrid), one of the greatest masterpieces of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is a symbolic painting. It was inspired by rage over the bombing of the ancient town of Guernica during the Spanish civil war. (Oppler, 1988; Rubin, 1980) In the mural, motifs from bull fighting and mythology symbolize the horrors of war. (Oppler, 1988)

## “The Artmedicine Methods.”

I have devised “The Artmedicine Methods” that integrate neuro-cognitive concepts of how an image is seen with artistic concepts of how an image is created. (Espinel, 1995, 1996, 1998) In this study I investigate the relationship between Picasso’s memories, life events, recollections, statements, art works and the images he created in *Guernica*.

I pursued the investigation in 5 categories :

1. History. Information on Picasso’s memories was gathered from his own statements, his friends’ and acquaintances’, art experts’, historians’ and biographers’.
2. Art. Works of art, by Picasso and by others, and ranging from modern to Ancient Iberian art, were examined in relation to *Guernica*.
3. Guernica’s images. The images of the painting and its creation, its 6 sketches and 8 states of progression, were separated and studied individually.
4. Memory classification. Picasso’s memories were classified: a) graphic or verbal; b) chronologically: by day, week, month, and by year, to his childhood; and c) whether conscious (autonoetic), or not.
5. Relationships. Comparison was made between Picasso’s memories and each of *Guernica*’s images.

## Results.

1. A precedent for all of *Guernica*’s images was found in Picasso’s memories. 2. Images that appeared and disappeared during the creation, except for those of the bombing of Guernica, were related to recent memories. 3. Images from the 1<sup>st</sup> sketch and finished composition were related to long-term, conscious memories. The times and events of these crucial memories were identified by Picasso himself.

## Conclusions.

Picasso’s images germinal to the creation of *Guernica* were related to long-term memories associated with autonoetic recall. These memories had a personal emotional content. It is likely that the conscious re-experiencing of Picasso’s past events was germinal in the creation of images symbolic of horror. A form of episodic memory (Tulving 2001) may have been crucial to the creation of *Guernica*. My “Autonoetic Hypothesis on Creativity,” therefore, might apply to the creation of Picasso’s *Guernica*.

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