Shifting Symbolic Forms During Late Latency-Early Adolescence

Charles A. Sarnoff MD

Shifting Symbolic Forms During Late Latency-Early Adolescence

Charles A. Sarnoff, M.D.

Table of Contents

Shifting Symbolic Forms During Late Latency-Early Adolescence

One of the prime maturational elements leading the early adolescent towards object relatedness is the shift of emphasis in the use of symbols and speech from the evocative to the communicative mode. In the evocative mode, symbols are used solely for self-expression and for the mastery of uncomfortable trauma and prior affect states. In the communicative mode, symbols are used as a tool for contact with reality and the control of the future. The effective transit of symbol use to the communicative mode is a vital step in development. It is important for success in work and is a primary constituent in the development of the ability to fall in love. It is also a vital element in effective free association in insight-oriented psychotherapies.

Psychotherapy in the latency-age child is often impaired by an age-appropriate cognitive limitation which dampens the ability of the child to communicate unconscious content to the therapist. The latency-age child has not yet fully developed the capacity to use psychoanalytic symbols in a communicative mode. When the child plays in a therapy session, or writes a poem or story, his primary intent is drive discharge involving narcissistic gratification through fantasy. Through evocative symbols he seeks the expression, or evocation, of inner feelings. The child's primary intent is not communication with the therapist.

Eventually, during middle and late adolescence, the evocative mode will contribute coloration to the symbols involved in creativity. This gives the impression that evocation contributes to object relations. This should not distract one from an awareness that symbols used in the evocative mode interfere with accurate communication of content. Communication often has a low priority for the late-latency child. During late latency, symbols used in an evocative mode slow natural developmental progress towards object relations. The presence of evocative symbols slows the development of the communicative thought processes required for effective psychotherapy and for adequate developmental progress.

The shift of symbolic forms from those that emphasize the evocative pole to those that emphasize the communicative is part of the larger group of transitional processes leading to communicative emphasis and enhanced object relations. Communicative emphasis is enhanced by transitions in

symbolic forms (evocative to communicative symbols); the development of enhanced communicative potential in speech (social speech), and the revamping of story material to conform to the experience and orientation of one's listener (tertiary elaboration).

One of the tasks of the child therapist is to hasten as well as shepherd and encourage this natural process of development. An example of an area sensitive to the therapist's approach is that of bewilderment about the physical changes of puberty. The child is apt to draw into herself or himself in the face of such changes. Physical change draws narcissistic energies inward, toward the changing self. As a result, the development of symbols used in a communicative mode, which would support the ability to share and to fall in love, loses impetus. The therapist who can detect the child's bewilderment and clarify the sources of confusion helps to put the communicatively oriented developmental processes back on the track.

Evocative Symbols Dominate Latency-Age Play

Nonverbal Forms. A use of the evocative mode in the selection of latency-age symbolic forms causes the play of the child to be dominated by nonverbal elements that are difficult to understand and decipher. In addition to dreamlike personal fantasy elements, there is passive acquisition with rote use of nonverbal symbols, signs, toys, fantasy characters from children's entertainments, and mythic images. These are the characteristic representations from which are selected the evocative symbols used in latency-age fantasy activity. The latency-age child selects pertinent aspects of these representations for their highly personalized meanings. Ludic symbols can be used to evoke feelings and repressed affectomotor memory elements that have rarely been shared with others.

> A girl of 7 brought to sessions a toy called the magic mirror. It was called that by the manufacturer because its design permitted it to be turned into a racing car. The girl played with it because of powers she read into the "magic mirror" name. It could be used to get rid of her mother when she was angry.

Of these nonverbal forms, certain culturally based mythic symbols (e.g., Batman, G.I. Joe) appear to be communicative. They share superficially a vocabulary relating to universally accepted themes. Actually, they are selected by the symbolizing function of the child with little emphasis on communicative value, and such symbols provide external foci of attention (countercathexes), which divert the conscious awareness of both therapist and child from conflicts and relegate personal memory elements to a state of

repression. At the same time, they sweep the expressive skills of the child into apparently socialized channels of expression. This phenomenon, which I call cultural capture, implies that the child evokes inner feeling states and memories through the tales of his culture. Through the use of such tales, instinctual pressure is released through fantasy surrogates while the private evocations of the child are sequestered and repressed. This occurs at the expense of the exploration and communication of conflict. When fantasies containing such elements are discovered by a companion or a therapy-oriented observer, only superficial meaning is perceived; unconscious contents remain uncommunicated. Universal human experience may serve as a basis to help the observer to interpret the meaning of the symbol. The intent involved in using such symbols is to withhold the sharing and communication of meaning.

> A boy of 8 was brought to therapy for uncontrolled behavior in the classroom. The first few sessions went well, with conflict material easily detected from the play of the child. A change of hour was requested so that the child could watch his favorite television program, "Batman." A change was made to a later hour. Quickly, the content of the sessions shifted from fantasies involving cutout figures that represented symbols from his own dreams to detailed presentations of episodes in the life of Batman. Questioning of the mother brought out the fact that the story line for each session exactly matched that of the program of the same day. The contribution of the child's unconscious to the selection of the material to be presented was slight. It was decided to interdict further television watching immediately preceding the sessions. Thereafter, the boy reverted to symbols that were an evocation of his own experience and traumas.

Symbol Polarities. Each of all possible symbols possesses a potential dual polarity of expression. Each can be analyzed from the standpoint of the emphasis placed by the symbolizing function on the evocative or the communicative value of the representation used as the manifest symbol. The healthier the latency-age child is emotionally, the more he is apt to stop and ask the therapist if the meaning of the play is clear. Play that embodies repetition compulsion places more emphasis on the evocative pole of symbol use, whereas play that embodies reparative mastery places more emphasis on the communicative pole of symbol use (see Sarnoff 1987a, Chapter 12). Reparative mastery is a therapeutic goal. From a clinical point of view, the psychotherapist should use as a therapeutic strategy the encouragement of symbols with an emphasis on communicative potential.

The Shift from Evocative to Communicative Symbols

The shift from evocative to communicative symbolization is accompanied by the development of *the observing object in the mind's eye.* This psychological element of the personality is formed as an advanced level in the progressive development of self-reflective awareness, and is derived from the internalization

of experience. It is characterized by the presence of an internal watching element that superimposes the needs of potential love and transference objects on a child's symbols and speech. The child who is never told to clarify a point, or is never questioned for meaning, fails to develop an observing object in the mind's eye. Like any superego element, the observing object requires the support of ego functions sufficiently mature to carry out its demands. The requirements include the maturation of communicative skills; these skill changes (which have been mentioned) include a shift to the communicative pole in symbol formation and perfection of social speech and tertiary elaboration.

Internal shifts from the evocative to the communicative mode in symbolic forms are forced by the following:

1. the end of drive expression through play symbols alone (ludic demise)

2. the enhancement of the perception of reality that accompanies the shift to verbal and abstract conceptual memory organizations (especially the latter)

3. awakening to the effectiveness for drive discharge of communication with love objects in reality; this is mediated by puberty (including menarche and the first ejaculation)

In normal circumstances, a need to communicate transmutes the speech of the child so that communicative elements dominate at about 12 years of age (social speech).

An observing object in the mind's eye plays a special role in monitoring tertiary elaboration. It demands that universally shared symbols and meanings take part in communication. The cognitive transformations of late latency-early adolescence make it possible to serve the needs of the audience (the reality world of objects) in selecting symbols. Because of the emphasis placed on the communicative aspect of symbolization at this time, aesthetic considerations influence speech with great force. Symbols push toward mature, adult forms which require verbal emphasis. In the shift from latency to adolescence, there is a change in the nature of the symbolic forms used in spontaneous fantasy formation. The evocative, personal experience and/or rote symbols of latency give way to the communicative, aesthetically determined symbols of adolescence.

The Nature of Symbols

Before proceeding further, it will be useful to define symbols according to the structures and functions we shall be discussing.

What is a Symbol? Symbol is a generic term describing any stimulus that carries to an observer the meaning of something other than the stimulus.

Symbols are the products of the *symbolizing function.* The symbolic form used at a given time is characteristic of the maturational stage at which it occurs, as well as the motivational circumstances involved. Symbolic form is the product of maturation, social influences, and intrapsychic forces and events. The structure of symbolic forms undergoes an ontogenesis. As symbols grow, so grows the ego.

What is the Symbolizing Function? It is one of the mechanisms of the ego. It is a complex mechanism the development of which parallels that of certain simpler functions. In the first two years of life, these are:

1. capacity to perceive similarities (e.g., establish mental linkages and/or perceive abstract relationships)

2. capacity for displacement along the linkage between concepts or objects based on perceived similarities

3. capacity for delay—to permit displacement

4. Motivation for displacement

Once these four ego units are developed, generic symbols can be formed. With the subsequent development of the following, psychoanalytic symbols can be produced. By 26 months we find:

5. capacity for reality testing to maintain and support a distance between the signifier and the signified

6. capacity for repression

Psychoanalytic symbols become operative at the age of 26 months. Intuitive use of these symbols

provides the psyche with an organ through which drives can be discharged through fantasy. The use of this potential reaches a peak during the mid-latency years. The primary sources of representations to be used in this way are the symbols of dreams and play. After the age of 12, with

7. improved reality testing and

8. ludic demise, reality elements predominate among those representations that will serve as symbols. However they continue to be used in the evocative mode through late latency-early adolescence.

The shift from the evocative to the communicative as the dominant mode is the work of early adolescence. Shifts between the modes can occur normally at any age or stage. Often the therapist of the latency-age child must encourage the shift to communication as a therapeutic technique. The shift to the communicative mode permits the discharge of acceptable drive derivatives. In adolescence, this discharge can occur with objects in reality used as symbols in the communicative mode. Prohibited derivatives continue to use dream symbols, passively acquired cultural (mythic) symbols, and fantasy. Unacceptable derivatives are unwelcome in communicative zones. They make up private thoughts and dwell in the zone of evocation. Dream symbols and fantasy symbols in the adult offer persistent psychological areas of vulnerability through and around which regressions can organize.

Products of the Symbolizing Function

The symbolizing function has a number of different products, all of which are grouped under the term symbol. This single term should not blind us to the fact that there are more than twenty-five different types of symbolic forms, of which we are interested in six. This is why I often use the term *symbolic forms* rather than symbols.

The following differentiation of four forms, and the two modes, is important for the work at hand, since if I say "symbol" and mean the fourth type, and the reader thinks it means the first type, there will be no communication.

The Four Symbolic Forms

The four basic symbolic forms that should be differentiated for our purpose are called indices, signs, symbols, and psychoanalytic symbols. We must be indebted to Ferdinand de Saussaure and Piaget (1945, pp. 98, 169) for their early contributions in this area.

Index. Denotes that the signifier is a physical part or an aspect of the signified. (Fingernail clippings are used in magical rituals to represent the whole of the victim.)

Sign. Denotes a sharp physical distinction between the signifier and the signified; where the choice of the signifier is arbitrary or determined by convention (i.e., involves a social relationship, as in language, which is a system of verbal signs). (Flags, i.e., patterned cloth chosen to represent a nation, signals, and words relate most closely to this category.)

Symbol. Here too there is a sharp physical distinction between the signifier and the signified; however, the choice of the signifier is "motivated" (i.e., involves, and is the product of, individual thought and involves signifiers coupled with signified elements—*referents*— which can be related through points of resemblance). The relationship between signified and signifier is conscious. Metaphors, such as "You are the angel glow that lights a star," consist of such conscious symbolic linkages.

Psychoanalytic symbol. A symbol, as defined above, in which the awareness of the relationship between signifier and signified has undergone repression, as in a cave or a clam representing female genitalia in a dream.

Evocative and Communicative Symbols

It is my contention that among all symbols, and especially within the category of psychoanalytic symbols, there are two subgroups that play an important role in the transition from latency to adolescence; these are the evocative symbols and the communicative symbols.

Latency and adolescence have distinct and characteristic emphases in their symbolic forms. The child in latency creates his fantasies with emphasis on evocative symbols, whereas the adolescent creates his fantasies with emphasis on future planning, using communicative symbols. In the intermediate zone

of late latency-early adolescence, there is a continuous shift of emphasis of symbolic forms between evocative and communicative polarities.

Evocative symbols are defined as psychoanalytic symbols that express memory, or past feelings or fervors. They conjure up the past for the child, without particular emphasis on communicative or cultural aspects. *Communicative symbols* are those which express recalls—as do evocative symbols—while simultaneously, with an eye to the sensibilities of the observing object (the audience), they entertain, hold interest, and communicate. The division into evocative and communicative symbols is, thus, arbitrary; but these categories represent age-correlated emphases which are accurate: symbols in latency *tend* to be evocative, symbols in adolescence, communicative. The shift from emphasis on the evocative pole to emphasis on the communicative pole is a characteristic shift in the cognitive transition that accompanies the change from latency to adolescence.

It is wise always to be aware that each psychoanalytic symbol has the potential to evoke or to communicate. Which end of this polarity is emphasized in a given symbol must be determined on the basis of a patient's associations or the observer/therapist's evaluation of context. Evocative purpose is more common in latency, and communicative purpose is more common in adolescence, in keeping with the role of symbols in these different stages.

It is proper to say that a given symbol manifests activity related to the evocative pole while retaining some communicative characteristics. Psychoanalytic dream symbols are primarily evocative. The ordinary conscious symbols in daily use are primarily communicative. When one speaks of an evocative or a communicative symbol, it is understood that a portion of the symbol's role relates to the alternative mode.

Historical Overview

The Evocative-Communicative Polarity in Symbol Forms. Once one's ears become attuned to resolving psychoanalytic symbols into evocative and communicative forms, it is possible to recognize that the differentiation of symbolic forms into two categories has been observed and reported in one manifestation or another in the scientific literature many times during the past three-quarters of a century. The literature reveals an interest in the nature of these forms, as well as insight into their roles

and positions in the developmental progressions that accompany the growth and evolutionary sequences in which they appear.

In the ontogenetic growth sequences of psychoanalytic symbols, which has a major thrust at age 26 months, evocative symbols precede communicative symbols. The transition from evocative to communicative symbols is a continuous process that begins when remembered words replace evoked feelings, images, and gestures. The greatest developmental surge in this process occurs during the transition from latency to adolescence, when symbols in health become consistently communicative.

In the following extracts from the psychological literature, we shall trace the development of the distinction between evocative and communicative symbols.

In 1903, Reinach introduced the concept that the arts of prehistoric man and modern man were intrinsically different. He described a difference in the use of symbols from the standpoint of a characteristic emphasis on evocation in the symbols of primitive art. In describing the art of primitive man, Reinach clearly had in mind two types of creative symbols, those which evoke inner sensations and those which blend the evocation of inner sensations with communicative intent. He said, "The prehistoric sculptor was never preoccupied with the intent to please but with the intent to evoke"[1] (p. 265).

Reinach's view of the type of symbols used by primitive man is reinforced by Di Leo (1970), who states in describing the cave paintings of Altamira:

> Archaeologists and art historians are in agreement that the art of primitive man was not intended as communicative but that its purpose was magical; it was almost completely confined to animal representation. Its aim was, by creating an image of the animal, to gain power over it. These pictures were to be found in hidden places and caves—not where they could be seen by others. In a way, the child's drawings are similar in that they too are a personal affair and not a communication—at least not an intentional one. [p. 142]

Thus, Di Leo takes Reinach's point of view, and associates the evocative symbolic style of the paintings of primitive man with the drawings of children. He goes on to point out that "the use of graphic means for communication begins with the stylization of art during the New Stone Age . . ." (p. 142).

The Phylogenetic Paradigm of the Shift from Evocative to Communicative Symbols. Campbell (1959) sought to discover in the evolution of art the time at which the graphic productions of man were

guided by aesthetic (i.e., communicative) considerations rather than by chance placements of symbols on a background. He discovered the point of change to be about 6000 years ago, with Samarra style pottery. Before this, throughout the entire hunting period of mankind, he noted the following:

> We do not find, even in this latest stage of the hunting period, anything that could be termed a geometrical organization, anything suggesting the concept of a definitely circumscribed field in which a number of disparate elements have been united or fused into one aesthetic whole by a rhythm of beauty. Whereas, suddenly—very suddenly—in the period that we are now discussing, which coincides with the appearance in the world of well-established, strongly developing settled villages, there breaks into view an abundance of the most gracefully and consciously organized circular compositions of geometrical and abstract motifs . . .[p. 141]

We may conclude from this that there has been a group of students of prehistoric art who found that the graphic works of prehistoric man consisted of symbols that were meant to *evoke,* producing a magical control of nature. Although the world of objects and its content seem to be the substance of their work, all such magical drawings and gestures are not truly directed at objects in a relationship. The drawings and gestures are evocations of "magic power," the effect of which does not transcend the boundaries of the mind. Symbols did not emphasize an aesthetic, communicative meaning pole until the development of a high level of cultural and political organization some 6,000 years ago. Those among the students of prehistory who have an eye for child development have noticed that the evocative symbols of primitive man share with the evocative symbols of children the lack of communicative influences.

The Evocative-Communicative Polarity as Viewed by Behavioral Scientists

In the works of psychologists who have delved into this field, we can find references to carefully worked out clinical studies of the shift in the symbolic form from evocative to communicative symbolization with the onset of adolescence.

In the literature of scientific psychology itself, there are at least two references that presage understanding of the fact that psychoanalytic symbols can be divided into the subgroups (evocative symbols and communicative symbols).

Henry Krystal (1965) wrote of evocative and communicative symbols in his paper about the painter Giorgio De Chirico. Apparently De Chirico suffered a major emotional decompensation, which resulted in a change in the nature of the symbols that he was able to use in his art.

> The symbolism of reunion with the love object previously portrayed by symbols referring to an idealized God-like figure of his father which incorporated the good mother as well were permanently given up and replaced by calculated mechanical and empty robots which took the place of the objects. . . . Early (in his career) the painter portrayed his depression and anxiety states on perceiving his isolation and depersonalization. This affect could be communicated and made a great impression on both audience and critic. As the artist mastered his anxiety at the price of relinquishing fantasy objects and loosening of associations, his painting lost appeal to his viewers, [pp. 224-225]

Krystal points out that in his early works, De Chirico was involved in the communication of his mood to an audience:

> His great discovery was that painting landscapes in the way he perceived them communicated his mood to an audience in an appealing way. [p. 213]

After 1917, De Chirico's paintings were largely rejected. In 1915, he had suffered mental exhaustion and had been hospitalized and discharged from the Italian Army with a psychiatric diagnosis.

> [He then] settled in Italy and started painting in a new style using predominantly manikins without faces, sometimes associating these with unrelated objects such as gloves, maps, arrows, draftsmen's tools, food articles and other items. . . . The most conspicuous thing about this latter period was the fact that the pictures had lost their feeling and passion, were not coherent and evoked no empathy, [pp. 222-223]

Krystal goes on to relate the appearance of food in these paintings by De Chirico as evocative of oral needs. In the article one finds the description of a regression from communicative symbols to evocative symbols as part of psychotic process in an adult. Of importance to us is Krystal's demonstration that it was possible to describe a change in a clinical state as the result of a modification of the product of the symbolizing function in an area of its communicative potential.

More specific and extensive differentiations of evocative and communicative symbols with an exploration of the ontogenetic timing of the shift to the more communicative mode in late latency are found in a work of Piaget (1945). He recognized that it was possible to subdivide the secondary (i.e., psychoanalytic) symbols of childhood into at least two groups, ludic symbols (play) and oneiric symbols (dreams). Both of these symbolic forms are recognized as occurring during states in which the individual is "without the possibility of accommodation to reality" (p. 209)—i.e., purely evocative. When the child's activities emphasize the exercise of already experienced adaptations to the outside world, repeated for the pleasure of repetition or solely for the exercise of skills, Piaget called the activity *play,* or *dreaming,*

depending upon whether the child was awake or asleep. The symbols used are evocative, and Piaget recognized that ludic and oneiric symbols occur in states of mind in which there is emphasis on the exercise of prior experiences without further adaptation to the real world.

Where there is adaptation of language or action to the real world, the symbols are communicative and the child's activity is called *work*. Ludic and oneiric symbols characteristically function primarily in the evocative mode.

Piaget recognized that there could be changes in the nature of secondary (psychoanalytic) symbols. These could occur when the individual matures, and in situations that encourage regression. Piaget stated that "unconscious symbolic thought is by no means a permanent expression.... It operates only in exceptional situations, such as: children's play, the dreams of both children and adults, and sometimes in states of completely relaxed thought" (p. 211).

(Furthermore, he mentions that states of completely relaxed thought occur during psychoanalysis.)

Characteristics of Ludic and Oneiric Symbols

There are characteristics that differentiate ludic and oneiric symbols according to form and structure:

Ludic symbols are experienced as play, with rare breakthroughs of a sense of reality that could make it feel almost real. The child feels in control of them. They usually relate to material substances. They commonly first appear around 24 months and rarely become porous to the affects that they defend against.

Oneiric symbols feel "real." They often go beyond the control of the child. They consist of visual mental images rather than material substances. They commonly first appear between 26 and 30 months. They frequently become affect-porous, as in nightmares.

There is a developmental differentiation between oneiric and ludic symbols. The former, as well as the evocative mode in symbol formation, persists into adult life in such manifestations as dream and

"couch" symbols, and the visual symbols found in "modern art." Ludic symbols, however, are lost when adolescence begins; communicative reality symbols replace evocative (play) ludic symbols in adolescence.

Ludic Demise

Ludic symbols, with their extraordinary emphasis on egocentrism in the waking state, diminish in occurrence and importance as part of the transition from latency to adolescence. Piaget (1945) has not sharply defined the timing of this event. He indicates that the shift from egocentrism to the primacy of the outside world as the factor influencing the thought of a person is the most important element in the disappearance of ludic symbols. This is known to occur at about 8 or 9 years of age. Clinically, the shift away from ludic symbols does begin to occur at this point; however, it gains momentum a few years later at the age of 11 or 12.

Even before that, however, there is in human development a continuous shifting between evocative and communicative polarities. Affectomotor memory gives way to verbal memory. Naming speech gives way to the communicative use of words, and evocative verbalizations give way to communicative verbalizations. Likewise, narcissism yields to altruism. Piaget emphasizes such repeating polarities, which with each repetition result in greater communicative value and socialization of thought. For instance, he comments:

> Whereas imitation (reflections of prior memory or learned experiences) can only reproduce the action as such either externally by miming or internally by the image, in the verbal account there is in addition a particular kind of objectivization peculiar to it and connected with the communication or socialization of thought itself, [p. 223]

In essence, Piaget has here juxtaposed the intrinsic aspects of the evocation-communication polarity. He has described it in terms of the early childhood polarity of affectomotor recall versus verbal recall. Our emphasis deals with a later working through of the same polarity, that is, with the shift in the evocation-communication continuum (or polarity) which occurs at the end of a stage (latency) during which some verbalizations have been caught up in rote memory and have been pressed into the service of evocation.

The passing of the ludic symbol, with the retention of the oneiric symbol, as one enters adolescence is directly related to the fact that there is more communicative and work orientation in the adult than there is in the child, except during sleep.

Communicative Speech

Evocation-Communication Polarities

Adults are never truly free of the influence of evocations of previous experience. These influences are especially prominent during dreaming sleep. This is true of waking evocations of previous events even when realistic current communicative symbols are being selected and used. This is attested to by material described by Darnton (1975), who pointed out that of the stories written by a newspaper writer those most likely to elicit responses from readers and editors contained elements in common with old fairy tales. There is apparently an influence on communicative speech that derives from inner earlier experiences and patterns and leads away from realistic, non-egocentrically oriented, accurate news reporting. For more about this, see Tertiary Elaboration, p. 63.

Socialization of Thought and Social Speech

The shift from egocentric to communicative symbolizations that one observes in patients in late latency is a highlight in a contiguous and continuing series of related processes. Important among these other processes is the development of *social speech,* defined as the ability to shape one's words in a description so that meaning can be easily and clearly discerned by a listener.

Krauss and Glucksberg (1977) delineated the time of the shift from nonsocial speech to social speech. This was done using the following technique. Children of different ages were given a page of designs, which they were to study and communicate only through words to an isolated person holding a sheet of similar designs. The isolated person was required to find the design described among a disparate group of forms on the paper before him. It was found that even though adults could successfully communicate to children verbal descriptions of the shapes that they had in mind, children had great difficulty in verbally communicating shapes to each other, before the age of 12. Even 13- and

14-year-olds, though they had begun to advance their skills in using social speech, did not perform with adult competence. The shift to social speech only begins to gain momentum at 12 years of age.

It was felt by Krauss and Glucksberg that Piaget's (1945) concept of *childhood egocentrism* should be considered causally in this developmental shift to communicative capacity. However, they discovered that to a certain extent the communicative skill was present from very early on. The shift from egocentrism with the appearance of "reversibility" was not accompanied by greater ability in this area. "By the age of eight most children should be beyond the point where egocentrism is an important factor in their behavior, and yet 13 and 14 year olds did not perform with adult competence in our task" (p. 104). To explain the delay, they suggested that taking into account the knowledge and perspective of another person is necessary for an individual to be able to utilize communicative speech. A gradual shift from highly personalized to socialized thinking characterizes this maturational step, rather than an acute change with the coming of adolescence. As Krauss and

Glucksberg have pointed out, it is a process that extends over a period of years.

Socialized Thinking: An End Point with Multiple Precursors. Some signposts (Sarnoff 1976) on the way to the development of socialized thinking are

1. a shift in fantasy content that occurs with the appearance of the second cognitive organizing period of latency (7 ½ to 8 ½ years). Fantasy content goes from fantastic to humanoid elements.

2. a shift from inner- to reality-oriented perceptions as a fantasy source. "The shift from inner-oriented perceptions to reality- oriented perceptions as a source of fantasy content for the gratification of drives is a nearly universal phenomenon during the second cognitive organizing period of latency" (p. 129).

3. acquisition of verbal signifiers with shared social roots. "The capacity to learn in terms of verbal signifiers which have shared social roots and culturally validatable implications is the major cognitive step involved in fixing and codifying the shift of human attention from personalized fantastic responses to socially-oriented goals" (p. 120).

The most common clinical manifestations of this trend are the age- bound changes in the content of fear-fantasy imagery of the latency- age child. Anthony (1959), in a review of the literature on this

subject, has described the imagery of the fear fantasies of children from 5 to 6 years of age as fantastic. From the age of 9 till 12 the imagery of fear fantasies is social. This, of course, relates to play, or ludic, symbols rather than those having to do with creativity, which is communicative.

One can see the intrusion of realistic and social factors into thought processes as part of an ongoing process that begins as early as 8 years of age. In the third cognitive organizing period of latency, whose product is adolescence, this process intensifies, and real objects become more important and communicative symbols replace evocative ones.

On the Cognitive Capacity to Fall in Love

Thus far we have demonstrated that psychoanalytic symbols function in at least two modes, one associated with the evocative group of symbols and the other, with the communicative group of symbols. "Group" is to a degree a misnomer here, for *any* symbol has the potential for serving in either mode.

Developmental level and defensive considerations determine which mode of function and which group assignment the symbol shall have. Groupings consist, respectively, of those symbols that emphasize the evocative pole of function and those that serve the communicative pole of function. There is a developmental shift in emphasis and frequency from use of the first to use of the second in early adolescence. The potential for this shift cognitively predates adolescence. In adolescence effective factors join to precipitate the ego structure that can support drive discharge in the context of communication with reality objects.

The shift to communicativeness is a process that transcends in area of influence, the symbolizing function. Its impact is felt on four levels:

1. Symbols become communicative.

2. More and more speech takes on communicative potentials.

3. Storytelling is modified to take into account the listener's verbal requirements for understanding.

4. The daily life needs and the instinctual requirements of a partner are incorporated into the

thoughts, hopes, and plans of a person on a preconscious level (the cognitive ability to fall in love) and can influence thinking as though the two were one. This occurs when the observing object in the mind's eye comes to represent the loved one as the result of internalization. Narcissism is thus both served and set aside. Communicative skills then come to encompass one's adjustment and object relations.

What remains to be delineated are the causative factors that intensify and effectuate the shift to object orientation during late latency- early adolescence. In the rest of the chapter, we shall seek the factors that motivate an individual to utilize communicative speech when dealing with unconscious material in creativity and in therapeutic sessions (tertiary elaboration).

Tertiary Elaboration

Hoffer (1978), in discussing the work of Bernfeld, observed that the latter was aware of a change in the nature of fantasy formation during the transition from latency to adolescence. He coined the phrase "tertiary elaboration" to describe this phenomenon, which has been discussed a few times briefly above and is here given expanded treatment.

Tertiary elaboration refers to modifications of latent fantasy that take into account social demands and audience expectations in the area of symbol formation and storytelling. It may be present early on to some degree, but it achieves an effective level first during the transitional developmental phase associated with late latency-early adolescence.

Experimental psychologists and historians have studied the influence of society and the outside world as audience on symbolization and speech. Investigations have dealt with internal psychological factors in communication. These were factors that influence symbols and the writing of stories, as well as pressures to communicate demanded by audiences, and listeners, on the form and content of writing and speech.

Darnton (1975) has presented an excellent summary of the Pool- Schulman study (1959), which relates to these influences, since it describes the influence of the audience and attentiveness to the opinions of others on the content and style of writing. Darnton describes how

Pool and Schulman got newspapermen to conjure up images of the public through a process of free association.

They asked 33 reporters to name persons who came to mind as they were going over stories they had just completed. Some reporters named persons whom they liked and whom they expected to react warmly to stories containing good news. Others imagined hostile readers and took a certain pleasure in providing them with bad news. [p. 175]

An affective component was detected and designated as having possible influence on the accuracy of writing of reporters. This distortion factor was tested by supplying four groups of journalism students, consisting of thirty-three students each, with scrambled facts taken from stories that communicated both good news and bad news. Each student assembled the facts into his or her unique version of the story; each student then listed the people who had come to mind while writing. The students were interviewed to determine the degree of approval or criticism that might be attributed to the persons on their lists. Then the stories were checked for accuracy. The experimenters found that student writers who imaged critical persons reported bad news with more accuracy. Pool and Schulman concluded that accuracy was congruent with a reporter's fantasies about his public.

The influence of one's public becomes more important in late latency-early adolescence. This follows upon the internalization of objects associated with recruitment and metamorphosis (see Chapter 7, p. 140). The observing object in the mind's eye comes to represent the public in the absence of the object. As it becomes more important, it influences the symbolizing function to select symbols on an aesthetic basis as the audience it represents becomes more a part of the internal self. Thus, in telling tales, the child is guided to elaborations that may please or entertain.

Tertiary elaboration shapes the reports and the stories one tells to fit and hold the interest of significant others. In dream psychology, the raw material of dreams often consists of disorganized fragments. The dreamer secondarily elaborates the fragments so that they make sense to him. In then telling the story to a listener, the elaborated fragments are bound with a matrix of sensibilities, details, and even a well-chosen conclusion which contains or excludes elements that would be pleasing, attractive, or opprobrious to the listener. Tertiary elaboration causes people reporting dreams to impart to them the theory- influenced expectations of the listener.

Summary

There is not just one form of psychoanalytic symbol; rather, there are many forms. Those that are

most important in latency are evocative mode symbols, whereas the forms most important in adolescence are communicative-mode symbols. The latter are the symbols involved in aesthetics, creativity, future planning, and finding objects of love.

Evocative-mode symbols have been known by many names. They are the ludic symbols of Piaget, the evocative symbols of certain paleoanthropologists, and the personalized symbols of those who study disorders of the symbolizing function in the schizophrenic process. Each of these symbolic forms can be differentiated, refined, and defined as a separate group with its shared characteristic.

The shared characteristic of evocative symbols is the selection of a symbolic signifier to represent unconscious content without regard for the communicative or aesthetic value that it has for an audience. Evocative symbols represent a victory for narcissism. The symbolic signifiers evoke—for the benefit of the egocentric aspects of the individual—inner feelings and experiences. In each case, already mastered fantasies and feelings are re-experienced at the expense of reality. The product of this repetition is momentary mastery through gratifying play based upon prior successful experiences.

Communicative symbols have, as their shared characteristic, inclusion of the needs of the audience when they are selected. Communicative symbols represent a victory for altruism, reality testing, and non-egocentric influences. The symbolic signifiers work for the benefit of object relations. Through communication and transformation, fantasies modified by changing their symbols and symbolic forms to match the will of the world enhance object relations. Contact with reality is achieved and past traumas can be deemphasized, reparatively mastered, and processed.

Nonegocentric influences are present from early on; egocentrism begins to wane shortly after birth. The influence of nonegocentric forces is at first slight, because there is very little articulation of the drives with reality-oriented libidinal love object peers. Their influence is most strongly felt in socialization experiences, such as toilet training, temper control, and the acquisition of nonidiosyncratic vocabulary. They primarily affect speech in early life. They cause the child to give up sensory-motor patterns of memory and to take on verbal patterns that coincide with the patterns of society. The motive forces are fear of punishment, fear of loss of love, and the reward of praise or love. Superego is very much influenced by these external factors as early as 5 or 6 years of age. In early latency, the affectomotor

fantasy activity of the child and memory activity are brought under the sway of fantasies of a verbal sort, which provide the child with guidance in dealing with the society according to the society's demands for the shaping of the child's efforts. At about 9 or 10 years of age, when ethical individuation takes place, the child is further influenced by the outside world with a reshaping of his conscience by freer group pressures. The superego is shaped in part by external influences in latency. This shows the influence of non-egocentric forces earlier than pubertal adolescence.

Symbols, on the other hand, are affected late; indeed, the most impressive changes await puberty. The question must be raised, why the change to communicative symbols occurs in late latency-early adolescence? There must be another factor besides loss of egocentrism. The factor is probably not too far out of view, if we consider the following: In dealing with unconscious drive discharge, communicative speech, although possible early, is rejected by the child, who prefers to use ludic symbols in play. These are the tools through which gratification of drives through fantasy can occur. The shift in symbolic form to communicative symbol is influenced by the enhancement of reality testing, ludic demise (the loss of waking play symbols as drive discharge elements), and the awareness of communicative potential in providing real objects for drive discharge. There develop within the mind ideas that incorporate the needs of the loved one even when he or she is not present. For the creative person, an internalized representation of the audience for which the work was conceived is created. Whereas the latency-age child conceives of a word as a means of expressing his drives, the adolescent conceives of words as a communicative tool in seeking love objects, overseen by an internalized representation of the loved one. Narcissism is expressed and conquered all at once when the object to be pleased can be incorporated as part of the self.

In the conduct of psychotherapy, the nature of the behavior and communications of the child is influenced by the internalized image of the therapist. The choice of topics brought in by the patient and even the nature of the dreams reported conform to the internal image of the therapist that the child acquires as the result of creating a representation of the therapist in his mind's eye. Therapy techniques can, thus, alter the patient's adjustment without the therapist's realizing it. A few words said or a positive response to a piece of information may be taken by the patient to be encouragement of form as well as content.

The next two chapters deal with a syndrome related to the adolescent brink (anorexia nervosa) and the narcissistic aspects of masturbation (the evolving expression of sexuality), and thus follow a longitudinal developmental pattern. More material on the matter of this chapter, with emphasis on enrichment of object relations in early adolescence associated with the development of the capacity to fall in love, will be found in Chapter 6.

Notes

1 It is from this phrase that the term evocative symbol is derived.