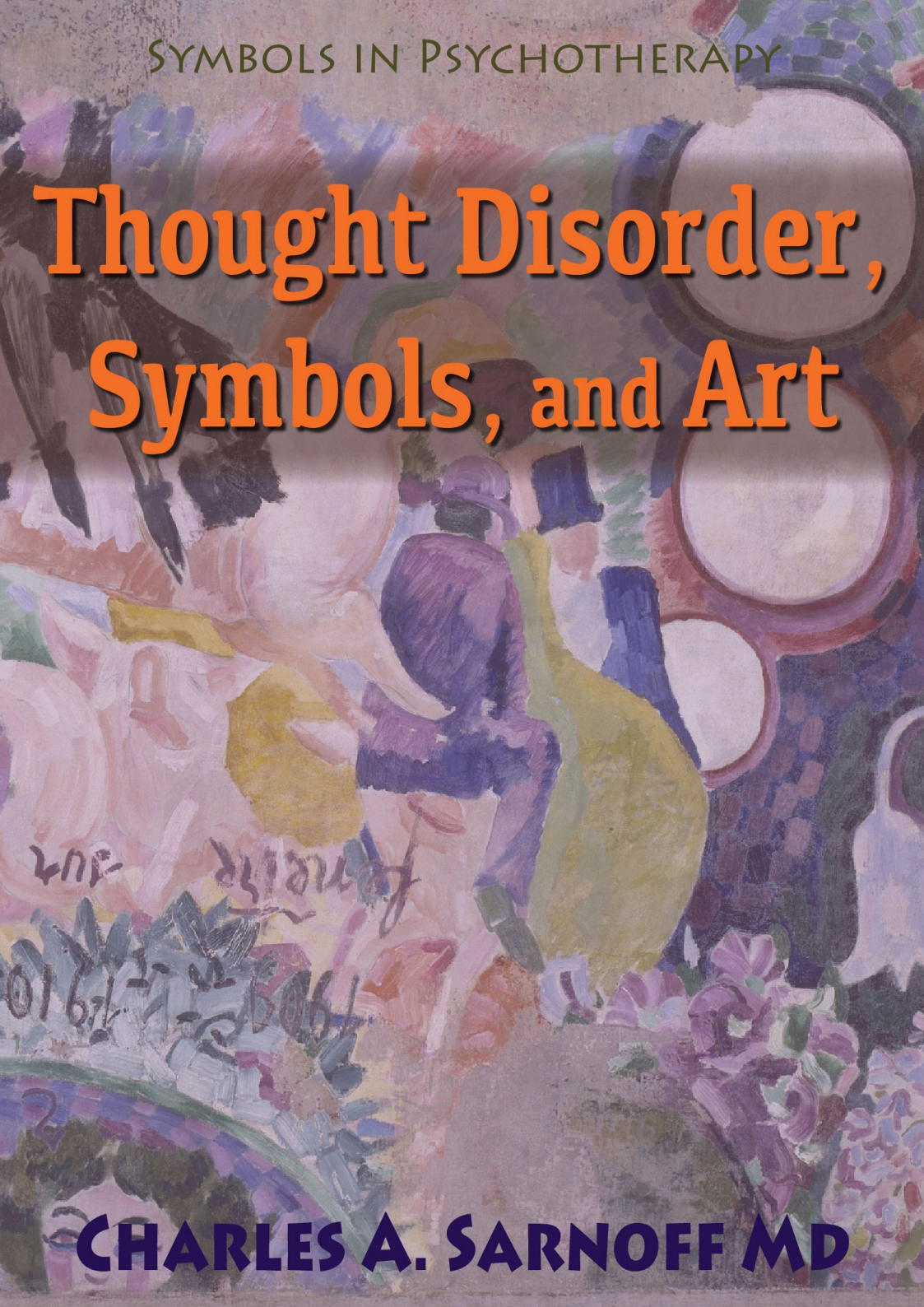
Symbols in Psychotherapy

Thought Disorder, Symbols, and Art



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From

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Introduction

The ways of poetic symbol formation are subject to pathological influences. There are two views of such pathology. One view, exemplified by Psychiatric thinking, holds that schizophrenic thinking disorders can invade the creative process. A second view, exemplified by Ellmann 1983 p.680, holds that the productions and the thought processes of an artist, sui generis, cannot contain a thought disorder such as those that occur in people who suffer from a disorder within the schizophrenic spectrum.

In Psychiatric parlance, thought disorders are seen to be discrete pathological variants that occur during the process of thinking. In the selection of manifest symbols they guide displacements according to rules that diverge from those dictated by acceptable shared vocabulary meanings and Aristotelian logic. Such unchecked displacement and distortion intrude upon comprehensibility. As a result the communicative potential of poetic symbol formation is quenched and the creative process altered.

The sharp differentiation implied by the two schools of thought is not consistently observed clinically. Schizophrenic artists during acute episodes may shift between normal and pathological symbolization. This makes the identification of pathology problematic. "95% of psychiatrists" (Andreasen 1994A P 394, 1994B) taking part in a study in which they were given unattributed writings by James Joyce to evaluate, detected thought disorder in the work of Joyce, yet only "48 percent diagnosed its author as having schizophrenia." (P 394) The impression of psychiatrists that Joyce's work contains thought disorder, with only half identifying the underlying condition as schizophrenia was interpreted by Andreasen, N. (1994) to "indicate . . . that even clinicians are not clear on the boundaries of abnormal thinking" (P 394).

Thinking Disorders in Works of Art

The presence of thinking disorders in works of art may be interpreted to be a disorder of the symbolizing function signifying the intrusion of disease into an artist's work. One should not rule out a

schizophrenic spectrum diagnosis just because the person in question is an artist who is at times logical. The temporary absence of thought disorder does not rule out a schizophrenic spectrum disorder diagnosis. Schizophrenic thought disorders are rarely consistently present in any afflicted person. They may be quite rare in a given individual. Consistent occurrence appears only in the most severe of illnesses. It is usual that thought disordered symbolization in an affected person intensifies with the presence of anxiety. During the same period of pathological involvement a poem or a letter may contain coherent thought in one stanza and total confusion in the next, depending on the affect involved.

The influence of thought disorder on poetic symbol formation advances and ebbs from moment to moment, and from month to month. In the English painter Richard Dadd's letters and paintings evidences of loss of goal directed thinking appears in one production but not the next. The temporary presence of thought disorder implies potential for psychosis. It is possible for only parts of one's functioning to be involved. In describing Joyce's late work "Finnegan's Wake" which many find hard to follow, Andreasen (1973), representing the psychiatric group, notes that "Joyce the artist completed the autistic withdrawal foreshadowed by his schizoid character. Although eccentric, the man never became psychotic. But his art did." (P 71)

Creativity, Poetic Symbols And Thought Disorder

Though creativity and thought disorder are not mutually exclusive, the evocative tone of thought disorder can reach a level, which undermines the communicative potential in a creative act. The extent to which thought disorder interferes with the capacity of poetic symbols to communicate indicates the degree to which the creative process has been interdicted. Creativity reflects the presence of talent, awareness and a will to create. The degree to which *communicative* motivation is intended and successfully expressed through elaboration of verbalization to conform to the experience, education and needs of the audience or auditor, defines the success of the creative process in developing poetic symbols. The dominance of *evocation* in thought disorder introduces a contradictory trend. Emerson (1845) explained the role of communicative symbols and the definition of a healthy poet artist in the following: "A poet is no rattlebrain, saying what comes uppermost." " . . . but a heart in unison with his time and country." " . . . seeing what men want, and sharing their desire, he adds the needful length of sight and arm, to come to the desired point." (P 719)

A person beset by a schizophrenic thought process with the will to create beauty through the use of words can still produce a lyrical word salad. Mild looseness of associations introduced to one's thinking by a schizophrenic thought disorder, if present, has a potential to enhance the music of poetic prose to the point that it attracts an audience, though losing some. Should the process proceed to autism and incoherence and the poetic sense be lost, more readers will become estranged. Autism (self centered personalized conceptual orientation) can introduce original and divergent verbal elements into the creative process. Mild autism mixed with creativity can interact to produce a pleasing though somewhat eccentric personality and artistic product, which attracts disciples and imitators. Severe autism involved in such a tincture produces an art so personal that new schools of art and literature cannot follow. Creative originality can exist in the absence of evocation and autism. Creativity can stand on its own, when its divergent insights are based on reality or emulate tradition.

Symbol, Autism, and Thought Disorder Thought Disorders

There are twelve marker thought disorders by which the presence of a schizophrenic process is recognized when accompanied by a flat affect, autism and ambivalence. Nine of these thought disorders (marked with an asterisk in the list below) are structurally allied to poetic symbols. Poetic symbols are prone to pathological alterations in the presence of these thinking disorders. Of the nine, numbers four, five, and eight, are based on condensations, displacements and links of similarity. These three are especially apt to interfere with poetic creativity since poetic symbols are woven from these threads. The difference between an healthy poetic symbol and one that is pathologically tainted depends on the degree of autism manifested in the disordered thought. The more autism that is present, the more impaired is the ability of the symbol to evoke empathy.

The marker thought disorders of Schizophrenia are:

1. * Loss of object ground differentiation—This is seen in paintings in which the surface is filled with detail, providing no point of focus. The art of the mentally ill is known for "the abhorrence of a vacuum" that results in diffusion of the center of interest in their paintings.

2. * Concrete thinking—This refers to direct representation without abstraction. An example would be the answer "an ambulance" to the question "What brought you to the

hospital?" asked by a doctor who is trying to focus the interchange on diagnostic facts. Another example of concrete thinking is "A wet stone" as the interpretation of the proverb, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." When asked why "A wet stone"?, The patient replied, "Moss slides off a wet stone."

3. * Magical thinking (See Frazer 1922 P12 and P43). There are two types of magical thinking, contiguous and sympathetic.

   Contiguous magical thinking (P 43) results in fingernail cuttings, hair and entities contiguous with the body being hidden or buried lest some malefactor find them and destroy them and in the process destroy the person who is the source.

   Sympathetic Magical thinking (P 12) is expressed in casting water on the dry ground in hopes that the clouds will do likewise and cast down rain in sympathy.

4. * Loosening of associations takes a number of forms. These are:

   Word salad—is characterized by communicatively meaningless autistic unfocused wandering between words and ideas.

   Verbigeration—overproduction of word salad.

   Mediate Associations—Words associated to other words through a personalized intermediate association that is incomprehensible to the listener as an association to the triggering word.

   Loss of Goal Directed Thinking—Associational links between words are comprehensible to someone who tries to understand what is being said on a paragraph level. However, the patient never gets to the point as his thoughts wander on with no evidence that there is a guiding principle.

5. * Predicate identification and physiognomic thinking present as a belief that the appearance of a single sparrow makes a spring. Through predicate identification one thinks that "Planes fly. Birds fly. Therefore birds are planes." and anyone who wears a red tie or a frown is feared as a member of a group that intends to hurt the patient.

6. * Bizarre use of words refers to personalized use of words in a way that is incomprehensible to others. This is an autistic exaggeration of the search for divergent new symbols. At times it can just be a sign of poor overreaching in a word search in poetic expression.

7. * Condensation refers to the phenomenon of portmanteau words. These are newly created

words that have too many meanings tucked into them. For instance one newly created word may contain elements of a number of words with antecedent meanings, as in, "Abortion is not cethical." "Cethical" was formed by combining Catholic and ethical.

8. * Neologism refers to the creation of a new word. For example there is James Joyce's word "contransmagnificandjew
bangtantiality" which appears in "Finegan's Wake" (see Campbell (1970 p 3.) and a patient's objection to a therapist's interpretation by saying "I don't like the "pertainment" of that."

9. Blocking (stoppage of thought) occurs when speech stops suddenly, reflecting thought blocking, which implies that the patient is dealing with threatening new thought content.

10. Pressure of Thought—This is seen when a patient's thoughts pour in so intently that he does not have enough world or time to say it all.

11. * Clang Associations are words used in a bizarre fashion, where similarity of a single sound element suffices to give direction in finding the next association.

12. Stereotypy and Mannerism refer to styles of presentation (i.e. in art), which repeat prior presentations without regard to the guidance of meaning.

Other mental illnesses are recognizable by the existence of thought disorders.

For instance:

Organic brain disease is characterized by thought disorders such as confabulation, paramnesia, circumstantiality, perseveration, and concrete thinking.

Manic-depressive disease is characterized by topical flight, clang associations, and pressure of thought.

Organic thought disorders cannot by definition predominate in schizophrenia, which is diagnosed by finding schizophrenic symptoms in the presence of a clear sensorium. Where organic thought disorders appear in schizophrenic productions, a bizarre quality or another schizophrenic thought disorder contained within it identifies the schizophrenic nature of the thought process.

Schizophrenic thought disorders are clearly defined entities, most of which are easily recognized by the trained psychiatrist, whose education contains extensive communication with schizophrenic patients under supervision in pursuit of thought disorders. These are usually written down lest the healthy secondary process thinking of the student strip the bizarre quality from the thought disorder in favor of a transmutation of the thought disorder into a production with normal form.

During his training the student at first recognizes a disordered confusion and has the impression that thought disorder is an ill-defined concept, which is of little value in defining the pathological structure of thinking in the schizophrenic syndrome. This is reinforced by the fact that many patients produce thought disorders irregularly or primarily when anxious. (Note below how Richard Dadd's poem is described as more confused when close to that which is personally difficult for him.) Slowly, as the student works at an understanding, the disorders begin to take clearer form. The situation is like the transition to familiarity associated with orientation to a new local. At first the sight of a landscape is confusing. When studied long enough, it resolves into a forest, which soon becomes trees and finally turns into families of species. In like manner, the thought disorders of schizophrenia become familiar entities with persistent qualities that support identity and a name. They define disease and are of inestimable use as an ongoing clue to diagnosis during the continuing practice of psychotherapy.

In evaluating a poet or other creative artist to see if his work contains reflections of a schizophrenic process, look for thought disorder. There are other clues to the presence of the schizophrenic syndrome. Vesanic traits (family history), personal history, inappropriate affect, poor relatedness, autism, ambivalence, and goalessness, should be reviewed.

I chose not to assign the diagnosis "Schizophenia" arbitrarily without supporting data about the artists we discuss. Since I have not personally interviewed the artists to be described, diagnosis will be determined from data reported by a contemporary of the artist. Diagnostic terminology will be limited to "Psychotic process associated with thought disorder". This provides a handle that fits our needs, while leaving to the reader the opportunity to explore further diagnostic possibilities based on clues available in the clinical data.

This terminology is handy because it diffuses the misapprehension that views a schizophrenic

diagnosis as a description of an illness which is an all or nothing matter, which if present could not leave neutral time for creativity. In actuality, many schizophrenic patients can function well in society, at times with no external signs of their illness. Some maintain encapsulated delusions that are unsuspected by colleagues. During periods of apparent wellness thought disorder can appear as an occasional accompaniment of anxiety associated with specific topics. This explains the works of a painter who can alternate normal with thought disordered paintings.

There is a progression in the work of many artists, which reflects pathological thinking characterized by expanding encroachments into thinking marked by grandiose autism (i.e. self centered thinking and idiosyncratic word choice in poetic symbol formation). An evolving pattern of pathology that follows this path in an artistically gifted creative person can be seen with remarkable clarity in de Chirico. The pattern starts with a disappointment in reality. This is responded to with depression which is the result of turning aggression inward onto the self. As a result aggressive pressure is diverted from the need to solve reality problems. At any time a return to health can occur. However it often happens that there is a regression from the self directed aggression of depressive states, where the self is the symbol of the hated lost object, to a state of regressed symbolization in which protosymbolic use of body organs expresses aggression psychosomatically. The offending and frustrating real world as object is replaced by preoccupation with the protosymbolic organ. Alternatively a compliant new world is created in fantasy. A creation in plastic art, or in poetic symbolic phrasing presents a diversion. A world of fantasy or delusion is created, which provides symbolic resolution for the original conflict or disappointment. During this retreat from life, the world feels to be within one's own control. This new world, bright or dark, may resonate sufficiently with the experiences of others to permit the artistic product to be used passively by them to evoke inner emotional processes and memories. This helps in the resolution of stresses. Should the intrusion of autism into the process occur thought disorder will broaden the pallet of possible symbols to the point that the artistic product fails to communicate. Mental disorganization can become so severe that the artist's product becomes a web of disconnected meanings, each a point of focus disarrayed across a pointless canvass. The artist can pass into psychosis, sometimes irreversibly, sometimes with migration back to health, only to return again and again to autism. Depression may lift and paranoid preoccupations organize into delusion or into a paranoid state, with thought disorder mildly detectable. The informing attitude of the artist may become so marinated in projection and

predicate identification that he enters the low point in the process of artistic decline into madness. At this time there appears an enhancement of grandiosity, which permits the development of a self-image in which the artist sees himself as the center of the world he has created. A sense of reality develops that overrides reality testing to the point that a conviction develops that conclusions drawn from thought disordered thinking are more valid than the reality that the world shares. The "reality" of his imagination when translated onto canvass is free of meanings to others.

A typical clinical pattern of pathology consists of a slide from normal creativity into a defensive phase that retains communicative value. This is interrupted by an acute psychosis in which there is little production. This is followed by a return to productivity in which artistic production shows varying degrees of penetration of the symbolizing function by autism or thought disorder. Krystal (1965), and Kris' (1952) both described schizophrenic artists in whom there was a period of creativity with conspicuous object restitution using art images. The period of creativity was closely related to the psychotic process and resulted in a modification of the style of the artist. When overwhelmed by autistic ideation which represented the conflict at the core of the precipitation of psychosis, " . . . expression becomes bizarre, magical and filled with clang associations, displacements and condensations that identification was no longer possible for the viewer." (Krystal 1965 P 210) As Kris (1972) pointed out "In extreme cases the works of psychotics are "unintelligible" as is their speech." (P 115) for "Symbolisms of this kind are not "evident," do not reverberate in others, and isolate the productions of the insane." (P 168) There are in the painted works characteristically a "horror vacui" a "tendency to fill space, to crowd in, . . . stereotypy and rigidity of all shapes, and the hypertrophy of symbols" (P 152). Symbolic imagery takes priority over the concepts that at first the symbols were chosen to represent. Thus images and symbols become the focus of the patient's productions at the expense of communication. The observer loses access to latent concepts at the root of the work of art as a result of the diffusion of representation produced by impaired object—ground differentiation.

Now we look at the life of some artists, whose work was intruded upon by diagnosed mental illness. We search for the effect of thought disorder on creativity. The artists to be studied are Giorgio de Chirico, Richard Dadd, Torquato Tasso, and James Joyce.

GIORGIO de CHIRICO

Introduction

Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978) is considered to be one of the finest painters of our time. His metaphysical works were the forerunners of Surrealism, Dada and abstract expressionism. He influenced Dali, Picasso, Magritte, Ernst, and Carra. The origin of Giorgio de Chirico's fame and influence lies in paintings that he did between 1911 and 1914. It was then that he introduced metaphysical symbolic images. These symbols replaced classical art symbols, which for him had represented external patriotic feelings, stories, events, and thing realities. The new metaphysical poetic symbols represented and expressed personal feelings and private thoughts. This was a new and divergent concept for Western art. He linked manifest symbolic objects to their latent content through " . . . fusion between a subject's state of mind and the atmosphere inherent in [the objects in] his immediate physical environment." (Lista 1991 p 29) As Krystal (1965) has noted, metaphysical paintings "impart an immediate and profound impression upon viewers . . ." (P 215) and have "been important in influencing the directions of the artistic expression of our time." (P 215) Paintings from de Chirico's earliest metaphysical period conveyed themes of inner emotions such as " . . . departure, melancholy, strangeness and emptiness . . . ." (P 215) An internal landscape of emotion was conveyed through symbols that unlocked shared affective responses in the viewer.

During the years from 1915 to 1918, de Chirico's Metaphysical works entered a second phase. The symbols that he chose changed. Shadows and the planes of buildings were preempted by mannequins, (i.e. figures without faces). Krystal (1965) notes that these later pictures " . . . had lost their feelings and passion, were not coherent, and evoked no empathy". (P 223) Their symbols were characterized by a shift toward an evocative symbol mode derived from symbol nets with privatization of meaning; they estranged the attention of viewers. It was late in the period of this shift in the nature of the symbols in his metaphysical paintings that de Chirico returned to Italy from Paris, entered the army, and was hospitalized for mental illness.

Lista (1991) has noted that for de Chirico, " . . . each period of major creativity was preceded by a serious deterioration in his intestinal complaint and by a journey to a new place of residence." (P 55)

The intestinal complaint occurred during periods of severe emotional problems manifested in psychosomatic symptoms and depression. The shift to mannequin symbols was accompanied by this pattern. At the time of this transition in symbolic form to a severely evocative mode, his emotional problems required hospitalization. He was hospitalized from 1916 to 1918.

When he left the service in 1918, de Chirico was improved but not cured. Thought disorder persisted and severely invaded the communicative aspect of the symbols used in his paintings. His paranoia persisted and grew. (see below). There resulted a loss in his appeal to audiences. A similar persistent influence had derailed the artistry of Tasso (see below). In the early 1920s de Chirico's art changed again. He returned to classical symbols in his painting, and he began making copies of his earlier paintings, which contained his metaphysical symbols.

The Early Years

De Chirico was born and raised in Greece. His was an Italian family. His father, a railway engineer, was a well-educated man who paid close attention to his son's schooling. In this regard it is interesting to note the number of times that trains appear in the metaphysical paintings. Signs of artistic talent led to art lessons. Of his two siblings, a sister died, and a younger brother survived. Soby (1958), quoted and expanded by Krystal (1965) reported that "As a child, Giorgio was solitary, did not make friends, and was given to an extreme reverence for inanimate objects." (P 212)

From de Chirico's memoirs one can see that he came from an exciting home with much culture and family activity. As a boy he was exposed to the domestic impacts of a war with Turkey. His father so distinguished himself during the war by keeping the railroads of Thessaly in repair, in spite of military incursions, that he was awarded a medal by the king of Greece.

De Chirico in his "Memoirs" (1962) offers some recollections from his childhood, which seem harbingers of the intense projection with paranoid ideation that came to the fore with his return to classical symbols in the 1920's, and estranged him from his contemporaries. He recalled boyhood fights with local children, which were initiated by him. These involved stones thrown with a belt or sling. On one occasion he responded to the destruction of a kite by local urchins with a stone fight from which he

and his brother had to be extracted by a servant. Why had his kite been destroyed? Thought de Chirico retrospectively in 1962 " . . . they saw that I lived in a house that was more beautiful than theirs; that I was better dressed than they were and that I must be more intelligent and must know much more than they did about many things, and therefore I was anathema." (P 22) The similarity of his explanation for the attack on his kite to his later life projections was not lost on de Chirico. He noted in 1962, that "In the same way now among intellectual, modernistic and asinine painters a kind of Holy Alliance has been formed for putting spokes in my wheels and causing me harm in my work as a painter;" (P 22).

De Chirico projected aggression onto things inanimate when still young. An example of such boyhood fear to be found in his memoirs (1962, 1994) was de Chirico's response to " . . . an enormous mechanical butterfly, which [his] father had brought [to him] from Paris . . . From my bed I looked at this toy with curiosity and fear, as the first men must have looked at giant pterodactyls . . ." (P 14). Such an experience is not unusual for an early latency age child. Persistence of such projection with a strong sense of reality after the age of 12 is unusual, except in the presence of exaggerated grandiosity. (See Sarnoff 1972B, 1976B.) Exaggerated grandiosity, when persistent intensifies cathexis of inner fantasy at the expense of reality perceptions. This results in giving credence to one's own fantasies and projections at the expense of reality. Grandiose self-evaluations predispose one to depression should the narcissistic images it generates be undermined by reality. A typical example of a grandiose self-evaluation in adult years is de Chirico's (1962) statement that " . . . in addition to my exceptional intelligence, so far as true painting is concerned, one must have my mighty personality, my courage and my ardent desire for the truth." (P 225), and " . . . I am an exceptional man who feels and understands a hundred times more strongly than others." (P 24)

Years of Apprenticeship and Years of Wandering

De Chirico's father died in 1905 when the artist was sixteen years old. His father suffered from acute episodes of illness for a number of years before he died. "At this time (his) mother suffered from a kind of long nervous exhaustion . . ." which was treated with medication. (de Chirico 1964 P 30) His father's death affected him profoundly. Though he continued to work at painting school, he failed the final exams. In his memoirs, he noted that "The emotional shock following the death of my father, [and] frequent intestinal troubles . . . made me feel tired, melancholy and discouraged, which certainly affected

my work." (P 49)

After his father's death, Giorgio, his brother, Andrea, and their mother visited Italy. They stayed briefly in Venice and Milan, and a little over a year in Florence. His artistic work was impaired by the presence of his emotional condition. In 1906, the brothers moved to Munich to continue their art studies. They remained in Munich for four years. While in Munich, de Chirico read Nietzche, Weininger, and Schopenauer. His art work came under the influence of Boethius and the Symbolist school. Symbolist iconography emphasized established mythic symbols such as those seen in portraits with death or unicorns at the subject's side. From early on, de Chirico's art was infused with a romantic cast that held purely representational art at bay. He worked in a Symbolist orientation described by Delavoy (1978) as " . . . specially designed to be at once experienced through an imagination focused by history, perceived through an altered sensorial system, and read in accordance with acquired codes." (P 9) With his shift to early metaphysical symbols, the source of de Chirico's imagery pushed beyond these described limits of the symbolist school. He drew metaphysical symbols from zones quite far from conventional symbolist icons. His new sources carried moods from the evocative heart of the artist's personal experience. At first he used symbols whose ability to convey mood was derived from unmapped, shared, and universal experiences. Twilight, shadows, statues, long vistas and distant trains conveyed an uncertain sense of loneliness. By way of contrast in 1916, he moved on to late metaphysical symbols, which were derived from a personal iconography beyond the ken of others.

Metaphysical[1] from de Chirico's point of view referred to potential unique intrinsic latent meanings hidden beneath the surface of a poetic symbol. The objects that contribute manifest form to such symbols have latent meanings, which are unlocked when scanned against memories during the search for meaning. Should the network of memories to be scanned for recognition been symbolically modified or the chain distorted, there arises a disquieting evocation of meanings whose " . . . ghostly and metaphysical aspect . . . only a few individuals can see in moments of clairvoyance and metaphysical abstraction." (de Chirico quoted by Faerna 1995 p14). Breaks in the associative chain of memory are products of thought disorders associated with manifest loose associations.

De Chirico was afflicted between 1909 and 1914 with severe depression and a chronic intestinal illness. These were accompanied by debility and severe pains. (See P 212.) As usually happened during

such long episodes of illness, he did very little painting especially during 1910. It was then that de Chirico returned for a year to the Italian cities of Milan, Florence, and Turin. Krystal (1966) describes a "painful intestinal disorder" (P 13), which occurred then. It was similar to that, which combined with depression afflicted him when his father died. De Chirico (1994) in describing his severe melancholia while in Florence said, "My bedside table was always covered with little boxes and bottles . . . [which] . . . served no purpose and my condition did not improve. As a result I did very little work. I did more reading than painting . . . . and was overcome with severe crises of black melancholy." (P 61) In spite of this de Chirico's 1910 stay in Florence left an imprint on his work.

The Early Metaphysical Period Begins

It was in Florence that his metaphysical painting took form after a "revelation" in the Piazza San Croce. (Faerna 1995 P 7) As de Chirico (1994) later described this formative moment: he was recovering from a severe bout of debilitating intestinal illness, when "The whole world around me, including the marble of the buildings and fountains, seemed to me to be convalescing." "The autumn sun, strong and warm, brightened the statue and the facade of the church. I then had the strange impression of looking at those things for the first time." Thenceforth he was guided by a desire to liberate art from an anthropomorphic symbolism that was based on commonly accepted associations. This revelation informed his metaphysical period of which "The Enigma of the Day" was the first painting. (See figure 12.)

Figure 12
"The Enigma of the Day" 1914 Georgio de Chirico

Notes

1 Faerna (1995). p 14

De Chirico's Symbolism in the Metaphysical Context Munich

The first application of the term "Metaphysical" to a work of de Chirico is attributed to Guillaume Apollinaire. Lista (1991) assigns the origin of this use of "metaphysical" to Otto Weininger, who used the term to describe a thought or insight that elucidated "the profound meaning of things". Seemingly unrelated words, images, and things can be used as symbols for such latent contents. "The functions and relational values of [these manifest symbolic forms] . . . could be neutralized [deaffectivised] to the point where the [manifest forms produced] became a symbol or a thing vested with mysterious allusions." [Sic] (P 27) Weininger's thought was available to de Chirico as early as May 1907, when he was in Munich. De Chirico (1960) reports that he had read Weininger's book "Concerning Supreme Things" in which Weininger[1] " . . . says that the sun setting on the horizon is like a severed neck." and in which he equates lava with solid animal waste. (P 164)

PARIS

After leaving Munich, de Chirico continued to paint using the manifest symbols of a classical "symbolist style". Weininger's concept of a symbolism derived from an idiosyncratic symbol net that could communicate mood was held in reserve, ready to be used in the creation of the world of painted symbols into which de Chirico would later escape. Through metaphysical symbols, he would be able to flee from melancholy into a world where "harmony seemed possible" (P 28 in Lista 1991). This step awaited his voyage to France.

In 1911, De Chirico left Italy to join his brother who had gone to live in Paris. On the journey there, he suffered from severe pains associated with his intestinal disorder. Krystal (1956) reported, "He rarely left his dingy studio." (P 214) during what Lista (1991) calls " . . . a year of inactivity."(P 117) Krystal (1956) describes this period as a year of total withdrawal and isolation. When he began to paint again he expressed "intense mysterious feelings" through his early metaphysical paintings. (P 218)

The early metaphysical paintings of de Chirico depicted deserted, silent urban landscapes, arcades of bland mystery, stretched perspectives, elongation of shadows, shadows as people, towers, distant trains, clocks set at 1:29, and chimney towers. The manifest symbols underwent a slightly menacing

artistic transformation that divested objects and places of their comforting familiarity, and replaced them with a depiction of life and mood that spoke through a triggering iconography, which though recognizable, had an unfamiliar spectral quality to it. As Crosland (1999) noted, de Chirico's "early painting reflects a world where direct human contact has been lost—all that remains of people are statues and shadows." (P 8) In de Chirico's own words to describe his work in Paris as quoted by Lista (1991) the " . . . way in which I can conceive of a work of art. It is essential that thought detach itself from everything we call logic and meaning, that it distance itself to such a degree from the shackles of humanity that things appear in a new light, as if illuminated for the very first time by a dazzling constellation." (P 83) During this period, in every painting, "every object is absolutely isolated, which is to say totally autonomous, and every space is distinct from the next." (P 83) Yet the symbols still remained accessible and could offer a participatory catharsis to the viewer.

By 1912, de Chirico had recovered his health to the degree that he was able to exhibit at a Paris Salon. He had exceptional success. He sold his metaphysical paintings, made the acquaintance of the leading painters of his time, and was offered the opportunity to paint for a retainer by an art dealer. (See Lista 1991 P 116)

FERRARA

Military Service and Mental Hospitalization

In 1915, Italy entered world war I. Soon after the war began, de Chirico and his brother obtained passes to return to Florence where they reported for call-up in the military district in which they had been registered. As de Chirico (1994) explained it, they wished to affirm their identity as Italian citizens through military service. Their Italian identity had been challenged by some in light of their country of birth. Once he was in the service, he was assigned to clerical duties. He found the surroundings distasteful. A decompensation occurred. His depression and intestinal troubles intensified. The shift in his symbolizing function to a regressive plateau, which utilizes psychosomatic protosymbols in the expression or fulfillment of needs, intensified. (de Chirico "Memoirs" P 84)

The pace of the war quickened. More soldiers were needed at the front. De Chirico was interviewed

by a medical officer whose own sons had recently died in battle. De Chirico felt sure of a combat assignment. The officer, recognized de Chirico's vulnerability and recommended mental hospitalization. As a result, as described by Soby (1958) there was a time before 1917, when "de Chirico was . . . obliged to spend much of his time in the military hospital at Ferrara." (P 113) Here no duties were required of him.

The Shift to Mannequins

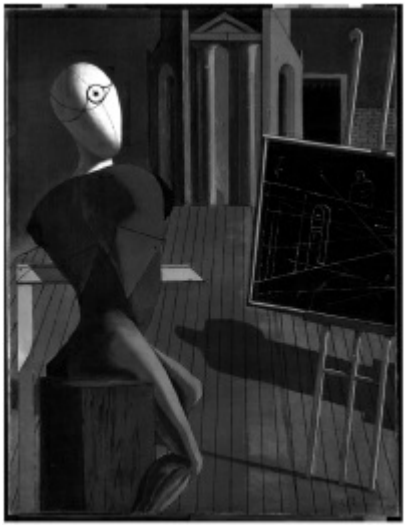

Figure 13 "The Seer"—1915 Georgio de Chirico

While hospitalized de Chirico began to paint again but with an alteration in the symbols of his metaphysical style. He began to use "predominantly mannequins without faces." (See Krystal 1966 P 222 and Figure 13) There was neither cultural precedent nor was there audience empathy for such mannequins. De Chirico had shifted to an autistic-evocative level of symbol selection, regressing to strongly evocative poetic symbols. "These pictures had lost their feelings and passion, were not coherent, and evoked no empathy." (P 223) "Thus, the paintings of the later period acquired that looseness of

associations which also makes schizophrenic art (a riddle)." (P 223) De Chirico [had] relinquished "fantasy objects" and replaced them with "calculated, mechanical and empty robots". (P 224)

Lista (1991) notes that "the artist mastered his anxiety at the price of relinquishing fantasy objects . . ." "substitution of concepts for objects." " . . . and loosening of associations, (as a result) his paintings lost appeal to viewers." "(A)utism controlled the associations involved." (P 225) Lista (1991) strongly emphasizes the loss of empathic potential of the late metaphysical paintings. With the late metaphysical symbols, de Chirico's works started to exhibit a closing off of spatial relationships within the canvasses. (P 89) "The mannequin, frozen into immobility with a practically enclosed space, eliminates the last traces of carnal potency embodied in the statue, with the result that the body itself becomes a 'thing'." (P 89)

Mannequins as Symbols

With the end of world war one, De Chirico (Lista 1991) was mustered out of the army. An exhibition of metaphysical paintings populated by mannequins, which had been painted during his hospitalization were offered for sale at an exhibition. The exhibition was a mediocre success. Only one painting was sold. It was the only non-metaphysical picture in the entire exhibition. (P 89) De Chirico's late metaphysical paintings had little appeal. As Lista (1991) put it, "No mystery radiates from these canvasses: instead, they show a world which has withdrawn into itself, a world that stares out at us but provokes no resonance." (P 99)

Return to Classical Paintings and Symbols

In 1918 according to Lista (1991) de Chirico settled in Rome with his mother and "[went] through [a] period of abject misery." (P 117) In 1920 he went to live with an uncle in Florence. (P 116) He moved to Paris in 1924. He lived in the USA from 1936 to 1938 and then in Italy. He married twice, once in 1924 and once in 1930.

From the twenties onward, de Chirico returned to classical principles in producing paintings. He replaced personal landscapes of memory with images from the shared world. Tully (1994) quotes Soby's (1955) opinion of these paintings to the effect that the 1920 NeoClassical Paintings " . . . are tiresomely sweet, even chic, and with them it seems fair to take leave of de Chirico as a vital force in modern art." (P

155)

On occasion he returned to the production of metaphysical paintings. This took the form of literal reproductions of his pre-mannequin works. On other occasions, he impeccably reworked the stylistic conventions that, arising from the pre 1915 inspiration, had generated the new direction in art that inspired Surrealism, Dada, and Abstract Expressionism. At this point, his art had become "mirror to imaginary associations rather than being a source of their creation." (See Lista 1991 P 103, 111.)

De Chirico's art thus resolves into five phases. These are; classical and symbolist training and painting in Greece and Munich up to 1911; Early metaphysical painting in Florence and Paris from 1911 to 1915; Mannequin metaphysical painting in the Ravenna Army Hospital from 1915 to 1918; and occasional Metaphysical reproductions during his return to classical style themes and symbols in Italy, Paris and the USA after 1920.

De Chirico's metaphysical works continued to influence the surrealists after 1916. When de Chirico moved to Paris in 1924, he was at first accepted and then ill used by the surrealists who found inspiration in his early metaphysical works, but not in the man or his late metaphysical or classically toned works. Identifying the dates of his paintings after 1920 is complicated by the fact that in addition to painting self copies, he declared many of his original paintings to be fakes (de Chirico's "Memoirs" P 198.) De Chirico died in 1978.

The Psychology of de Chirico's Metaphysical Symbols

An ever repeating cycle of emotional reactions began to effect de Chirico in 1905 following his depression at the death of him father. Each cycle would begin with a move of his place of residence followed by depression and GI symptoms severe enough to interfere with his ability to work for as long as a year. He would then return to his artistic work. Krystal (1966) describes affect and agitation as controlling factors in this cycle of reactions, which influenced his symbols and art style from 1911 to 1918. Such cycles were experienced repeatedly until 1920.

The end of the emotional cycle of 1911 occurred while de Chirico was in Italy and later in Paris. The resolution of his depression paralleled the introduction into his paintings of depersonalized early

metaphysical symbolic forms. These consisted of symbols, which retained some communicative mode characteristics in spite of the abstruse organization in space in relation to each other. Lista (1991) detected in the development of de Chirico's metaphysical language of 1911, transcendent influences, including a "focus on the world of "things" which lies beyond objective reality" (P 53). He also saw adjustment to affect in de Chirico's ability to express sensations via objects (P 72), to the extent that he could convert " . . . disturbed psychic condition into 'thoughts'" which can be represented by things in paintings." (P 22)

De Chirico quelled his own personal affects through the use of his early metaphysical symbols. Lista (1991) described his affect and agitation as controlling factors that activated his regressed symbolizations. Krystal (1966) noted in regard to this that during "the flight from reality into the world of fantasy, the removal of the sense of reality from its perception was an accomplishment for him in his struggle against depression and the dread of destruction." (P 214) De Chirico himself noted that at times agitation was replaced by an intense stillness, albeit eerie and "ghoulish." (P 215)

Since the early metaphysical symbols worked in the communicative mode, they were accessible to viewers. They could serve as vehicles for sympathetic catharsis through passive symbolization. Paintings of this period appealed to viewers. The early metaphysical paintings sold well and inspired new directions in art.

De Chirico's return to art, after a deep disorganization associated with the emotional cycle that occurred when he returned from Paris to join the army (1916), was dominated by the presence of his late metaphysical symbols. These were derived primarily from evocations of obscurely privatized webs of meaning. His symbols became intensely depersonalized through their 'disincarnation' in the form of mannequins. Disordered thinking invaded his creativity. His paintings and their symbols strayed so far from common experience and meaning that they stirred little emotional empathy in viewers. They did not sell.

Why Early Metaphysical Symbols Worked and Late Ones Failed

To understand why de Chirico's early metaphysical symbols worked and his late ones failed, it is

necessary to understand the role played by the production of symbols in the creation and appreciation of a work of art both by an artist and by his audience. There are uncontrolled elements in life in response to which a person can only be passive. In this circumstance, man hungers for reliable entities to which he can turn for reassurance. Transcendent symbols are most often sought for they offer comfort wherever there is chaos. Mythic contents are steadfast. They do not change for the arc of their active lives. Cultures evolve with the development of such entities. The reliability of geometric forms, the organization of time, and the constancy of cosmologies and eschatologies provide a sense of control. They represent the divinely endowed and humanly created predictable realities of man's world and cultures. This has a therapeutic role in banishing uncertainties for mankind.

Lista (1991) described the evolutionary road that preceded the emergence of "metaphysical pictures" (pitura metafisica). He saw it as a path traversed by Pythagoras, St. Augustine, Shopenauer, Neitzche, and Weininger (Pp 29-31). An example of one such evolving culture element, would be the use of geometric forms to bind the expression of affects associated with uncertain localization in space (i.e. being lost). Grid plans for cities such as those developed by the Greek colonists of Italy (see Mertens and Greco 1996 P 243 etseq.) in their city planning, allay confusion.

Visual symbols such as linear structures, which evoke by tradition, and shadows, which evoke by their inherent capacity to generate affect (see affect porous symbols), are troubling because of the power they have to stir affect. Organized geometrical shapes (i.e. town squares and colonnades), statues that hint of the past and in the process give direction to time, and empty windows pointing toward the horizon have become a part of the spatially organized human context that make of life a reliable and calming experience in the face of uncertainty. De Chirico's work was but one further step in this visual tradition. The reassuring old city forms of antiquity when mixed with personal symbols of separation and loss (i.e. train stations, distant trains, shadows, lonely vistas) created a new and accessible language for art. The early metaphysical pictures consisted of the symbols of a self-created world under the artist's control, which drew his attention from depressing aspects of his own world of reality.

A substitute world created through a work of art resolves narcissistic blows associated with failure or disappointment in the real world. The symbol net partaken of and appreciated by a prepared (mythological educated) populace and also by de Chirico in his early metaphysical symbols gave rise to

an art that could "engender a peace inducing catharsis:" (See Lista 1991 P 35.) This is a potential inherent in the communicative symbolic mode. A similar balm for uncertainty is (infused) shared mythic explanatory belief to which one can turn when perplexed. De Chirico consciously participated in such transcendent thinking. He noted, "The divine mystery encompasses in its immensity the mystery of art. I was able to comprehend that the divine presence is revealed in art and that contemplating art constitutes a rite of purification." (See Lista P 35.) Mythological education not only holds together cultural identity. It also certains individuals in need of comfort.

The roots of individual transcendent symbols are not accessible to science and therefore not scientifically provable. Their existence as a body of culture elements infused through education, and of great influence in shaping the form of reality as seen by believers, cannot be denied. Such symbols populate art. Symbols drawn from this group have potential even when used in unique situations to generate empathic responses in the viewer. In this regard Emerson (1845) noted that symbols communicate because they contain both personal and culturally informed meanings and associations. The icons represented in the early metaphysical symbols of de Chirico comforted because they appeared as familiar structuring items in ordinary, albeit non-narrative contexts.

The icons chosen for the late metaphysical symbols offered no such comfort. Following a cycle of travel, hospitalization for depression, idleness and then return to art with a lessening of his emotional symptoms, de Chirico created a late metaphysical symbol vocabulary (mannequins), which was unique and much divorced from the elements that had served as sources of comfort for his culture. Mediate association, a form of the loosening of associations thought disorder (see above), following in the wake of expanded autism and grandiosity, became the tool that squandered empathy. Attention to the skills of recognition of the audience was ignored. Interpretation of de Chirico's idiosyncratic personal mythology and its symbols exceeded the skills or memory of the viewer. They failed to offer intellectual or emotional resonances. Failure to attract an audience and buyers ensued.

The Shift in Psychological Dynamics after 1918

After 1918 de Chirico developed regression in thought patterns that presaged a regression in object relations that would mark his character in later years. By 1920 he had relinquished the use of

metaphysical symbols as an element in the cycle of adjustment that influenced his creative work. The loss of this dynamic adjustment resource was associated with the clinical advent of a shift in the way that he handled aggression. His discharge of hostility went from turning in on the self, manifested in depression and gastrointestinal symptoms, to projection of hostility onto persecutors. The sense of reality of the latter was reinforced by ever increasing grandiosity. There was a shift of symptom from idiosyncratic late metaphysical symbols in paintings to idiosyncratic interpretations of the behavior of others. The latter was charged with grandiosity and paranoia. This was noted by Crosland (1999) who described his growing paranoia. In the hospital de Chirico had been described as " . . . closed, withdrawn and (saying) very little." (P 64) "(His) resentful, distrustful attitude . . . was to deepen as time went on—so much so that he became "totally self centered" (P 97) and in a "State of paranoia" P 70)

By early middle age we can find in de Chirico's ("Memoirs" 1991) own words, increasing paranoid grandiosity, feelings of omnipotence, and feelings about himself as the center of the universe. When speaking about critics of modern painting, he said, "before one really has the right to speak in such a way one must in the first place be a painter of great intelligence and one must have been capable of painting the paintings, which only I have succeeded in painting in the first half of our century." (P 116) De Chirico's "Memoirs" (1991) of his post military service years are filled with examples of a fixed style of paranoid tinted response (P 137, 193, 219) in which de Chirico asserts his identity as the "center of the universe" (P 8, 9, 116, 225). Such paranoid coloring can be especially seen in three instances. In one instance ("Memoirs" 1991 P 137), de Chirico attributed the failure, of his new paintings, to persecutors who are organized into "cliques" made up of allegedly envious less intelligent and stupid artists, dealers, experts, painters, and critics. His description of an experience while attending the opera is the second instance. In the latter situation he stated "I noticed, however, at La Scala that there was a persistent and subtle hostility towards me that emanated even from the more active sides of the theater. The reason was always the same: envy on account of my artistic strength and my personality as a man."(P 193) The third instance is contained in de Chirico's description of an encounter with the critic Longhi. "He saw me, calculated the distance between us in an instant and probably deduced that if he had continued to go forward we would have met like two steamers in the fog. There was no time to lose and he resorted to an extreme method: magic. He stretched out his arms and dived into the pavement . . . how [can one] do such things without possessing the gift of ubiquity and the faculty of being able to arrange at will the

disappearance of one's own person?" (P 93)

Hallucinations

Grandiosity reaches a height when self-created entities are seen to be more important that the reality that two people can touch. De Chirico's (1991) own descriptions tell of his experience of hallucinations. In one example, he recalled that "an indescribable hysteria, of which no instrument could have measured the power, caused the heavy marble tables to levitate, and they rose half a centimeter from the floor; a phenomenon, moreover, which I alone was able to observe." (P 106) During 1919 "[He] saw tongues of fire appear in the gallery, while outside, beneath the clear sky over the city, rang out a solemn clangour as of weapons beaten in salute, and together with a great cry of righteous spirits there echoed the sound of a trumpet heralding a resurrection." (P 97) In these highly personal experiences the metaphysical symbols of de Chirico had found a new home.

SUMMARY

Symbols are a manifestation of creativity. When a psychotic process associated with thought disorder appears in the life of a creative artist, there is a transmutation of symbolic content that draws upon personalized often idiosyncratic symbolic linkages. Thought disorder and schizophrenia may be seen to influence the creative products but are not primarily creative in themselves.

There is a degree of exception to this axiom. When such altered creativity is present in mild degree new directions can be opened in art, provided that the symbol content remains invested in the course of the pre-existing culture pattern. The backbone of cultural evolution is an evolving set of emulations in which each new step is but a step away from the last. One of the hallmarks of disordered creativity in an artist is a break with the emulative progressions in the cultural evolution of his society. Under the influence of thought disorder the created symbol can stray so far from socially shaped ongoing concepts that it replaces tradition with private trends.

RICHARD DADD

Introduction

Richard Dadd worked in the mainstream of a movement in 19th century British painting, which emphasized facility in painting fairy scenes and the depiction of the wee folk who in imagination populated the gardens and leas of England. He was born in 1817 and functioned well until the development of mental illness in 1842. He was hospitalized in 1844. He never recovered. He died in 1886 after 42 years of hospitalization. The intrusion of thought disorder into his artwork showed a variability, which paralleled the inconstant intrusion of autism into his ordinary thought and speech.

He showed remarkable talent for fine line and depiction. This skill captures the attention of the museum-goer to this day. He clearly influenced the works of contemporaries such as Stanier and Huskisson. He became ill before he had the opportunity to introduce an influential divergence from the main flow of the fairy painter's trade. His precipitate descent into madness was accompanied by a degree of aberration in thinking that exceeded that which could be tolerated in the process of establishing a new school of art.

Dadd showed evidence of a labile affect early on. One description tells of his blue eyes, " . . . at one moment almost wild with the varied lights of mirth and fancy, and then so deep and solemn in their thoughtfulness" (Allderidge (1974 P 15). As a young artist, his work attracted private commissions and projects. One early commission gave him the choice of topic for the decoration of a large home. "The subjects . . . chosen himself, were from Tasso's 'Jerusalem Delivered' and Byron's 'Manfred'." P 17. An 1842 commission to accompany a gentleman engaged in Middle East travel required him to make illustrations of the sites seen. While in Egypt, he experienced feelings of awe at its ancient mythology. This contributed the element of Egyptian religion and the god Osiris to his later delusional preoccupations.

In May 1843, He became guarded and suspicious of the motivations of others. He became unpredictable and at times violent. He developed ideas of reference. He thought he was being watched. He is reported to have "cut a birthmark from his forehead, saying it was planted there by the devil" (Allderidge 1974 P 2) He saw and heard haunting evil spirits and became preoccupied with the devil.

(P 22) These ideas became the content of persistent delusions, which could be detected on interview thirty years later.

Family History of Vesanic Traits

Dadd's family history was rich in vesanic traits. He was the fourth child of seven children born to Mary Ann and Robert Dadd. There were four sons and three daughters. Four of the siblings died insane. Only one, the eldest son, Robert, lived a full and balanced life. Two of the sisters never married. Their lives consisted of moving from job to job as governesses and companions. A sister, Maria Elizabeth, attempted to strangle her youngest child during a distraught episode of rage and was committed to the Royal Asylum in Aberdeen in 1863. She died there after thirty years of confinement. The youngest brother, George, became mentally ill at the same time as Richard. He was hospitalized in 1844. He died in Bedlam in 1863. Yet another brother, Stephan, died insane in 1860. He had been kept at home with a private attendant since 1853.

In August of 1844, Richard was taken for consultation to an alienist, who recommended restraints. In spite of this, the family history and the concurrent illness of George, Dadd's father did not discern danger in Dadd's dementia. His father attributed Richard's behavior to sunstroke and expected spontaneous recovery. A few days after their meeting with the alienist, Dadd invited his father to accompany him to a favorite haunt, Cobham, where he promised that he would 'unburden his mind'. (See Allderidge 1974 P 23.) While on a walk in Cobham Park, Richard Dadd stabbed his father with a knife, which had been purchased for that purpose alone.

Allderidge (1974) describes no doubts that " . . . the killing was premeditated" (P 24), as Dadd himself explained " . . . the idea of a descent from the Egyptian god Osiris, induced me to put a period to the existence of him whom I had always regarded as a parent, but whom the secret admonishings I had, counseled me was the author of the ruin of my race. I inveigled him, by false pretenses, into Cobham Park, and slew him with a knife, with which I stabbed him, after having vainly endeavored to cut his throat'. P38[2] In his deluded state Dadd believed that his father was the devil and that his own allotted task was to be an envoy of god (Osiris?) assigned to kill those possessed of the demon.

Immediately after his father's murder, Richard fled to France. There he was apprehended a fortnight later, during an attempt to murder a fellow passenger in a coach he had taken on the way to attempt the assassination of the Emperor of Austria. Upon being returned to England he was adjudged insane and sent to Bedlam Hospital.

Dadd's first year in the hospital was one of great agitation during which he did no painting. When he finally began to paint, two styles emerged. In one, his work was realistically balanced as it had been before his illness started. In the other, there was a distinct change of style as illustrated by the "Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke" (1855). This painting (Figure 15) displays the need, sometimes called horror vacui, to fill all the space on the canvass. This is a characteristic of schizophrenic art (v.i.). The material features of the picture seem "explicable only in terms of some private obsession." (Allderidge 1974 p 82) There is loss of object ground differentiation with no focus or center of attention. There is a disordered orientation of figures in space, (a feature more prominently found in Dadd's 1849 painting "The Flight Out of Egypt" (Figure 14).

Figure 14
"The Flight Out of Egypt" Richard Dadd

There is little in the way of a central theme to tie together the multitude of characters and events depicted. There are affectless expressions on faces. His "later eastern scenes" showed "remoteness"

(Allderidge 1974 P 29) " . . . there is about many of Dadd's pictures a far more characteristic atmosphere of trancelike stillness, as though time and motion had been arrested by the intensity of his observation; and this is nowhere more perfectly exemplified than in 'The Fairy Fellow's Master-Stroke." (figure 15) "The earliest fairy pictures do not have this static quality, and much of their drama arises from the frenzied animation of the dancers." (P 42) Even in his early pictures one can find examples off this "air of cataleptic suspense." (P 42) This may be an early manifestation of the ebb and flow of psychotic process that so characterized his life and invaded his work after the first acute surge of his illness.

Figure 15
"The Fairy Fellow's Masterstroke" Richard Dadd

Mercurial shifts of mood and thought content were manifested in his daily interactions with people. For instance, while engaged in serious discourse about a painting he was showing, Dadd perceived " . . . a fly stuck to the paint and identifying it as the devil in one of his disguises, became excited and distraught." (P 34) Dadd provided a poem to go with "Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke" (sic). It is a web of digressions, which catches the ear of the reader but cannot engage his mind. In this poem he uses mental illness as a metaphor. This is a process also seen in Tasso's work. Dadd describes 'pendants' which wind about the picture as representing vagary wild, and mental aberration styled. (P 125)

The poem is called "Elimination of a picture & its subject—called the Feller's Master Stroke" (sic) Allderidge (1974) notes that the name has nothing to do with the picture and explains that the word "elimination" could be an error, a pun, a play on some word such as 'illumination' or 'elucidation'. (P 128) Should this be so, the title of the poem contains a condensation or a bizarre use of words. The poem is thought disordered. Allderidge (1974) describes "In this long rambling and sometimes incoherent poem, Dadd explains the action in his painting 'The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke.' and digresses on a number of subjects, some tenuously related to it, and some which seem to have slipped in while no one was looking (loosening of associations). While he is describing the picture and the characters in it the sense emerges quite clearly." (P 127) Although the topic he is talking about is usually obvious, it is not always so certain what exactly he is saying about the topic (autism). Little of the verse holds together under close inspection. "Some of the wilder passages suggest that he has become so involved in personal preoccupations that the medium has simply got out of control." (P 127) In painting the picture, Dadd used no external guide for the content. " . . . he gazed at the canvass, and thought of nothing until pure fantasy began to give form . . ." (P 125). This is the kind of exclusion of external influence that prompts dreaming and which when admixed to a tincture of anxiety breeds thought disorder in disordered minds.

Prominent among Dadd's thought disordered paintings is "The Flight out of Egypt 1849-50" (Figure 14) It is filled with characters and without focus. This is another example of the schizophrenic artist's horror of the vacuum. The following is an adaptation of a description of the painting by Allderidge (1974).

The Roman soldiers seem to have strayed in from another world, which may be why they are being ignored. (loosening of associations). Trumpets which in one part of the picture are behind a tree have bells, which are in front of the face of a woman who is clearly standing in front of the tree (loss of object ground differentiation). " . . . it is doubtful whether even a full explanation by Dadd himself would have made it wholly accessible to us." (autism) (P 82)

Summary

Thought disorders may affect artistic creativity intermittently. Such was the case with Dadd. The

intrusion of thought disorder becomes more intense, when the artist becomes agitated. There is a point beyond which the intensity of affect closes down creativity. Therefore there are mentally ill artists who may show no sign of thought disorder in their artistic productions. The latter situation was the case in the work of Tasso.

TASSO

Introduction

Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) was the last great poet of the Italian Renaissance. He has been most celebrated for his heroic epic poem Gerusalemme Liberata ("Jerusalem Liberated" 1581), which with interpolated fantasy diversions, tells of the capture of Jerusalem during the First Crusade. In his lifetime, the Gerusalemme Liberata was imitated and translated into many languages.

Torquato Tasso was born into good fortune. His father, Bernardo Tasso, was a famous poet in his own right, whose skills gained him positions in Renaissance courts. While his father served in the court of the Duke of Urbino, Torquato was educated with the son of the Duke. In his adult life, Torquato's poetic skills earned him a place in the court of the Duke of Ferrara. In 1579, Tasso was imprisoned by the Duke for erratic behavior caused by mental disturbance.

The Art Life of Tasso

Tasso contributed to the art of his time. He influenced its course and brought to it new concepts that reshaped culture. He is credited with establishing a new literary genre, pastoral drama, (such as the "Aminta"), which deals with idealized rural life. He was, along with Ariosto, influential in the development of "ottava rima". Tasso's life and his poem "Jerusalem Liberated" illuminated Western thought and influenced Western culture's creative world in a style and degree that have only been reached by the works and lives of Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Heine, Byron, and Goethe. There are paintings, which relate the adventures of his hero, Tancred. For instance Rosenblum (1967) described a painting (1822) by Francois Gerard, "Corinne at Cape Miseno" which depicts the heroine of a novel by Mme de Stahl as singing "of the ghost of Tasso". (P 118) In the nineteenth century, the torments of Tasso's

life became the basis of an opera by Donizetti, and of a play by Goethe with an overture by Liszt. The latter became an independent tone poem entitled "Tasso, Lamento e Triunfo". Liszt's main musical theme for the overture was based upon a song sung by a Venetian gondolier. When Lizst asked the origin of the song, the gondolier sang the words. The tune, it turned out, served as a setting for a then three hundred year old poetic text from "Jerusalem Liberated" The "Lamento" refers to the misery of Tasso's late life crises. The "Triumpho" refers to the legend, which through telling of his persistence, life, creativity, and spirit, gave content to romantic elements in the cultural world for hundreds of years. The Gerusalemme Liberata, has been the source of plots for many opera librettos. Handel's first opera "Rinaldo" best remembered for the immortal melody of the aria "Lascia ch io Piangi" (1711) is based on the Tasso poem. There are also Monteverdi's "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda", Lully's "Armida", Hayden's "Armida" and Dvorak's "Armida." Four of the five operas mentioned are currently available on disc at local recorded music stores. Last, but hardly least in support of Tasso's status as an established and highly influential artist, Clark (1992) tells us that Delibes ballet "Sylvia" first produced in 1876, was inspired by the "Aminta", a renaissance theatrical spectacle written by Tasso and first produced in 1583.

PREMORBID PERSONALITY

Tasso was described by Brand (1965) as a weak man, who was easily affected by external pressures. He was " . . . lacking in courage, patience, moral fiber, strength of will, shrewdness, love of his fellows, humility, [and] dignity . . ." (P 37). "His greatness was all in his writings." (P 37) His life was marked by "periods of sanity and lucidity" (P 206) Montagut, as quoted by Brand described Tasso as a man with a " . . . psyche formed at a certain stage of life, an adolescent psyche."[3] (P 223)

For five years before his imprisonment, there were signs of increasing instability. Brand (1965) described Tasso in 1574 (P 16)—as " . . . subject to fevers, which effected his mental lucidity. He had a constant irresolution and a certain disequilibrium of the brain." "He heard or believed that he heard malicious and envious tongues all round him and his sensitive temperament led him to magnify the slightest neglect into loss of favour and affronts to his dignity." (P 16) Tasso believed himself bewitched. "He saw apparitions and was convinced that a 'Folletto" was stealing his money and his papers and upsetting his books." In 1575 " . . . in one of his fits of madness, he threw a slipper at a doctor and forced his servant to drink his medicine." (Brand P 31) In 1577 Tasso "tried to have a servant sent to him from

Urbino as he believed that the Ferrarese serving men were planning to kill him." (P 19) Harvey is quoted by Brand (1965) as describing Tasso at this time as a person having "so hyperbolical a conceit, overhawty for the surmounting rage of Tasso in his furious agony."(P 207) Roncorino is quoted by Brand (1965) to the effect that Tasso had deliria of persecution, grandiosity, hypochondria and religiosity. (P 224) (Hallucinations and delusions were not differentiated verbally until the mid 19th century. Prior to that they were called spirits or deliria).

Tasso's general behavior before 1579, the year of his imprisonment, was that of a person who was fastidious and self-important. He complained of persecution, and was unable to live amicably with his fellow courtiers. In his relationships with others, he was difficult and dependent.

Weiss (1962) in describing the stresses that ushered in Tasso's breakdown noted "Fear of the Inquisition and anxiety caused by the strictures of rhetoricians and grammarians proved eventually too much for Tasso's mind. Fears became an obsession, which . . ." (in turn led to insanity and seven long painful years at St. Anna).(P VI) Since Tasso often gave samples of works in progress to others and was stung by criticism, he added to his own difficulties.

It is part of the legend of Tasso that when noblewomen of the Ferrarese court offered him support, he mistook kind ministrations for erotic interest. When he responded to this fantasy, he was rebuffed with devastating results. In Goethe's play "Tasso", this is a major factor in the precipitation of his psychotic episode. By way of contrast one should note that Donizetti blamed Tasso's imprisonment on requited love. In the opera, when Tasso was released after many years, he went to seek his love only to find that she had died.

"The language of his letters betrays the fevered, excited state of his mind." He feared that the purge given by the doctors was poisoned. " . . . his letters, at this time, reveal his confused thinking and "lack of moral fibre." His mental state was often confused. "He thought that he had given offense or been deliberately snubbed when no such thing had happened." (Brand P 33) "Above all he hears voices." "and has hallucinations. He has terrifying nightmares and comes to believe that he is bewitched . . ." "Under these conditions he becomes languid, depressed and unable to write." (P 34) He showed extreme egotism, with no interest in the lives of others and was lacking in humor. (P 34) The pattern of his

response is monotonously constant." (P 36) His mental state was marked by alternating periods of lucidity and rage and confusion. (P 37) "His whole life in the sense of his action was a pathetic failure." (Brand P 37)

Using the medical techniques of the time, "He was bled and purged but his "Humours" did not abate." Derangement reached the point at which restraints and domiciliary care were required. One evening in June 1579, he suspected that a servant was spying on him. He drew a knife and attacked him. He raged at the Duke of Ferrara. Attempts to restrain him provoked further outbursts. He was arrested "and chained in a cell as a raving madman."

During his hospitalization, Tasso was able to work. Brand (1965) notes that "Many of Tasso's poems were published during his imprisonment."(P 217) Boulting (1968) describes his letters while in confinement as "full of unsoundness to the discerning mind." (P 304) He quotes a letter written on Oct. 18, 1581 (Confinement began in 1579) in which Tasso says he knows that there are two kinds of spirits that visit him, devils and human souls. "I hear human cries, and particularly of women and boys; there is derisive laughter, and I am worried by noises of animals and inanimate objects moved by hands. There is also diabolical witchcraft and enchantment; and yet I am not certain; for rats, that are as if possessed by the devil, overrun the room; or human artifice may be the explanation. But I am bewitched, for sure, and the operations of necromancy are very powerful." (P 249) "In addition he claimed that the Duke communicated with him by signals" Boulting (1968) reported further that Tasso saw "The glorious Virgin and her Son surrounded by a halo of colour, who appear to me that I might not despair." (P 250)

Brand (1965) reports that while in confinement "His depression and persecution mania led him into fits of anger and violence when he lost control of himself." "Imprisonment brought him fits of hallucinations and melancholia."(P 23)

After seven years of confinement Tasso had recovered his self-control to the point that although not cured, he could be released from his "prison madhouse". He rewrote "Jerusalem Delivered", changing the name to "Jerusalem Conquered". Weiss (1962) in describing his work states that "during the last years of his life when he was only partially recovered, though fully released from confinement, Tasso began rewriting his poem."(P VI) As in the case of de Chirico, his artistry was blunted after an acute

psychosis. There was an immediate flurry of interest followed by neglect. "No one gives a thought to the "Jerusalem Conquered". Boulting (1968) calls the "Conquistata" empty of all poetry, of every claim." (P 262) It remains unread. Bellisario Vinta, Tasso's contemporary, is quoted by Boulting (1907) to the effect that "he still hears voices, sometimes gay, often sad . . . that bore some tone of the authentic presence and came . . . through the gates of horn." (P 205)

Summary
Thought Disorder and Art

Before he became so ill, Tasso's works were free of thought disorder. Careful reading of "Jerusalem Delivered" reveals no signs of divergent thinking in a text rich in charming fantasy. One canto of "Jerusalem Delivered" (Tasso (1575) P 284) refers to irrational fears in a metaphor informed by his own experience.

"As an innocent child has not the courage to look where he has a foreboding of strange spirits, or in the shadowy night he is afraid, imagining monsters and prodigies still; so did they fear, without knowing what it can be for which they feel such terror—except that their fear perhaps creates for their senses prodigies greater than chimaera or sphinx." (13:18)

When too disturbed, Tasso wrote little. This may explain why thought disorder does not appear in his professional writings. The poems he did write while hospitalized, retained their appeal. Thought disorder was reserved for deliria and his personal letters. In the post hospitalization period, the communicative appeal of his work was lost. The latter phenomenon is also to be seen in the late works of Joyce, de Chirico and some of the works of Dadd.

JAMES JOYCE

Introduction

Of all the great artists of the twentieth century, James Joyce (1882-1941) is thought by many to be the most important. His ideas and innovations influenced scholars, poets, and generations. Amongst these a cadre of intellectuals sprang up whose binding shibboleth afforded entry to their cult for those

who rejoiced in Joyce and reserved time to celebrate Bloomsday (the birthday of the protagonist of his novel, Ulysses). His secretary, Samuel Beckett continued his style and became a successful playwright who won the Nobel Prize in literature.

Positive critical acclaim enhanced Joyce's reception by the public. On a general level, William Butler Yeats (see Ellmann 1982) declared Joyce to be the equal of Padraic Colum, George Bernard Shaw, Rabelais, and John Millington Synge. (P 799) More specific is the contribution of Bonamy Dobre (1934), who in his book on "Modern Prose Style" (Quoted in Cairns 1948) extolled Joyce by saying "The writer who has taken experimentation furthest of all is, of course, Mr. James Joyce." (P 1389) To support this view, Dobre offered the following quote from "Finnegan's Wake" (1939) "Can't hear with hawk of bats, all thim liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! My foos won't moos." (P 1389)

The longer Joyce wrote, the more did the content of his work become obscure. Puns, fractured rhetoric, condensations and neologisms dominated his work, as did emphasis on the music rather than the meaning of his words. Joyce's way was summed up by a friend (Paul Leon), who wrote that "I've found it wonderfully amusing to translate simple ideas into incomprehensible formulas and to feel it is a masterpiece." (See Ellmann 1982 P 630.) Joyce welcomed this evaluation. His fans and his readers were helped to handle his digression from the communicative goals of art, through guidebooks and skeleton keys to his works, which cut through the brambles that had sequestered meaning from the public eye. In spite of all attempts to clarify Joyce's meanings, there persists the impression that the shadow of something eldritch has blurred the mechanisms of his genius.

Family History of Vesanic Traits

In Joyce's family and in his life adjustment, evidences of a mental infirmity at times associated with thought disorder is apparent. There is an history of frank schizophrenia in James Joyce's family. As we have seen in the study of Richard Dadd, there is evidence that genetics influence the schizophrenic syndrome. Kallmann (1938) in his classical text "The Genetics of Schizophrenia" noted that there were a number of wanderers and drifters in the descendants of the probands (1,000 hospitalized schizophrenics) in his study. Joyce's father John Joyce was described by Joyce himself as a person who spent "many years of sitting around." (P 744) He was "a heavy drinker and known to have broken off two

engagements in fits of jealousy (P 18). Ellmann (1982) called Joyce's father a "reckless, talented man, convinced that he was the victim of circumstance." (P 21) On his mother's side, Joyce's family included a "priest, who became harmlessly insane and lost his parish." (P 20) Joyce's daughter Lucia, who died on Dec. 12, 1982, after a long period of confinement at St. Andrew's (a mental hospital in Northampton), suffered from a full-blown chronic schizophrenic syndrome. She was subject to catatonic (P 650) episodes. Nurses who stayed with her "had great trouble saving her from serious harm . . . " (P 684), so suicidal was she. She was often unmanageable (P 681). She was diagnosed as "Hebephrenic psychosis with serious prognosis." (P 651) She had marked thought disorders. Her letters were characterized by Joyce as having "lack of even casual connections" (P 658) "Joyce had a remarkable capacity to follow her swift jumps of thought, which baffled other people completely." (P 650)

Jung (P 679) who interviewed both father and daughter personally noted a similarity in their use of portmanteau words and neologisms. Jung saw them as " . . . Like two people going to the bottom of a river, one falling and the other diving." Joyce who recognized the affinity between his creativity and his daughter's problems wrote in 1932 that "Whatever spark of gift I possess has been transmitted to Lucia, and has kindled a fire in her brain."(P 650) Joyce at one time described his daughter's thought disorders as "anticipations of a new literature." (P 679)

Pathological Aspects of Joyce's Personality

Joyce's own adjustment was described by Ellmann (1982) in the following words, "The surface of Joyce's life seemed always erratic and provisional."(P 744) He speaks of James Joyce during 1932-1935 as "the fragile edifice that was Joyce during his years in Paris." (P 652) Ellmann speaks of Joyce's thoughts as reflecting ideas of reference (i.e. thoughts that one is being persecuted). He describes "(Joyce) talk(ing) of mistreatment in the stylized way that had become habitual to him." (P 688) Ellmann tells us that Joyce in 1936 broke with a friend telling her "she had been poisoned against him for ten years and against his daughter for two. The charge was as unanswerable as it was unjust." (P 698) Joyce was diagnosed by Carl G. Jung M.D. after meeting him to discuss Joyce's daughter as "a latent schizoid who used drinking to control his schizoidal tendencies." and who had "no emotional rapport with others."(P 680)

Ellmann (1982) offers descriptions of the emotional adjustment of James Joyce, defending Joyce's sanity at every turn. Again and again, clues to diagnosis are explained away. In spite of this, when the *clues* he gives are gathered together, (see below) one is led to the conclusion that the cadre of psychiatrists, 95% of whom found thought disorders in Joyce's work (Andreasen (1994) P 394), was a well trained group which had made an accurate appraisal of the presence of thinking disorder.

The Clues follow-

THOUGHT DISORDER—Joyce adapted his capacity for neologism and condensation to his work. He aimed only at the control of the expression of his inner awarenesses. He did not work to polish or write primarily with the intent to convey meaning. In a letter to his daughter he wrote "Lord knows what my prose means. In a word, it is pleasing to the ear."(P 702) Joyce aimed at the enhancement of the musicality of his prose at the expense of meaning.[4] For instance, it was Joyce's habit to dictate bits of Finnegan's Wake to his secretary, Samuel Beckett. "In the middle of one such session [during the creative process] there was a knock at the door which Beckett did not hear. Joyce said, 'come in'. and Beckett wrote down these words. Afterwards Beckett read back what he had written.

Joyce said, "What's that 'Come in'?"

'yes you said that,' said Beckett.

Joyce thought for a moment, then said, "Let it stand."(P649)

So much for the communicative intent of Joyce in writing prose. "At a time when others were questioning the liberties he took with English, Joyce was conscious only of its restraints on him." (P 397)

EGO DISORGANIZATION—Joyce was subject to episodes of emotional collapse. On Aug 17, 1917 an attack of severe glaucoma left no choice but that there be an operation, an iridectomy, on Joyce's right eye. The operation " . . . so unnerved Joyce that he *collapsed,(italics my own)* and for three days even [his wife] Nora, . . . was not allowed to see him." (P 417)

During a depression, which was attributed by Ellmann to a reaction to his daughter's illness, he

had six or seven days of insomnia and nightmares. "During the day he was troubled by auditory hallucinations."(P 685) He sought the help of a doctor who attributed the hallucinations to nerves.

AFFECT—Joyce's affect was labile and at times inappropriate. "Those who expected to see him melancholy were sometimes surprised to see him buoyant and full of banter." "Joyce's conversation moved in sudden rushes of indignation followed by renewals of composure that were quite serene." (P 688)

Ellmann's (1982) clues tell us that Joyce had:

1. Thought Disorders, which both he and Jung recognized as part of the same process that affected his daughter, who was incapacitated by the severity of the schizophrenic process from which she suffered.
2. Autistic involvements in his relationship to the audience.
3. Labile Affect.
4. Ideas of reference.
5. Hallucinations.
6. Family history positive for vesanic traits
7. Depression.

From this, one can conclude that Joyce experienced intrusions into his life to varying degrees of a psychotic process associated with thought disorders similar to those found in the thinking of those afflicted with the schizophrenic syndrome. In contrast to the other artists described, Joyce's condition rarely proceeded to a level of incapacitation and when it did, he recovered quickly. As in the other artists here described, the process of the creation of poetic symbols was invaded during psychotic regressions in which thought disorders undercut the communicative pole of symbolic expression.

Discussion

The Differentiation of Transcendent Symbols and Thought Disordered Symbols

Transcendent symbols are not thought disordered. Simple, poetic, and psychoanalytic symbols are scientifically observable. Transcendent symbols are not. They are abstract concepts, which are thought of by transcendentalists not to be products of inner forces. They are broadly shared. Belief in their reality is not a sign of psychosis. Spiritual influences are invoked as the source of transcendent symbols. Eyes, caste toward heaven, proclaim their reality and diminish any search to understand the influence of brain maturation, regression, or pathological conditions on their formation. Participants who share the symbol nets of a given culture consider transcendent symbols to be, (in Lista's (1991) phrasing), " . . . scion[s] of a spiritual line stretching back to time immemorial."(P 39) They are held to preexist man rather than be his product. To achieve communication to an audience the manifest contents of transcendent symbols are shaped so that they can be matched to memory panels that reflect the culturally shared icons of a tradition. Except for the insights of mystics, they are derived from education and shared experience. Environmental influences are easily detected in their contents.

In dynamic thinking applied to the thinking of the artists studied in this chapter, thought disorders can be seen to alter manifest symbols by shifting influences on symbolic contents and syntaxes from shared culture elements (such as those described above, which contribute to the formation of transcendent symbols) to divergent internal sources. Primary amongst these internal influences are evocative autistic elements. The symbols of psychosis serve personal relatedness less, when culturally determined symbol nets are replaced by groupings of concrete superficially associated pictorial icons and phrases that are not shared or easily recognized. These consist of disconnected and nonlinearly associated meanings piled up in one place, as seen clinically in word salad. Such loosening of associations and other thought disorders alter verbal productions to produce patterns of disorganization in the paintings of manifestly psychotic schizophrenic artists. An example of this would be filling a picture to quell what Morgenthaler (1921) has called the horror of the vacuum (Horror Vacui). (P VII) The latter is a concept that is irrelevant to the expectations of the outside observer and undercuts the composition of the painting.

Often a psychotic artist's most influential works come at the stage in which the drift toward total estrangement is passing through an early phase of divergence from an established culture defining

symbol net. Communicative possibilities are still present. If the descent into madness does not proceed beyond this stage, a sustained source of divergent creativity, which masquerades as originality, may be produced. Artistic production following a psychotic episode is usually not a strong source of inspiration for an audience, as is the product of early stage divergence. The effect on creativity of the schizophrenic syndrome varies as the pathological life pattern evolves.

Classically the schizophrenic syndrome is described as having an onset in the late teens. At that age, prodromata of illness are seen, such as intermittent social withdrawal as a means of dealing with the interpersonal misunderstandings produced by the incipient psychotic process. This is followed in a few years by florid psychoses from which recovery or temporary remission is possible, but in which persistence or recurrence is to be expected with gradual deterioration of the intellect over time. Some patients recover to the point that they function with intermittent and limited surfacing of thought disorder and evocative symbol organizations. For most, the illness persists with a progressive shift toward greater paranoia and grandiosity manifested in delusion and self-cathexis. This eventually supports a sense of reality and appropriateness in creating and interpreting symbols, which in actuality are estranged from the ways of the world. This process in varying degrees invaded the lives of all the artists presented in this chapter. For Joyce, progression was slowed by a defensive alcoholism that helped avert acute breaks in reality testing, and by the establishment of a social acceptance for his art that made of it for him a pseudosublimation.

When thought disorder becomes active, there develops in an artist's symbolizing function an emphasis on autistic evocations. This leads to a de-emphasis on a choice of poetic symbols at the communicative pole. As a result symbols are produced with a diminished capacity to hold attention and stir empathy. In that case, artistry becomes blunted and its products lose appeal.

Summary

In both art and everyday life, with early adolescent maturation out of latency, psychoanalytic and poetic symbols are transformed from products of evocative mode symbolization into products of communicative mode symbolization. Thought disorders in adults distort symbols in both picture and prose by effecting a reversal of this developmental shift. As a result the symbolizing function loses its

communicative potential. The reversal is expressed clinically in a regression from symbols that communicate in the service of object relations to symbols that evoke autistic reveries in service to oneself. Non-communicative creativity develops. This process becomes more severe with agitation. In states of severe agitation creativity ceases.

Notes

1 Weininger died of a self-inflicted bullet wound at the age of 23.

2 From William Wood "Remarks on the Plea of Insanity" (1851) pp41-42. See P 160 in Allderidge (1974).

3 Translation by the author.

4 In support of the idea that the music of Joyce's prose was one of its justifications see also Ellman 1982 P 382.