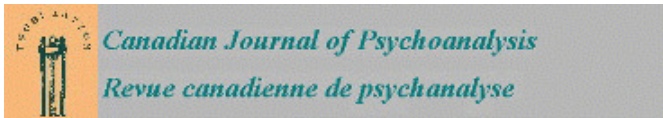


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Libidinal Drive as Index of Creativity and Synthetic Ability in Artists

Stéphanie Z. Dudek and Florence Hoehstetter 

The goal of the present paper is to examine, within the context of psychoanalytic theory, the extent to which libidinal drive defines and enters into the artist's desire and ability to achieve synthesis, as reflected in imaginative responses to the Rorschach test. The basic Freudian postulate is that synthesis is the essential component in creative artistic activity, and that this ability depends on the ego's capacity to integrate libidinal and aggressive drive in the service of creative transformation. Integration can occur only if libidinal drives are readily available and preferably if they are present in excess of the aggressive (It is Eros that unites [Freud 1923, Silberman 1961])

There are many ways of obtaining an insight into the degree and quality of drive energy available to the functioning ego. Among these are dreams, free associations, phantasies, projective test responses, reflections, or ideation during the creative process. Numerous research studies of artists have in fact established that creative artists (painters, writers, dancers, actors) give considerably more evidence of primary process ideation than their non-artist controls in response to projective tests such as the Rorschach. This also applies to creative versus non-creative children, differentiated for creativity by means of the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Dudek and Verreault 1989)

Primary process ideation is defined as a drive derivative; that is, it is organized by drive, and as such carries all the characteristics of fluid drive energy rawness, intensity, lawlessness, and intolerance of delay. It is the young child's original, analogical way of expressing

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drive and desire. Freud envisaged that as the child matures, primary process would evolve along a continuum eventually to become reality-oriented, secondary-process thinking. The entire continuum, however, would continue to exist. Holt (1965), on the other hand, saw primary process as a parallel system to that of the secondary process. He felt that it was not present at birth, that it evolved slowly, and that its modes of dealing with the fluidity and magical wishful qualities of its ideation would become nuanced with time, but never fully lose these qualities. Noy (1969) carried Holt's thinking further, stressing aspects of primary process that elaborate it as a parallel system whose concern is with subjective reality. Noy labelled it the *self-system* functioning to organize drive according to its own personal programs and evolving with time in strength and forcefulness. According to Noy (1969) "primary processes are used for mastery; i.e., as a part of synthetic function of the ego" (p. 161). Holt (1970) developed a system for identifying and scoring primary process ideation as it emerges in the Rorschach test and in other thematic content (for example, dreams, literary productions, and thematic apperception test stories). He provided a means of evaluating depth of regression (DD), and defence effectiveness (DE, that is, the way in which reality control is exerted over primary process), as well as a formula for computing adaptive regression, which he called regression in the service of the ego (REGO). A non-psychoanalytic system of identifying primary process was provided by Martindale (1990), which he used originally to analyse changes in artistic style over the centuries.

The present research is based on an analysis of primary process as it emerges in the Rorschach protocols administered to eminent artists. It uses the Holt system of analysis. Such an analysis is expected to offer an insight into (a) the individual's primitive drive organization at its most personal level, and (b) into the ways that the ego uses to achieve mastery over its potentially disruptive effects. Certainly, in the case of the artist, art as finished product is evidence of an achievement of mastery at its most impressive level. The novel product may also be seen as the synthesis of antagonistic impulses that merge and are transcended by new symbolic forms.

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The Freudian theory of creativity was originally based on the sublimation of libidinal drive. Later, sublimation of aggressive drive was added (Hart 1948, Hartman 1955). Sublimation is clearly an ego defence mechanism that allows the libidinal and aggressive drives to be expressed in substitute form; that is, in a form in which repression does not play a significant role. The creative artist needs ready access to raw, untransformed drive affects, for that is the raw material of art. The transformation of this fluid, unbound energy into contents and products under the direction of the secondary process results in a created product that is sufficiently acceptable to allow its integration into society. However, if the product is too novel or bears too strongly the signs of its primitive origins, it may take considerable time before it is accepted by society. The artist needs and thrives on access to primary process, whereas the normal person prefers and chooses to function with the aid of ego defences that prevent the emergence of raw drive, privileging socially adapted force, thought, and action.

Synthesis is an essential component in creativity. It is a process that is present from the beginning of the child's life (Glover 1932, Hartmann 1947), and this is what makes possible the union of libidinal and aggressive drives, which together determine normal development and social adaptation. If the union of these two contradictory drives (Eros to unite and Thanatos to tear apart [Freud 1923, Silberman 1961]) does not take place, the capacity for emotional growth and for synthesis is paralysed.

It has been amply demonstrated that genuinely creative artists and architects have ready access to the analogical forms of thinking that

characterize primary process (Dudek **1968, 1984; Dudek and Bouhadana 1982; Holt 1967**; Myden 1956; **Noy 1969**). Such thinking facilitates the processes of destructuring and of recombining old visions and perceptions into new ones. Regression is one of the necessary mechanisms to make this possible. Holt (**1967**) stated “we can conceptualize the primary process as a special system of processing information in the service of synthetic necessity” (p. 383) The synthetic necessity in the case of adult creative thinking is the artist's strong drive to work something through, some aspect of personal drive and desire. However, to do this creatively the artist needs to

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take the present structures apart. This need carries an obsessive quality to the extent that the artist's creative life is placed in the service of such resolution. Artistic choice has been shown to involve a lifelong commitment in which the artist avows “my work is my life,” and vice versa. (Dudek, Berneche, Berube & Royer **1991**, p. 367; Philip Johnson, personal communication **1990**).

The tendency to “unite” is particularly evident at the primary process levels of thinking. The primary process is, in fact, rampant with the need for fusion given its lack of ability to differentiate, discriminate, and bind. For example, condensation is a primitive form of synthesis (**Holt 1965; Noy 1969**). The job of the ego is to achieve synthesis in keeping with at least some of the constraints imposed by reality, in order to achieve a “bounded” form and a finished product.

As previously stated, according to Freudian psychoanalytic theory, creative synthesis can be achieved only if the libidinal energies are stronger than the aggressive. That is, if the need to unite predominates. What promotes the urge to think creatively, to work at synthesis? An analysis of creative process suggests that it is the artist's need to solve personal problems through sublimation, that is, on a symbolic level (**Kris 1952**). During the process, artists use disparate, disjunctive symbolic forms that need to be joined into wholes, in order to make at least temporary sense. Regressive thinking facilitates this process by making libidinal and aggressive drive ideation available, and by providing divergent ways of confronting the so-called problems. According to Kuhn (1963), the approach of formal thinking is modelled on closed systems, whereas divergent thinking is a response to anomalies. In short, divergent and creative thinking, with its access to primary process, is a response not only to ill-defined problems but to systems that are embedded in a web of static relations, which must be disrupted if something new is to emerge. Disordering them may provide the first step toward a higher order synthesis. Regression facilitates the ability to disorganize and to disrupt, thus liberating analogic thinking with its tendency to continual restructuring. Regression opens up directions that can perhaps only become available at disinhibited levels of affect and cognition.

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Moreover, disruptions are likely to alter the meaning of all the parts. A new synthesis is the creative artist's inevitable response—hopefully a higher order synthesis.

The concept of regression in the service of the ego was coined by Kris (**1952**) to describe the processes involved in artistic creativity. However, Kris was among the first to indicate that regression is a phenomenon dangerous in itself even for the artist, useful though it may be in providing access to the deeper layers of the self. The ego must be strong to tolerate disruptions. The ready access of primary process would imply that artists' egos are strong enough to tolerate the anxiety that contact with chaotic, intense, and often unacceptable drive is likely to evoke. In short, access to the deeper layers of the personality as revealed through primary process is not in itself a sign of ego weakness, pathology, or fragility of the ego defensive structures. Both the strength and flexibility of the ego's defensive system is at issue. This will determine whether liberated regressive energies will be placed in its service or whether the ego is in danger of being overwhelmed by them. An excess of libidinal (constructive) as opposed to aggressive (destructive) energy works in the service of greater ego integrity.

To support the hypothesis that presence of primary process is a sign of ego flexibility rather than a characteristic of pathology in the creative person's Rorschach, it was necessary to show that such Rorschachs contain the signs that go with strong egos—namely, evidence of maturity, complexity, and sensitivity. In Rorschach terms such Rorschachs would be characterized by presence of large numbers of *R*, *M*, *Fc*, *sum C*, *F+*, *P*, *W+*. Repressive signs would be absent (namely high *F%* to the detriment of all other determinants). Many researchers have in fact demonstrated that Rorschach records of creative individuals (artists, musicians, architects, dancers, and actors, among others) are indeed characterized by rich and complex profiles. Their Rorschachs are replete with evidence of both ego strength and crude primary process ideation, particularly of a libidinal (sexual) nature (Dudek **1968, 1971; Dudek and Bouhadana 1982; Dudek 1984; Dudek et al. 1991**; Dudek and Croteau, in press;

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Hochstetter 1981; Holt 1970; Huard 1971; Myden 1956; Vezina 1981).

Dudek (**1984**) compared the Rorschachs of creative architects and artists to those of productive professional persons and the so-called normal population. The main psychogram difference between them was in greater richness and complexity, with the creative samples outstripping the normal by a large margin on access to primitive drive.

In summary, the main goals of the present research were as follows: having established an operational definition for the concept of synthesis as it defines creative activity, we attempted to evaluate to what extent it is related to libidinal drive. The Freudian definition of synthetic activity is to see it as “uniting” isolated or distant antagonistic elements by integrating them into a unified response. In order for synthesis to occur, libidinal energies must outweigh and attenuate the aggressive thus allowing creative activity (“union”) to take place.

Creative production depends on the artist's capacity to transform primary process content (PP), with the help of secondary process ideation (DE), into symbolic forms that achieve the status of art. For creative activity to result in original and unique art products, we infer that the artist's adaptive regression will involve high-level syntheses (that is, the union of distant antagonistic elements) that may be used in the creative process to achieve novel unique products called art. For this to happen, artists must also have the capacity to think in uncommon ways (as evidenced in formal deviations in the Rorschach) but also to have sufficiently good contact with reality (F+) so as to be able to work the entire process through. Non-psychoanalytic researchers, for example Martindale (1993), also support Kris's concept of regression in the service of the ego. Martindale maintains that regression releases free associative thought, thus increasing the probability of novel combinations of ideas. Both Mednick and Mendelsohn have proposed theories that, according to Martindale (1993), can be taken as versions of Kris's theory stated in behaviourist vocabularies.

In short, adaptive regression consists of a series of interrelated processes that must work together. They are united by the formula

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DDxDE/PPR. Namely, defence demand (regressive quality) times defence effectiveness, divided by the total number of primary process responses.

Both adaptive regression and synthetic activity are normal processes that characterize all human beings. They are not the prerogative of the artist. But while all persons strive for synthesis, the ability to achieve a truly high level synthesis is rare and characterizes mainly the truly creative individual in any profession. The type of synthetic activity that is being studied in artists in this research is focused primarily on the activity of primary process content, to which artists normally have much easier access than non-artists. Persons engaged in other professions such as doctors, lawyers, professors, and business people are unlikely to require primary process as the raw material of their production. Nor do such professionals demonstrate a determined search for novel solutions in the pursuit of their daily activities. This is not to say that they do not strive for synthesis, integration, and a sense of completion in their work.

Hypotheses:

1. Creative artists will produce a greater number of high level synthetic responses than non-artists.
2. Creative artists will produce significantly greater numbers of formal deviations than non-artists.

Corollaries:

- (a) Rorschach records of creative artists will contain greater numbers of level 1 primary process content than records of non-artists.
- (b) Creative artists will show a greater capacity for adaptive regression than non-artists.
- (c) Rorschach records of creative artists will show a greater number of libidinal responses than those of non-artists.

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Method

In order to evaluate the above hypotheses and corollaries in creative artists, it was necessary to compare them to a group of productive persons engaged in other professions. The artists composing the experimental group were all eminent in their profession, as judged by competent critics. None of the successful professional persons had attained eminence, if eminence is seen as national or international acclaim in their specialties. Furthermore, it was established that none of them was engaged in any creative activity such as art, music, or writing. The groups were controlled for age and sex, and had all been engaged in their professions for a minimum of ten years.

Test material: The test chosen to assess regressive thinking was the Rorschach. It has an adequate scoring system for assessing primary process and adaptive regression. The synthetic score was constructed by the authors and will be described later.

Subjects:

Artists: Ten male and 10 female artists engaged in their professions over their adult lifetime (minimum 10 years), mean age 37.65, S.D. range 30-50 years. The group was composed of eminent Canadian painters by a jury consisting of the editor of a Canadian art journal and two eminent artists selected by him. They were unknown to the present researchers.

Professional persons: Ten males and 10 females who were professionals: doctors, lawyers, professors, scientists, and nurses, mean age 38.2, S.D. range 30-50 years.

Both groups were composed of persons functioning satisfactorily in their respective milieus.

Testing Procedure

Tests: All subjects were individually administered the Rorschach test by the senior author. They were all seen at their domiciles or studios. This is due to the fact that eminent creative artists were not willing to be tested outside of their studios. The standard Rorschach testing procedure was followed. The artists were solicited by the first author

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for a study of artists' attitudes on the place of contemporary art in society, with the assistance and interest of the Canada Art Council. The control group was selected by the first author at a later date and given the questionnaire on genesis of professional interest. The present paper does not deal with the results of the interview. The focus is on synthetic thinking.

Formal Rorschach determinants were scored by the second author according to the Klopfer system. Twenty-five percent of the records were rescored by an experienced psychologist working at a psychiatric hospital for 18 years. The agreement between them was 93% on all determinants combined (M + FM, 96.5%, F+ 89%, F- 95%, Fm 97%, Fc, cF, FK, 90.0%, FC, CF, C 92.5%).

The Mayman (1960) system was used for scoring form level. A 90% agreement between the same raters was achieved on 25% of the records. The main difficulties were on scoring the weak form level responses (Fv, Fw+, Fw-).

Primary process and synthetic quality was scored by the second author. Twenty-five percent were independently scored by an experienced psychologist who has been teaching the Holt method to students for ten and a half years. Agreement was 91% for content, 88% for primary process level I and II, 88% for defence effectiveness, and 82% for synthetic quality. In scoring synthetic quality, the senior psychologist was trained by the junior author for the task.

Scoring the Synthetic responses: Z

The synthetic score was elaborated by the authors. A synthetic response, called Z, was defined in terms of the following principles: only responses that contained both libidinal and aggressive content could qualify for a synthetic score. The synthetic response involved "uniting" isolated or distant antagonistic elements by integrating them into a unified response. The first criterion to consider was the distance that separated the two disparate units (namely aggressive and libidinal drive). The second was to consider whether the integration was induced by the aggressive (Z-) or the libidinal drive (Z+). The quality of the integration was described by the extent to which

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the goals of one or the other were served by this unification. That is, to what extent they were working to serve one goal, and to what extent they were merely made compatible without serving each other (hence not really synthesized). These principles resulted in five levels of synthesis, of which only levels 4 and 5 may be considered as truly synthetic.

Level 5 identified the highest level, and level 1 identified the lowest level of synthesis. To understand the Holt scores, access to the Holt article (available in Rickers-Ovsiankina, 1977, pp. 375-90) is recommended.

Level 1

Level 1 described a general concept in which libidinal and aggressive traits constitute different parts of the concept. Example: *This is an animal. I see his small eyes. This is his body, his paws, and his claws.* The scoring system is that of Holt (1960). The score for this response is L 2 Ev, Ag 2 S. Both are level II primary process: the first is libidinal (eyes, L 2, Ev), and the second is for the aggressive (claws Ag 2S). The elements do not interact. There is virtually no synthesis.

Level 2

This demonstrates a general concept in which the libidinal or aggressive aspect nuances the more general concept. For example: *This is a monster: one sees his head, his body, and his large hairy tail.* Here we have an aggressive creature (monster, Ag 2S) which the libidinal aspect (tail, L2A) mitigates. The score is: Ag 2S L2A

Level 3

A general concept, which has by its description the attributes of an antagonistic quality. *The mask of a gorilla.* The score is: L2 E-V, Ag 2S.

Mask is scored as an exhibitionistic voyeuristic response, i.e. libidinal. An aggressive animal as a qualifying adjective does not greatly change the intrinsic libidinal quality of the mask. Mask is the primary concept.

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Level 4

A primary content is involved in an activity that significantly modifies its aggressive or libidinal nature, as the case may be.

A tiger who is eating. The score is: Ag 2S, L 20. The tiger, an aggressive animal (Ag 2S), is engaged in a libidinal activity (L20). This is an example of a successful synthesis. It is Z+.

Level 5

A primary content serves the implicit or explicit goals of its antagonist in a direction opposite to the latter's normal goal. Example: *An animal who has killed another in order to feed its young.* The score is: Ag 2S, L 20. The aggressive act (Ag 2S) serves libidinal goals (L 20), hence a total, high-level synthesis is achieved.

N.B. The synthesis is scored in terms of Z+ to denote it is in the service of libidinal drives, or Z- to denote it is mainly in the service of aggressive drives. Thus: Ag 2S, L 20, Z+ for the last response.

Analysis of data

All the scored data were subjected to analysis of variance, both as raw data and as percentage scores. As already indicated in the theoretical exposition, the majority of the scores are intricately intertwined to constitute the adaptive regression formula DDxDE/PPR. It is, however, important to evaluate each contributing element for its particular relevance.

Results

The number of responses to the Rorschach in the two groups was virtually the same; 39.8, SD 18.08 for the artists and 37.1, SD 18.9 for the non-artists. This facilitated statistical analysis. The large number of responses is typical for creative subjects as well as for highly educated groups (Dudek 1984).

Hypothesis 1 was supported (Table 1) Although artists do not give more synthetic responses than non-artists, they do give more high-level synthetic responses (levels 4 & 5) (t 2.13, $p < 05$). Density of synthetic responses is significantly greater (t 3.04, $p < 01$) in artists'

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Table 1 Means and Standard Variations of *t* test Analysis of Synthetic Responses (Z)

Var	Artists		Controls		<i>t</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Z (Lib + Agg)	4.30	3.36	3.25	2.97	1.04
Z scored 4 or 5	2.50	2.42	1.15	1.46	2.13*
Z scored 1 or 2	1.70	1.34	2.05	1.88	-0.67
Z (libid)	1.65	2.08	0.45	0.76	2.41*
Z (agg)	1.85	1.39	2.20	2.28	-0.58
4 or 5 (lib)	1.0	1.49	0.20	0.41	2.32*
1 or 2 (agg)	1.05	1.19	0.85	1.23	0.52
Density Z	3.14	1.48	1.98	0.94	3.04**
Z + Lib	1.65	2.08	0.45	0.76	2.41*
Z - A	1.85	1.39	2.20	2.28	-0.58
Holt Pripro					
Sum Lib R	16.23	13.33	9.85	7.01	1.89
Sum Agg R	11.28	6.64	8.65	7.46	1.17

Z = Libidinal + Aggressive in all categories

4 & 5 high synthetic levels

1 & 2 low synthetic levels

$t = 2$ tail * < 05 ** < 01

protocols. Low-level synthetic responses (levels 1 and 2) occurred significantly more often in the non-artist sample.

Table 2 includes a summary of the components that enter into an evaluation of the adaptive regression score (REGO); namely, primary process level 1 (PPI) and level 2 (PPII), formal deviations (F Dev), and defence effectiveness (DE). Form level was analysed separately for the overall responses (4.78 NS) and for primary process content

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(4.64 NS) to compare the quality of artist and non-artist responses at each level. Table 2 indicates that Hypothesis 2 is supported. Artists scored significantly higher on formal deviations than non-artists (t 5.81, $p < 01$). It also indicates that Corollary A is supported. The artists score significantly higher on level 1 primary process content (t 4.59, $p < 01$).

Corollary B is not supported (Table 1). Although the Holt system shows that artists score higher on total number of libidinal responses than non-artists, (16.23 vs 9.85) the difference is not significant (two-tail t 1.89). The difference on sum aggressive responses (11.28 vs 8.65, t 1.17) is also not significant.

Corollary C is supported. Artists show superior adaptive regression (means 3.07 vs 2.10, t 4.53, $p < 01$). Moreover, they score higher

on adaptive regression on *level 1* primary process. That is, they achieve better adaptive scores on markedly regressive content ($t = 2.05, p < .05$). The groups do not differ in ability to see forms adequately. However, artists show significantly better form on level 1 primary process responses. The results for primary process hold up even better when the raw data are converted into percentages.

Discussion

The present study was able to support the main hypothesis, to the effect that greater access to libidinal drive energy is related to higher levels of synthetic achievement in the artist group. The artists obtained significantly higher scores on high-level synthesis than their controls. The artists also showed a greater ideational range and a greater interest and skill in providing rationalizations for their responses: building theories, elaborating details, and taking greater liberties with ordinary formal thinking—a facility that leads the average person to conclude that artists do not think as others do. However, what may be regarded as weird or shocking perceptions and constructions at one point in the evolution of an epoch are often regarded as ground-breaking and great contributions at a later point.

Table 2 indicates that high-level synthesis occurred more frequently in the artist group, as predicted. The inference that synthesis

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Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations of *t* Test Analysis of Primary Process Variables in Artists and Non-artists

Subject	Artists		Controls		<i>t</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
R	39.80	18.08	37.15	18.90	.45
Radd	4.40	5.10	1.15	1.60	2.71**
Pripro I + II	26.20	11.50	18.25	11.86	2.15**
Pripro I	11.15	7.56	3.03	2.36	4.59**
Pripro II	21.18	9.14	15.35	10.21	1.90
F Dev	14.93	6.89	4.95	3.36	5.81
%RPP	67.0	12.0	48.0	12.0	4.96**
%PPI	28.0	15.0	.08	0.5	5.82**
%PP II	5.40	11.0	41.0	12.0	3.81**
% F Dev	3.90	13.0	14.0	0.9	6.98**
Form Level	4.78	4.3	5.08	5.6	-1.89**
Rego	3.07	7.9	2.10	.55	4.53**
DE	1.12	2.5	1.09	2.9	3.4
Form PP	4.64	5.8	4.61	1.04	0.8 $N = 36$ †
Rego PPI	3.93	1.40	2.77	1.98	2.05* $N = 36$

$N = 20$ in each group

$t = 2$ tail * $< .05$ ** $< .01$

F Dev = Formal deviations

PP1 = primary process, level 1 - crude, blatant

PP2 = primary process level two, socialized

Rego = adaptive regression

DE = defense effectiveness

† $N = 36$, i.e., 4 subjects gave no PPI responses

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is essential to creativity depends partly on the extent to which high-level synthesis occurs more consistently in the protocols of the creative group. Our group was selected by qualified critics as representing some of the most creative artists in Canada. Synthesis is an essential adaptive activity that is not exclusive to creative persons. However, creative persons are expected to provide truly creative and unique synthesis in whatever field of endeavour they place their efforts. It is self-evident that only high-level and unique synthesis carries important consequences for society.

The expected difference between degree of access to aggressive and libidinal content occurred in the synthetic responses only. Artists gave significantly more libidinal synthesis (Z+), but not significantly less aggressive synthesis (Z-). This is consistent with Freudian

theory, which predicates that creative persons appear to be predominantly motivated by the libidinal impulse (the impulse to unite). It is noted that the difference between libidinal and aggressive synthesis is much greater in the control group (.045 Lib vs 2.20 Agg), and it is virtually identical in the creative group (1.65 Lib vs 1.85 Agg).

As in previous studies with creative groups, our artists obtained significantly higher scores than non-artists on adaptive regression. This difference was particularly marked with respect to adaptive regression on level 1 primary process, that is, crude, blatant expression of drive. Defence effectiveness, that is, the need and the capacity to rationalize primary process, was not more effective in artists. Nor was there a difference in form-level adequacy (judgement). This is hardly surprising. The control group consisted of high-level professional persons. There was no reason why their intellectual functioning, their judgement, or their capacity to justify their thinking should be either better or worse than that of the artists. The main differences resided in those aspects of ideation that are the privileged characteristics of the artists: access to primitive drive, capacity for adaptive regression, and synthetic activity—faculties essential to creativity in the arts.

The present group of artists was drawn from a group of eminent Canadian painters as evaluated by highly reputable critics. The broad standard deviations on test scores of primary process, regression in

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the service of the ego, defence effectiveness, and on synthesis attest to differences between artists in ability to have access to their own sources and to transform them into significant art products. Naturally, not all serious artists realize their goals. However, their future stature depends on the extent to which new synthesis achieves a significant alteration of old images, to provide something new, challenging, and in the final analysis, reconstructive.

Note

The synthetic score was reviewed by R. R. Holt, and he accepted it as a positive addition to his system.

Summary

In order to identify the presence of libidinal drive and primary process ideation, both of which have been postulated by Freudian theory as the raw material essential for creative transformation in creative activity, we chose to assess 20 eminently creative artists (painters) and a comparison group of 20 productive persons (doctors, lawyers, and psychologists), all successfully engaged in their professions. We chose the Rorschach as an already validated instrument by which to test our hypotheses. The artist group was selected by qualified critics as representing some of the most creative artists in Canada. The main hypotheses, namely, that greater access to libidinal drive energy is related to creativity and to higher levels of synthetic thinking in the artist group, were supported. The artists obtained significantly higher scores on high-level synthesis than their controls. They also showed greater adaptive regression, and a greater interest and skill in providing rationalizations for their unusual responses, which they tended to give in greater numbers than non-artists.

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