PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE LABYRINTH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE MANNERISTIC ART AND THE SCHIZOPHRENIC WORLD

Otto Doerr-Zegers*

Introduction

The labyrinth is a complex subject that has accompanied human beings from the beginning of civilization, and which can be observed from at least four dimensions: first, as a particular type of space, different from other spaces, such as the home, the street, the square or the meadow. Second, as a historical construction of great archeological interest: the mysterious and labyrinthine palace of Knossos in Crete, the center of development of an important Mediterranean culture immediately preceding the Hellenic culture. Third, the subject of the labyrinth brings back the myth of the king of Crete, Minos, whose wife, Pasiphae, conceived from her union with a divine bull a monster half man and half bull, the Minotaur, which was confined by Minos to the bottom of his labyrinthine palace and every nine years seven young men and seven young women from among the submitted Athens were brought to it, who, once inside the labyrinth, could not escape and ended up being devoured by the monster. Theseus, son of Aegeus, king of Athens, was the one who, with the help of the thread of Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae, half-sister of the Minotaur, succeeded in slaying the beast and escaping, thus ridding the Athenians of the curse. Fourth, as a motive typical for manneristic art.

Of the above four possible perspectives to approach the subject of the labyrinth, I will expand on the first, the third and the fourth one, namely, the labyrinth as a

* Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry East, University of Chile
Director of the Center for Studies on Phenomenology and Psychiatry, Diego Portales University in Santiago

possible human space, the labyrinth as a myth, and the labyrinth as a motif in manneristic art. I do this because I suggest that there is a particular relation between these two contexts and the world of schizophrenia, the mysterious disease so intimately associated with the essence of human being as it has convincingly argued by Timothy Crow (2002, 2006). I will start by making a phenomenology of the labyrinthine space in comparison with the human space.

Phenomenology of the labyrinthine space

Above all, let me be clear that in this study I will always refer to the "lived space" as it is understood by Erwin Straus (1960) and not to the objective, geographic or geometric space. Straus writes:

"If we want to represent the primary experience of space, we must free ourselves from the concept of space in physics and mathematics. We must be careful not to allow any prejudices or anticipatory decisions to be imposed on us, even if they stem from the proven experience of other sciences. For this are logically and systematically the later ones, even though they were developed historically earlier than the analysis of the primary forms of experience."

Yet this does not mean that the one concept has nothing to do with the other one. The lived space presupposes the existence of a physical or objective space, and it is defined by three characteristics.

Mood

The first thing that characterizes the lived space is that it is always marked by how a person feels on the level of emotions; it is a space colored by the basic humor or mood of the person who lives in it; nonetheless, the mood of the one who lives in any given space is in turn influenced by the objective space of the surrounding. In German language the word *Stimmung* is used for both, the mood of a person and the ambience or atmosphere of a landscape: Therefore, one could argue that the space pervaded by humor represents a particular way of self-world relation, in which

both elements of the duality are inextricably united, prior to any separation between the subjective and the objective. Thus, if, for any reason related to one's biography, we wake up happy and new are in a very good mood, the space surrounding us (our house, the garden, the landscape) will seem joyful and beautiful to us too. In contrast, a cloudy sky, and low and dark rain clouds under which the space comes closer and becomes more oppressive, will determine one's mood in a very different way than a sunny day, with that clean space that characterizes it and invites one to go places.

Another example of the direct influence of the external space upon one's internal being is color. It has always been known that light colors produce joy in humans, while dark colors, particularly blue, can trigger sadness. When Johann Wolfgang von Goethe published *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810) he described the aesthetics and psychological impact of colors to a degree of accuracy and relevance that is unsurpassed still today. For instance, Goethe writes regarding the color yellow:

"Thus, it is according to experience that the yellow makes a thoroughly warm and restful impression… one can notice this warming effect most vividly when one looks at a landscape through a yellow glass, specially on dull winter days. The eye is gladdened, the heart expanded, the temper cheered; an immediate warmth seems to blow upon us" (Paragraphs 768-769).

This stimulating effect of the color yellow increases the closer it comes to red. Blue has a diametrically opposite effect: it moves away from the viewer like the blue of the sky, and it widens space, like bluish hills at dusk. However, at the same time, according to Goethe,

"Blue gives us a feeling of coldness, just as it also reminds us of shadows" (Paragraph 782).

Green, however, is the color of balance and neutralizes the opposing effects of yellow and blue. Goethe tells us about green:

“The eye experiences a distinctly grateful impression from this color. If the two elementary colors are mixed in perfect equality so that neither predominates, the eye and the mind repose on the result of this junction as upon a simple color. The beholder has neither the wish nor the power to imagine a state beyond it. Hence for rooms to live in constantly, the green color is usually chosen for wallpaper.” (Paragraph 802)

Now, this subjective aspect of the objective space is what Tellenbach (1968) calls “the atmospheric”.

The question would be, then, what is the atmosphere of the labyrinth? In the myth, the mood that dominated the fourteen Athenian youngsters who were dropped inside the labyrinth every nine years and handed over to their dark fate was one of fright and horror. This horror was collectively perceived in Athens prior to the youngsters’ departure toward Crete, during the period in which those who would be sacrificed were selected. It is precisely the sorrow of the entire people that pushes the hero Theseus, son of king Ageus, to join the group to get entry into the labyrinth to slay the Minotaur. It is necessary to keep in mind that the labyrinth is, by definition, a space that is very easy to enter, but very difficult or nearly impossible to leave. Moreover, it is a space that leads nowhere and the only thing that can be found there is a monster is, that means the destruction of everyone who, whether out of free will or by force, enters that space. However, this monster also happens to be divine and as Franz Zinkernagel in his commentary on Friedrich Hölderlin’s *Oedipus* writes:

“The representation of the tragic is primary based on the monstrous, such as God and man is making, and the power of nature and man’s innermost been becoming boundlessly *one* in wrath, thereby comes to comprehend itself that the boundless becoming one is purified by boundless separation” (1927, p. 874).

What does Hölderlin refer to with this boundless separation through a cleansing from the boundless becoming one can be reached? I suggest that he alludes here to the subject of the labyrinth, for at least two reasons. First, because he refers to a space with boundlessness, something that is very characteristic of the labyrinth, which, in

turn, is a way of cleansing, when a big mistake has been made. Second, because few “matings” can be more monstrous than the one of Queen Pasiphae and the bull with the divine force and whose product will precisely be a monster, namely the Minotaur. To approach God is terrible, monstrous, as Hölderlin says, but at the same time, without escape, without hope, for it is not possible to stay the same after knowing the divine, any more than it is possible to return alive from the labyrinth once is being inside of it.

This interior atmosphere of the labyrinth that I have tried to outline appears in each of the versions of the myth and has been vividly reconstructed by a researcher of the subject, Paolo Santarcangeli (1984, 1997), using thereby the following words:

“The path was silent, and the darkness was growing thicker. Of the hero’s finger the thread unwound slowly, almost without an end. From time to time came noises and echoes, along the smooth walls, and like a blowing, a mooing of the wind. Of the wind? Then, there where it must have been the innermost recess of the tangled path, after turning left and right countless times – or, at least, so it seemed to him – dawned like a pale glow. He first heard the breath of the Beas; and then he saw it, lying on its side. It slept, heavy in sleep and as if innocent… Suddenly, hearing the faint noise of the mortal… The Beast… was instantly awake… The two looked at each other. There was little space between the two. The hero threw himself on the animal… and plunged his sword into his body.” (1967)

Directionality

What other characteristic does the lived space have? Its directionality. The human space always has a direction: forward and backward, an up and down, a left and a right. We are always oriented in space and on the way to somewhere. On our bed we sleep leaning to the left or to the right; we get up on one of the two sides, we go out to the street and head towards work, which is north, south, east or west from where we are. In the late afternoon, we leave work and return home in the opposite direction. Straus argues that there is only one situation in which human beings lose

their frontality and that is dance (1960, p. 141 ff.). When dancing, the human being indistinctly moves forwards or backwards, toward the left or toward the right and does not advance. Here the space is not frontal, but circular. And perhaps for that same reason dancing has such a relaxing and reposing effect, for, when dancing, one of the deepest characteristics of human life, which is its directionality, and consequently, its intentionality, is suspended. And when this occurs, life ceases, at least for a moment, to be a challenge, an invitation to action, to the performance of work.

The labyrinthine space, in contrast, lacks all direction: forward is confused with backward, and one side is mistaken for the other, there is an entrance but no exit and the center is an illusion. The reason for this total disorientation is the structure of this space itself, constantly ending in a wall, open on two equal and mirrored sides, leading to new Y-junctions in the passages, that are also identical, and ultimately, to the same point of departure. But the creepiness of the atmosphere also contributes to this disorientation. Its association with the underground, with grottos, with darkness and the lack of any form of luminosity is another essential feature of the labyrinth. The word “orientation” comes from “orient” or east, that is, the place where one can see the sun rising in the morning and that solar journey from the east to the west is what has served as a starting point regarding orientation for most of the peoples on earth. The lack of reference to the movement of the sun that is inherent to the labyrinth necessarily contributes, therefore, to the total disorientation of everyone who enters that space.

Referentiality

Another characteristic of the human or lived space is its permanently being referred to a space other than itself. In that respect, it is similar to all psychic phenomena, which, as we know from Franz Brentano (1925) and Edmund Husserl (1962), are essentially characterized by being referred to things other than themselves, that is to say, by their intentionality. Every interior space, with its multiple meanings, refers

to an exterior space; yet this occurs also in reference to elemental spaces such as the dimension of height, in which down remits to up, the dimension of width, in which the left side remits to the right side and finally, the dimension of depth in which forward remits to backward. However, this sort of intentionality of the human space also appears in more elaborated forms of spatiality. It is the case, for instance, of the home, which, as the center of the world, remits to the street, to the road and its possible goals, but also to the square, to the *agora*, as a point of rest on the road and a place of encounter with the other. But one of the forms of space where a reference to another space is observed most clearly is the case of the profane space versus the sacred space. Since the appearance of human beings in the phylogenic scale, that duality arises in them and just like there is a profane time, the one of temporality and a time of the gods, the time of the eternal, to which one is admitted through ritual act, in the same way the space of the home and of the wide world remit to the sacred space, to a transcendent space, plainly stated, to "another world". In the Christian tradition the Lord's prayer has been prayed for two thousand years and this prayer contains already in the first phrase the presence of the sacred space: "Our Father, *who art in Heaven…*".

One of the spatial polarities most relevant to the theme of the labyrinth that is of interest today is the one given between the nocturnal space and the daytime space, between darkness and light; a polarity that is discussed in great detail by Tellenbach (1991). It is true that the Greek world did not have such a negative view of shadows as the Judeo-Christian tradition does. For the Greeks the night was the time of seeing their gods and heroes in the firmament, Moreover, the road from the daytime toward the night of death was not irreversible for them, as can be inferred from the myth of Persephone, kidnapped by Hades, the sovereign of hell, who, grown tired of his celibacy, forced her to be his wife. Zeus took pity on her and allowed Hermes to bring her back to the Olympus. However, every now and then she would return to hell to be with her husband. In strong contrast to that, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, one can observe from the beginning an opposition between "darkness" and "light". The first act of the creating god is to separate them and in all biblical narrations the light appears as the good and the night as the sinister. The gospel of both Saint John

and the letters of Saint Paul preach this antagonism repeatedly: on the one side is light, on the other is darkness.

Both images, the one of the celestial light and that of the infernal shadows, find their origin in one of the so many periodicities of nature: day and night. And both have their own space. The daytime space is the space of continuity, of perspective and clarity; in other words, it is a space where the sense of sight dominates and where, totally naturally, movement and action occur. The night space, by contrast, lacking horizon and luminosity, is a space of hearing and touching that corresponds precisely to the senses that are specially strongly developed in blind people. But the nocturnal space is not defined only by lack of light, in fact it has a rather unique and positive nature. Eugene Minkowski (1933) describes the space of darkness as follows:

“It does not spread out before me, but touches me directly, envelopes me, embraces me, even penetrates me, completely, passes through me, so that one could almost say that while the ego is permeable by darkness is not permeable by light. The ego does not affirm itself in relation to darkness but becomes confused with it, becomes one with it.” (p. 393)

The disappearance of the objects’ contours, as well as of every other form of horizon, makes the nocturnal space, by definition, the space of the imprecise, of the suggestive, of the mysterious. But somehow, both spaces, that of night and that of day, that of darkness and that of light, or the profane and the sacred, continuously refer to one another, to the point where it is impossible to conceive one without the other, and like in every polarity, there are multiple transitions between the poles. There are spaces that could be considered intermediate between night and day, as is the case regarding daybreak and twilight, or the semi-darkness of the forest, or the wintry and foggy weather.

The labyrinth is probably the only self-enclosed space that is also without any reference to another space. It is true that it has an entrance, that is, a point where it is in contact with the outside world, but this point does not allow for a real polarity to

be established, that is, that sort of equilibrium between the different poles of every human space. The spatial polarities manifest a permanent flux between both extremes marked by, sometimes, infinite transitions between them. The labyrinth, in contrast, is self-sufficient; inside of it, each one of the paths returns to the starting point and contact with the other, with the non-labyrinthine, is absolutely the exception, without any transition between the outside and the inside. Even in the myth we find that only once every nine years' time Minotaur's labyrinth is accessible and follows a whole special ceremony. In this surprising temporal precision of the myth we believe we perceive an allusion to that sort of extreme solitude of labyrinthine space, that can be opened toward the other only through extraordinary sacrifice: through blood and death. The labyrinthine space is only hell, without the possibility of a relationship with or of progress toward heaven. Men and animals live on Earth, while gods live in heaven or in hell. There are many gods dwelling in the depths, as is the case of Hades and his wife Persephone, mentioned above. This space, which is neither earth nor heaven nor hell, the labyrinth, is inhabited by a monstrous being, a mixture of animal, man and God. It can be noted in general, when one talks about the Minotaur, one thinks of it as a hybrid of man and animal, but it also happens to be a god. First, because the white bull that possessed Pasiphae, Minos's wife, had been sent to this mission by Poseidon, god of the seas, and who soon became an important Cretan divinity; but also, because Pasiphae herself was the daughter of Helios, the god of the sun, and, therefore, she had the blood of gods running through her veins. Thus, the Minotaur is a monstrous combination of the three classes of beings inhabiting the universe: animal, man and gods. Mythology of the time features pairings of men and gods, with its offspring, the demigods, or of men and animals, from which gracious mythological figures such as centaurs and sirens were born. However, the combination of the three is a monstrosity and for this outrageous unique being there must be a space with equally singular characteristics, such as the labyrinth. Nikos Kazantzakis especially depicts the divine nature of the Minotaur and, thus, makes Minos say:

“I have made too much haste in ascending to the light to conquer the world. And the more I dominated the world, the more I forgot the god, the god who bayed at my feet, always a slave.” (op. cit., p. 810).

And later, when Theseus has already accomplished his mission of slaying the monster, Minos complains:

“You have snatched him from us… Now people will no longer hear the god mooing under the earth, they will lose all fear and will raise their heads with insolence… And they will sink in anarchy. Come, barbarian, and impose order with your new god.” (p. 817).

Ariadne, in turn, and despite helping Theseus to find his way out of the labyrinth, laments later with the hero, referring to the Minotaur as her god:

“For you I have betrayed my father, my native land and my god” (p. 822).

Its monstrosity, its character of a total, human, divine and animal being, rather than the lust of its mother, is what condemns it to remain locked in the depths, in a space without possible exit, without even a reference toward or hope for another space than itself.

The Labyrinthine Space and the Myth of the Minotaur

The attempt to make a phenomenology of the labyrinthine space led us to the proximities of the myth; it is now almost crying out for us to propose a possible interpretation. In my view, the Minotaur represents the human condition. There is no doubt that human beings’ access to words and to an intuitiveness regarding spirit has made us partly abandon the animal condition and to get access to the world of the gods, by way of words and by music. Humans are the conscience of the universe; we have a historical sense, knowledge of death (although solely of others’ and not one’s own), and an incontrollable aspiration to the transcendent and to the eternal. Animals do not know about death and neither do gods, in the sense that, even when

they are conscious of it, they do not suffer it, since, like Rilke's angels, they live "in the rush of their return to themselves" (2nd Elegy). Only we humans feel the "terrible trident" of the "Neptune of the blood" (3rd Elegy), that is, all the strength of instinct and of bestiality, and "we have conscience at the same time of flowering and of fading" (4th Elegy) and "only we see it (death)" (8th Elegy); but we are also able to listen to "the blowing, the incessant message formed from the silence" and we begin "to lose the habit of the earthly, as one is tenderly weaned off one's mother's breast" (1st Elegy), that is, humans have access to the world of the gods. Both animals and gods are identical to themselves and live in harmony with their environment, with things other than themselves. Humans, however, break all order and are a pure contradiction and, like the Minotaur, humans are simultaneously beastly and tender, conscious and unconscious, culpable and innocent. Fortunately, humans are not only that, we are also openness and vocation of transcendence. Yet to realize our vocation we need, indeed, to be saved from that suffocating and dingy prison (perhaps the concept of sin) by the action of a being of the light, of a god (as exemplified, for instance, by Theseus or Christ). And this is then the end of the myth of the Minotaur: Theseus, with the help of love (Ariadne), finally liberates humankind from wickedness or our animality, and from the contradictory nature of our hybrid condition, by destroying the monster and, by doing so, making the labyrinth unnecessary. In human history this will appear later only as an element of that so peculiar artistic style that is mannerism, but also as a central feature of schizophrenia, the modern way of manifesting madness.

Labyrinth, Mannerism and Schizophrenia

The nexus between labyrinthine space and schizophrenia is formed by mannerism. It is, apparently, the first truly not naïf, not ingenuous style in art history. Mannerism arises around 1520 and lasts only for seventy years, as by 1590 it is replaced by baroque. There is no clear explanation of why it appears at that moment and the reasons for its demise are not known either. Now, this was certainly not definitive,

since isolated worshipers of it would appear in the following centuries, and it would return in all its glory and majesty through twentieth century surrealism.

The first manifestation of mannerism is a picture painted in 1523 by Francesco Mazzola (also known as “Il Parmigianino”) representing himself, reflected in a convex mirror. This first mannerist picture shows almost all the characteristics of this artistic style that has been later defined in 1639 by Matteo Peregrini with reference to its seven sources:

He proposes seven general sources of discernment: “the incredible or unexpected, the deceptive, the involved, the imitative, the incomplete, the implied, and derision”.

Mannerism reaches its greatest achievements in Michelangelo’s fresco The Final Judgment, painted between 1533 and 1541 behind the altar of the Roman Sistine Chapel (1541) and it adopts rather extravagant shapes in the Venetian style of Paolo Veronese and Tintoretto, and El Greco’s work being its culmination. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, with this movement in the process of disappearing, another almost archetypical figure of mannerism arises: Giuseppe Arcimboldo, who composed human figures with fruits, plants, animals and objects and succeeded in combining things of which nobody thought they could go together. This painter’s work calls to mind the aesthetic credo of twentieth century surrealism, associated with well-known names such as Salvador Dali and René Magritte and which nobody expressed so well as Comte de Lautréamont with his novel language that reveals a new form of beauty, for instance, the passage of the Sixth Canto that describes his perception of seeing a young passer-by:

“And above all, as the chance meeting on a dissecting-table of a sewing-machine and an umbrella!”

Et surtout, comme la rencontre fortuite sur une table de dissection d’une machine à coudre et d’un parapluie!

Mannerism arises from classicism as a need to overcome that harmony that is so characteristic of the latter and appears as a willful, forced search for originality in the

disharmonic, in the ambiguous and, ultimately, in the absurd. In his 1944 essay regarding the formation of mannerism, Karl Scheffler (1944) writes:

“Mannerism…corresponds, speaking in a parable, to the state of the individual…when the generative potency experiences a crisis, as the individuals and the communities sense that their creative spiritual powers have passed their peak. In this state, auxiliary forces of the will are called upon against the impending dangers, yet without daring to break with tradition.” (p. 170).

One always finds in mannerism a willful, forced, arbitrary element. This style is the opposite of getting carried away by contemplating nature in an attempt of imitating it, or by an emotion, be this profane or sacred. What other characteristics does mannerist art have? There are at least two. The first is related to the fact that in mannerist paintings, with exception of the portraits of individual persons, the figures are interlinked in a complex nexus of relationships with other figures, as is clearly observed in Michelangelo’s “Final Judgement” and in almost all paintings by El Greco. In all these great artistic expressions, the figures, intertwined with one another, ascend in a vertical line, thus giving the impression that space itself has escaped toward the infinite. The other characteristic, particularly noticeable in portraits, is the predominance of a mask over that intimate and secret interiority sought by classists such as Leonardo da Vinci. In the portraits by Il Bronzino, for example, the characters are painted almost with the same perfection as Leonardo displays (unlike the coarseness of most of El Greco’s figures) and yet Il Bronzinos’s *personae* are cold, rigid, closed figures that therefore do not let one get to know them or recognize them in the portrait.

The relationship between mannerism and labyrinth is very simple. The labyrinth is one of the elements most used by mannerist artists, almost as much as the mirror or the monstrosities. One of the first artists to use the idea of the labyrinth, although not being a mannerist himself, was Leonardo da Vinci. He used it, for example, in his coded writing and pictograms, but also later in his abstract games with labyrinthine constructions which, at that time, gave him fame as being a magician. Labyrinthine drawings are almost as ancient as humanity. One can find them in the

Stone Age, in Classical Antiquity, in medieval cathedrals (as model of the redemption path leading to celestial Jerusalem) or in the well-known Hindu mandalas. However, with Leonardo the use of this symbol brings about a change: the labyrinthine entwining becomes a model for mystery. Without providing a reference, Gustav René Hocke argues that according to Dante Alighieri

"the mystery, God, would have to be symbolized by *nodi strani,* by *strange knots,* we may well say by interwoven *objectless* lines, by abstract, inextricable figurations" (quoted by Hocke, p. 190).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the labyrinthine motif experiences an explosive rise. Labyrinthine gardens became fashionable, which, in the case of the Bomarzo Palace of the Orsini family, are filled with monsters and are thereby providing a quintessential example of mannerism. Baroque poetry and prose are also labyrinthine and the finest examples of that time are the works of Luis de Góngora and Baltasar Gracián. In his famous novel *El Criticón*, Gracián describes the world of his hero as a "model of labyrinths and center of minotaurs" and he then adds:

"It was spacious and not at all proportionate, nor was it square: all angles and traverses, without perspective or concinnity. All its doors were false and no opening discernable".

In the eighteenth century the most outstanding figure in terms of employing the subject of the labyrinth is without a doubt the Italian engraver, Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), who drew his famous motif of "Prisons" with infinite ladders and mirrored corridors that have inspired part of the work of an interesting contemporary Chilean painter, namely, Eduardo Meissner Grebe.

In the nineteenth century, with the predominance of romanticism and of neoclassicism, the labyrinth disappeared as a subject, to return in all its glory and majesty with surrealism. I could not end this brief historical review without mentioning the great Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, who in spite of his concise style, also

frequently got involved with mannerist subjects such as the labyrinth and mirrors. In one of his stories. *El Aleph*, he writes:

“I dreamed, until I was exhausted, of a clean, small labyrinth in whose center was an amphora, that my hands almost touched, that my eyes contemplated, but the paths were so confusing that it became clear to me: I would die without ever getting there”.

Moreover, his story “The garden of the Y-junctions” is labyrinthine in all possible senses, from the argument and the description of landscapes and gardens to its unexpected and surprising end.

In summary, the curious movement that appeared in the sixteenth century and that had important though isolated worshippers in the following centuries, is full of divisions, whims, and contradictions, its most recurrent subjects being the labyrinth, the mirror, the mask, the artifice, the monstrous and the uncommon association. I suggest all these characteristics suspiciously bring mannerism closer to the schizophrenic world. Everybody knows that from the first descriptions of this disease made by Emil Kraepelin (1985) and Eugen Bleuler (1911) one can find references to stereotyped and mannered movements, gestures, conducts, expressions, and thoughts and, years later, Ludwig Binswanger (1956) claimed that mannerism was not only a symptom, but also an essential feature of the schizophrenic way of existence. I suggest that, moreover, every one of the fundamental symptoms of this disease, in the sense of Bleuler (1911), could be understood as the expression of an extreme form of mannerism and this is linked to a strange association with one of its favorite subjects, namely, the labyrinth:

1. *Thought disorder*: the looseness of associations, including nonsensical sentences; the incomprehensible and arbitrary character of associations; frequent misuse of repetitive and meaningless words or phrases in the middle of other sentences, stereotypes and mannerisms, in both language content and structure, all of them characteristic symptoms of schizophrenic thinking, take us to the labyrinthine space, so characteristic of mannerist art, as well as to the employment of artificial ornaments and of whimsical forms.

2. *Affectivity disorder*: the typical affective flattening or emptiness of schizophrenics corresponds to the great importance of the subject of the mask in mannerist art, as well as to that lack of interiority I mentioned with respect to the beautiful, yet cold Bronzino portraits. The use of blue, violet, and bilious green colors, characteristic of the artwork of both Bronzino and of El Greco, also points to a certain form of hiding the most intimate individuality and feelings.
3. *Ambivalence*: mannerist art employs frequently the subject of the mirror and nothing could reflect more that duplicity of feelings and wills, characteristic of schizophrenic ambivalence, than a mannerist mirror. One is and is not at the same time, one loves and does not love, one feels and does not feel simultaneously. One is one's own image (in the mirror) and the own image is oneself. Surprisingly, this ambivalence characterizes the feeling and acting of most of the myth's characters: King Minos, who punishes the stepson on account of his wife's infidelity and locks him in the labyrinth, while at the same time he worships him as a god. So, he complains to Theseus: "You have snatched him from us."

4. *Autism*: the labyrinth is the autistic space *per se*. There is no reference to the other, but only to oneself. In this space persons with schizophrenia move with the ambivalence of binary junctions, without ever finding either the route or the exit and having to face, sometimes directly, that is, with very few defense mechanisms, the fears coming from one's depth (psychotic anxiety). Yet autism is more than just a complex psychopathological phenomenon, and certainly not a mere symptom. It is also a style of life, one of whose characteristics is, like in the labyrinth, the difficulty to get out of it. Prior to the era of psychopharmacological drugs, schizophrenic patients, once entering the autistic style of life, remained within its bound, as in some way it protected them against the threats and strangeness of the world. Now, a huge pharmacological arsenal enables physicians almost regularly to ease their positive or productive symptoms. This treatment requires more effort to place them back into social and work life, and into friendly and loving relationships. Schizophrenics are lost in

eccentric ideals (*verstiegene Idealbildung*), in twisted thoughts (*Verschrobenheit*) and throughout their life, their conduct tends to twist and turn about in a chronic introspection (it is noticeable that they look frequently at themselves for hours in the mirror, as if searching for themselves), in repetitions and freezes (fixed and delusional ideas maintained identical for years) and in constant dwelling on how something is done rather than on what has been done, in a way that lacks experiential content supporting it. These characteristics of the schizophrenic way of existence make it easier to understand its vicinity to mannerism. Goethe himself had alluded to this feature, in a remark regarding shortcomings of Roman architecture when compared with classical Greek architecture. He writes:

“Only now do I feel how justifiably all arbitrariness (of functional architecture) has been detestable to me…Now all of it stands there stillborn, for what does not have a true, inner existence has no life and cannot be great or become great“. (2013)

The tragic existential condition of people with schizophrenia lies in the fact that they, in their desperate search for themselves, find only emptiness, since the self is never really in one identity, but in another one. And this is dramatically reflected in their artistic productivity, that shows how that interior emptiness is transformed into an obsession with filling every possible external space; how the incapacity or rather the fear to deeply feel (associated, as it is known, with the coldness of the mother or with an home destroyed early) appears in their pictures as the total absence of perspective and how, finally, the difficulty they face to accept the dialectic condition of existence is reflected in their work through infinite unnecessary details, that are mere graphic pyrotechnics, pure artifice, in summary, empty and abandoned labyrinths, without Minotaurs posing a real (instinctive, for example) threat, nor Theseus saving, with the help of love, all who are trapped in the labyrinth and allowing them (or human kind in general) to reach true transcendence.

Summary

The subject of the labyrinth is shown here in at least four contexts: First, as a possible space; second as an archeological relic, namely, the labyrinthine palace of Knossos in Crete; third, as an essential element of the myth of the Minotaur; and fourth, as a motif that is typical for mannerist art. Attempting to associate the subject of the labyrinth with psychopathology, I proceed first to determine, by means of the phenomenological method, the essential features of this exceedingly special space. The analysis led me to conclude that the labyrinth lacks directionality, it is not referred to another different or opposite space – like all other human spaces – but only to itself, and that the predominant atmosphere in it is one of terror. Second, I explored why the Minotaur monster necessarily dwells in a space such as the labyrinth and, in passing, I ventured an interpretation of the myth. Third, I described the characteristics of mannerist art and the reasons why the labyrinth is one of its favorite subjects. Finally, and with respect to a series of cases of schizophrenic painters, gathered in the renown Prinzhorn Collection of Heidelberg University, I elaborated in what way the labyrinth appears in all these patients' paintings and which could be the differential features between the subject of the labyrinth in schizophrenia and in non-psychotic mannerist art.

References

Binswanger, L.: Drei Formen Missglückten Daseins. Verstiegenhiet, Verschrobenheit, Manieriertheit. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag (1956).

Bleuler, E.: Dementia praecox oder die Gruppe der Schizophrenien. Hb. Der Psychiatrie, hrsg. v. Aschaffenburg. Bd. IV. Leipzig und Wien: Deuticke Verlag (1911). Trad. Cast., Buenos Aires: Paidós (1960).

Bollnow, O. F.: Mensch und Raum. Stuttgart-Berlin-Köln-Mainz: Kohlhammer Verlag, 4. Auflage (1980).

Borges, J. L.: "El Inmoral"., in El Aleph (1949), Obras Completas I (1923-1949), Buenos Aires, AR: Sudamericana 2016, p. 835..

Borges, J. L.: “El Aleph”. En: Obras Completas. Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores (1974), p. 531.

Borges, J. L.: “El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan”. En: Obras Completas. Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores (1974), p. 472-.480.

Brentano, F. : Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt. Zweiter Band: Von der Klassifikation der Psychischen Phänomene.Leipzig: Meiner (1925), pp. 133-50.

Comte de Lautréamont, “Sixth Canto”, in *Maldoror & The Complete Works of the Comte de Lautréamont,* transl. Alexis Lykiard, Cambridge, MA: Exact Change 1998, pp. 188-219, here p. 193.

Comte de Lautréamont, Isidore Ducasse, “Chant Sixième”, in *Oeuvres Complètes: Les Chants de Maldoror, Poésies, Lettres*, Paris, FR: José Corti 1987, pp. 321-59, here p. 327.

Crow, T. J.: The Speciation of Modern *Homo sapiens.* Oxford: Oxford University Press (2002).

Crow, T.: “March 27, 1827 and what happened later – the impact of psychiatry on evolutionary theory”. Progress in Neuro-Psychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry 30: 785-796 (2006).

Goethe, J.W.: "Schriften zur Farbenlehre". In *Naturwissenschaftiiche Schriften*, Erster Teil. Zürich: Artemis Verlag AG (1949), Kap. XVI., S. 207 ff.

Goethe, J. W.: Carta a Herder (1787). En: Viaje a Italia. Barcelona: Ediciones B, S. A. (2001), p. 166.

Goethe, J. W.: “Terni, den 27. Oktober, abends“. In *Italinische Reise. Auch ich in Akadien,* Berlin, DE: Holzinger 2013, p. 94, http://www.zeno.org/Lesesaal/N/9781484072868?page=94&ps=%21

Gracián, B.: El Criticón. ed. Miguel Romera-Navarro, Lancaster, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press 1938, p. 228.Quoted by G. R. Hocke: Manierismus in der Literatur. Hamburg: Rowohlt (1959).

Hocke, G.R.: Manierismus in der Literatur. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch GmbH (1959).

Hocke, G. R.: Manierismus in der Kunst. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch GmbH (1961).

Hölderlin, F.: Oedipus der Tyrann. In: *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. 1, hrsg. von F. Zinkernagel. Leipzig: Insel o. J. (1927), S. 874.

Husserl, E.: Husserliana, Vol. IX, Phänomenologische Psychologie. The Hague: Nijhoff (1962), p. 237.

Jensen, A. E.: Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur. Stuttgart: August Schroder Verlag (1948).

Kazantzakis, N.: "Teseo". En-. Obras Selectas II, Novelas - Teatro - Viajes. Barcelona- Editorial Planeta (1962), p. 733.

Kraepelin, E.: Psychiatrie. Ein Lehrbuch für Studierende und Ärzte. 5. Auflage. Leipzig: Johannes A. Barth (1896)

Minkowski, E.: Le temps vécu. Études phénomenologiques et psychopathologiques. Paris- Collection de l'Évolution Psychiatrique (1933).

Minkowski, E. : Lived Time : Phenomenological and Psychopathological Studies, transl. Nancy Metzel, Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press 1970, p. 429.

Peregrini, M.: Delle Acutezze. Bologna-Genua: Clemente Ferroni (1639), citado por Gustav René Hocke, en: Manierismus in der Literatur. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH (1959), p. 72.

Rilke, R. M.: "Primera Elegía del Duino". En: Rainer Maria Rilke, Las Elegías del Duino y otros poemas. Traducción, prólogo, notas y comentarios de Otto Dörr. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria (2000), p. 33.

Rilke, R. M.: "Segunda Elegía del Duino". En- Rainer Maria Rilke, Las Elegías del Duino y otros poemas. Traducción, prólogo, notas y comentarios de Otto Dörr. Santiago- Editorial Universitaria (2000), p. 45.

Rilke, R. M.: "Tercera Elegía del Duino". En-. Rainer Maria Rilke, Las Elegías del Duino y otros poemas. Traducción, prólogo, notas y comentarios de Otto Dörr. Santiago- Editorial Universitaria (2000), p. 57.

Rilke, R. M.: "Cuarta Elegía del Duino". En-. Rainer Maria Rilke, Las Elegías del Duino y otros poemas. Traducción, prólogo, notas y comentarios de Otto Dörr. Santiago- Editorial Universitaria (2000), p. 71.

Rilke, R. M.: "Octava Elegía del Duino". En-. Rainer Maria Rilke, Las Elegías del Duino y otros poemas. Traducción, prólogo, notas y comentarios de Otto Dörr. Santiago: Editorial Universitaria (2000), p. 129.

Santarcangeli, P.: Il libro dei laberinti. Storia di un mito e di un simbolo. Firenze: Vallecchi (1967).

Scheffler, K.: (1944). „Über die Entstehung des Manierismus“. Werk: Die Schweizer Monatsschrift für Kunst, Architektur, kunstelisches Gewerbe 31 / 6 (June 1944), 169-171. Quoted .by Hocke, G. R., en: Manierismus in der Kunst. Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch GmbH (1961).

Straus, E.: "Die Formen des Räumlichen. ihre Bedeutung für die Motorik und die Wahrnehmung." ln- Psychologie der menschlichen Welt. Berlin-Göttingen-Heidelberg: Springer Verlag (1960), S. 141 ff.

Tellenbach, H: Geschmack und Atmosphäre. Salzburg: Otto Müller (968).

Tellenbach, H.: "Tres concepciones occidentales de la noche", transl. Elvira Edwards and Otto Dörr. Cultural Supplement "*Artes y Letras*" El Mercurio, 9 September 1990.