NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

SCHIZOPHRENIA, POSTMODERNISM, AND ART

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FOREWORD

In this essay I am attempting to examine the relevance the disease schizophrenia has to the periodizing concept that is Postmodernism and to contemporary Art practice. The essay is in the form of a sequence of points or observations, they loosely follow each other, but there is no major importance attached to the order in which they come. Hopefully they will all cross-relate to each other, perhaps after a first reading in chronological order, the reader could pick points at random and relate them to points elsewhere in the essay. Due to the nature of the topic I felt that a structure of chapters would be inappropriate, therefore there is no listing of major categories of inquiry. I hope the reader will bear with me with regard to this.

Due to the scope of inquiry I will often make what might appear to be gross generalisations. This is because the essay was designed to be discoursive. Hopefully these generalisations will provoke the reader to examine these diverse areas of inquiry in more detail his/herself. There was not room in the present format to qualify every statement, this was often frustrating, but essential to the flow of the argument.

A knowledge of the psychopathology of schizophrenia would be a help in understanding my arguments, but not essential. I feel I have explained any symptoms of the disease that I have specifically dealt with. However I would not like the reader to think that I have in any way explained or defined the 'state of mind' that is schizophrenia, diagnostic classifications of schizophrenia are subject to wide debate even within established clinical psychiatry. But any symptomatology or disease-aetiology referred to, will be correct and can be found in existing psychiatric theory. It is my sincerest hope that I have in no way glamorized or trivialised the 'disease', or the condition of those who suffer from it.

INTRODUCTION

This essay is an inquiry into schizophrenia, Art and Postmodernism in terms of semiotics and a philosophical approach to language. The only introduction needed, is that my major premise is that schizophrenia is a language disorder.

Language imposes itself on our perception of reality. This is the Saussurian theory of the sign, in which the 'signifier' effectively dominates the 'signified'. It brings into account the interplay between words as 'external objects' (i.e. patterns of soundwaves or markings on paper, as real in reality as the objects that they refer to) and words as 'sound-images' or 'sense images', inextricably linked to an internalised mental reproduction or conception of the object (out-there, in 'reality') in question.
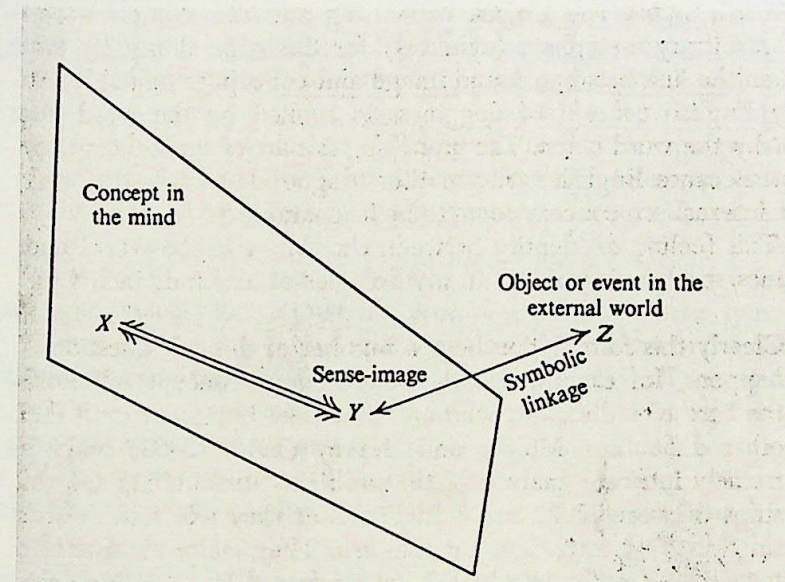
Jung would hold that there are two types of thinking, directed and non-directed. When we think in **words**, maybe when trying to solve a difficult problem, we are using directed thinking or thinking with 'directed attention'. You might even start talking to yourself

or if it is a mathematical problem draw a diagram. "So long as we think directedly, we think **for** others and speak **to** others". (Jung; (1)). Non-directed thinking is thinking outside the verbal form, image piles on image, feeling on feeling. It seems the tendency in non-directed thinking is to shuffle things about and rearrange them, not as they are in 'reality', or in a correct linguisticly ordered reality, of what goes with what, or genius with species etc. "That these likenesses were not only in things but also (perhaps above all) in the ways in which language defines things." (ECO; (2)). But to order, as one genuinely perceives them.

Central to the Postmodern ethos is the apparent disintegration and subdivision of the language system, into privatized or disparate sub-systems. One has only to conjure up notions of modern economics, of 'city-dealing' with its obscure market language or ideolect to see an example of a privatized language system, indeed one could find a similarly privatized language system in use by L.A. Gang members in the recent 'Colour' wars. Or as Laurie Anderson put it "Buzz-words-tops." "Perhaps the immense fragmentation and privatization of modern literature - its explosion into a host of distinct private styles and mannerisms -

forshadows deeper and more general tendencies in social life as a whole." (Jameson; (3)). Modern literature characterised by its variety of unique styles has become a treasure chest for Postmodern writers to plunder, mixing and matching styles removed from their original contextual relationship of form to content. This relationship of form to content becomes blurred in Postmodernism, the inference being that something of a similar nature is going on in everyday life. One could propose that everyone is in search of 'forms' in their lives.

Schizophrenia is essenially a language disorder, it is seen (by Jameson) as the breakdown of the normal relationship between signifiers whose 'normal' interrelationship produces the effect (or illusion) of meaning. Or as Dr. Anthony Clare would put it "The disturbances of thought processes result in an idiosyncratic use of words, an impairment of **logical organisation**, and a fragmentation in the orderly association of ideas." (Clare; My Underline, (4)); which came first, the chicken or the egg? Ludwig Wittgenstein summed it up well when he said that, the thought is the language. The schizophrenics who populate psychiatric hospitals are those who have not gravitated towards a 'communal language system', they

do not, or are unable to use an 'accepted' linguistic structure for ordering the elements of reality (specifically in terms of an 'accepted' 'encyclopaedic' or 'dictionaric' network for interpretants). It is therefore not surprising that they manifest an idiosyncratic use of words.

Examples of some diagnostic classifications of these thoughts and word processes, please note the ideological propositions implicit;

1) "The terms paraphrasis or metonyms refers to the schizophrenics tendency to use ordinary words in unusual ways"

2) "In 'knights-move-thinking' a characteristic of schizophrenic thought disorder, the subject omits an essential step in his reasoning," and

3) "Overinclusion refers to the schizophrenic problem whereby he is unable to keep irrelevant thoughts from contaminating the main one" (O'Shea, Falvey (5))

All these quotations are from a standard textbook of psychological medicine. Confirmation of the schizophrenic's inability to use a communal language system can be found in Jung's assertian that the schizophrenic ceases to be schizophrenic when he/she meets someone by whom he feels understood.

Therefore a key element (the other being 'pastiche') of Postmodernism is schizophrenia, and a semantic approach to the 'disease' will reveal its relevance to Postmodernism.

Jameson's terms 'pastiche' and 'schizophrenia' appear to describe two views of the same process. Unlike parody, 'pastiche' is schizophrenic; in that is is bound up with the deaths of linguistic and cultural norms, in general. The generic rules or cultural norms violated by parody are so acknowledged that there is no need to reaffirm them. If however there is no observance of the generic norms, if there is no reinvention of new generic norms, or if there is nothing but violations, to the point where the norms themselves are forgotten; it is then that parody gives way to 'pastiche'.

This process bleeds into everyday life and back into cultural production, the writer Martin Amies has described not understanding the characters he portrays in his novels, he maintains that peoples actions and motivations in life (even taking into account chance) are no longer coloured by anything even approaching logic or rationalism. That deterministic predictability exists neither in 'fiction' nor in

science; there are no longer norms to bounce-off either in the individual or culturally. "It is no longer clear what the artist and writers of the present period are supposed to be doing." (Jameson (6))

"According to Lyotard 'we' are living in a new existential condition in which all certainties associated with rationality from the enlightenment on are gone." (Editorial/Circa; (7)).

Schizophrenia involves an inability to think 'logically' and behave 'rationally', this is a view held in almost all psychiatric theory. The terms 'logic' and 'reason' are not constants, however in-so-much as we do have a 'concept' of reason and logic, it is what we call a 'classical model' of reason. If schizophrenia is a key element of Postmodernism it is not surprising that we are experiencing what is termed the Postmodern 'crisis in reason' or, in semiotics the 'death of the linguistic norm'. All reason should be a critique of language.

With this crisis comes a reciprical crisis of representation. A crisis in that we arfe unable to

construct and exchange images of the world that are apt to convey the form, if there is one, of this world. There is a profoundly 'surfacey' quality to Postmodern cultural production, for example, contemporary or retro-architecture again resorting to an eclectic mimicry of its modern and pre-modern tradition. The dominant vehicle for architectural statement is now the 'facade', conveying the covert message, not to scratch beneath the surface, for 'there is nothing there'; and this can be read quite literally.

In what way do these crises affect Art/cultural production? This argument is dialectic - the schizophrenic perception of the world is one of fusion of fragmented and disparate elements of 'reality'. "Von Domarus (1944) interpreted schizophrenic 'thought disorder' as a result of the patient's following non-Aristotelian logic. For example, a schizophrenic may equate a stag with an Indian by focusing on a characteristic common feature- namely swiftness of movement. On this basis, he classifies both stags and Indians as belonging in the same group." (Szasz (8)). The 'modus ponens' is the first rule of classical reasoning where by if I assert, if p the q and acknowledge that p is true, then q can only follow. In other words, from the major premis that 'All men are

mortal' and the minor premis that 'Socrates is a man' we can conclude that 'Socrates is mortal'. This logical process presupposes an understanding of the class called 'man'. To reiterate; the ordering or filing of classes is idiosyncratic in schizophrenia. The 'modus ponens'does not apply in poetry, dreams or indeed visual arts. Is it not through such activities that humanity tries to make sense/reason of the world?

This process is seen in Postmodern art practice and cultural production in general. It involves a dismantling, a deconstruction of the elements that make up reality (social totality). Postmodernism is about an incoherent hybridized representation of an incoherent and illusatory culture, it is as if we have become incapable of representing our own current experience aesthetically.

Language systems alter the function of 'signs' though ever shifting social configurations. 'Signs' only convey 'meaning' when contrasted against other signs within a fixed (culturally accepted) 'code' for example in the cultural convention of a mathematical 'code' the statement X + Y = Z makes perfect sense, taken out of that context, the expression /+/ or /=/ would convey

wholly different, or even no, information. Jean Baudrillard has proposed that control of the 'code' in terms of mass-media communication effectively means the existence of a political economy of the 'sign'. If the interrelationship of signifiers is being manipulated by economic forces it follows that 'our' perception of 'reality' will be drastically altered. "A scientific injuction is invoked against the imminent possibility of the terms exchanging amongst each other symbolically - in poetic language for example as in symbolic exchange, the terms respond to each other beyond the code. It is this response that is ultimately deconstructive of all codes, of all control and power." (Baudrillard; (9)). A bizarre example of altered perception, would be, the fact that a great number of people involved in the Falklands conflict described **perceiving** themselves as actually appearing in their own movie. The moment before they ran in the face of fire they saw themselves as the protagonist in an epic of their own making.

The schizophrenic functions largely outside of any 'normal' language system, therefore the 'sign' in schizophrenia maintains some sort of autonomy, a self-sufficiency. Moreover the perception of reality (the absolute rule of the present). "Venables (1966)

has drawn attention to a heightened physiological arousal in schizophrenia, both in those showing florid signs of psychosis and those showing marked social withdrawl, retardation, and apathy. The combination of slowing and lack of interest with increased physiological arousal might appear paradoxical. It is possible, however, that as a result of persistent 'over-arousal' the schizophrenic seeks to minimise the intensity and frequency of stressful stimuli to which he may be exposed." (Clare (10)).

Another paradox is that as science's develop their abilities to evaluate or measure more accurately, it usually results in variables being dimensionally rather than dichotomously (being either present or absent), defined. Classical 'cause and effect' or 'if p then q' reasoning seems no longer to apply. In physics relativity theory elimiated the Newtonian illusion of absolute space and time, quantum theory eliminated the Newtonian hope of controllable measurement process (this has profound philosophical implications, see; Pauli exclusion principle, Neils Bohr - uncertainty principle etc.) and catastrophe theory or chaos removed any idea of deterministic predicatbility. We just do not know what constitutes a 'reality' A dimensional view of schizophrenia would conceive of **different types**

of perception as being only points on a continuum, hallucinations being represented towards one end of a line with 'normal' perceptions nearer the other end.

As an aesthetic expression of reality 19th Century acidamic painting was made irrelevant with the introduction of photography. Something of a similar nature is happening today. The combined technologies of T.V., video, cybernetics, computers, 3D holograms, word processing and information technologies are profoundly altering oiur world view in general, as well as any notions 'we' might have had about what is deemed real and what is deemed un-real. The new common-place Fax machine regularly irrationalises distinctions between the authentic and the inauthentic, the representation and the reality become one-and-the same thing,. Engaging/grappling with such conceptual intangibles is very much what schizophrenia and to a degree what a schizophrenic-art practice is about. I do not want to mythologise schizophrenia but it is the case that the abilites, 1) to conceptualize intangibles, 2) for circumstantual or non-linear thinking, and 3) for tangental thinking (rapid, strangely connected associations, deconstructive of the 'point' in question) are all heightened in schizophrenia. In a lesser degree these types of

thought processes are useful in a postmodern context.

As a cognative tool, linear type thinking is not very practical for finding 'form' or making 'sense' in an increasingly fragmentory and illusionary world. The four characters in Tarkovsky's film 'The Stalker' made a hazardous journey through a wilderness called the 'Zone', their destination a certain room, in which they are told their most secret wish will be granted. In order to arrive at their goal they must attach an iron nut to the end of a white rag and throw it in **any** direction, walk to where it lands, pick it up and repeat the process. The idea being that in the zone (a metaphor for life), the shortest route between two points is not always in a straight line.
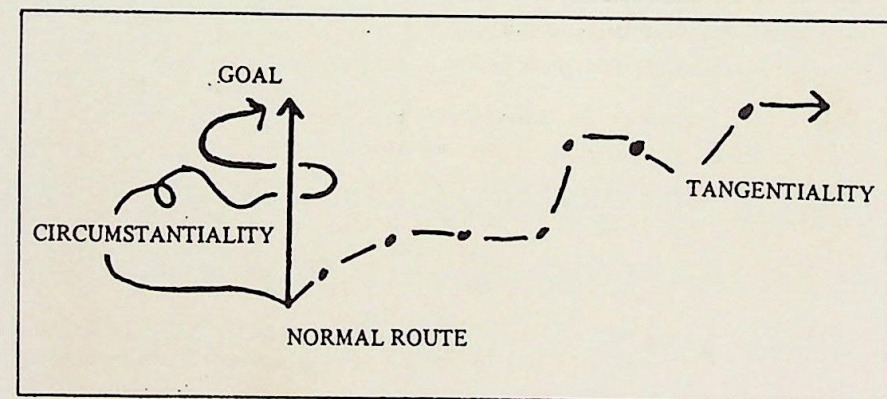
"The trend of thought is hapharzardly interrupted; one topic is taken up, quickly displaced by another, and it, in turn, by another. In a classical flight of ideas the point is continually lost amidst a web of jumbled thoughts associated together by similarly sounding words (clang associations), alliteration, proverbs, and cliches - despite many irrelevances, distractions, and tangential journeys, the patient is able to return again and agin to the central theme of his communication." (Clare; (11)).

An increasingly schizophrenized society can in fact induce schizophrenia amongst its members, for example with regard to the significantly higher rate of schizophrenia in Southern Ireland. There has been put forward a possible link between the genesis of schizophrenia and the cultural traditions of the Catholic church - by its stressing a greater attention to **intangibles** than say Protestantism.

One could infer that a schizophrenic Art practice would be better able to make 'representations' of the world as it is perceived. On a more intimate level, (not a world view) so acute is the schizophrenics experience of even an isolated object in reality, that, at times

it can verge on 'implosion', a terror arises that at any moment the object being preceived is liable to crash in and obliterate his/her identity. Much as a gas would rush in and obliterate a vacuum. This can be experienced to a far lesser degree when someone not suffering a psychoses tries to obsessively observe something, (a cup for example), in order to draw it. With prolonged concentration the 'reality' of the cup can assume proportions more 'real' than ones own identity and may become, just for a moment, threatening. It is also interesting that there can arise an un-nerving awareness of just how arbitrary any 'given' perception is. An awareness that any **one**-way of **not**-looking at it. And of how difficult a fusion or reconciliation of different types of perception into one image would be. The type of fusion (on a wider scale) of disparate perceptions or elements of reality *that is common in schizophrenia. This phenomenon has been acknowledged by countless practicing artists throughout history.

*Note: I feel obliged to discuss my own work here in reference to this point and also to schizophrenic language systems in general. It is in the nature of the work that my explanation of it will be, in some sense 'coded', itself. Hopefully my discussion of Elizabeth Magill's work, will clarify what I mean by a schizophrenic-art-practice.
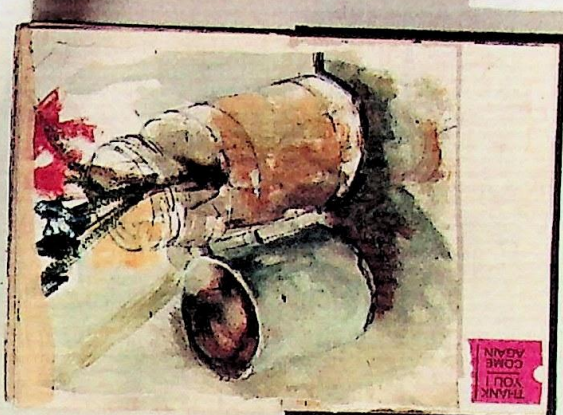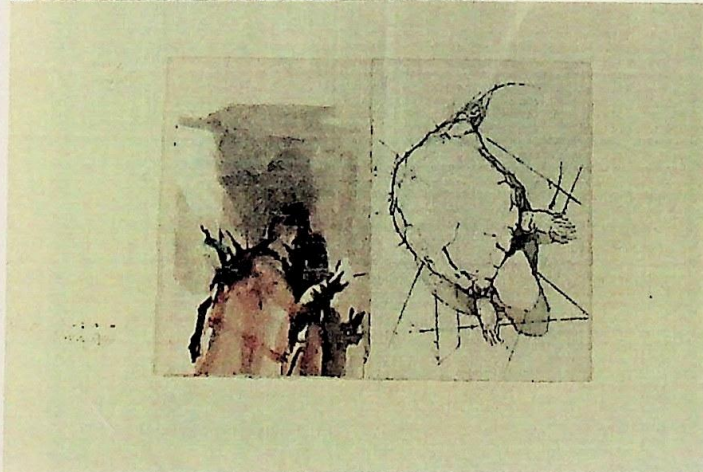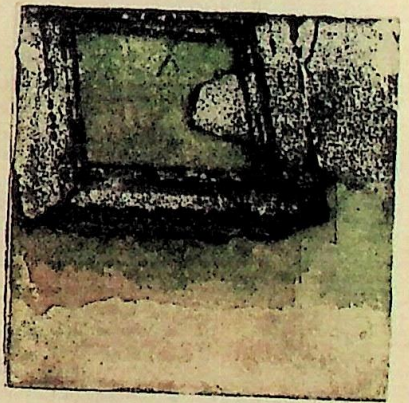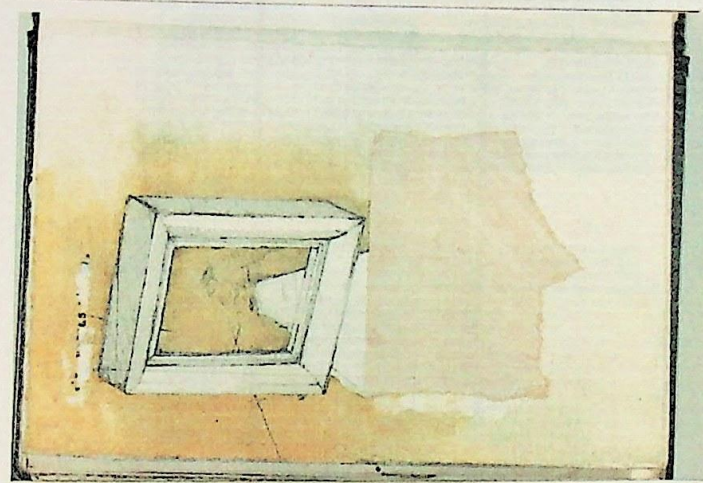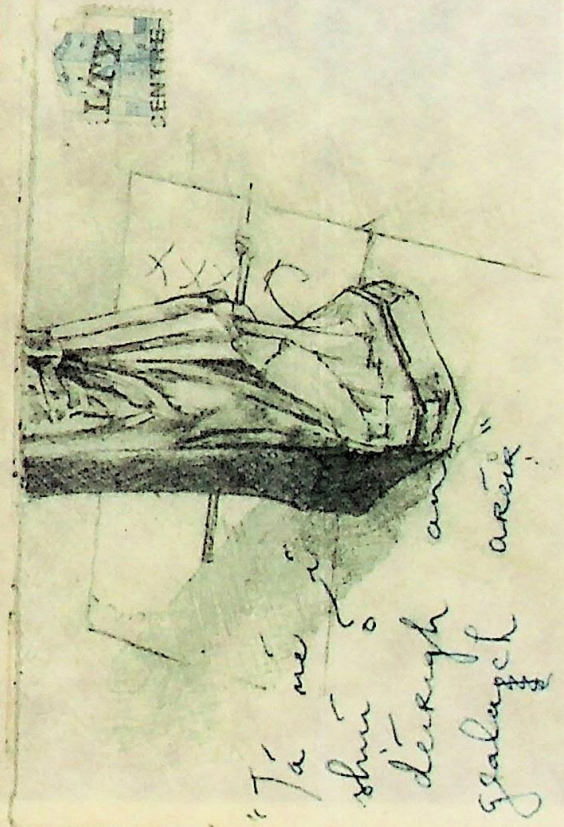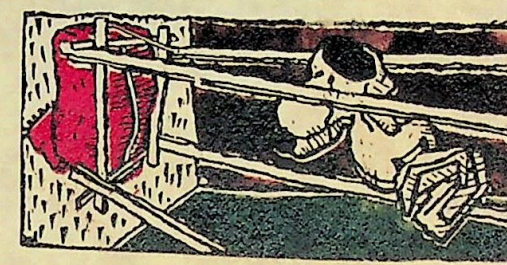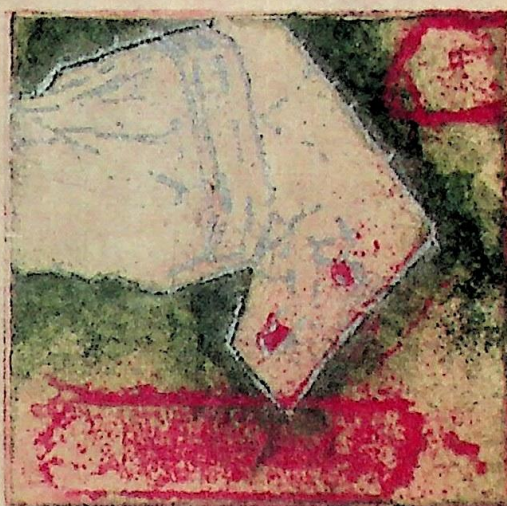
Each piece/illustration presented in the preceding pages is a sampling of a **complex and personal system of iconography**. By isolating apparently trivial imagery (cinema tickets, postmarks, samples of handwriting, Band-Aids etc.) and by juxtaposing these elements with other quite heroic images a statement of sorts is made. Also a vocabulary of symbols starts to take shape.

Whether on a visual. literal or conceptional level all the pieces relate and cross-relate to each other. A Band-Aid becomes a sacred relic...the act of preserving it reminds one more of taxidermy than of image making. Therefoer the next image in the progression is of a stuffed tortoise, and the story goes on... Much of the 'meaning' is in figuring out what relates to what and why? It might be a simple as the shape of a pedestal being echoed in a subsequent image but why a pedestal in the first place? On a more physical level the drawings of observation and the intimacy demanded by their small scale. However occasionally I make unpredicted jumps to very large scale representations of the same images. I am fascinated by treating the same images in different ways. Therefore the 'illustrations' are of a wide range of media/processes; etching mono-types, lino-cuts, oil-paintings, watercolours, drawings, etc.
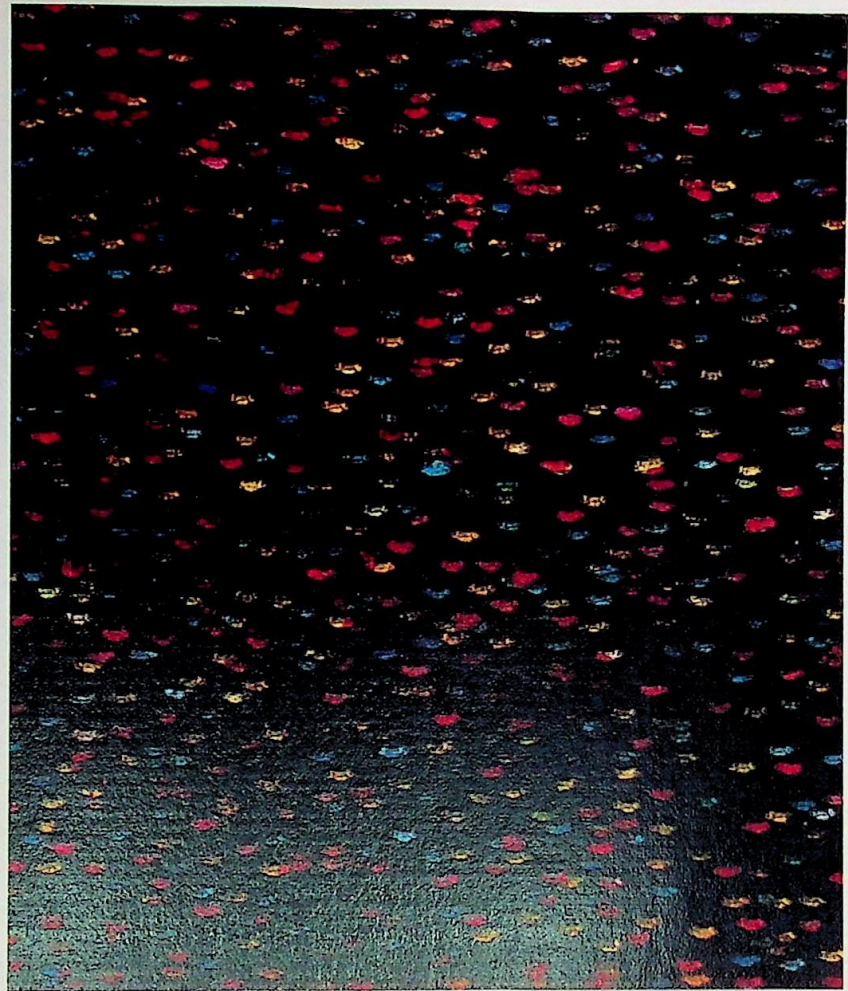
What logic is there is mapping clusters of red, yellow, and blue cars? Is it an attempt to 'make sense' of, or to 'find forms' in what is essentially a mass of unassimilatable data? "Anonymity, identity, the many, the mass – these are some of the issues that have absorbed Elizabeth Magill since her arrival from Ireland, cars another, they constantly whizz past her studio and she spent a day recording their number plates." (Kent; (12)).
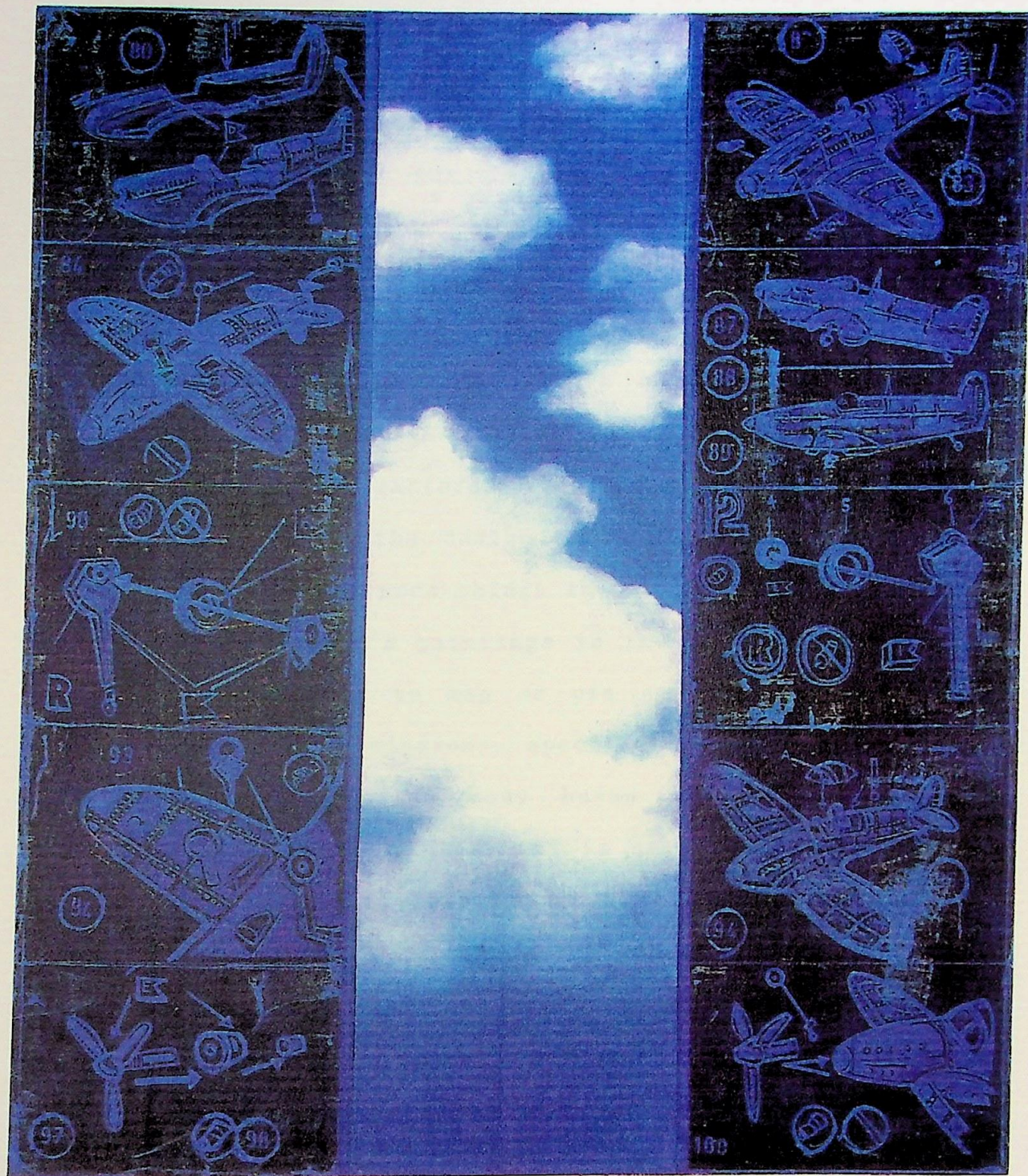
The information might be overwhelming but the arrangement gives it form, a way of ordering or comprehending the morass. Denser populations or groupings forming patterns, each individual little car informing and effecting every subsequent car. Not in a linear sequence, but in crazy tangents that shoot within, and out of the picture plane. What makes Elizabeth Magill's paintings convincing is that they are not unlike a sort of philosophical game of Pareidolia — Pareidolia refers to the phenomenon of conjuring up images when looking at ill-defined impressions or patterns; like the children who see monsters amidst the design on their bedroom curtains, or the adult who sees things in the cooling hearth, the viewer or Magill's paintings is invited to renegotiate the information, to map or pin down the unknown. To **try** and draw conclusions, specific to the forms in the painting and to as many human situations as the painting refers to. 'Airfix' is an inquiry again into the process of piecing things together (in this case how to construct a model aeroplane). It is about the sorting, coding, filing, ordering and categorising of that information; 'fig' numbers, tab numbers, diagrams, and rows of letters (the language system) that direct the action. This piece is directly linked to that **other** piece, and what will be the next connection? The

information (the variables) appears to be bewildering, and this is in an enclosed-system, a child's scale model. On October 13th 1989 computer virus set in, in a larger system, world economics;- the Dow Jones average fell 200 points, Dark Friday, Black Monday etc- indeed communication systems of all form have developed to incomprehensible levels of complexity. The Orwellian fantasy of state survelance (not 'control' see Enzensberger) of communication is now an impossibility, the bureaucracy needed to monitor tele-communication alone would need to be 'n' times greater than the system itself. Language systems (fashion, transport, film, etc) eventually becoming so complex that they begin to function under their own rules. And an awareness of this is very much part of the collective unconsciousness of Postmodernism. Even the flow of traffic in our major cities is beyond our understanding. Magill makes images about these inevitabilities in information systems about the mass of ultimately unassimilatable data that is the P-M reality. And in this respect her images are the most schiziophrenic that I have ever come across in a commercial art gallery. (Schizophrenic in a descriptive, not a diagnostic sense, I do not wish to imply that Magill is schizophrenic). The most generally accepted acusal factor for schizophrenia is, that it is the product of the psyche being subjected to
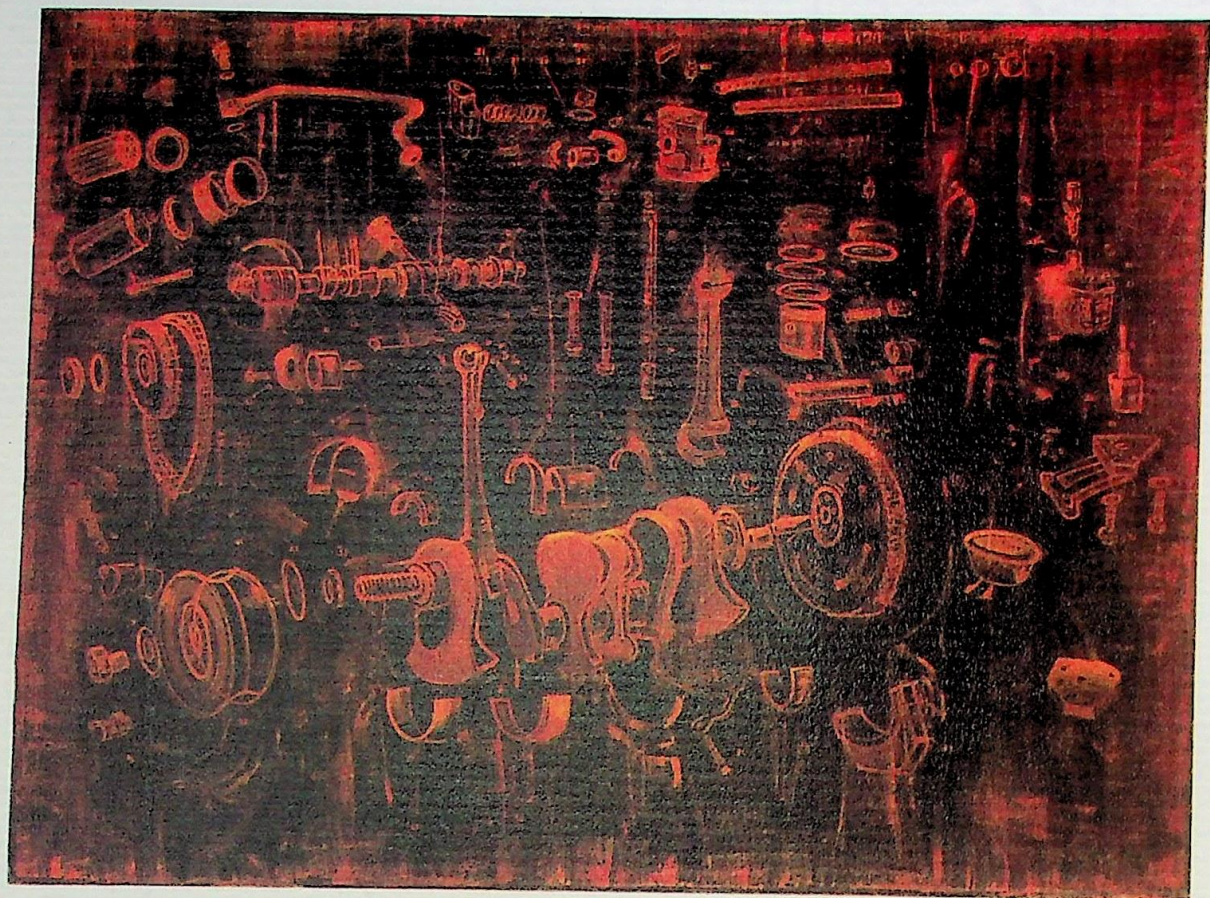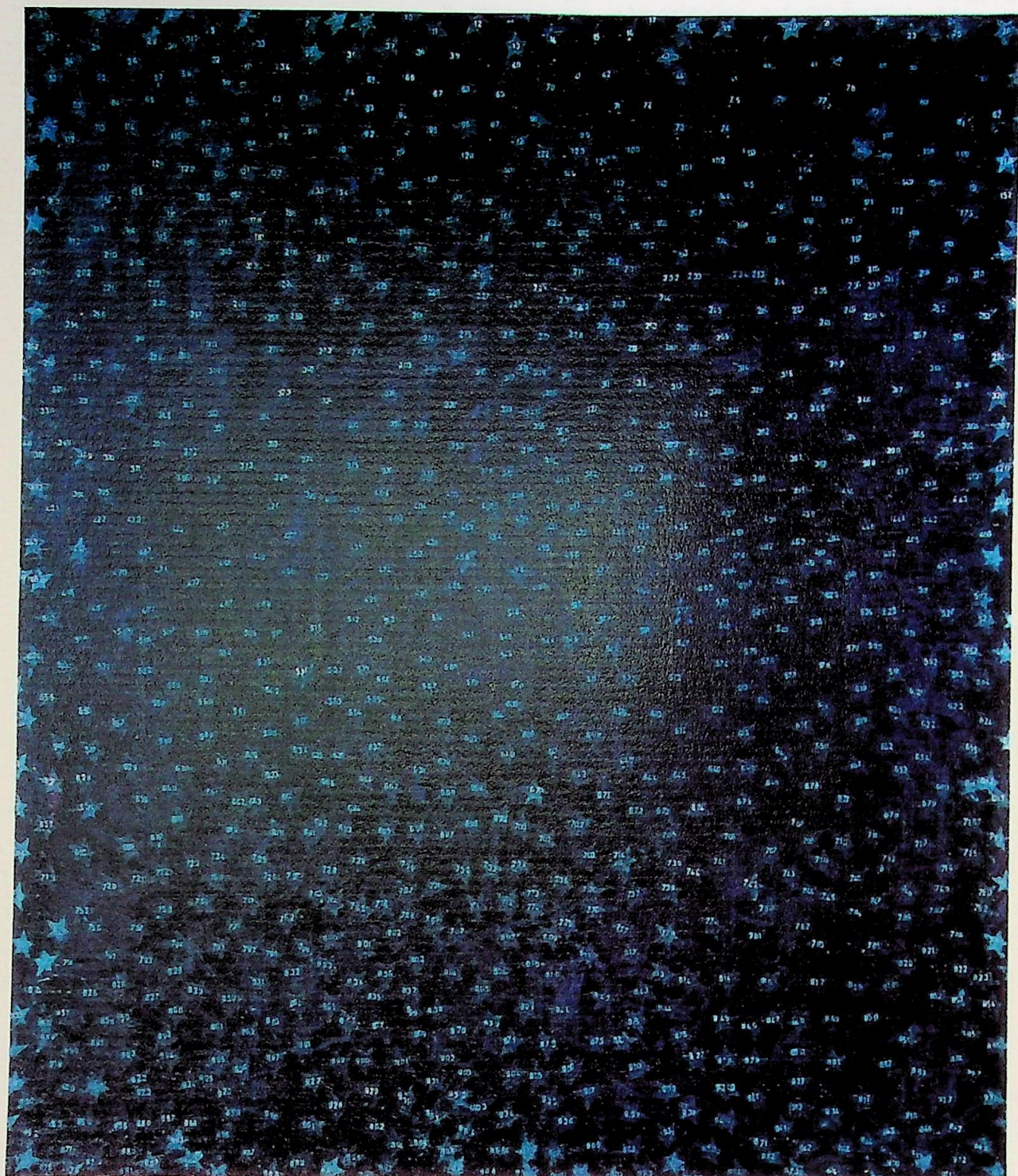
a massive flood of unassimilatable information. "There is often a massive flow of content into consciousness and the stream of thought is overwhelmed by ideas, images, distractions-" Clare on disorders of thought in schizophrenia. (Clare; (13)).

"913 stars? Do we count them to stand quietly in observed solitude? To pass the seconds in the minutes, the minutes in the hour, the hours in the day." (Snoddy; (14)).

However a problem arises here. Question; Does representation not involve communication? Can the schizophrenic or a schizo-art-practice communicate? At what point does a language system which is becoming increasingly privatized no longer able to constitute an act of communication? In practice this problem never occurs, a facility for dialogue is not needed within a language system (however idiosincratic) to constitute a communication event. Certainly there must always be two individuals, 'x' the sender and 'y' the receiver/interpreter, but 'y' does not have to be able to understand the language system, only to interpret it, i.e. it can be a one-way-system that ~~decimates~~ [marks] communication events within the mass-media

(communication theory, structural linguistics). Its
underlying mechanics are formalised in the sequence...

Transmitter-message-receiver

(encoder-message-decoder)

one-way-system

Due to the understandably limited possession of
television transmitters, off-set litho printers etc.
the media language system is one "in which one speaks
and the other does not, where one has the choice of the
code and the other only the liberty to acquiesce or
abstain." (Baudrillard (15)). But it is nevertheless a
language system that communicates.

The system's (mass-media) structure is based on an
arbitrariness of signification as pervasive as that at
work in schizophrenia, only more contrived. This is
frightening because in many ways Postmodernism **is** the
media explosion. The implication being that 'y' the
receiver (in a media communication event) has as much
grasp of the underlying ideological structure of that
language system as he/she would have of understanding
the dynamics of 'verbal salad'. Eventually the
validity of that representation must be assessed by the
receiver, freedom to experience culture should
simultaneously carry with it the right to a freedom
from culture.

To reiterate; the crucial point is that our internal perceptions of the world around us are greatly influenced by the verbal categories which we use to describe it, these language systems are found to be different in schizophrenia but that paradoxically society is becoming increasingly schizophrenic. This is occuring because postmodern reality is not unlike a hallucination in that it is illusory. A halluination is a sensory experience lacking sufficient basis in external stimuli, the origin of which is nevertheless located outside oneself, the person experiencing a hallunication will have no appreciation of the lack of an adequate external basis for the perception. In a sense there is a similarity here to the typical P-M perception of life as being nothing more than a set of flickering images, an interplay of surfaces and unrelated fragments that can give only the illusion of reality, moreover this illusion will be specific to the individual, someone elses illusion could be wholly different also specific to the individual will be his/her awareness of the perception as **being** illusory in nature, some will have no appreciation of this.

If there exists a generically distinct postmodern art, it should be an art that addresses itself to this type

of perception, in the individual and in the universal. This art practice will be itself schizophrenic due to the type of perception of which it will be required to make 'representations" of/give expression to – the argument folds in on itself. Aside from this an examination of what is involved when a culture becoming increasingly schizophrenic should be initiated This will involve a more pragmatic understanding of what schizophrenia is, even a simplistic view of sanity and insanity as being dichotamous requires/initiates a working conceptual model of something called sanity, and a model of sanity which works within a dynamic social, political and cultural framework. Psychopatheological classifications are not useful in this type of inquiry, because they will always involve ideological proposition. This situation is exascerbated by the fact that any 'science' concerned with the innermost workings of the mind as opposed to the brain (and this distinction is important) must in some sense border on philosophy for it will be constantly having to deal with intangibles, things that cannot be observed/unreasoned empirically.

Only a representation which involves rethinking the visual metaphor (in the case of visual art) in an eclectic, idiosyncratic, tangential and

cross-referential manner will be able to express what is, as I have said, rational, un-expressable. It is the metaphor specifically, and how it is treated that directs P-M 'representation', (and subsequently dictates how relevant that representation is to P-M experience). It is the fundamental semiotic device permitted by all language systems including schizophrenese that allows for the thought processes and 'code switching' thus required, to take place.

Language is essentially metaphorical, metaphor is the tool that makes every other linguistic activity, the capacity to perceive or grasp the similarity of and between apparently unassociated elements of 'reality' i.e. the metaphor as a cognitive tool has marked the development of humanity. The naming and ordering into groups of these 'elements' is seen in some cultures/mythologies as an act of creation itself. For example in aboriginal culture there is no word for 'tree', and therefore no concept of the collection of plants that form the generic group 'trees', instead all those plants are individually 'named'. This motif in the language system produced or was produced by the mythologies of that culture. This feeling of indentity between the things in the world and their names reaches very deep. In mythologies of all kinds including the Christian Bible the naming of plants, animals and

indeed people is a creative act which gives the objects independent existance. "The act of naming is, like baptism, extremely important as regards the creation of personality, for a magic power has been attributed to the name since time immemorial." (Jung; (16)). In an essay on the language of schizophrenia Roman Jakobson cites the poet Holderlins disavowal of his own name and his assumption of a loan name; 'Scardarelli' (the poet was suffering a psychosis at the time). Jakobson interprets this much in the way R.D. Laing would as an attempt to eleiminate the 'I' from his conversations and poetry, i.e. psychotic guilt, "the taboo name of the sender is resolutely replaced by 'Scardarelli'; the author remains rather indifferent both to the consumer of the verse and to the fate of the manuscripts." (Jakobson (17)). Together with the manifestation of this "false-self-system" - (producing the pseudonym) Holderins capacity for dialogue was also destroyed; but contemporanous to this, his competence at that which is distinctly monalogical (-his poetry) was unimpaired and even improved. Jakobson holds that the name Scardarelli derives from the stage role of a character who was a courtly servant involving a stock of cliched "gestures of bowing and scraping (seigneur com indeur; Je suis votre valet...)." (Jakobson; (18)). Bearing in mind the romantic notion of the poet as a servant of society one wonders to what extent Holderlins was

Scardarelli? I am also reminded of the story of the patient in a lie-detector test who when asked if he was Napoleon, replied 'No' and the lie-detector recorded that he was lying.

Even the naming of more complex 'abstract concepts'; honesty, fear, beauty, speed... these are metaphoric in that the words imitate or symbolise **real** emotional reactions to the world, out there. "A large number of onomatopoeic vestiges remain even in the more modern languages; not for instance, the sounds for running water; rauschen, rieseln, ruschen, rinnen, rennen, rush, river, ruscello, Rhein. And note wasser, wissen, wissern, pissen, piscis, fisch. Thus, language in its origin and essence, is simply a system of signs or symbols that denote real occurrences or their **echo in the human soul."** (Jung; (20) my underline). Conversely the term 'familiarisation' justifiably describes how the naming of an object or feeling circumscribes our understanding of it. The term questions to what extent humanities knowledge about, for example, the object that is a horse, or understanding or horsiness, or that which is essentially a horse, was forever lost/curtailed the moment we put a name to it. Without recourse to a simple name, the feeling of perception of even more

complex concepts as 'love' or 'anger' would probably be more acute. It has been the imaginative/original usage or the breaking down of these linguistic barriers that art, especially poetry, has always been about. Paradoxically every subsequent system, rule or convention arises in order to **tame** or discipline this metaphorizing facility. To demarcate which expressions may be generated and which may not - that which makes sense and that which makes non-sense. The metaphor that violates the grammatical norm can sometimes say something which is beyond literal truth even in the 'clang' associations of the psychotic or in poetry "to say 'green ideas without colour sleep furiously' could be (if it didn't resemble poetry) a case of a verbal comic, because the grammatical norm is pre-supposed." (ECO:; (21)).

It follows that as with familiarisation, grammatical convention's stabilising influence upon the metaphor cannot be all pervasive, because it is the metaphor that makes a language system vital, it is the hope/invention of new previously unthought-of metaphorical relationships that propel a language system towards linguistic renewal and representational development. For all acts of representation (even simple 'iconic' types like maps) are metaphoric in that

they are not the object only like it. Language i.e.
the metaphor; and "man is a symbolic animal - the alter
is an image; and the image must alter.

The grammatical elements for metaphorical relationships
are as follows;

(1) Index: This is where a part **stands** for a whole, x
indicates y; e.g. smoke is an index of fire, the
association is not wholly arbitrary.

(2) Signals: Here the relationship x:y is
mechanical/automatic, a sygnal triggers a response,
e.g. the sensations of tiredness is a signal to sleep,
the association between tiredness and sleep is not
arbitrary (the term 'sensation' might appear ambiguous
in this context, however if you think of verbal
language as being only the product of the 'sensation'
of soundwaves hitting the eardrum, the terms
singificance will be understood and it will be used in
this context throughout this essay).

(3) Signia: All symbols and signs are contrasted as
sub-categories of signia. They do not occur in
isolation etc. A classic (and also very relevant to
P-M) example of metaphoric code-switching between these
grammatical elements would be 'Pavlov's dogs'. Where a
bell was an 'index' for the presence of good food but
was made to be effectively treated as a 'signal',

'triggering' the dogs to salivate. It has also been demonstrated, that sexual arousal can be conditioned to a picture of a Boot in 'normal' males by associating it, in a laboratory with pictures of naked women. "McConaghy (1970) has replicated this experiment using coloured geometrical patterns in place of the boot picture, thus showing that possible erotic overtones or 'preparedness' are not essential ingredients to the acquisition of the conditioned 'fetishism' ." (Wilson; 22). The experiment worked again by making the subject treat an 'index' as a 'signal', but from a different view point, one could well ask, what if anything is a 'genuine' 'saignal' for an emotional or psyco-sexual response? And I mean this in the widest sense, was not the image of a naked female already semioticly 'over-coded' within western culture? This manipulation of the interrelationshop of indices, signs and signals is all pervasive within Postmodernism, everything is mediatedeven our supposedly most intimate thoughts are subjected to a galere of shapes and sizes, behaviours, and responses. "Not only re equivalences established between goods in an open market, but bodies, actions, ideas, knowledge, fantasies, images, function as commoditites which can be translated into other commodities as deterritorialized schizophrenic flows." (Deleuze, Guattari; 23).

The logic of 'magic' also grounded in the treatment of 'indices' as 'signals' is perfectly mirrored in 'mass-media/political 'sorcery' and ultimately finds its **truest** expression in that of schizophrenia. "If a Sinhalese peasant wants to shop a charging elephant he will (or should) stand stock still and recite a magical formula." (Leach; 24). By altering his 'sense-image' (indicating change) and by then treating that 'index' as a signal he 'triggers' the required alteration in the environment; alternatively in a modern 'coup' take over of the national television station will be universely as a 'signal' that the previous government has fallen, the radio, and t.v. proclaiming success in casting spells, when it is often little more than an index (if even that) of a change in power to mythologise, at worst, it is not magic; and one simply demonstrates the extent to which the media is a system of social control and power. Conversely - "A man says he is dead, but he is (biologically) alive. But his 'truth' is that he is dead. He expresses it perhaps in the only way common (i.e. communal) sense allows him. He means that he is 'really' and quite literally dead, not merely symbolically or 'in a sense' or 'as it were' and he is seriously bent on communicating this truth. Here a schizophrenic is correctly treating the 'sensation' of non-existence as a 'signal' that he is

dead, much as one would treat the sensation of hunger as a signal to eat. But his metonymic sense is interpreted through the communal language system as being only metaphoric non-sense. How would an 'existential' interpretation of this statement read?

Similarly 'magical' undoing involves the belief that thinking or doing something (usually ritualisticly) will have an extraordinary effect on the environment. Examples of this would be the adolesent who avoids cracks in the pavement, obsessively recounting 'special' numbers or touching the corners of tables an even number of times. This type of obsessive/magical thinking reaches bizarre proportions in schizophrenia, it is perfectly normal in children and among isolated 'primitive' island culture systems. Remnants of and a facination with this type of 'thought process' still exists in western culture, I think Jaspar John's numnber paintings, Greenaway's film "Drowning by numbers", Warhol's repetitious portrait systems, the minute ticks and 'special' numbers left in Uain Unglows portraits, and the current vogue in N.Y. for computer generated random sequence paintings, say a lot about this phenomenun. One N,.Y, artist, a vietnam veteran allows his temperature to generate random sequences of two photographs, one of 'war dead and one of a

'surburban scene' which he then paints, in an attempt to figure out 'what probability' allowed him to survive the war. Sometimes clusters of war dead form and sometimes he gets a straight line of suburban houses —he says he cannot make 'sense' of the images.

The type of 'sense' necessary to read these images was present not so long ago even in western culture. The universe of the early middle ages was a universe of hallucination and intuition of non-linear thinking: 'fantasy' dominated everyday life. This world is eventually succumed under relentless attacks from the universe of 'reason' and 'logic', of St. Thomas Acquinas 'Christianisation of Arstotle. For purely economic reasons, it became necessary to find techniques of reason, forever altering the way man thought; in effect the workforce (and the pesants) were rationalized along with the organisational and production processes of the time. There is an irony here, for though Christianity rationalised humanity from the middle ages on, it is itself and always be inherently illogical and ritualistic. One characteristic feature of such non-logic is that metaphor is often treated in religious utterances as metonymy. Consider the statement of fact that God the Son was 'begotten' of God the Father, even thought God

the 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Ghost' are one and the same thing since the 'beginning'. if the latter three assertions are regarded as separate metaphors, then the words 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Ghost' are alternative symbols for a single metaphysical concept 'in the mind'. But peculiar to religious discourse is the denial that such formular are metaphoric, they are said to be 'true' and simultaneously' true. As I have already said, the mental gymnastics needed to come to terms with this type of 'religious' Chripto-logic has helped produce the situation where Ireland, a predominantly Catholic country has the highest rate of schizophrenia per head of the population in the western world.

What occured in the late middle ages (that gave birth to the Renaissance) was a sort of game of cultural politics, it was played in an attempt to make (what was relatively straight forward) Aristotlien (Greek) logic fit in with that of established Judo-Christian theology. Europe ended up with a sort of mish-mash of logics, that through time it grew to believe as being the **only** possible form of reason. "St. Thomas did not Aristotelianize Christianity; he Christianized Aristotle." (ECO; 26). Understandably this causes confusion from time to time, the form of thinking in

schizophrenics can sometimes be 'concrete' i.e. literal interpretations of everything including old proverbs, religious texts, or even television advertisements. (It is an exaggerated form of rational thinking). It is also interesting that many similarities can be drawn between the adoption of a new and holy arbitrary system of logic in the late middle ages (to fit economic requirements) and the emergence of a similarly neo/hyberdised logic system in late capitalism. No-one can doubt that we are living through a 'change-over' period but one wonders if it will give birth to another 'Renaissance'.

A pre-requisite to understanding the confection of code/systems that constitutes P-M logic, is the voluntary embracing of those codes in all their complexity and variety. The idea that any codes are potentially a transformation of any other code, is crucial here. It is our common experience that all kinds of human action serve to convey information. Such modes of communication include, writing, musical performance, press, dancing, building, acting, worshipping, governing, purchasing and so on. The argument rests on the proposition that, at some level, the 'mechanism' of these various modes of communication must be the same, that each is a 'transformation' of

every other in much the same sense a written text is a transformation of speech. This is essentially what P-M is about with its overwhelming variety of media, a musical concept becomes a written score, finger movements on a keyboard, the 'key' is altered for orchestration, the sound-recording becomes a series of binary digits, it is broadcast/made into a commodity, promoted and interpreted; perhaps it is visualised, maybe it becomes a metaphor in an advertisement. As trees become paper, cardboard cartons, matches, or through age, various forms of fuel like turf and coal, similarly 'information' is metamorphisised from one code to another. My thesis is that (1) Schizophrenia is a legitimate code/transformation of information, and that (2) Thought processes similar to schizophrenia are useful in translating/assimilating the multiplicity of all available codes. I am not suggesting that all art production become schizophrenic, that would be rediculous, because an intact 'super-ego' is essential to that productoin, this is due to the amount of 'holding back' involved in realising a work of art. What I am suggesting is that to immerse oneself in all this information whilst at the same time managing to keep some sort of equilibrium, that this would be a useful technique for making relevant representations of the world as it really is. I think this is what

Elizabeth Magill manages to carry off when she spends a day recording car number plates. James Joyce's daughter Lucia a chronic schizophrenic, but unlike his daughter he was in control of what he was doing. "Their psyches were strangely alike, even in some of their deviations from the 'normal', at the same time they were radically different. As Jung put it, they were both going to the bottom of a river, but Lucia was falling and Joyce was diving. What might seem to many to be 'mental abnormality' in Joyce's writing, Jung said in 1932, "may also be a kind of mental health which is inconceivable to the average understanding." (Chester; 27). While I am on Irish writers, the upside of Ireland having a high rate of schizophrenia is that, what advantages that we associate disease have filtered their way into the culture as a whole As a nation we display a high level of articulacy among all socio-economic groups coupled with an imaginative/ideosyncratic use of the English language that is so prevalent that we are usually quite unaware of it. In general we are very adept at tangential or non-linear thinking, often arriving at what is termed an 'Irish solution to an Irish problem'. With regards to cultural production, these abilities have until recently tended only to manifest themselves in literature. This was probably caused by our peculiar history; as a 'nation on the run' it was not always

possible to carry large canvasses, or build great architecture and therefore develop 'visual literacy', but verbal language was always portable... As an 'Island community' 'magical thinking' was commonplace until relatively recently. Indeed ancient Irish history is replete with 'psychiatric' terminology. A 'Cailleach' was an old hag who was able to transfer mental illness from one person to other. And in pre-Christian Ireland the 'madman's wisp' was made from a ball of straw or grass by a Druid and then thrown in someone's face, the unfortunate victim went mad. It is also worth noting that the same 'gene' that carries 'creativity' also carries genetic information specific to schizophrenia and 'in-breeding' has always been a part of this island's culture. As I mentioned earlier Lucia Joyce was schizophrenic. On one occasion she set fire to her room because as she later explained, her father's complexion was very red (note the language system). I am also reminded of the similarities between the imaginative reconstruction of the world in "Finnegan Wake" and the psychotic reorganisations of schizophrenia. This type of representation of a pecularly Irish friction with reality, runs from the 'literacy Renaissance' through writers like O'Brien/O'Casey, Behan and Beckett and can be seen right up to contemporary writers like McGahern, Jorden, Bolger and Banvelle.

To conclude this essay I would like to briefly relate this point to contemporary Irish painting. For the first time, the culture can support serious art productions. This occured because the climate eventually became right for the development of general visual literacy and also for strictly economic reasons. This is a very recent development, in real terms less than two or three years old. What could be termed the first generation of 'professional' Irish painters, Cullen (M), Maguire, Jorden, Graham, Mulcahy, etc. and even their forerunners Kane, Cullen, Burke etc. etc. were all characterized by hysteria for expressionism, and for a certain unease, they felt at promoting themselves as artists ('careerism' is an integral part of P-M art practice, the galleries...Magill exhibits in, are code systems themselves; they inform the work). But more to the point; I would hold that these painters were very aware of the profusion of images and information that they inhabit as people, that they have always made concerted efforts to find a figuration for this P-M/schizophrenic sensability i.e. that which sets Irish art apart..., but that there was usually little method in their madness (Graham painting pictures in mental hospitals, Mulcahy declaring that he was a 'shamen', Bork using the Sweeney/schizo metaphor, the list goes on). They painted 'charactures' out of the

phenomenon that they sought to document; instead of examining that phenomenon, 'insanity' need never have been hinted at. This occured for many reasons, (1) In general they had not been exposed to multi-channel viewing all their lives (the importance of this should not be underestimated). (2) They never appreciated that we were living in 'late-capitalism' (there ties individually and collectively to the, by then, irrelevant politics of the self) in short (3) they never fully embraced the complexity of the P-M situation. Younger Irish artists are priviliged in that when they deal with P-M in their work, they are playing on home ground. They are still discussing an 'Irish sensability' but it always has however (esoteric it might appear be) a contemporary relevance. "Individually, each piece jolts the viewer by its strangeness, the unexpected slant it takes on things. Collectively, her work accumulates evidence of a separate, contiguous reality; her own inner world, perhaps. It is, in any event, a region remote in more ways than one. Her venerable bronze vessels hint at voyaging, distance, in time as well as space, and the **maps she is fond of making are reminiscent of attempts by early explorers to plot uncharted spaces.** (Rosc; 28). This from an article on Kathy Prendergast, she worked as a vide camera operator at RTE before going on to main sculpture. Similarly Peter Powers' etchings
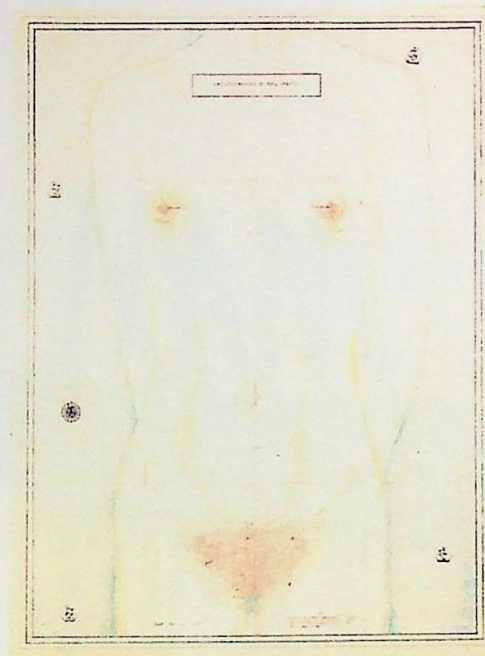
ENCLOSED WORLDS IN OPEN SPACES 1983
watercolour & ink on paper
76 x 56 cm
Collection Vincent & Noeleen Ferguson
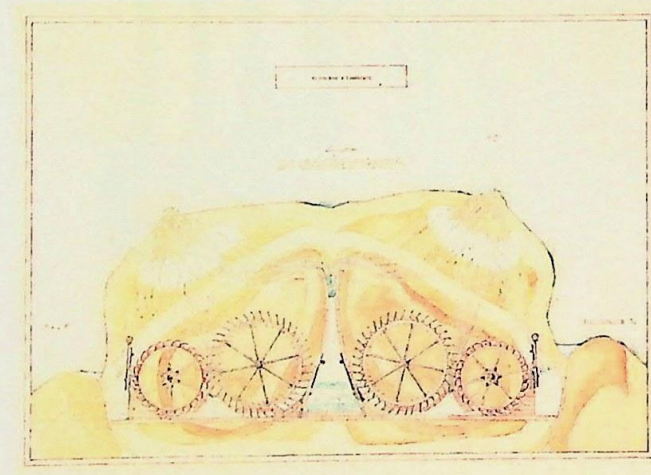
TO CONTROL A LANDSCAPE – IRRIGATION 1983
watercolour & ink on paper
35 x 60 cm
Collection Vincent & Noeleen Ferguson
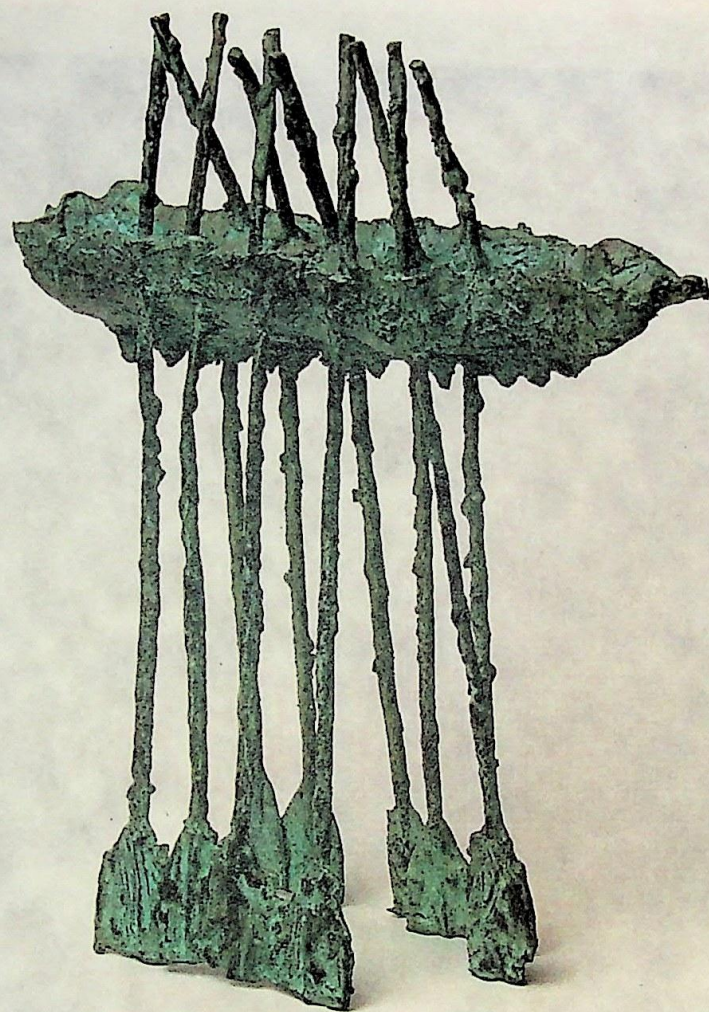
NIGHTSHIP 1984
bronze
26 x 18 x 8 cm
Collection AIB Group

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show an understanding of the 'speed' and role of the 8individual' in postmodern existance, sometimes with specific reference to a uniquely Irish problem, emigration (the healthy ones got out). He acknowledges being influenced by Joseph Bueys' work and its relevence to 'late-capitalism'. A number of other young Irish artists are equally aware/engaging and will probably go on to make important work. I will refrain from mentioning their names, because I feel that this should be the subject of a separate inquiry.

LIST OF QUOTATIONS

1) C.G. Jung   Symbols of Transformation   pg12 L8
2) Umberto Eco   Symiotics & the Philosophy
                         of Language.   pg103 L6
3) F. Jameson   The Anti-Aesthetic.   pg114 L5
4) A. Clare   Psychiatry in Dissent   pg161 L16
5) O'Shea + Flavey   A textbook of Psychological   pg34 L8
                         medicine.   L12 & 9.
6) F. Jameson   The Anti-Aesthetic   pg115 L25
7) Editorial Panel of. Circa No.48 Nov/Dec '89.   pg15 L12
8) S. Szasz   The myth of Mental illness   pg50 L1
9) J. Baudrillard   For a critique of the Political
                         Economy of the sign.   pg180 L3/10
10) A. Clare   Psychiatry in Dissent   pg213 L14
11) "   "   "   "   "   pg91 L26   pg92 L9
12) S. Kent   20/20 Dec 89   pg17 L16
13) A. Clare   Psychiatry in Dissent   pg91 L33
14) S. Snoddy   Elizabeth Magill, Catalogue Kerlin
                         Gallery Dublin.Pub. Aug 89.   pg 3 L18
15) J. Baudrillard   For a critique of the political
                         economy of the sign.   pg179 L1
16) Jung   Symbols of Transformation   pg187 L13
17) R. Jackobson   Verbal Art, Verbal sign, Verbal time pg139 L18
18) "   "   "   "   "   "   "   "   pg135 L15
20) Jung   Symbols of transformation.   pg12 L17
21) ECO   Travels in Hyper-reality.   pg227 L13
22) Edited:Kevin Howells The Psychology of sexual diversity.   pg105 L11
23) Deleuze & Guattari   Critical analisis of; by R. Bogue.   pg100 L22
24) Edmund Leach   Culture & Communication   pg30 L7
25) R.D. Laing   The Divided Self   pg38 L16
26) ECO   Travels in Hyper-Reality.   pg265 L13
27) C. Anderson   James Joyce   pg123 L6
28) Aidan Dunne   Rosc 88   pg145 L22

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