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## Preface

Art, creativity and neurology may seem widely different topics at first sight. However, it is obvious that art originates in the brain. Therefore, disorders of the nervous system often influence the preparation and development of artistic activities because they may alter motor, sensory, and above all, cognitive, functions.

The creativity of painters, musicians, writers, poets, and other artists is the magnified expression of one of the ‘highest’ brain functions in the human being, and it is understandable that brain, spinal cord, or peripheral nerve disease may have subtle or overt influences on artistic production. While every clinician has indeed observed instances of altered or modified creative abilities in individual patients with acute or chronic neurological disease, one of the best ways to address the problem probably is to have a closer look at famous artists, whose activity and production has changed (or has failed to do so) after the development of a lesion or dysfunction of the nervous system.

In the following chapters, the impact of various neurological diseases such as stroke, epilepsy, brain trauma, dementia, and other problems in famous artists (writers, philosophers, painters, and composers) is presented through the lens of changes in their behavior and in their production. Some ‘cases’ such as Ravel or van Gogh are already famous, but the nature of their disease has remained somewhat controversial. Other artists with a neurological disorder have been much less well studied, including Apollinaire, Daudet, Gernez, Haydn, or Kant, to quote only a few.

There is no such a thing as a ‘creativity center’ in the brain, and the production of an art work obviously requires a ‘global’ brain functioning, about which we are still lacking much knowledge. However, it is also striking to observe how a localized damage to the brain or other nervous structures has led

to subtle or dramatic changes in creativity and artistic production in many famous artists. Between ‘neurology of history’ and ‘history of neurology’, the study of how a neurological disorder can alter productivity in recognized artists and other creative people is a largely unexplored field. We hope that this book will represent a useful contribution to this domain.

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